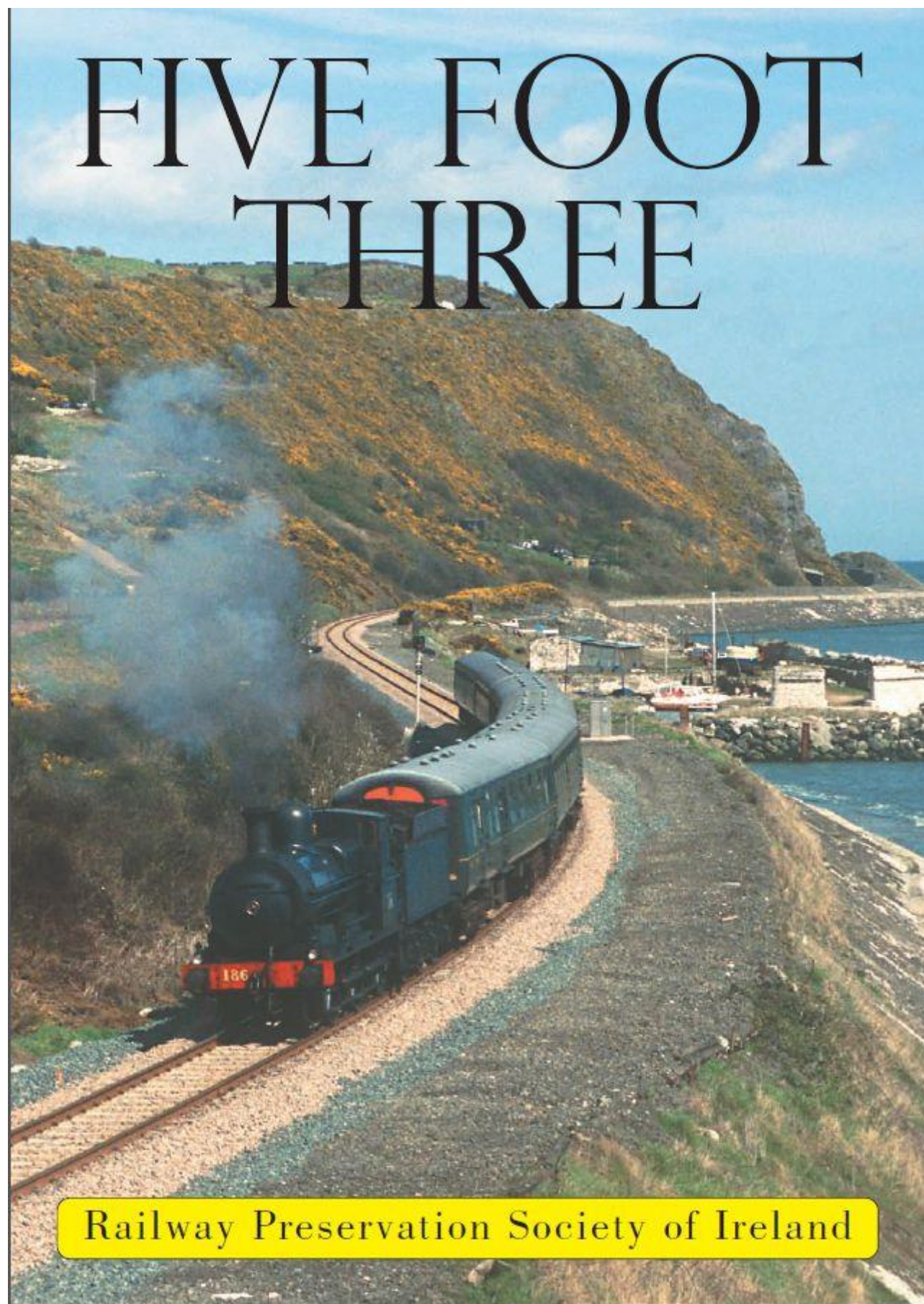


FIVE FOOT THREE



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: Better be honest - this was April 2006. No.186 passes the White Harbour with an Easter Bunny train. (N. Poots)

EDITORIAL

Much has been heard in recent times about the Youth Team, and rightly so. Not so long ago, the Ageing Editor was one of a very few retired persons to be found at Whitehead but now - and quite suddenly it seems - they are in the majority. This tells its own story and shows how fortunate we are that a group of young men felt moved to get stuck in. Hopefully, now that they are established and have demonstrated that Whitehead is not exclusively the domain of old fogeys, others may feel inclined to join them. Their recent success in winning the HRA award for their brake van restoration is evidence of what can be achieved by a determined team, most of who did not arrive armed with engineering skills. In Dublin also, several welcome younger faces have appeared - something our Secretary would like to hear more about for inclusion in News-sheets and e-mail Bulletins.

It will be apparent from the reports of various Society office-bearers that a lot has been going on behind the scenes. Much of this has revolved around whether Whitehead should continue as an undeniably scruffy place dedicated to engineering of a high standard or if more effort should be put into making it more inviting to potential visitors. As regards the latter, some may have felt that we ought to stick to what we are good at, whilst lack of funds was a more compelling reason to leave things as they were.

However, a very competent team has been assembled which has not only prepared plans for future developments but also successfully explored sources of essential grant aid. A rather more difficult problem has reared its head in Dublin where our current workplace at Inchicore appears likely to be affected by the planned eruption of an underground line.

One could speculate as to what motivates people to get involved in steam preservation: is it nostalgia or an interest in the steam locomotive as a machine or, ideally, both? Interestingly, this is reflected to some extent in the monthly winter meetings so ably organised by Charlie Friel for longer than he would care to think about. One gets the feeling that these are better attended when devoted to “all our yesterdays” than when the subject is of wider steam interest.

The above is a preface to another recent development. In the earlier days of the RPSI anyone seen showing interest in any form of diesel traction (curiously perhaps, buses appeared to be exempt!) was liable to be threatened with having to explain themselves to the (mythical) Ethics Committee. The Carlow diesel, although uninspiring and, in winter, far from cosy, is undoubtedly handy, taking minutes rather than hours to get started for work at Whitehead. But now we have two main line examples - some of our deceased founding fathers must be turning in their graves! However, this is where motivation crops up again, in that it is now 40 years since the end of regular steam and the people we would like to attract as volunteers are nowhere near that age. So, whilst the Editorial blood is not stirred at all by the cry of the diesel, another generation may not all feel that way. Thus, a practical attitude would appear to be that, so long as the maintenance and operation of diesels is not to the detriment of steam, there is a place for them. Haulage by any kind of locomotive is rapidly becoming a rarity and, as Dublin’s Santa experience shows, if the train is “different” a lot of people aren’t all that concerned about what is pulling it - so if they’ll pay let’s pull them.

Despite the proliferation of photographic devices (and apart from a few perennially reliable sources) “lineside” photos suitable for publication seem to have become rather scarce. This might be because, apart from the date and arboreal intrusions, nothing changes much from year to year - or it might be because our trains are such fun that everyone wants to travel in them! With digital equipment the photographer can now fire away merrily and dump the duds without counting the cost of every frame exposed and, thanks to the wonders of e-mail, the results are easily transmitted. Although practically all photos are now in colour, up to now colour slides and digital material have almost all been reproduced in black and white in Five Foot Three. However, in an attempt to move with the times, this issue should include colour photos in the text - the obvious exception being archival black & white material. Let’s hope it works!

It would be wrong to end without a word of tribute to Johnny Glendinning, under whose active Chairmanship the Society has continued to move forward. Retirement wishes seem to assume that the retiring person will henceforth be inactive but that seems inappropriate in Johnny’s case. Perhaps he and your Editor should now be planning how to evade a reconvened Ethics Committee!

CHAIRMAN’S REPORT

Johnny Glendinning

Here we are again at the end of another year and I am writing the 2009 report. I start as usual by thanking all my Council colleagues for all their hard work and support throughout yet another very busy year for the RPSI, all of which is included in the various reports elsewhere in this issue of Five Foot Three. As this is my last Chairman’s Report I thought I should reflect on the changes during the time I have had the privilege to serve as Vice Chairman and then Chairman and take a look at the possible future of the RPSI.

When I was elected to be Vice Chairman in 2001, replacing the then Vice Chairman David Dillon who had sadly died, the Society was involved in a review with NIR of the NIR/RPSI operating agreement.

At the same time negotiations were taking place with both IÉ for the RPSI to become a Guest Operator on IÉ and also with the Railway Safety Commission about the RPSI Safety Case. This was a time of great uncertainty for the Society and its future but, as a result of these agreements, the RPSI now has a number of vehicles which are registered for use on both railway companies' tracks. I need to make the distinction here between the railway companies' requirements and those of the government, e.g. prohibition on wooden bodied carriages, the provision of TPWS, OTMR and SDL are all requirements of the government whereas things like route and track availability are railway company decisions.

Another achievement was becoming a Registered Museum and then in 2007 reaching the higher standard of Accredited Museum. This means we now have standards for looking after our exhibits which provide those who donate items to us with the knowledge of how their gifts will be cared for. Also it reassures funders that the RPSI's artefacts are being kept for the nation.



The Powers that Be. Front: Sir Kenneth Bloomfield (vice-president), Lord O'Neill (president). Johnny Glendinning (chairman). Back: David Houston (vice-chairman), Peter Marsden (treasurer), Paul McCann (secretary). (C.P. Friel)

The Society has achieved a lot in the last 10 years and must now plan for the future. If we are to continue for another 40 years we must make sure we have the people and the facilities to do so. We need to encourage more young members to get involved in the Society's activities, make better use of our existing volunteers, develop a training scheme for the heritage engineering skills needed to keep our trains running, make use of our All-Ireland Museum Status to gain funding and build on the goodwill and support we get from IÉ and NIR.

We should be considering ways which will enable us to run more trains with greater income. If we are to attract grants and funds that we badly need then the RPSI base at Whitehead must become visitor friendly. Also, if we are to create a base in Dublin and we are going to seek public money to pay for it,

then it too must have public access. Continuing to do what we have always done, that is, only overhauling an engine every five years and each year running 15 trains out of Belfast with a similar number out of Dublin, will not pay for future running costs. So, standing still is not an option.

During this year the Council has been very fortunate to have been offered three large sums of money by three different members. The first two members put up enough money to each purchase a 141 Class diesel loco from IÉ. The third member gave a large donation towards the purchase of the additional land at Whitehead.

Looking to the future, the Council accepted a proposal from a group of members to set up a Diesel Department in the Society. This group hope to raise money by way of donations to buy one or two more locos and to obtain premises in which to store and overhaul them. It will be up to those interested in diesel preservation to make the Diesel Department a success for the RPSI.

I was delighted by the news that the Whitehead Youth team had won the HRA Wagon Award. The HRA citation reads “Great Northern Railway (Ireland) Goods Brake Van No.81 (“Ivan”) is the winning wagon. The Judges were impressed with the quality of the restoration and the substantial use of young volunteers. They also noted that this is one of the few survivors of traditional standard (Irish) gauge freight vehicles.” Heartiest congratulation to them.



The “Youths”, with the HRA wagon award. Front: Adam Lohoff, Mark Walsh, Nathan Lightowler, plus Mark Kennedy of UFTM. Back: Ben McDonald, Michael McCann, Edward Friel, James Friel. (J. Glendinning)

In conclusion I would like to thank all those, from inside and from outside the RPSI, who have worked with me and helped me throughout my years as Vice Chairman and Chairman. I have enjoyed my time in these posts and I feel I was privileged to have worked with so many dedicated people. I will let others judge whether or not I have made a difference for the good of the RPSI.

I wish the new Chairman well and hope the Society continues to go from strength to strength.

NEWS FROM COUNCIL

Paul McCann

Let me start on a high note. The year under review has just ended with news of the latest HRA award for the RPSI - the GNR(I) brake van No.81 having won the Wagon category of the Association's Carriage & Wagon awards for 2008. It is testimony to the dedication and skill of the younger members at Whitehead, and to their mentors, that the HRA has recognised the Society's work once again.

2009 was notable for other big news stories too. The earliest of these was certainly not news we wanted to hear, being informed by the railway company that our presence at Inchicore was under threat by the changes expected there with the proposed inter-connector tunnel under Dublin. Apparently, the tunnel portal and a new station will be right in the middle of the site there. Since then a number of alternative sites have been investigated for feasibility, and all have their pros and cons. The investigation process is still underway. The end of our tenure at Inchicore may not be tomorrow but it is certain and, whatever the outcome, it will not be cheap to provide the required facilities, and it could well make the planned expenditure at Whitehead look like buttons in comparison.

As one door closes another opens! During negotiations with Iarnród Éireann management on the issue of Inchicore, it was made known that the South Wexford line from Waterford to Rosslare Strand might be available for the RPSI to operate as a heritage line. No further information is available, nor has any been sought!

More hopeful news came in the form of a number of grant offers for development of Whitehead as an excursion destination, museum, and engineering and visitor centre. Most of these arose from the success of the 2020 Committee, the progress of which is reported elsewhere. Suffice to say the Committee has seen the recruitment of new blood into the Society's volunteer circle and it shows in the progress achieved. It is hoped that southern members will feel enthused enough by this success to join the Committee so that similar results can be achieved in facilitating a new base in the Dublin area.

Current grants (new, on-going or offered) include:

- International Fund for Ireland - Mk2 coaches
- NI Museums Council - Small Exhibits (Stables roof)
- NI Museums Council - Small Exhibits (Diner 87)
- Heritage Lottery Fund - Training of NIR Driver Assessors
- GROW - Station building, security fencing, tarmac

Late in the year a strip of land on the seaward side of the site at Whitehead came up for sale. While only some of it is suitable for RPSI use, it was felt that the opportunity was too good to miss, especially as there was an offer of a substantial donation towards the purchase from one member and a loan from another. The main proposals for development would be a turntable and stores area. At the time of writing the sale remains to be finalised as conveyancing is still underway. As to the purchase of the main site from Carrickfergus Borough Council, following a two-year delay while a boundary issue was sorted it now appears that we are in the final stages of completion.

A thorny subject for some, and a great delight to others - diesels! Two separate offers of funding were received during the year to cover the purchase of two locomotives from Irish Rail's remaining fleet of 141 class GMs. The first was from Murphy Models in Dublin and the second from a member wishing to remain anonymous. With this very generous funding in place, it was agreed to acquire the locomotives - 141 is ours, and the purchase of 142 is being finalised. During the year an approach was made to Council by a group of members who are also diesel enthusiasts. They have impressive

proposals for acquiring, maintaining and operating a fleet of 121/141 class locomotives. The plan would be to establish a diesel maintenance facility (Charleville has been identified) and to operate diesel-hauled tours using existing RPSI rolling stock. Agreement in principle has been reached, the proviso being sufficient external funding in place and agreement with CIÉ on premises. No doubt 2010 will bring more news on the project.

The issue of diesels is also complicated by the fact that the two existing mainline diesels, Hunslets 101 and 102 were under threat during the year. 101 was stripped for parts and scrapped in late January 2010. Scrapping was not lightly undertaken, but with space extremely tight at Whitehead the Museum Committee undertook a thorough review of all the Society's rolling stock and came up with a list for disposal: 916 (Mk2 driving trailer), 923 (Mk2 open), 5 (NCC bogie flat), 2518 (Guinness grain van, spares to be retained for sister wagon 504) and 101 (Hunslet locomotive, spares to be retained for 102). Hunslet 102 is to be kept as an RPSI exhibit.

At this point it would be appropriate to thank those who have donated to the Society this year, some of them very substantially, e.g. for locomotive and site purchase. But donations can also come in kind, e.g. from the railway companies. This year an Atlas road/rail digger was presented by NIR and the Irish Presidential Saloon and signalling equipment by Iarnród Éireann.

Driver training continues to be high on the agenda north and south. Plans are in hand for a few more weeks of training in the Dublin area after Easter. In the north, thanks to a generous HLF grant, it is hoped to have some of NIR's Driver Assessors trained as Steam Driver and Fireman Assessors.

Council, as always, strives to steer a true course through all the issues that arise during the year, not all strictly railway. For instance, to comply with legislation, a child protection course was recently held at which a number of members from Dublin and Whitehead attended. Around the same time a Society equality of opportunity policy was devised and put in place.

Our trains continue to be very well supported despite the state of the economy. But operations were affected to varying degrees during the year by a failure of No.4, extreme cold weather, Malahide viaduct collapse, NIR line relay closures and, depressingly, by civil unrest. Unfortunately, the NIR line closures are due to continue during 2010 and it may be some time before we can again reach Coleraine or Londonderry. However, south of the border one new route is open, one is about to open, and another is being laid. A major success was the HRA weekend in September and congratulations to members involved in its organisation.

The Belfast Welcome Centre continues to be the main outlet for northern ticket sales, providing an online booking facility. In Dublin most ticket sales are by post and our agents have changed to Oceanic Business Services in the city's Docklands.

A notable venture for the Society, but one in which the organisation is being undertaken by another museum, is the proposed transfer of Irish State Saloon 351 to the Netherlands in the coming year for a six-month stay at the Dutch Railway Museum in Utrecht.

Arising from 2008's Conservation Management Plan, a draft set of proposals to jointly develop railway heritage with the Downpatrick & County Down Railway and the Ulster Folk & Transport Museum were drawn up, and Council representatives have held the first meeting with both bodies with a view to coming to an agreement.

On the workshop front, a new fitter and two apprentices have been taken on during the year.

The Society's website continues to play a major part in the marketing of our trains. Informal surveys on recent Santa trains have shown that the website is used by a high proportion of passengers as a source of information. The facility whereby members of the public, i.e. not Society members, can submit their email addresses for publicity news releases was re-launched on the website in time for the Halloween

trains. The surveys referred to above also noted this service as a valuable contribution to marketing. There are around 500 addresses subscribed so far, with the number increasing daily.

During the year a significant number of back issues of Five Foot Three were added to the website. The intention is, as time permits, to have all back issues available.

The number of members receiving the email Bulletin continues to increase; it is approaching 700. The number of Bulletins sent is now over 1,000! As noted last year it is very difficult to get news items from the Dublin area and, hence the northern bias remains. That bias will always be there due to amount of work undertaken at Whitehead but that is not to say it could not be redressed to some extent and I would again appeal to Dublin members to get more involved with the provision of interesting submissions for publication.

What are the membership statistics, I hear you ask. Well, despite the recession, the numbers are very encouraging and I can only pay tribute to our members for their loyalty.

	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003
NI	413	411	399	391	386	380	379
RoI	403	403	387	380	375	375	388
GB	291	303	299	290	294	284	305
Overseas	30	31	35	34	35	32	38
Adult	653	679	688	676	685	696	748
Senior	350	339	298	289	275	247	227
Junior	21	19	33	29	31	24	28
Student	15	13	8	8	6	5	1
Family	21	19	14	15	14	21	25
Life	57	57	57	58	58	59	61
Societies	3	4	4	4	5	5	5
Honorary	17	18	18	16	16	15	15
Totals	1,137	1,148	1,120	1,095	1,090	1,071	1,110

And yes, we are getting older! Senior membership has increased by over 50% since 2003.

My report, as always, must finish by thanking all who have helped me, and the Society generally, throughout the year. Charles Friel continues to organise the very successful Belfast meetings. The current season is running in a new venue at Orangefield on Belfast's Castlereagh Road. The hall is brand new and, while smaller than St. Jude's, has proved to be very popular with those attending. The 5 minutes or so at the start of the evening, showing video and/or photographs of recent happenings, has become an established part of each meeting. It allows members to be kept informed and, perhaps, to develop an interest in becoming more involved. The sales stand at the back of the hall continues to provide a vast selection of books, magazines and DVDs both old and new. Not least is the opportunity for old acquaintances to have a chinwag every month.

The insurance market continues to remain stable and that has been reflected in our annual costs. However, they're still around £47,000!! My thanks to Karen McLaverty and Lesley Browne of Marsh for their on-going assistance. As reported above, Ashgrove House in Dun Laoghaire, have been replaced by Oceanic Business Services as the ticketing and phone answering service for Dublin-based operations.

Within the Society, the Posts of Special Responsibility to the Secretary for the year were: Charles Friel (Belfast Meetings); Johnny Glendinning (Museum Curator); Mark Kennedy (Curatorial Adviser); Philip Lockett (Web Manager); Ciaran McAteer helped with legal issues; Barry Carse, Dublin area membership queries; Nelson Poots ("Five Foot Three" Editor); Mary Glendinning kept an ear to the

answer-phone.

There are various sub-committees which help Council manage the Society's affairs, and to them our thanks. If you are not one for getting your hands dirty at Inchicore or Whitehead you might find your niche in one of the committees - why not give it a go?

Despite the grumbles we all might have at the way the railway companies operate, we could not do it without them. So finally, we must give our sincere thanks to the management and staff of Iarnród Éireann and Northern Ireland Railways.



The HRA award for the restoration of GNR(I) brake van No.81, alias "Ivan" (J. Glendinning)

LOCOMOTIVE REPORT

Peter Scott

My circumstances are slightly different this year, since at the end of August I retired from active service with Northern Ireland Railways. I looked forward with relish to my new life style, which I assumed would be characterised by leisurely detachment from the cares of the world. The only major decision should be what time, if any, to rise from my bed and saunter to the indoor heated pool - beside which I would partake of the first Bucks Fizz of the day and peruse the morning papers brought deferentially by my valet. And of course, there would be no excuse for delay in writing the Magazine Report which was always late and caused the Editor irritation. However, life isn't like that and I can assure anyone else approaching retirement that detachment from the world does not work and "leisurely" is not the term that would spring to mind!

So once again, the Editor is breathing down my neck for his Report. Also, I really intended to devise a new and revolutionary format - that failed too, so here it is more or less in the tradition of previous years:

Locomotive Position

No.3 “R.H. Smith”. LP&HC 0-6-0 loco. Downpatrick.

Previously I have described this engine as a “shunting loco” but it strikes me that this is fundamentally a misnomer. No.3, or “Harvey” as commonly known, has proved itself well capable of operating heavy trains in a main line and passenger environment. Two main line ballast contracts and passenger operations at Downpatrick have amply proved the loco’s capabilities. On the other hand, with a comfortable maximum speed of 15 mph, the loco is certainly not in Steam Enterprise league!

No.BG3. A Guinness, Son and Co 0-4-0ST shunting engine. In traffic, Whitehead.

In comparison, the Guinness Engine most certainly is for shunting duties - it could do with more wheels and a more convenient coal carrying arrangement. Whoever designed the cramped bunker inside the cab definitely never had to load coal into it.



The innocent-looking TPWS boxes seen here (and duplicated for bunker-first running) in the cab of No.4 give no idea of the vast amount of cabling and other items attached to them - or of the time and effort required to put them there. (P. Scott)

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

Most of the TPWS fitment was completed and the ‘First of class’ test done before the loco headed south for the Dublin Santa season. So, ironically, the new equipment has been of no use at all to date since only the NIR system requires it. Completion of associated equipment is to continue now that the loco has returned to Whitehead, with final commissioning prior to the first operations at Easter.

The difficulties of shedding a locomotive in Dublin have become increasingly apparent. We are greatly indebted to Iarnród Éireann for accommodation and assistance, and our thanks are due at all levels.

However, IÉ are running a modern high speed passenger railway where locomotive-hauled trains are becoming a thing of the past and the necessary facilities for detaching and servicing locomotives is a declining feature. We do not want to overstay our welcome and it is imperative that the Society finds suitable accommodation under its own control, with all the essentials for stabling, maintenance and servicing of steam locos, as a matter of urgency.

An irritating problem which particularly affects loco No.4 is damage to firebars. Severe clinking with melting and warping of the rocking bars has been a recent problem, much more in evidence now than when the loco was used in the 1970s and 1980s. Firebars are now being renewed far too frequently. Rocking bars from different sources have been tried without making any difference. Needless to say our coal sources are currently under scrutiny.

In spite of the above problem, No.4 is undoubtedly our most versatile locomotive and those who introduced the design back in the 1940s were blessed with wisdom and foresight. The railway has increasingly become a main line passenger operation with tight timetabling and little leeway for additional traffic, least of all steam trains with their special needs. What a pity we saved only one of these locos - could this deficiency even now be rectified?



Trial fitting of the new inner firebox plates for No.461, 10th August 2009. (C.P. Friel)

No.186. Ex GSWR 0-6-0 goods engine. In Traffic, Whitehead.

No.186 is getting her 'mid-life' re-tubing in January, together with some other minor repairs. Unusually, both operational main line engines (No.186 and No.4) require maintenance accommodation at Whitehead at the same time, and space is tight. The retubing was originally planned for November, but absence of the viaduct at Malahide caused the postponement. No.186 is in the Workshop (minus tender) and No.4 is in the loco shed where pit access is required for fitting of the remaining TPWS/AWS equipment.

No.186 encountered one of the most unusual problems that I can recall in RPSI history - as a result of

the unusually cold weather conditions experienced in late December. Upon arrival at Coleraine on the "Mince Pie" train on 27th December, the loco proceeded to the yard to turn, only to discover that the turntable siding was buried in ice (not snow) several inches thick. The wheels spun ineffectually and in fact derailment was feared. Clearly this Torville and Dean act was getting nowhere, and in the end the entire crew had to arm themselves with crowbars and shovels and literally hack their way through the ice.

We are so used to mild winters in Ireland that frost action is not normally a serious issue, involving only sensible precautions and keeping matters under review. This year has been dramatically different and hopefully nothing vital has been forgotten and left with water in it!



With No.461's inner firebox inverted and plates held by temporary bolts, Bob Skingle tackles the hot and noisy job of riveting. (C.P. Friel)

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

The major work on this locomotive has been the renewal of much of the firebox. The outer firebox has received new sides, throat plate and the lower part of door plate. The old platerwork showed all the classic consequences of many years' service - corrosion pitting, grooving at the foundation ring and cracks at the flange radii. The inner copper firebox had likewise suffered fire wasting and quilting, star cracking at stays and flange radius grooving. It has received new half sides and the lower part of the tube plate. The door plate has been completely renewed, doing away with the former firehole ring patch. The inner firebox has now been riveted up and fitted to the boiler; riveting of the foundation ring and the fitting of stays is now progressing. Mechanical refurbishment is well advanced; some additional work has been done to eccentrics and crossheads. Mechanical reassembly should be completed shortly.

No.85 “Merlin”. GNR(I) 4-4-0 compound express passenger loco. Dismantling and assessment, Whitehead.

A major item influencing the decision to select No.85 as our preferred next locomotive for traffic was the increased route availability recently agreed with Iarnród Éireann. The loco has now been cleared to operate to Mullingar, Limerick and Tralee - as well, of course, as the existing Belfast-Dublin and Cork main lines.

The first move is to carry out sufficient dismantling to establish the scope of repairs and hence the likely cost. The boiler has been lifted out of the frames, tubes removed and the interior cleaned out for inspection. Initial examination has not revealed any major unexpected problems. Mechanical assessment will proceed shortly.



The difference of gauge between Ireland and GB is apparent here. A little improvisation enabled the driving wheels from a North Eastern Loco Preservation Group 0-6-0 to be rolled into the workshop for tyre turning. (P. Scott)

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

General overhaul required.

No.131. Ex GNR(I) 4-4-0 express passenger loco. Partly dismantled awaiting overhaul, Whitehead.

Some preparatory work has been carried out and some major items have been acquired, e.g. copper plate and stay bar for firebox repairs.

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

Requires major repairs including renewal of cylinder block.

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

Requires major overhaul.

No.202. Ex GNR(I) 0-6-0 heavy goods loco. NIR York Road Works.

Before anyone sits up in amazement, asking where we managed to hide a GNRI SG3 “Big D” loco and when it is to appear at the head of a train, this is the 1½ inches to the foot cut-away model which used to grace the concourse at Great Victoria Street Station. Tragically, it was damaged in a bomb explosion but fortunately was not completely destroyed and has subsequently been restored under RPSI auspices. The engine section (i.e. without the tender) has already been on view at “Headhunters” Museum in Enniskillen. The tender, which had suffered most damage, took the longest time to repair but is now almost complete. NIR York Road Works joinery shop has constructed a display case, and so the loco with its tender is once again in a displayable condition. It will hopefully appear from time to time at locations appropriate to its real life career. Our thanks are due to Ian Campbell, NIR Fleet Engineer, for facilitating the display case.



The restored model SG3 in its impressive display case. (P. Scott)

Diesel Locomotives

No.1. Ex CSÉ Carlow Ruston and Hornsby diesel mechanical shunter.

In traffic as Whitehead shunter.

No.23. Ex Irish Shell “Planet” diesel mechanical shunter. In store, Whitehead.

Requires engine and gearbox overhaul.

Unilok ex UTA Road-Rail shunter. Transport Museum, Cultra.

The Unilok continues its servile existence at Cultra. This ungainly Cinderella of the locomotive world lives on the siding outside the Railway Gallery where its elders and betters recline in warmth and

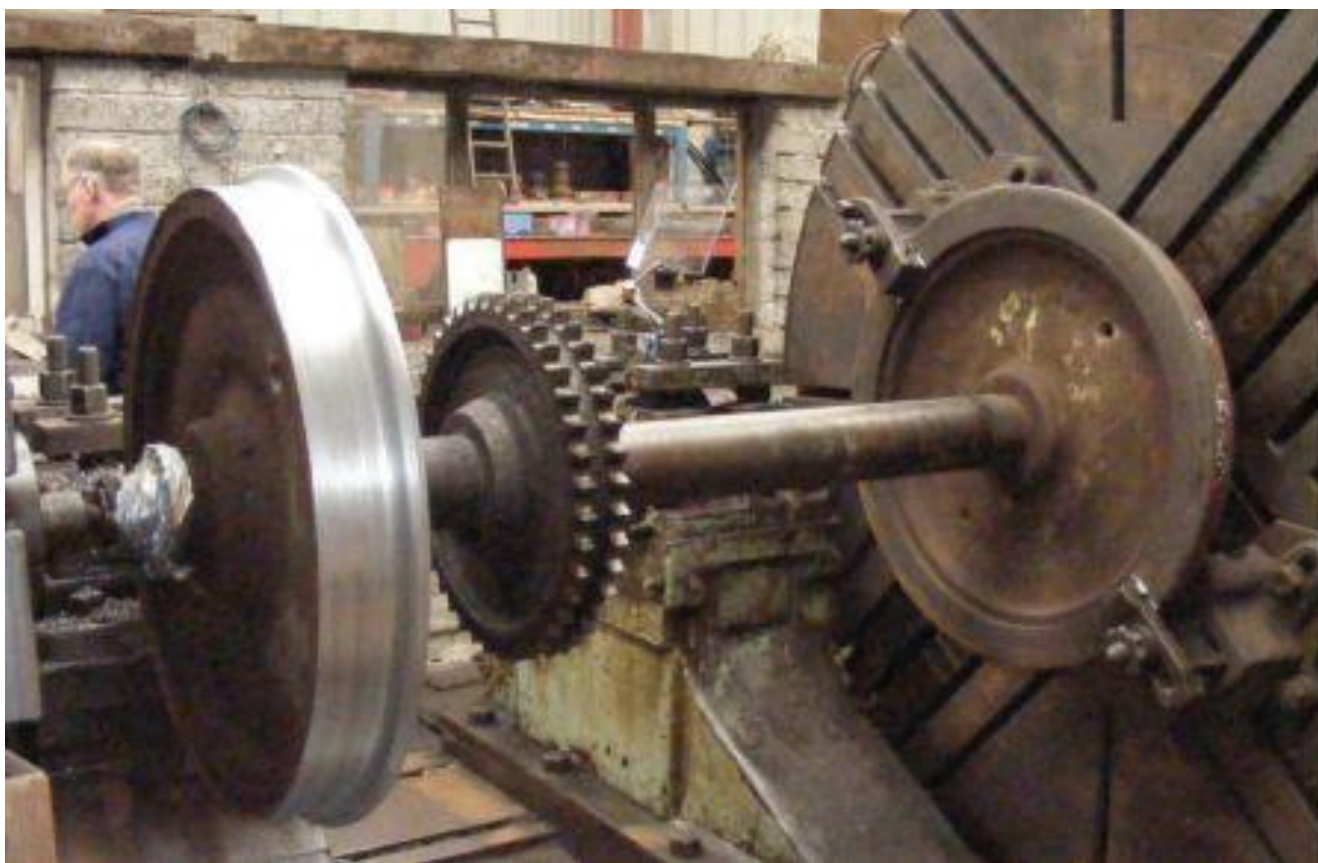
luxury, and only ventures into that august company when No.74 “Dunluce Castle” requires to be moved for a Museum function. The real Cinderella went to the Ball and met the Prince - Unilok might get an oil change and a coat of paint.

101 “Eagle”. Ex NIR Hunslet Bo-Bo diesel electric loco. Scrapped.

This loco was delivered to Whitehead some years ago as a cannibalised hulk. No interest was shown following advertisement that disposal was proposed, so the loco was sold for scrap after the removal of some remaining items appropriate to sister loco 102.

102 “Falcon”. Ex NIR Hunslet Bo-Bo diesel electric loco. In store, Whitehead.

The loco is basically intact. Some exploratory work has revealed that “top end” overhaul is necessary if the engine is to be started.



In recent times much of Brian Hill's spare time has been spent at the wheel lathe. Here a wheelset from one of Downpatrick Railway's G-class diesel locos is receiving attention. (C.P. Friel)

B141. IÉ General Motors Bo-Bo diesel electric locomotive. Inchicore.

The once extensive fleet of BGMs is now being rapidly phased out by Iarnród Éireann. Recognising the considerable interest in these locos, the Society agreed to the acquisition of B141 (the first of the class of double end GMs) - the funding coming from a private source. At the time of writing, the Society is taking the initiatory steps to set up a Diesel Loco section. As to the effect upon steam locomotive operation, the Society takes the view that involvement with main line diesel locos, although a “non-core” activity, can really only be complementary and not mutually exclusive. In the Preservation World the advent of diesels does not have to parallel the demise of steam!

As well as the primary benefactor, IÉ Chief Mechanical Engineer Phil Verster was instrumental in

facilitating the acquisition of the loco.

B142. IÉ General Motors Bo-Bo diesel electric locomotive. Inchicore.

Sister loco B142 has also been acquired by private funding. At the time of writing, both locos are being painted in the original black and tan livery.

Contract And Other Work

No.5 “Drumboe”. Ex CDRJC 2-6-4T loco. 3ft gauge.

Overhaul has progressed as a Workshop training exercise. The rear section of the main frame, which had suffered badly from corrosion (being under the footplate and bunker) has now been renewed and riveting nearly completed. The pony truck has likewise had corroded sections replaced. Dismantling of seized up working parts is continuing. I never cease to marvel at the sophisticated design of the Donegal locos in comparison with the main line locos dating from about the same time. Drumboe (built in 1907) has the 2-6-4T wheel arrangement, Walschaerts valve gear and balanced slide valves - it took the NCC until 1946 to catch up! (Doubtless I will provoke a storm of protest at this blasphemy - write to the Editor, not to me!)



As part of the continuing programme of bogie refurbishment, Mk2 coach 300 is lifted by the sheer-legs to have its old bogies rolled out. (C.P. Friel)

Carriage Work

Remedial work has been done to the bogies for vehicles 300, 301, and 302. The work included fitting wheelsets with heavier rims. The originals, which were the only ones available to us at the time the Mk2 vehicles were introduced, had wheels close to scrap size.

Brake equipment overhaul has been carried out for ex IÉ Mk2s 303 and 304. The electric heating on both these vehicles is being replaced by the Mk2 pressure ventilation system to make the vehicles compatible with the rest of the Mk2 train.

I would like to conclude by expressing my thanks to all who have helped in locomotive restoration and maintenance during the year, both in practical and organisational terms. This includes volunteers and full time staff, and also recognises the input from other Society Departments.

Now back to the Bucks Fizz!

LOCOMOTIVE RUNNING

James Friel

Coal is something that most people involved in our operations (including our passengers) seem to have an opinion on. I don't claim any specialist knowledge but some details may be of interest.

For the past few years the coal we have been burning from Whitehead came from Daw Mill in Nottinghamshire. This coal was of variable quality, and tended to break up into small parts about the size of peas and accumulate in the smokebox of whatever engine was burning it. Of more concern was the rather tenacious clinker, which had to be chipped off the firebars at the end of each run.

The coal of choice on the main line in England at the moment comes from Ayrshire. It promised to clinker less than the Daw Mill stuff, and was slightly cheaper. We had a load delivered and so far it seems to have performed well. Any clinker which does form doesn't adhere to the grate, which makes it easy and quick to remove. However, through some error we were sent a load which contained a lot of slack and small stuff, which tended to smother an otherwise well-burning fire. In future we are getting the coal washed and screened.

Once the coal has been purchased it needs to be loaded onto a locomotive, with one of our two vintage Muir Hill 2WL loading shovels. This came unstuck before one of the Steam and Jazz trains when shovel No.1 blew a hydraulic hose. Thanks are due to all who helped with the repairs to this venerable machine, which allowed the Steam and Jazz trains to go ahead.

The coal mentioned above is burned to boil water. During the year the supply at Lisburn was disconnected by NI Water as they replaced the water main on the North Circular Road; our thanks are due to the NIR station staff who ensured that the supply was reconnected. The recently reconditioned float valve on the Down tank at Lisburn has continued to operate satisfactorily. Once the Down tank is full, this valve stops filling the tank and allows the full mains pressure to supply the Up column.

Our thanks are also due to the station staff at Ballymena who ensure that the tanks there are filled for us before each trip. The tanks at Ballymena have not been serviced for a good few years and are in need of some work if they are to continue performing satisfactorily in future. Unfortunately, one of the tanks there was disconnected from its supply shortly before the "Mince Pies and Mulled Wine" train but I am pleased to report that moves are being made to reconnect it as soon as is feasible.

One particularly wet day in November an expedition reached Coleraine to service the turntable and check the status of the nearby hydrant. Both were found to be in order, but when the train arrived in late December the hydrant was found to be covered with two or three inches of ice, while the rails to the turntable were also covered in ice - something that had not been anticipated. However, after twenty minutes of enthusiastic shovelling both hydrant and turntable were de-iced and the operation could continue.

During the year an effort has been made to increase the frequency of boiler washouts so that no engine runs for more than 14 days before being washed out. The process has been refined so that even No.4's large boiler can be fully washed out and left ready for steaming within about nine hours. The single biggest improvement was the construction of a hose attachment which incorporates a valve to allow the water to be shut off, and interchangeable nozzles which makes for a much faster and thorough job than was previously possible.

Washing out removes mud and scale from a boiler but it cannot prevent internal corrosion. There are

now various boiler water treatments on the market that are applicable to steam locomotives which can reduce the amount of corrosion in the boiler to almost negligible amounts, and we are actively looking into introducing a system of treatment to our boilers.



*As far as is known, the Loco Running Officer found what he hoped for in Lisburn water tank.
(M. Walsh)*

These are the mileage figures for 2009:

Loco	Days in steam	Train miles	Light engine miles	Total loco miles	Total miles since last overhaul
4	26	2,669	130	2,799	27,158
186	19	1,974	130	2,104	13,561
3BG	21				
Total	66	4,643	260	4,903	

WHITEHEAD SITE REPORT

Dermot Mackie

This was an exceptionally varied year for our activities, spiced up by the arrival of some new kit and a couple of 'away' days. It started with the more mundane but essential job of re-roping the sheer-legs, ably assisted by Bill King-Wood and Alan McRobert. Then, in late January/early February, we had a scrap drive which included the old tanks from Drumboe. Saint Valentine's Day seemed as good as any for a shunter school and 5 new recruits graduated - with an engine in steam, a number of the operating grades were also assessed.

In early March, an RPSI team co-ordinated by Mark Walsh, visited Roscommon to collect a selection of redundant signalling gear kindly donated by Irish Rail. Two 40 ft trailers were filled with smaller items such as point rodding, bell cranks and pulley wheels and a Hiab lorry facilitated the removal of

poles, full gantries and the Claremorris gate ground frame. Later that month the fully refurbished sheer-legs were load tested and certified for 16 tonnes, and pot holes were filled in the lane with the help of John Wolsley, John Williams and the JCB.

NIR's very generous gift of the old Ballymena-based Atlas road/ rail excavator, was taken by low loader to Whitehead on Monday 30th March, after driver familiarisation training (see photo). On the following Saturday the machine was used to lift 4 heavy wheels onto a trailer for sale as boat anchors. The rest of the afternoon was spent making light work of transferring the mass of Roscommon signalling equipment from a flat wagon, which had to be returned to NIR. This job was made a lot easier with the help of Thomas Charters and Robin Morton. Since the arrival of the containers last year the organisation and cataloguing of Mk2 coach spares from Inchicore has been on-going and has been carefully done by Paul and Philip Newell. In addition, a 'new to us' air compressor, acquired courtesy of Selwyn Johnston, was delivered to Whitehead.



The Atlas machine, ready to leave Ballymena on 30th March 2009. (Adam Mackie)

The end of April brought the completion of the 3ft gauge "Burtonport extension" at the back of the Workshop. This allows Donegal-type rolling stock to be moved out of the way if large delivery lorries need access to the engineering works. Tram-type format with a sunken road and chairs, plus tie bars, was used as before. The Atlas machine, travelling on track wheels, was able to dismantle three 30ft track panels opposite the platform and stack the heavy concrete sleepers. Early in May, the Atlas was given a full service with a change of engine oil, oil and air filters and replacement fuses. In addition, the hydraulic leaks were fixed and all grease points filled, air lines cleaned and bled and the brakes checked. The machine was then used to transfer a range of heavy Hunslet spares from the dilapidated, wooden-floored, flat wagon R6 onto one of the 20 ton, steel floored, flat wagons recently acquired from NIR. This job was completed in a couple of hours, a task which previously would have taken a whole day using the hand crane and the Carlow diesel. May also saw the first application of weed killer to the site and then James Friel and myself made repairs to the large water tank at Lisburn in readiness for the Steam and Jazz season.

The summer months were very busy, with Thursday established as a regular day out on the site for the retired members. June saw Johnny Lockett starting at bush cutting at the side and back of the carriage shed where a veritable jungle had grown up over the years. The evening of the last Steam and Jazz left the outside carriage road vacant and allowed us to use the Atlas to clean back more of the water tower bank in preparation for the proposed blast-cleaning area. This job was completed in early July, from the No.1 shed road side using the Atlas to dig out the spoil and the JCB to carry it away. The area was then filled with new aggregate - some of which also found its way into the pot-holes of the laneway.

By this time the badly splayed front wheels of the JCB were causing major concern and it was decided to carry out a radical repair. The old brass king-pins were removed from each stub axle and fabulous new ones were skilfully machined by Bob Skingle and new track-rod ends bought. Weeds were sprayed again, which thankfully killed the notoriously stubborn mare's tails. The platform was also treated in time for the Summer Steam train rides and looked a lot tidier. About this time we had another scrap drive and a full ferrous skip was sent to the recyclers. Some major track repairs were carried out with a replacement of 6 concrete sleepers and a crossing timber, following a spread track. This was accomplished in August in only one and a half days, with no restrictions to weekend movements.



Part of the Mullanboys track re-laying team, Alan McRobert, Dermot Mackie and John Lockett, 3rd December 2009. (R. Morton)

In September we fixed the petrol engine which drives the water pump, so we could empty the pit at the sheer legs prior to a bogie swap for one of the coaches and the lifting of No.85's boiler. The repaired JCB made short work of filling a skip with ash, which was removed from the site, and contractors made an excellent job of re-roofing the stables in what, thankfully, turned out to be an Indian Summer.

Steelwork for the reinforced concrete base and retaining wall of the new blast area was prepared during October and November. The base was laid first and, in late November, we poured the concrete for the

retaining wall, with a full load being sufficient to create the base for a signal post at the Belfast end of the platform and to extend the carriage shed floor by 10 metres. The levelling of the latter would not have been possible without the strenuous efforts of Trevor Taylor and Geoff Moore.

For some time the poor condition of many of the timbers under the turnout at the Larne end of the platform road had given concern. With the approaching busy Santa operations, which use this several times a day to run the engine round a train, it was decided to use a complete track possession to carry out the urgent necessary repairs. In total, it took 4 complete working days to do the job, which entailed lifting of both crossovers as well as the removal of the old timbers. Seeing how easily they fell apart the Carriage & Wagon officer likened them to wet compost! Six very long timbers and three standard sleepers were replaced, the crossovers were lifted into place and, after careful alignment, the timbers were drilled and the track was finally bolted down on a very wet Thursday 19th (remember Cumbria). Whilst this task was greatly facilitated by the Atlas machine, special thanks are due to all those who worked so hard on this job, including the new 'boys' Gordon Hunt and Denis Campbell.



Treasurer Peter Marsden and recent bride Sylvia test the Wickham trolley on the newly-laid track at Mullanboys on 31st December 2009 - see Site Report. (C.P. Friel)

Finally, some months ago the track squad was approached to see if they would be willing to help in the re-laying of a short portion of the CDR Killybegs branch line at Mullanboys crossing. The crossing keeper's house was being tastefully restored and it was felt that replacement of the track on the site would allow a fitting, active, commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the closure of the line. The track bed was cleaned and prepared by local contractors and sleepers, flat-bottomed rails, fish plates, bolts and spikes were all acquired by CDR Restoration Ltd. It was then up to an RPSI track team, expanded by the addition of David Thompson and Ian Stewart to tackle the job of putting down the 80-odd yards of track. This represented the cutting, moving and laying of over 80 sleepers, shifting and

aligning and joining up 16 lengths of rails and drilling and hammering in over 320 spikes. The weather was kind, the local hospitality superb, and two days of hard work resulted in a positive local contribution to the railway preservation movement when it was completed on 3rd December. It is now planned to include runs on the track, using the recently restored Wickham petrol-powered trolley, on Thursday 31st December.

So there you have it - another action packed twelve months with plenty of variety and exercise in the great outdoors. Beats the gym any day and the craic is great!

NORTHERN OPERATIONS

Mervyn Darragh

The 2009 operating year was rather subdued in that, with track closure north of Ballymena and time needing to be set aside to fit Train Protection Warning System to No.4, destinations and availability were temporarily limited.

The operating year got off to a purposeful start with two full Easter Bunny trains to Whitehead, hauled by No.4 on Monday 13th April. Some consideration needs to be given as to whether a second day's operation could be viably operated.

The Irish Railway Heritage Weekend with sundry fringe activities took place between Thursday 7th and Tuesday 12th May. Besides the Carrowbeg International Steam Railtour to Westport, a diesel railtour, the Comeragh, operated to Waterford. The Heritage weekend catered for those who enjoy steam travel, have a leaning to diesel, or enjoy both.



No.4 arrives in sunny Castlebar with the Carrowbeg railtour, 9th May 2009. (C.P. Friel)

The Comeragh Railtour operated on Friday 8th May with a passenger complement of just over 200. On a showery day Irish Rail GM 078, still in orange and black livery, took the train from Dublin Connolly to Waterford via the Kilkenny line using the Lavistown Loop. There 141 and 171 from the rapidly

diminishing “Baby” GM class took the train to Dublin Heuston via Limerick Junction. A great day’s rail travel was had, with the train crews entering fully into the atmosphere of the day.

The Carrowbeg Railtour to Westport operated from Saturday 9th to Monday 11th May (two overnights), visiting Ballina on Sunday and returning to Dublin and Belfast on the Monday. The railtour took place in mostly sunny weather and was very successful. Irish Rail having only three steam drivers/firemen available unfortunately meant the tour had to be based around one locomotive, and versatile No.4 did an excellent job. Everything went to plan except that the Claremorris turntable failed to turn the locomotive, although it would spin with nothing on it. Plans are in hand with Irish Rail to remedy the problem.

The Tuesday wind-down saw a coach tour visit to the National Trust’s Patterson’s Spade Mill followed by a buffet lunch on board the Maid of Antrim before a cruise on somewhat choppy Lough Neagh in the Toome Bay area.



Catering team, Rita Henderson and Chris Bowman, with a gentleman whose presence would suggest a date in December. (C.P. Friel)

To facilitate the exchange of locomotives between Whitehead and Dublin a Strawberries and Steam operation was organised for Sunday 24th May at relatively short notice. This resulted in the loading being rather disappointing at a little over 50% occupancy. No.4 was in good steaming form and arrived in Dublin a little early. The return journey for No.186 was more challenging and the locomotive had to make an unscheduled stop at Lurgan to raise steam.

A charter operated on Saturday 30th May when around 100 American travel writers were whisked from Belfast Central to Cultra behind No.186. All were very surprised and delighted with their form of travel as they had been led to believe they would be travelling by railcar.

The Steam and Jazz trains, all with full complements of passengers, were worked to Portadown behind No.186 on four consecutive Fridays commencing on 12th June.

What is now turning out to be an annual summer steam excursion from Portadown to Bangor took place on Saturday 1st August. Unfortunately a delayed start off Portadown and a pre-planned arrangement to turn No.186 at Central Junction triangle during the Bangor lay over, meant a longer than scheduled day for the train crew. The train was full and all enjoyed the day.

A further locomotive exchange took place on Sunday 9th August. This was the last planned operation for a number of weeks and was to enable major inroads to be made into the continuing wiring and piping of No.4 towards TPWS commissioning. The train was sold out and evoked some of the atmosphere of previous Steam Enterprise excursions.

The Locomotive Department agreed to release No.4 to work the annual Country Comes to Town steam specials off Portadown on Saturday 19th September. This event and train operation continues to be supported by Translink, for which the Society is grateful. The locomotive and train were ready to depart Whitehead as planned but unfortunately a disturbance by miscreants at Lurgan meant that the line was temporarily closed on that date. Disappointed passengers had to obtain refunds from the ticket outlet. A lot of hard work carried out by people of good will in preparing the train was negated.



After penetrating the icy wastes surrounding Coleraine turntable on 27th December No.186 is ready for a delayed return to Ballymena - and the water that wasn't there! (J. Cassells)

No.4 had been granted permission by the Department of Regional Development to operate passenger trains until the end of June without commissioned TPWS. Knowing that the work was advancing rapidly, NIR arranged a temporary derogation extension with the DRD to 31st October. This coincided nicely with the Society programme, which enabled the Broomstick Belle train to run between Belfast Central and Whitehead. on the final permitted date.

Yet another locomotive exchange occurred on Sunday 22nd November - the collapsed Malahide viaduct having been repaired and reopened to traffic on 16th November - when No.4 headed to Dublin light

engine. A swift turn round saw the crew take No.186 north.

The normal December programme of Santa trains was operated. Tickets were all sold within three weeks of going on sale in early November. There were two trains to Lisburn from Portadown on Saturday 5th December, and two trains on each of the remaining operating days, 6th, 12th, 13th and 19th from Belfast Central to Whitehead, with a third working to Lisburn on both Sundays.

Being unable to work No.4 on passenger duties meant that the post-Christmas Mince Pie train to Dublin was replaced by a trip to Coleraine with No.186 on Sunday 27th December, a month which had progressively got colder, with snow prevalent towards the end. A combination of largely weather-related factors dictated that the return train departed late. It was known that at Ballymena the Down line water tank was inoperative, so on the outward journey water was taken from the Up line tank. At Coleraine, about 100 yards of frozen snow had to be removed with crowbars and shovels from the rails leading to the turntable. Meanwhile, in the bus yard, ice and snow led to difficulty in locating the hydrant there. In the event, it was decided that the locomotive had adequate water to take it back to Ballymena. Unfortunately, however, on arriving there it was found that the tank we had used that morning had failed to re-fill! An unscheduled stop subsequently had to be made to take water from a road hydrant adjacent to Antrim station. Some passengers who had time restrictions returned on a preceding service train but the bulk of passengers remained on board. A special word of appreciation to the train crew and Inspector for seeing the train safely returned to Whitehead.

No.4 finally returned, light engine, to Whitehead on Sunday 3rd January 2010. Plans are to have the locomotive's TPWS accepted by NIR for passenger traffic by early April 2010.

In conclusion, a word of thanks to Northern Ireland Railways for their continuing support and understanding. Special thanks too to the Locomotive and Carriage departments, our locomotive crews, dining car staff and coach steward team.

DUBLIN OPERATIONS

David Houston

Traditionally the first couple of months of the New Year have been quiet for the Dublin Area Operating Committee (DAOC), with short days and severe weather militating against any prospect of an early start to the running season. 2009 was different. Not only were we going to operate in the unpredictable January weather, but we were going to do an 'overnight' as well. In addition there would be a stock move from Whitehead to Dublin and back to fit in too - a Steam Enterprise in all but name.

But this was something special - it was not every month that we commemorated the retirement of one of our steam drivers, so the departure of Tony Renehan had to be marked in a special way. Gerry Mooney undertook the organisation of much of the fringe activity, and the remainder of the DAOC got working on the other aspects that have to be looked after to ensure a successful operation. The Belfast Area Operating Committee were involved too - preparation of loco, stock, and catering to mention but a few aspects. In many respects this was a May Tour event, but operating in the depths of winter.

The operation, named "The Top Link", entailed No.4 plus Whitehead Mark 2s working to Dublin Connolly on Friday 30th January, then Dublin to Cork on Saturday, with loco visiting Limerick Junction triangle en route, overnight in Cork, with a social event to say "Thank you" to Tony, back to Dublin on Sunday, service loco and stock, and then with Noel Playfair in charge, through to Whitehead. In a sentence the entire operation went like clockwork; a well-filled train, an excellent social evening in Cork, a faultless climb out of Cork on Sunday morning, and a drastically reduced stock of company detonators as befits a traditional railway send off. We were also delighted to have both Dick Fearn and Mal McGreevy as guests for the weekend.

The remainder of the operating year was practically routine in comparison, although in addition to the now standard operations to Mullingar at Easter and Halloween, plus the "Sea Breeze" season, we also

managed some charter work. Easter Monday saw the “Easter Eggspress” operate to Mullingar, with passengers participating in activities at Belvedere House as part of an ‘All In’ fare. Belvedere House also successfully marketed a local shuttle from Mullingar to Enfield and return for local folk, another indication of the growing relationship between the Society and this popular Co. Westmeath facility. Delays due to pathing problems on the Enfield shuttle led to a late return to Mullingar and a later than planned departure back to Dublin. However, No.186 was well up to the task and gave a spirited run home, recovering some of the lateness en route.



Tony Renehan had a noisy farewell here in January 2009 but this shot, showing the historic facade of Inchicore Works, was taken as No.4 returned the Carrowbeg tour to Dublin on 11th May. (C.P. Friel)

On Sunday 7th June we operated a Charter for Malahide Lions to Dundalk. The train, hauled by No.4, ran empty from Connolly to Malahide. The Cravens set was in use, and it was a pleasing sight to see No.4 depart Malahide in bright sunshine with a full train. Participants were given a bus tour of the Cooley Peninsula while we took local passengers from Dundalk to Drogheda and return before taking the Lions back to Malahide. The day was declared a great success, and the Lions have indicated that they would like to do something similar in 2010. Our member, and Lions stalwart, Joe Gunning was the driving force behind this operation.

The well-tried “Sea Breeze” formula has proved to be as popular as ever in 2009, with two excursions operating, one in June and one in July. We would have run more but other demands prevented this. There seems little doubt that a “Sea Breeze” could operate profitably once a month from May to September, if the resources were available. However, with just one ‘big’ loco currently available to cover the requirements of both Dublin and Belfast committees such a programme is not possible.

No.4’s final assignment of the Dublin Summer Season was on Sunday 2nd August when Dun

Laoghaire-Bray and return and Dun Laoghaire-Connolly and return shuttles operated to commemorate the 175th Anniversary of the opening of the Dublin and Kingstown Railway. Named the “Kingstown Special 1834-2009” the shuttles were chartered by Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council, and ran to capacity all day. From an estimate of the number of passengers carried, approximately 2,000, this event looks to have been the busiest day in the history of the Society in terms of passengers carried.



Dublin volunteer workers Stephen Cooke and Kevin Murphy look well pleased with themselves after their steam-raising turn at Westport on 11th May 2009. (C.P. Friel)

After this day of hectic activity No.4 moved north, and No.186 came south to cover the remainder of our Summer Season. On Sunday 23rd August we operated “The Greystones Experience” which comprised taking passengers from Connolly to Greystones, and then working forward to Wicklow with passengers who joined at Greystones. Unknown to us when the operation was planned, Greystones was hosting a street festival on that day, so not only were our Dublin passengers fully occupied while the train went on to Wicklow and back, but the organisers of the festival benefited from an unexpected train load of participants. What started out as a simple Dublin-Greystones-Wicklow and return operation turned into a great success for all concerned.

Sunday 13th September saw No.186 heading this time for Mullingar. The occasion was the Heritage Railway Association’s Autumn Meeting Weekend, and the Mullingar operation was our contribution. Royal / Presidential Saloon 351 was turned out specially and feedback suggested that HRA participants were suitably impressed. Belvedere House were involved too, with some participants taking lunch and a tour there while No.186 did the fill-in shuttle to Enfield and return. Pathing difficulties arose again, and some late running ensued, but overall the day was deemed most successful.

The final operation of the Dublin Summer Season was a Halloween “Ghost Train” from Connolly to Mullingar and return, with Belvedere House involvement. Yet again pathing issues arose, exacerbated

by poor adhesion - it was the 'leaf fall season' after all - and some late running was again a feature. There were some anxious moments too when the water supply at Mullingar station was cut off due to a serious leak. However an additional stop at Enfield on the return journey got over this problem as far as No.186 was concerned, but the toilets on board remained dry!

And then there was the Santa season. This year the season was reduced to 13 trains instead of 18 as had been the norm in recent years. Whilst all trains were filled to capacity, the current economic climate seemed to have an effect, as there were a number of instances where large block bookings were made, only to revert at a later date to advise that the anticipated numbers taking up tickets were substantially less than expected. A very long waiting list was then worked on. This resulted in many grateful passengers who thought that they had left booking too late to travel.



With the return working of the "Greystones Experience" on 23rd August 2009, No.186 is seen on the scenic section around Bray Head. (C.P. Friel)

Our passengers would probably have, in the main, been unaware of a big problem which was only resolved in the days before our first scheduled operation. This was of course, the issue of Malahide viaduct, and its reopening in time for No.4 to come south to be in position for the start of the season. The DAOC deliberated long and hard on what options were available should the line not be reopened in time. These ranged from running more but shorter trains, hauled by No.186, to diesel hauled trains; cancellation wasn't seriously considered at any stage. In the event all went well and No.4 arrived back light in Dublin on Sunday 22nd November with No.186 going north. At this point it is appropriate to record sincere thanks to Iarnród Éireann for all the assistance they gave us as we faced and overcame this particular problem. The Season provided a 'first' in that one day's operations were all diesel hauled. No.4 had developed boiler problems at the end of operations on Saturday 12th December, and could not be made available for the following day's trains. IÉ kindly provided a class 201 locomotive,

actually NIR's 8208, an unusual choice for the Maynooth line, and unique on a Santa train. Despite the best efforts of 8208's crew to fill the void left by the absence of No.4, there was definitely something missing! One big concern was how our passengers would react to the absence of steam, but we were greatly relieved to find them almost entirely understanding of the situation. As many passengers as possible had been made aware of the problem before the train reached the platform, and the almost universal reaction was: "We don't mind what hauls the train as long as Santa is on board"! Food for thought for future Santa seasons, maybe. Due to the efforts of Peter Scott and his team from Whitehead, assisted by our Dublin locomotive department, No.4 was repaired and available for the final day's operation on 19th December.

Overall the year's operations must be judged as a success. If this can be measured by the fact that Malahide Lions, Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council and the Greystones Festival Committee want to do it all again in 2010, then we must be doing something right. None of the year's success could have been achieved without the on-going co-operation, advice and assistance of Iarnród Éireann staff at so many levels. To all we express our sincere thanks. The hard work of all Committee members and their teams, and the loyalty of our passengers were, of course, also key to the success. All of this was achieved against the background of changing our administrative support provider during the year, a potentially disruptive move, but most capably managed by 'all-rounder' David Humphries. To all I say a very sincere 'Thank You'.

THE GS&WR AT THE TURN OF THE CENTURY (PART 2)

Alan O'Rourke

Turning to the working timetable, the first thing that strikes one compared to current railway operation, is the great number of goods trains which, being loose-coupled and very slow, tended to run in the hours of darkness to avoid delaying passenger services, and were subject to many footnotes about being shunted to allow passing of passenger trains. Between 7pm and 3:45am the following morning, Kingsbridge despatched such services to Athlone, Nenagh, Tullow, two to Thurles, Limerick (via the Junction), Waterford (via Carlow), and two "fast Cork goods" which, by omitting many of the smaller stations, managed the run in about ten hours. There was also a range of local goods trains, such as a 10am Limerick Junction to Cork. This was typically slow - seven and a half hours for just under 60 miles but, as with many such local goods services, this included a good deal of station work, in this case seven stops totalling over four hours shunting and including being held to allow passenger trains to overtake.

There was also a complex system of conditional stops, described in the footnotes. For example, the Nenagh goods might be stopped at Monasterevan or Mountrath if those stations had any traffic for stations beyond Ballybrophy. Another long slow odyssey was the 1:55pm Thurles to Cork goods, arriving there at 10:15pm. The railways still of course carried much livestock and on Tuesday empty cattle trains ran to Nenagh, Kilkenny and Clara, returning with stock on Wednesday and running through to the North Wall. Tullow had a similar empty train down on Wednesday morning, returning at noon. Likewise, Cork had a clutch of goods trains departing from about 8pm until 8am to Dublin (two "fast services"), Waterford (via Dungarvan), Limerick (via Croom), Tralee (two trains each night), Lismore, Thurles, Newmarket and Limerick Junction, with corresponding return workings. The night goods Cork-Tralee also conveyed the mails.

Between Kingsbridge and Cork, there were no fewer than 27 intermediate stations, although some had a very modest service. Lisduff had just one booked down passenger train, plus two by request ("CR"), with two up booked and two request services; one goods daily each way; and one Sunday passenger service each way. Although Inchicore does not appear at all in the down table, most up passenger trains are shown as calling there and it was also used as an interchange for two local trains to the North Wall. The premier passenger trains were of course the day mails. The down train started from Kingstown in

connection with the Holyhead steamships at 5:37am, had a twenty minute halt at Kingsbridge to get its energy up, and then ran to Cork in five minutes under four hours, serving only Maryboro', Ballybrophy, Limerick Junction and Mallow. The up service was at 3:30pm from Cork, same timing, but omitted the Ballybrophy stop, and went through to the North Wall, but with a connection to Kingstown Pier.



GSWR 4-4-0 No.325 takes water at Mallow while working the Queenstown-Kingstown train on 26th July 1914. Transatlantic passengers could reduce the time taken to reach London by leaving their liner at present-day Cobh and taking this train to Dun Laoghaire, then onward by steamer and train via Holyhead. (Ken Nunn, LCGB collection / C.P. Friel)

There were also the American Mail specials but, because of the unpredictable timing of trans-Atlantic liners, and the state of the tides at Queenstown, the up specials might turn up at short notice, and were expected to run from Queenstown to Islandbridge Junction in four hours. All other trains had to shunt to give them priority, except the up day mail, which, if it could be achieved without undue delay, the American mail could overtake at either Limerick Junction or Kildare. The down train was less of a moveable feast, running on Thursday and Sunday mornings at 3:05am from the North Wall, through to arrive at Queenstown at 7:15am, with stops (presumably for locomotive rather than traffic purposes) at only Portarlinton and Limerick Junction. The night mails were quite different affairs, only really suitable for insomniacs. The down service was at 8:35pm from Kingsbridge, all stations to Limerick Junction except Lisduff and Dundrum, then Killmallock, Charleville and Mallow, arriving Cork at 2:50am. The up service was at 10:06pm from Cork, a slightly different pattern of fourteen stops (plus Hazlebach on Thursdays only!) to reach Kingsbridge at 4:10am. This unbalanced set of timings seems to have been to allow exchanges with the Waterford and Limerick line night mails at the Junction, with all four trains passing through between 12:12am and 12:54am.

The only other through mainline services in the down direction were 9:15am from Kingsbridge (starting from the North Wall at 7:50am), a sort of semi-fast, but stopping at several small stations between Ballybrophy and Killmallock, reaching Cork at 2:16pm; 4pm, which ran non-stop to Thurles, but was thereafter rather pedestrian, reaching Cork at 8:10pm; and the 6:20pm, another train that began

a bit earlier at the North Wall, and called all stations from Portarlington except Emly, Mourne Abbey and Rathduff, depositing its passengers at Cork at 11:25pm. Up from Cork, there were the following trains: 6am slow, Kingsbridge 11:35am; 9:30am, very slow, Kingsbridge 4:40pm; 12:30pm, a semi-fast, Kingsbridge 5:45pm; and 5:10pm, Mourne Abbey and all stations Mallow-Portarlington, supposed to reach Kingsbridge at 10:45pm, but in practice one suspects often late as it was entailed by a long list of potential request stops to set down.



*Later, in the GSR era, B2 4-6-0 No.409 with a down empty cattle train near Newbridge.
(R.M. Arnold / C.P. Friel)*

The service was not quite as bleak as it might seem, as there were various short and local workings: 8:40am Kingsbridge-Ballybrophy; 8am Templemore to Cork; 12:45pm Kingsbridge-Limerick Junction; 3pm Kingsbridge-Thurles; 3:06pm Ballybrophy-Kingsbridge, 4:55pm Thurles-Kingsbridge (the table suggests this may even have been through from Clonmel via the Southern Railway) and 5:40pm Limerick Junction to Thurles. There were also local trains from Kingsbridge to Sallins at 11am and Kildare at 4:10pm and 11:30pm, the last passenger departure of the day. How these got back is not so clear, although there were two odd little Kildare-Sallins locals, providing connections into up Tullow branch trains. At the other end, there was a daily Mallow-Cork and back local. So, although the GSWR never consciously developed a suburban network like DSER or the GNR, the combined mainline and local trains (Tullow, Athlone, and Waterford at the north end; Fermoy, Tralee and Waterford at the south) produced quite a frequent service. Thus, Kildare had ten down arrivals between 9:33am and 12:30am the following morning, and ten up departures between 8:25am and 9:10pm. Mallow managed ten down departures between 8:10am and 2:5am and nine up arrivals between 6:40am and 10:48pm.

The North Wall line had a complex service of MGW and GSW transfer goods services, empty stock and light engine manoeuvres, but in addition to the Kingstown boat trains, the GSW provided two daily passenger workings each way between Kingsbridge and the LNWR depot there, and there were two

additional connections off mainline up trains at Inchicore, to the North Wall, which avoided the reversal at Islandbridge Junction.

The Waterford line was complicated by the existence of duplicate routes to Kilkenny, via Carlow and Abbeyleix. The overall pattern was four passenger and a goods each way between Kildare and Kilkenny; three passenger and one goods on the Abbeyleix line; and four passenger and two goods each way Kilkenny to Waterford. Duplicate connections off mainline trains tended to be provided at Kildare and Maryboro' meeting at Kilkenny, where the Maryboro' train tended to provide the through service to Waterford. The best service was provided by the 6:40am. mail ex-Kingsbridge. One could either enjoy the excitement of being "slipped" at Kildare, or, for the faint hearted, a genteel 17 minute connection at Maryboro', reaching Waterford at 10:12 regardless of choice. The 9:15am down also provided duplicate connections, reaching Waterford at 1:11pm. A 2:15pm was provided from Kingsbridge to Kilkenny. It called at all stations to Kildare, where it took connection from the 3pm ex-Kingsbridge, which was non-stop. The latter train also provided a link into the 4:35pm ex-Maryboro', and Waterford was reached at 6:57pm.

The Carlow line, however had the status of Waterford's only through service from the capital: 6:30pm ex-Kingsbridge, arriving at 10:23pm. On Wednesdays and Saturdays only the overnight goods via Carlow also provided an early morning mixed, 7:20am Kilkenny to Waterford. Up services did not connect as well at Kilkenny. Thus, there was a 7:35am Kilkenny through to Kingsbridge, leaving 45 minutes before the Waterford train arrived, which provided a rather slow 4 hour 20 minute journey to Kingsbridge via Maryboro'. The through train was 10:8am ex-Waterford, via Carlow reaching Dublin at 2:23pm. The mail left at 3:40pm, with arrivals in Dublin of 7:25 (change at Maryboro') or 7:10 (change at Kilkenny and Kildare). Finally, 6:15pm ex-Waterford arriving in Kingsbridge at 10:22 (one change in Kilkenny) or 10:45pm (via Maryboro'). All services on the branch were all stations except the 6:30pm ex-Kingsbridge, which omitted Bennett's Bridge. Goods services were: noon Maryboro' to Waterford (up train at 4pm); one overnight goods each way Waterford-Kingsbridge via Carlow; and a nocturnal mail goods Kingsbridge to Kilkenny, returning the following evening as a plain goods.

Two branches were associated with the Waterford lines and both appear worked as "one engine in steam". The one time "Bagenalstown & Wexford Railway" had two passenger and one mixed each way, although the passenger only trains weren't any faster, and the main factor was the gradient: the 20¼ miles down to Ballywilliam took about 45 minutes; the slog back an hour and a quarter. The timetable also provided an early morning train to Borris and back. Connections to Kilkenny and Waterford at Bagenalstown were very fair. The Mountmellick branch had two mixed and two passenger trains each way, with a running time of about 20 minutes. Connections to Dublin were good, Cork fair and Waterford non-existent.

The Limerick-Waterford line is an example of how the mighty are fallen, for only in recent years has there been a restoration of the sort of services it enjoyed before the "Emergency". In 1901, down services were provided at 8:20am (mail), 11:15am (mixed), 4pm (mail) and 11pm (mixed mail). Up from Waterford, trains ran at: 6:45am, 10:20am, 2.35pm (all passenger only), 6:30pm (mixed) and 9pm (mixed mail). Times ranged from 3 hours 7 minutes to 4 hours 50 minutes. The extra "up" train was balanced by the 1:30pm express goods ex Limerick, serving the New Milford steamer. It reached Waterford in the very commendable time of 3 hours 10 minutes and was the only train on the whole line to avoid the dance at Limerick Junction, dashing the 24¾ miles to Tipperary in 50 minutes. There were also two local services to the Junction: 7am and 5:25pm ex-Limerick, returning at 9:25am and 6:25pm.

East of the Junction, all trains called all stations except Grange, which had three booked up trains, but only one down, plus one "flag" for cross-channel passengers only. West of the Junction a rather complex pattern of stops applied, including some solely available to those travelling beyond the great

crossroads. Pallas was the most favoured station with four down and six up passenger services, but Killonan had only one each way. Two ordinary goods trains were provided each way, plus an extra down service on Saturday night, returning on the Sunday evening. On Wednesday and Saturday only a local goods was provided from Waterford at 5am to Clonmel, returning as a mixed at 8:30am.



WLWR No.20 “Galtee More” arrives at Limerick with a goods train on 3rd September 1900. (Ken Nunn, LCGB collection / C.P. Friel)

The 70 mile North Kerry line (Limerick-Tralee) had a fairly predictable service of three passenger services, and a pick-up goods, which was mixed between Tralee and Listowel only.

	Mixed mail	Goods	Mail	Passenger
Limerick (d)	4:50am	8:00am	10:15am	6:10pm
Tralee (a)	9:00am	5:30pm	1:30pm	9:40pm
	Passenger	Mail	Goods	Mixed mail
Tralee (d)	6:10am	Noon	2:30pm	7:00pm
Limerick (a)	9:30am	3:10pm	9:00pm	10:40pm

A locomotive based at Foynes worked three passenger and one mixed train each way, running time a little over 20 minutes for 9½ miles, providing alternative connections into up and down trains, and one based at Tralee worked two passenger and one mixed each way to Fenit, running time about 20 minutes.

Considering the poverty of the country it traversed, the Limerick-Sligo line had a surprising frequency of slow trains, with 27 passenger stations on its 144½ mile route (excluding Ballysodare on the Midland). Two through trains were provided daily, with a running time of about 7 hours: 7:30am and 10:12am ex Limerick; 8:50am and 12:30pm ex Sligo. Up to 44 minutes were spent waiting MGWR connections at Athenry and Claremorris. One through goods was also provided each way, taking about

14 hours. Between Limerick and Ennis local trains were run at: 2:30am (!) mixed mail; 1:45pm passenger and 7:20pm passenger. Ennis sent back a passenger at 8:30am, a goods at 4:10pm and a mixed mail at 8:30pm. Including the Tuam services, the citizens of Clare's county town thus had five useful return passenger services to Limerick. Other short workings were: 7:30am Tuam-Sligo passenger; 5:30pm Athenry-Tuam passenger (extended to Claremorris on Wednesday & Saturday only); 4:40pm Limerick-Tuam mixed; 9:40am Tuam-Limerick passenger; 2:50pm Athenry-Tuam mail; 5:10pm Sligo-Tuam passenger; 6:30pm Claremorris-Tuam (Wednesday & Saturday only, no connection further south). On Saturdays only a local passenger train was dispatched at 8:30am from Tuam to Milltown, returning at 9am. On Tuam fair days, an extra early morning train to Athenry was also provided in addition to the regular four services between Athenry and Tuam. Finally, we must not forget Joseph Tatlow's consolation prize: the MGWR's daily goods between Athenry and Limerick and back.



GSWR 0-6-0 No.121 on a Tralee-Limerick goods approaches Listowel on 31st May 1924. Part of the monorail track to Ballybunion, closed in October that year, can be seen on the right. (Ken Nunn, LCGB collection / C.P. Friel)

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[To be concluded...]

THE CRAVEN CHRONICLES

Niall Kelly

When the RPSI was formed, the most modern Irish carriages were the CIÉ Cravens. Cravens Limited, a

Sheffield-based firm had been awarded the £500,000 contract to supply new coaches to CIÉ in 1962, having competed with other British and continental companies for it. The first ten carriages (1504-13) were delivered largely complete in 1963, with thirty more (1514-43) coming in 1964, followed by another fourteen (1544-58) in 1966. It was originally intended to buy seventy of the type, but the last sixteen were never built. With the exception of the first ten vehicles, all were assembled at CIÉ's Inchicore works in Dublin from kits of parts supplied by Cravens, allowing the craft of coach building to continue at Inchicore. Interestingly, an article in the Irish Independent around the time the order was made suggests that Limerick was also considered as a possible assembly location in addition to Inchicore, although ultimately this did not come to pass. Cravens Ltd had actually supplied carriages to Ireland before; the Dublin, Wicklow and Wexford Railway bought vehicles from them in the 1870s.

These vehicles arguably represent a turning point between the old and the new in terms of Irish carriages. The Cravens were the last Irish vehicles to employ steam heating, yet were also innovative in a number of ways. They were the first Irish carriages to use the then new B4 bogies, which would also be used on Mk2 stock. Construction was of semi-integral construction. The newspaper correspondents who were invited on a trial run between Dublin and Kildare on 2nd April 1963 were well impressed by the new internal features, which included fluorescent lighting along the ceiling and self-closing, spring-loaded doors. An Irish Times reporter praised the smooth ride quality of the carriages, noting that even at 65 mph, "it was possible to balance an English three penny bit on its edge on the tables in the carriages". Another highlight of the carriages was a sign that lit up to indicate whether or not the toilets were engaged. The aforementioned reporter noted that this would spare passengers "fruitless walks" to occupied toilets. For those interested, upholstery was originally of a speckled blue-grey colour, replaced in later years by a blue-red pattern.

As mentioned earlier, the vehicles undertook a press run on 2nd April 1963. They entered revenue-earning service on the 18:30 Dublin to Cork service on 10th April 1963. In January 1965 a set of Cravens took part in speed trials with a pair of General Motors 141 class locomotives between Dublin and Cork, with greatly improved journey times being accomplished. Although the use of steam had finished on CIÉ by the time of their introduction, there is at least one report of one being hauled by UTA steam locomotives on cross-border services: J. Cassells' article in Five Foot Three No.55 mentions one being in the make-up of the 9:15 Dublin-Belfast service one Saturday in February 1965.

In the years that followed, the Cravens would go on to see use on all corners of the CIÉ passenger network. They would have often operated with other carriage types, such as the Laminates and Park Royals, examples of which also exist in the Society's collection. A few Cravens were fitted out with first class accommodation in the 1970s; these were renumbered in the 11xx series as follows, their original numbers in brackets: 1147 (1551), 1148 (1547), 1149 (1558) and 1150 (1548). The first two are recorded as being converted back in to standards in 1973 and 1974 respectively, although 1547 would become a first for a second time in 1980. On this occasion it became 1151, lasting as such until 1985. 1149 and 1150 reverted to standards in 1984. All such vehicles regained their original numbers upon conversion back to standard class. Thanks are due to Stephen Hirsch for this information.

One other variation worthy of mention was 1543, which for a period ran with an experimental type of bogie made by Linke Hoffman Busch; this is featured in Barry Carse's article on the Cravens in the October 2006 IRRS Journal. The October 1982 IRRS Journal also notes this vehicle has been fitted with lead weights to resolve the problem of 'hunting' when travelling on CWR sections.

As built, the Cravens had no catering vehicles. They often operated with one of the 1950s built 24xx series catering cars to provide such facilities, one of which 2421 is still active in the Society's heritage set. However, some vehicles were eventually converted to provide catering facilities; 1518 was fitted with a counter around 1986; 1520 appears to have been similarly modified. These two vehicles are recorded in the April 1991 newsletter of the Irish Traction Group as having been converted back to

standards. In their place 1508 and 1509 were fitted with catering facilities, although 1509's tenure as a catering vehicle did not last long before being derailed on the south Wexford line at Belview in 1993, which ultimately resulted in it being withdrawn.

Gradually, the carriages were displaced from premier duties by newer Mk2 and Mk3 type stock. However, they worked Dublin outer suburban trains into the twenty-first century, to places varying from Arklow, Athlone, Dundalk and Longford. They could also be found on local services out of Cork, Tralee and Limerick, as well as the Ballina branch and the Rosslare Europort to Limerick route. Friday only auxiliary services, such as that to Sligo, also saw the use of Cravens.



***Beautifully renovated interior - the “convenience” signs can be seen on the end panels.
(T. O’Shaughnessy)***

The Cravens could also be found in use on trains serving special events. These included GAA matches, music concerts and Knock pilgrimages. A table in the February 1988 IRRS Journal records no less than 36 Cravens departing Cork in just over an hour on various specials following a U2 concert in that city on the night of 8th August 1987. One of the last trains to Midleton before closure (recently reopened, will they visit it again?) was a GAA special on St. Patrick’s Day 1988 operated by these coaches. The coaches were also popular on enthusiast specials, which saw them visit all corners of the NIR network as well. Some may be interested to know that a set of Cravens was used in the short film “Six Shooter”, which stars Brendan Gleeson. Shot on the South Wexford line in 2004, many of the scenes take place inside one of these carriages. Indeed, those who know their Cravens well should be able to spot some continuity errors!

Train sizes could vary dramatically, some Limerick area services used a humble one Craven and a van. The Fridays Only, Sligo service could be made up of nine Cravens and two vans, while some GAA specials were known to be made up of a staggering twelve Cravens and two vans! This would give a

seating capacity of 768; higher figures have been recorded counting standees. Such a feat is unlikely to be repeated with modern railcar stock.

During the 2000s, the arrival of new 2900 class commuter railcars saw the Cravens displaced from their remaining Dublin area duties. In turn the migration of most 2600 and 2700 class railcars from the Dublin area allowed the Cravens to be gradually replaced in other areas also. The arrival of the new Mk4 carriages allowed Iarnród Éireann to gradually withdraw the Cravens from service during 2006, the remaining Intercity duties being taken over by displaced Mk2 stock. The final examples came out of service in December of that year. However, the Cravens story was far from over.



1541 in company service in 1983. (T. O'Shaughnessy)

Just as IÉ was withdrawing the Cravens from traffic, the RPSI began efforts to secure a set for preservation. This was made possible by a generous donation from a syndicate of members. Of course, the Society was no stranger to these carriages; one is recorded as having being used on the Fenit leg of the “North Kerry” Railtour as early as 1972. They had been used on the RPSI's Belfast and Cork line excursions since the late 1980s. 1529, 1539 and 1541 were acquired in early 2006. These coaches soon found themselves operating with the heritage set, covering for other vehicles then receiving attention. 1529 and 1539 received a temporary coat of lime green below the waist to distinguish them from vehicles still in service with IÉ. That summer saw an unusual combination of both RPSI owned Cravens operating with IÉ owned ones on a special trip to Foxford commemorating the centenary of Irish Land League founder Michael Davitt. Interestingly, the last time an IÉ owned Craven operated occurred on the Pearse-Maynooth ‘Santa Specials’ on 16th December 2006 - it was hired by the Society to cover for an unavailable preserved carriage.

Meanwhile work started on refurbishing the bodywork of 1541, while 1539 had her lime green replaced with a darker shade to help it better fit in with the CIÉ liveried heritage set. The aluminium construction of these vehicles has proved a blessing, as it makes them free of the corrosion that had

plagued other vehicles. By the end of 2006 1541 had received a grey undercoat in the Ramps shop at Inchicore. A new RPSI livery was introduced. It consists of Caledonian blue, with yellow lining. With the Society already possessing two rakes of carriages in green liveries, this blue livery will add a bit of variety and distinguish the two Dublin-based sets. In service, the Cravens only ever carried two variants on the black and orange livery and IÉ are keen that the Society has its own distinct image. So eventually, Dublin will have both a 'green train' and a 'blue train'!

Various issues meant that work on the repaint had to be put on hold during 2007, although that year did see the vestibules transformed from a rather dull grey livery to a much more inviting blue and cream scheme; a combination which tends to fare far better indoors than outdoors! Early 2007 also saw the acquisition of several more carriages, 1505, 1506, 1508, 1514, 1522, 1523 and 1532. 1505/06/08 are from the Sheffield-built 1963 batch, all others were assembled from parts at Inchicore in 1964. Interestingly, the fourth edition of "Irish Railways, Traction and Travel" lists 1514 and 1522 as being once wired to operate as part of AEC railcar sets. Also acquired were two BR steam heat generator vans, 3173 and 3185. At the same time efforts were made to salvage spare parts from the vast amount of Cravens (and later Mk2 stock) awaiting scrapping; everything from seat cushions to brake blocks were acquired in the process.



1529 in its coat of many colours at Dublin Connolly. (T. O'Shaughnessy)

Meanwhile 1539 continued to operate in the heritage set. May 2007 saw 1522 and van 3173 transfer to our Mullingar base for refurbishment. Some work managed to be done replacing rivets in several panels on 1541. The latter half of 2007 saw a successful trial fitting of a cistern to the toilets in this carriage, as the old victory valve system had proven troublesome in the past. This modification was later undertaken on the remaining carriages. The crew also returned their attentions to getting the set operational; work being done on brakes and electrics.

In 2008 it was announced that the Cravens would be needed for an excursion to Dundalk in September. Work to return them to service was speeded up. The maintenance crew busied themselves in getting

this done. The bodywork restoration team returned their attentions to finishing 1541, by now in the wagon shop at Inchicore. Many hours were put in rubbing down and sanding panels to ensure the smoothest finish possible. The finish itself was greatly enhanced by the acquisition of a paint spray machine. Meanwhile the cleaning crew set to work making the carriages presentable. A temporary bar was fitted to 1508 - we couldn't have our customers go thirsty could we!

The Dundalk trip on 28th September grew nearer. With one week to go, 1541 emerged from the wagon shop resplendent in her new RPSI blue livery, proudly bearing the Society crest, the first vehicle to do so in fact. During the week she transferred to Dundalk with some of our heritage vehicles for display, despite going missing along the way, only to be found on the Navan branch at Drogheda! On Saturday evening, 27th September, for the first time since late 2006, a full set of Cravens departed Inchicore for Connolly at 19:00 behind IE diesel loco 082, itself in a new livery developed since the Craven's retirement. The next day saw their first public RPSI excursion to Dundalk and Drogheda, part of a special event marking the fiftieth anniversary of the closure of the GNR(I) works at Dundalk. It was a proud day for all involved.



Nearly there - 1541, spray-painted in blue, in Inchicore. (T. O'Shaughnessy)

During 2009, the Cravens saw their first intensive period of RPSI service. The coaches operated the May tour to Westport and Ballina. The "Sea Breeze" excursion on 21st June saw the first visit of the coaches to the new station at Rosslare Europort. Dundalk and Mullingar were also visited during the season. April had seen the return of Dining car 1522, superbly refurbished by our Mullingar team. This allowed the former cafeteria area in 1508 to serve as a souvenir shop. Bar car 1514 is now at Mullingar for refurbishment. Meanwhile at Inchicore the team set to work on restoring and repainting the bodywork on 1523.

At the moment, all Cravens except 1506, 1514 and 1529 are serviceable. As mentioned above, 1514 is under overhaul at Mullingar. 1506 is awaiting attention to its brakes. This just leaves 1529, which is

unlikely to return to service in the immediate future and is used as a source of spare parts for the rest of the fleet. It also serves as the Inchicore RPSI crew quarters.

Along with the heritage set, the Cravens are the only vacuum-braked passenger set on the IÉ network. The demise of the Mk3 fleet has seen our sets become the only conventional locomotive hauled stock as well. Unique to Ireland, they manage to appear traditional while being of modern construction. They look equally at home behind a steam or diesel locomotive. With a good seating capacity, not to mention route availability, they are ideal for the Society's trains. No doubt they will visit much of the Irish railway system in the years to come.



The finished job, with yellow waistband and RPSI crests, at Dundalk. (T. O'Shaughnessy)

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LESSER KNOWN FACTS - THE DONEGAL

W.T. Scott

Donegal - Ireland's second-largest county - had over 200 miles of narrow gauge (3ft) and only about 28 miles of standard gauge track. The GNR(I) owned the 5' 3" gauge lines from Pettigo to Bundoran and around 8 miles of their line to Londonderry ran through Donegal from Porthall to after Carrigans. This latter stretch caused military problems during WW2 as it ran through neutral Eire. Allied forces could not use it so those travelling by the GNR(I) line to Londonderry had to change to the County Donegal narrow gauge at Strabane as this line did not cross the border.

The County Donegal Railway became the County Donegal Railways Joint Committee in 1906 when it was taken over by the GNR(I) and the Midland Railway of England. The latter had a penchant for joint railways in England, notably the Somerset & Dorset and the Midland & Great Northern. The Midland

had already acquired the Belfast & Northern Counties and the Londonderry & Strabane and the GNR(I) became concerned about the Midland's growing power in the north and west so, after much wrangling, the Joint Committee was set up. The section between Londonderry and Strabane was owned wholly by the Midland though worked by the CDRJC. The Midland looked after track and fixtures while the GNR(I) saw to locomotives and rolling stock.

The CDRJC had by 1938 the most modern locomotive fleet in the British Isles, consisting entirely of superheated engines - eight 2-6-4Ts and four 4-6-4Ts (Baltics). Four of the 2-6-4Ts survive and No.5 "Drumboe" is currently being expertly rebuilt by the RPSI at the Whitehead works. Irish narrow gauge lines tended to buy their locomotives from the cheapest supplier. Since the small Irish lines could only afford one or two engines at a time this policy made standardisation difficult and led to carrying a heterogeneous selection of spares.

The CDR/CDRJC was able to avoid these problems, partly by its size and partly by its backing in later years by the GNR(I) and the Midland of England. Only two builders were used: Neilson and Nasmyth Wilson. Neilson built six 4-6-0Ts in 1893 and, as Neilson Reid, two 4-4-4Ts in 1902 while Nasmyth Wilson built all the modern 2-6-4Ts and the Baltics. The Neilson/Neilson Reid engines had all gone by the 1930s, the influx of railcars hastening their demise. The two 4-4-4Ts - an unusual wheel arrangement anywhere and not used elsewhere in Ireland - were the only four-coupled engines to last until the 1930s. They were probably built to get a larger coal capacity than the 4-6-0Ts which could only carry 1 ton whereas the 4-4-4Ts could carry 2½ tons, enabling longer runs to be completed. These engines had a large - 4 ft - driving wheel for the narrow gauge and there was a rumour that they were intended to work an express service along the level Finn valley from Strabane to Stranorlar. However, nothing is gained in steam locomotive engineering without a price and in the case of the 4-4-4Ts the price was that the axle load went up while the adhesion weight went down. 4-4-4T: driving axle loadings 10 tons 13 cwt + 10 tons 3 cwt; adhesion weight 20¾ tons 4-6-0T: driving axle loadings 6 tons 17 cwt + 8 tons 11 cwt + 8 tons 14 cwt; adhesion weight 24 tons.

The 4-4-4T's axle loading was high for the narrow gauge. The best rails on the CDR were between Londonderry and Stranorlar and the 4-4-4Ts did most of their work on this stretch, although one is thought to have worked on the Ballyshannon branch for a while.

The Strabane-Londonderry line was always steam-worked and the engines were coaled in Londonderry using coal from the nearby port. The haulage charges were paid by the UTA which now owned the section from Strabane in succession to the Midland Railway and the LMS. Engines coaled in Derry could then work goods trains from Strabane into Co. Donegal using UTA coal.

Livery: The engines were green until 1906 and then black until 1937 when they became geranium red! They were well cleaned but there was one snag - the red on their domes and boiler tops gradually became black because of the smoke and ash which became baked into the paint, as with the blue engines of the GNR(I).

The Baltics were the only CDR engines to have Belpaire fireboxes. They were originally unsuperheated but the success of the 2-6-4Ts led the then Locomotive Superintendent, R.M. Livesey, to have them superheated from 1921 onwards. No.11 "Erne" was the last Baltic to run in the British Isles, where 4-6-4 never became a popular wheel arrangement.

The CDR General Manager, Henry Forbes, was an extremely able man who ran his railway in the cheapest possible way but, sadly, his policy of second-hand materials and strict recycling overtook the railway after WW2 and the line was worn out at a time when the GNR(I) was bankrupt and the other partner - the UTA - only wanted to close railways. Although passenger and goods traffic stayed with the Donegal to the end, the track was done and closure because of the state of the permanent way was inevitable.

Only one of the CDR's locomotive suppliers outlasted the railway - and that not by long. Early in the 20th century Neilson Reid became part of the large North British Locomotive combine. Despite several years of prosperity after WW2 this company ceased building steam around 1960 and, despite belated efforts to penetrate the diesel market, went out of business soon afterwards.



With its unusual 4-4-4T wheel arrangement, the CDR's No.10 "Sir James" is seen here at Donegal on 6th August 1930. (H.C. Casserley / W.T. Scott)

Nasmyth Wilson was never one of the largest firms and for many years combined general engineering with locomotive building. The latter became most important by the early 20th century by which time the company was supplying locomotives around the world, principally to South America, Japan and Australasia. Unlike most other countries, British railway companies usually built their own engines and tended to give work to outside firms only when they couldn't avoid it, so in their native land Nasmyth Wilson only got the crumbs.

The position was different in Ireland with many small or medium sized railway companies, e.g. the CDR which had twelve Nasmyth engines. Contrary to what one might expect on a narrow gauge railway, the CDR's 5A class of 1912 was Ireland's most advanced steam loco at the time - they had Schmidt superheaters and Wakefield mechanical lubricators for pistons and valves from new. The CDR had wanted an engine with 2,000 gallon tanks but Nasmyths convinced them that superheating and 1,500 gallons would suffice, thus keeping the maximum axle load down to 10½ tons. The 5A class engines could handle trains of 250 tons over the Barnesmore Gap - a climb of 1 in 60 from Meenglas to Derg Bridge.

Nasmyth Wilson had also supplied the GNR(I) with some excellent engines, notably nine of the "Glover Tanks" - surely Ireland's most capable suburban tanks - and five SG2 0-6-0s which seemed equally at home with heavy goods trains or passenger excursions. Despite their reputation for sound locomotive building, unfair competition from other countries aided by government subsidies drove

Nasmyth Wilson out of the locomotive business in 1937.

A VISIT TO IRELAND, 1939

G.J. Aston

Having paid a flying visit to Kerry in the middle of April, in order to travel on the Tralee and Dingle line before it closed for passenger traffic, I was glad of an opportunity for a few more days in Ireland in May, in which to see something of other railways which are also in danger of closing down.

Leaving Liverpool at 9:10pm on Monday 15th May, I changed at Preston into the 6:10pm Euston to Heysham, which is only a small train now that the "Ulster Express" runs non-stop to Morecambe at 7:00. It was in fact far too small for the traffic, there being only four passenger-carrying vehicles and a surfeit of passengers returning to Morecambe after their "Tradesmen's Holiday". With a light train of 170 tons and a Class 5 engine, 5372, we were treated to a grand display of speed, passing Oubeck, 17.9 miles from Preston in even time. I had a comfortable crossing on the "Duke of Lancaster" and, after breakfast on board, travelled by the bus up to Great Victoria Street for the 8:15am train. This is primarily the breakfast car train to Dublin, and had six vehicles of the latest stock in front, behind rebuilt 4-4-0 No.171, "Slieve Gullion". In rear were three bogies and a small van for Cavan, in which I travelled, this portion being detached at Portadown. The working here is a trifle unusual, as instead of the engine being brought to the second portion of the train, the coaches were detached by a shunting engine, and pushed on to the engine for Cavan which was standing in the next platform. 4-4-0 133 was the forward engine, presumably working through to Cavan, but I left the train at Tynan in order to travel over the Clogher Valley Railway to Maguiresbridge.

For some years the Clogher Valley has been considered to be lying at death's door, but it appears to have taken on a short new lease of life by the introduction of a diesel railbus, seating about 25, which, however, appears to work between Tynan and Fivemiletown only. From Fivemiletown to Maguiresbridge, the trains are still steam-hauled, and in many respects compare very unfavourably with the diesel car. I had unfortunately no time to alight at Aughnacloy to visit the loco shed and the only steam engine I saw was No.6 "Erne", which worked the train into which I changed at Fivemiletown, where the diesel was turned for its return trip. The tank engines on this line, contrary to the usual Irish practice, have a predilection for running bunker first, and are fitted with a cowcatcher at that end.

I changed at Maguiresbridge into the GN train for Derry which had left Belfast at 9:30 and travelled as far as Fintona Junction. One of the new 0-6-0s, 81, took the train into Enniskillen. At Fintona Junction the notorious "horse-train" was waiting, and after giving me time to photograph it, the driver set off with all his passengers travelling first class, i.e. inside, with a carpet on both floor and seat.

Arriving in Fintona just after 1pm, I had no mind to hang about in the town, as unprepossessing a specimen as I have seen, even in Ireland, and as there was a bus to Omagh at 2:55pm, I set off along the road, and had covered almost half the distance of 7 miles to Omagh before the bus overtook me and quickly completed the journey for me. From Omagh to Strabane was a quick journey behind 4-4-0 131, and I there changed into diesel car 17 of the County Donegal line, for Letterkenny. This is the latest diesel on that line and is larger than any of its predecessors, holding some 45 people. It was well filled too, and the farcical customs examination at Lifford took some time. The car had a good turn of speed and the driver appeared to revel in it, with no perceptible slacks round any but the sharpest curves.

At Letterkenny I was expecting a rush for the Burtonport train. The booked interval is only 10 minutes; we were late, and I had to book. The train, consisting of one 3rd class coach and a string of wagons was in the platform sure enough, but had no engine. Acting upon Mr Casserley's advice (in Railway Magazine, May 1938), I was prepared to book 1st class but the stationmaster cheerfully informed me that they weren't putting a 1st class vehicle on the train that night, so it was no use paying the extra fare.

The thirds have un-upholstered slatted seats but as these have some vague resemblance in shape to the configuration of the human body they are not too uncomfortable, even for a journey of over three hours. Our engine - No.3, a 4-6-0T, was eventually located taking water outside the little engine shed and we left Letterkenny some 15 minutes late, there being only one other passenger. 4-6-2T No.10 was noted in the shed at Letterkenny and No.14 of the same type was at Burtonport. The journey down to Burtonport on a gloriously fine evening with the declining sun shedding grand patches of colour on the mountains through which the line winds was one of the things which one never forgets, like the first glimpse of the Cuillins from the Highland "Skye" line and the Sands of Morar on the West Highland. We shunted at many stations and the method of detaching seemed to vary at each one - flat shunting, gravity and tow-ropes were all employed - but, despite all, we managed to keep our scheduled time and reached Burtonport at 9:15, just ¼ hour late.



LLSR 4-6-0T No.3 at Letterkenny with a mixed train for Burtonport in May 1939. (Loco & General / C.P. Friel)

Sweeney's Hotel at Burtonport advertises itself as being 100 yards from the station. It took me quite a long time to find it, and when I paced the distance next morning I found it was nearly 700! However, I had a good night and good food and was quite ready to face the hard seats on the 8:30am next day. This time we had No.14, which worked right through to Derry, though the men change over at Letterkenny with those who have worked the 10:00 from Derry which was hauled by No.2, a 4-6-0T. It was a dull morning, inclined to rain up among the mountains, and as far as Letterkenny I was, of course, retracing my journey of the night before. Continuing to Derry, I was interested to see Manorcunningham and Newtowncunningham, places of which I have recollections from my days in Chester Goods, when Hunters, the well-known seedsmen, used to send consignments to the stationmasters at these places, who apparently acted as their agents among the farmers. We were never free from rate disputes and outstandings, but always received the most plausible letters from these rogues, who were obviously more faithful to the farmers than to any railway company!

So far we had kept tolerably good time, and I was toying with the idea that if we reached Derry early enough I would take a taxi and travel to Strabane on the 2:00pm from the LMS station. However, at Tooban Junction that idea was quickly dismissed as we waited there some 20 minutes for the goods to arrive from Buncrana, worked by 4-8-4T No.6. There was considerable shunting, and we eventually left after attaching most of his train. There was further delay with the Éire customs at Bridgend and we reached Derry some 35 minutes late.



LLSR 4-8-4T No.6 at Pennyburn, showing its 2½ ton coal bunker. After the success of their 4-8-0s the Swilly decided to have two similar ones, but without the expense of tenders. The makers, Hudswell Clarke, told them they had kept the weight of this tank version down to about 52 tons and, with no means of checking, the railway accepted that. Much later, it was revealed that they weighed almost 60 tons! (H.C. Casserley / W.T. Scott)

I consoled myself by having a good lunch and walking round to the LMS station at the east end of the bridge, and then caught the 4:10 from Foyle Road to Omagh. This train conveys a TPO to Portadown, connecting there with the English Mail via Dun Laoghaire. At Omagh I was surprised to see no sign of the diesel car which should arrive from Clones to connect with the Up Mail, and to see a coach from Bundoran being attached to the rear of that train. Nor was I any wiser when the diesel car turned up empty 5 minutes after the Mail had left. Upon enquiry, however, I learned that there had been a special party from Bundoran, and a special engine had had to be sent from Clones to work their coach from Bundoran Junction to Omagh. When the railcar reached Bundoran Junction its passengers were transferred to this special train and the diesel followed empty! As the driver of the special engine had no intention of running back to Clones tender-first, the diesel was further delayed while the engine used the turntable and cleared the long block to Fintona Junction. The diesel was then turned and left about 18 minutes late.

At Enniskillen a number of the SL&NC coaches were standing in the station, the outermost being of

the tri-composite variety with a single 1st class compartment divided by a transverse door into “Smoking” and “Non-Smoking”. As the two compartments - or half-compartments - are well and truly divided by opaque glass this is far from being the ideal observation car. I was assured that this was the only coach that was going and so consoled myself that, though the 2nd and 3rd class sections were crowded, I should probably have this to myself. I had, however, reckoned without the afternoon express from Dublin and Belfast, with which the 6:50 from Enniskillen connects. First came a couple who walked in and secured the other half-compartment. They were followed by a porter with about seven pieces of luggage which he distributed on, under and above the seat in my half. A functionary in plain clothes who had already examined my ticket was then seen walking along the platform, preceding three men and a small boy. They continued talking at the door of the compartment until the train left; one of the three, who was left on the platform, being addressed as “Mr Little”. I knew that he was the manager of the line, his name having appeared on my ticket, and naturally assumed that my two fellow-travellers were also dignitaries. This impression was confirmed by one remarking to the other that he hoped to re-lay this piece shortly, so I soon found myself in conversation with Mr Egan, the Engineer (Civil and Mechanical) of the SL&NC Railway. He gave me a great deal of interesting information, including some observations on the lot of an Engineer who has to pay duty on sleepers and rails which he sends from his depot at Manorhamilton in Éire to relay a piece of line at the Ulster end! The test case of what duty is to be paid when the bridge which spans the boundary river is renewed has not yet arisen!



SLNCR 0-6-4T “Enniskillen” at Manorhamilton on 10th June 1950 with the 14:00 down goods. Mr Egan’s house can be seen on the right. The SLNCR appeared wedded to this design which originated in 1882 and continued, with only slight alterations, up to “Lough Erne” of 1949, now part of the RPSI collection. (W.T. Scott)

Mr Egan and his son alighted at Manorhamilton and I was left face to face with the other gentleman, who had so far taken no part in the conversation. He was soon unbending, however, and by a little

deduction I found that I was talking to the chairman of the Company, Capt. George Hewson. He left me at Dromahair, and for the rest of the way I was alone and we landed in Sligo at 9:30, 35 minutes late, though I have really no idea of where the time was lost, for I found the conversation of my distinguished fellow-travellers too interesting to bother much about our progress along the line.

Next day I left Sligo on the 9:10am train for the long and tedious journey to Ennis. The train works through to Limerick, calling at almost all stations, and the engine also goes through, although the men change over with the north-bound train at Athenry. The scenery is not at all exciting, especially after Donegal, though there are one or two distant views of Croagh Patrick as the train approaches Claremorris. For those who may be interested I append a few notes of engines observed en route.

0-6-0	106	on 9:10 Sligo-Limerick
4-4-0	583	in Claremorris shed
4-4-0	64	on 7:05 Tuam-Sligo
4-4-0	1	on 7:00 Limerick-Sligo
0-6-0	161	on 6:45 Sligo-Limerick goods
0-6-0	229	on 3:40 Limerick - at Swinford Sligo goods
4-4-0	5	on 10:25 Westport-Claremorris
4-4-0	6	at Tuam, shunting
4-4-0	533	on Ballinrobe branch
4-4-0	298	on 10:40 Limerick-Sligo at Athenry
2-4-0	667	on Down Mail at Claremorris
2-6-0	381	on 1:25 Athenry-Galway

I was really very glad when we at last reached Ennis and there was a chance to go into the town for a meal. I returned to the station about 4pm and took my seat in the 4:30pm train to Kilrush. At Ennis, the narrow gauge trains for West Clare are accommodated in a bay just across the platform from the main line, and as the two lines on leaving the station run parallel for nearly a mile, we were treated to a good race when we pulled out simultaneously with the main line train. The narrow gauge train was only beaten in the last 200 yards, though starting on the outside of the curve. One is almost tempted to think that the race is intended by the Timing Office, for the 4:30 to Tuam is in Ennis station for 13 minutes, with little to do.

The West and South Clare lines were fully described in the Railway Magazine for May 1939, so that I need say nothing beyond my own experiences. During the winter months, the two trains daily run through between Ennis and Kilrush, with a shuttle service between Kilkee and Moyasta Junction, but in the summer, when there is a third train, I understand that the workings are adjusted so that the main train goes through to Kilkee, with a branch train to Kilrush. The journey takes 2 hours 44 minutes to each place, and there is a once-daily bus from Ennis to Kilkee, passing through Kilrush but not serving any of the other places on the railway, which takes only 80 minutes to Kilrush and 100 to Kilkee. The train is due at Kilrush at 7:14 while the GSR bus, leaving Ennis at 6:00, is due at Kilrush at 7:20 and Kilkee at 7:40. I was anxious, if possible, to travel on both legs of the South Clare and the ideal way appeared to be to go to Kilrush and then immediately catch the bus to Kilkee, staying the night there and travelling straight up to Ennis at 8:15 next day.

After my experiences of the two previous days - 15 late at Burtonport, 35 late at Derry and 35 late at Sligo - I was not very sanguine, but I confirmed the time of the bus with the booking clerk at Ennis and had a word with the driver, who cheerfully assured me that the bus would be about 10 minutes' walk from the station at Kilrush. In my gloomy doubts I had overlooked the fact that the West Clare, almost alone among the Irish narrow gauge lines, does not operate mixed trains but has a separate goods train each way daily. We were consequently spared any shunting at intermediate stations and, to my delight, reached Moyasta Junction on time. The enginemen had changed over with the crew of the Up train

which we had crossed at Miltown Malbay, but the word had apparently gone round and the good work was sustained. Our engine was No.6, a 0-6-2T, which was exchanged at Moyasta Junction with the engine of the branch train, 2-6-2T No.9, in order to work the latter up to Ennis for repairs the next day.

We reached Kilrush at 7:16 and, on alighting, I was immediately picked upon by the Stationmaster. "Are you the man for the bus?" The clerk at Ennis had been good enough to phone Kilrush that I was coming and the way was prepared. I was directed straight up the street and to turn left at the top. At the corner a man stood to direct me. Again, "Are you the man for the bus?", and sure enough, the bus was standing round the corner waiting for me. The bus drivers in Ireland appear to pay very little regard to the clock and, though it was barely 7:20 when I boarded the bus, I have little doubt that it would have gone, before time, had I not been put "on line" in this helpful fashion. The bus was soon in Kilkee, after a bumpy ride at considerable speed, and after a meal I enjoyed a grand walk along the cliffs overlooking the Atlantic, with views over the Aran Islands and the mountains of Connemara.



West Clare 0-6-2T No.6 with a goods at Corofin in 1950. The trailing wheels on these engines were originally the same diameter as the drivers but this was found to be hard on the track. Increasing their side play failed to cure this and the trailing wheels were eventually reduced in diameter. (Kelland collection / W.T. Scott)

Next day I had another early start and this time, of course, had to change at Moyasta into the train from Kilrush. I had the company of schoolboys as far as Ennistymon, where there is a large secondary school, and we reached Ennis at 11 o'clock prompt - an example of punctual running which I have found almost unique among the narrow gauge lines. Before catching the train to Limerick there was time to explore the Loco and Carriage sheds, which contained much of interest, including some very superior "tourist" coaches, almost of the Club Saloon type, which come out in the summer. The ordinary coaches of the West Clare have a vestige of upholstery on the seats but these are not in any way shaped, as are the seats of the L&LS. I recommend anyone who travels on the West Clare when the tourist coaches are not on to pay the difference for 1st class - it is well worth it! In the carriage shed

was also a small petrol-driven inspection car.

The West Clare has now nine engines, and their disposition at the time of my visit was as under:

- 1 Under repair at Ennis.
- 2 At Inchicore for heavy repairs (in suspense, I understand, pending a final decision on the closing of the line).
- 3 In Ennis shed.
- 5 Worked 8:35 ex-Ennis on 19/5.
- 6 Worked 4:30 ex-Ennis on 18/5, then branch working from Kilkee shed.
- 7 Worked 4:50 ex-Kilrush on 18/5.
- 9 Worked Kilkee branch on 18/5 and then changed over with 6.
- 10 Worked Ennis-Kilrush goods on 18 & 19/5.
- 11 Worked 8.15 ex-Kilrush on 19/5.

From Ennis to Limerick I travelled behind 4-4-0 No.64 and though we were absolutely on time we were kept back at the junction adjacent to Limerick ticket platform for the Pullman car train from Dublin which was about 10 minutes early - disgustingly snobbish regulation!



West Clare No.6 again, this time at Kilrush in the 1930s. Originally named "St. Senan", the loco was withdrawn in 1956 and its boiler went to Spain for scrap in 1958. (Rail Photos / C.P. Friel)

After an hour in the town I went down to Foynes for the afternoon, leaving at 2:15pm behind a 0-4-4T, No.295, which was one of the original WL&W engines. Amalgamation in Ireland seems to have wrought the same havoc as in England, however, for I rode in a DW&W coach. The Foynes branch is worked by a Sentinel car, No.356, which is very similar in appearance to those recently working on the

Moffatt and Horwich branches of the LMS. There was only one other passenger from Ballingrane to Foynes on this, the first train of the day at 3pm. After a very pleasant afternoon lazing on the hill overlooking the Shannon I returned by the Sentinel at 5pm and connected at Ballingrane with the same engine and stock, returning from Abbeyfeale. In view of the meticulous way in which engines are turned at Newcastle West before proceeding with a through train, I am curious to know whether they trouble to turn a tank engine which, anyhow, must run bunker-first either to or from Abbeyfeale, where is no turntable.



***WLWR 0-4-4T No.295, also known to have worked in the Roscrea area in 1953, is seen here at Limerick. It survived being scrapped with other ex-WLWR engines in 1954 - but not for long.
(A. Donaldson / W.T. Scott)***

My schedule provided some 40 minutes in Limerick, during which time I hoped to have some tea before catching the boat train for Rosslare at 6:50. At Patrickswell tickets were examined - but we still stood there. I put my head out and saw that the Guard had gone up to the signal box, which is on the platform. I thought I heard something about "staff failure", and I was soon after him. There had indeed been a failure and the signalman could not get a staff out of the pillar. But, I was reassured, the pilotman had already left Limerick by motor car and we should be in Limerick in ample time for the boat train. After 20 minutes a car was seen approaching at a fearful pace, and a man in corduroys, with a GS&W pilotman's badge, was deposited in the station yard. We were soon away and ran at a good pace to the junction with the avoiding line about a mile outside Limerick. The points are remotely controlled from the main line box and the staff failure had apparently upset the electrical working of these as well. At any rate, they lay for the wrong direction and it did not seem to occur to anybody to take the train over the direct line and back it into the station. There was a man on the ground, admittedly, who might have been a signal fitter, but it was not until the pilotman, the driver and the guard had all alighted to help him that anything was done. At length, the cover was prised off the motor box, the points were liberated and pulled over by hand. Nobody seemed to think of clipping them, but

we passed swiftly over and ran into limerick station at 6:42, with 8 minutes to spare.

After that, tealess, I found the journey something of an anti-climax, and the slow progress made by 4-4-0 No.58 with two bogies and two 6-wheelers was not at all encouraging. I took advantage of the 15 minutes wait between shunts at Limerick Junction to have a bite in the Refreshment Room and then settled down to the slow journey to Waterford on which, despite the slow schedule, we lost 6 minutes.

The boat train from Cork was waiting for us at Waterford, formed mainly of new 'LMS type' stock, into which I was glad to change out of the clerestory gas-lit coach in which I had travelled from Limerick. We left behind a Woolwich 2-6-0, 397, with 7 bogies and 3 small vans - about 255 tons. It was now dark, but somehow I was reminded of the Stranraer road from Dumfries with its ups and downs through desolate country and the boat waiting at the end of it. There is automatic staff exchange on this line and we went through most of the stations at 45 mph or so. Just as we passed Duncormick, where the night seemed to be blacker than anywhere else, the brake was slapped on and we came to a very sudden stand. There could only be one explanation of that - missing the token - and in a moment the fireman came running back with an electric torch and made his way to the station 600 yards away. Perhaps we were fortunate in that the staff was found after only half an hour; in the meantime the ticket collector and guard had searched every compartment and van in case it had come in through an open window, while the fireman and signalman had looked in vain in the vicinity of the box. Where they found it at last I don't know, but it was found and that was all that mattered.

We reached Rosslare at 11:33, 38 minutes late, but the boat got away with less than the booked margin. Just what time it left I was too tired to notice. I had gone below immediately and the next thing I knew it was 3:30 and the boat was at rest alongside the quay at Fishguard. In conversation on the boat I learned that "staff-dropping" was by no means unprecedented, and there was an occasion last winter when the boat left at 4:00am instead of 11:35pm, thanks to the Cork train dropping a staff which could not be found. The line was under snow, the telephones were down and there was nothing for it but pilot working, the two stationmasters setting out in opposite directions until they met.

In the course of a rather unexciting run to Crewe I met the first rain that I had seen all week, although much of the weather in Ireland had been dull. And so, with the familiar journey from Crewe to Lime Street I concluded a most enjoyable week's travel in which I had covered about 600 miles of new ground in Ireland and Wales.

8:15am Belfast to Portadown 16-5-1939

Engine 171 "Slieve Gullion" (Rebuilt 4-4-0), 10 vehicles, 281/295 tons.

	Miles	Schedule	Actual	Speeds
BELFAST			0:00	
Adelaide	1.4		4:12	38
Balmoral	2.3		5:32	39
Finaghy	3.1		6:46	40
Dunmurry	4.1		8:15	41
Derriaghy	5.1		9:37	44
Lambeg	6.1		10:49	51
Hilden	6.6		11:25	51
LISBURN	7.6	11	12:53	
Knockmore Junction	1.6		3:41	46
			PW Rest.	23
Maze	2.5		4:59	
Broomhedge	3.8		7:49	34
Damhead	5.0		9:22	50

Moirá	6.9		11:25	57/48
Kilmore	10.2		15:10	59/62
LURGAN	12.4	17	17:53	
Boilie	2.0		3:46	53/51
Seagoe	4.0		5:56	60
PORTADOWN	4.9	8	7:19	

This is the Dublin breakfast car train, which conveys a portion of three vehicles for Cavan, detached at Portadown.

OLD SLOW COACHES

Michael H.C. Baker

Any right-thinking little lad is interested only in what is most modern and up to date and what future wonders lie just over the horizon. Therefore elderly wooden-bodied carriages, perhaps not even equipped with bogies or corridors, with dusty, faded upholstery, small windows badly in need of a good wipe over to make them transparent, hard-riding and full of groans and squeals have very little appeal to youth or, indeed, to the general travelling public. I can recall passing through a GWR Dean clerestory of our Shrewsbury-bound train at platform one in Paddington back in the late 1940s on our way to find a seat in something rather more up to date and thinking what a dark, gloomy old thing it was. Similarly some ten or more years later I was astonished to find the gleaming Stanier Pacific, newly painted in that wonderful Midland/LMS crimson lake which looks so good on “Dunluce Castle”, running in from Crewe to Hadnall on a stopping train bound for Shrewsbury. Amongst the motley assortment of carriages it was towing was an arc-roofed antique which I, naturally enough, eschewed in favour of a nice Stanier centre-corridor. I still kick myself that I didn’t take the opportunity to ride in what I later discovered was the last survivor by some twenty years of a group of five carriages, originally LNWR six-wheelers dating from c. 1890 which had been mounted in pairs on new underframes and bogies in 1924. BR number M13936M, since you ask.

Thus, having reached some sort of maturity by the time of my first visit to Ireland in 1959, I have sought out anything old and interesting in the way of carriages ever since; a rich field indeed, although I have to pinch myself and not slip into grandfatherly shaking of the head mode at the realization that IR’s Mk3s now belong to that category and are heading for the scrap yard. Which brings us to Mullingar.

Now here were riches indeed. Everything about the railway scene at that Midland town looked as if time had stood still for several decades. I write about the days when Galway and Westport trains took this route and when it was still possible to find an Atock 2-4-0 at work, shunting at Galway. However, let us not get side-tracked by steam! Two features of railway carriage development which really marked veterans out as belonging to a long-vanished era was the absence of bogies and the presence of a clerestory roof. Both were still to be found in passenger service in Ireland into the early 1960s. And those which had finally carried their last long-suffering customer were likely to make one final journey to Mullingar, where they would meet their end under the towering gantry of the Morris Bretland track relaying depot.

The very first Irish clerestory carriage I came across in 1959 was an ex-GSWR composite on the Waterford to Macmine Junction branch line train, it forming the entire passenger accommodation; whilst the next day I found a rake of six-wheelers of GSWR and MGWR origin in the sidings at Cork awaiting the weekend and a run down to Youghal. The GNR in 1959 still possessed quite a lot of clerestory carriages - well, I know that strictly speaking it had ceased to exist by then - and I have a notion that I saw one still in GNR livery at Great Victoria Street as late as the winter of 1967. Researching the precise date of carriage withdrawals of forty or more years ago is rather tricky, the IRRS Journal not recording these as comprehensively as it did locomotive withdrawals, and the

carriage registers I consulted at Inchicore in the late 1960s were not totally reliable. That said, it would seem that the last six-wheelers probably ended passenger service on CIÉ in 1962. They had gone some time before that on the GNR and the UTA.

However, that was not the end of their story, for many carriages refused to lie down and die but continued a sort of half-life in departmental use. This could vary from being scarcely changed, other than renumbering and perhaps being repainted, to being gutted internally, having doors sealed, windows boarded or panelled over and becoming vans or what were in effect mobile sheds. Other examples suffered even more drastic demotion, losing their wheels and underframes and being set down at goods yards, locomotive and carriage depots and so on to serve as mess rooms, dormitories or tool sheds. Nowadays, for all sorts of reasons, it is very rare for a carriage once taken out of passenger service to find further employment but until the last few years of the 20th century one could still come across veterans, some still functioning in departmental service but most often parked at the end of a weed-encumbered siding, rotting quietly and inoffensively away until quite unidentifiable.

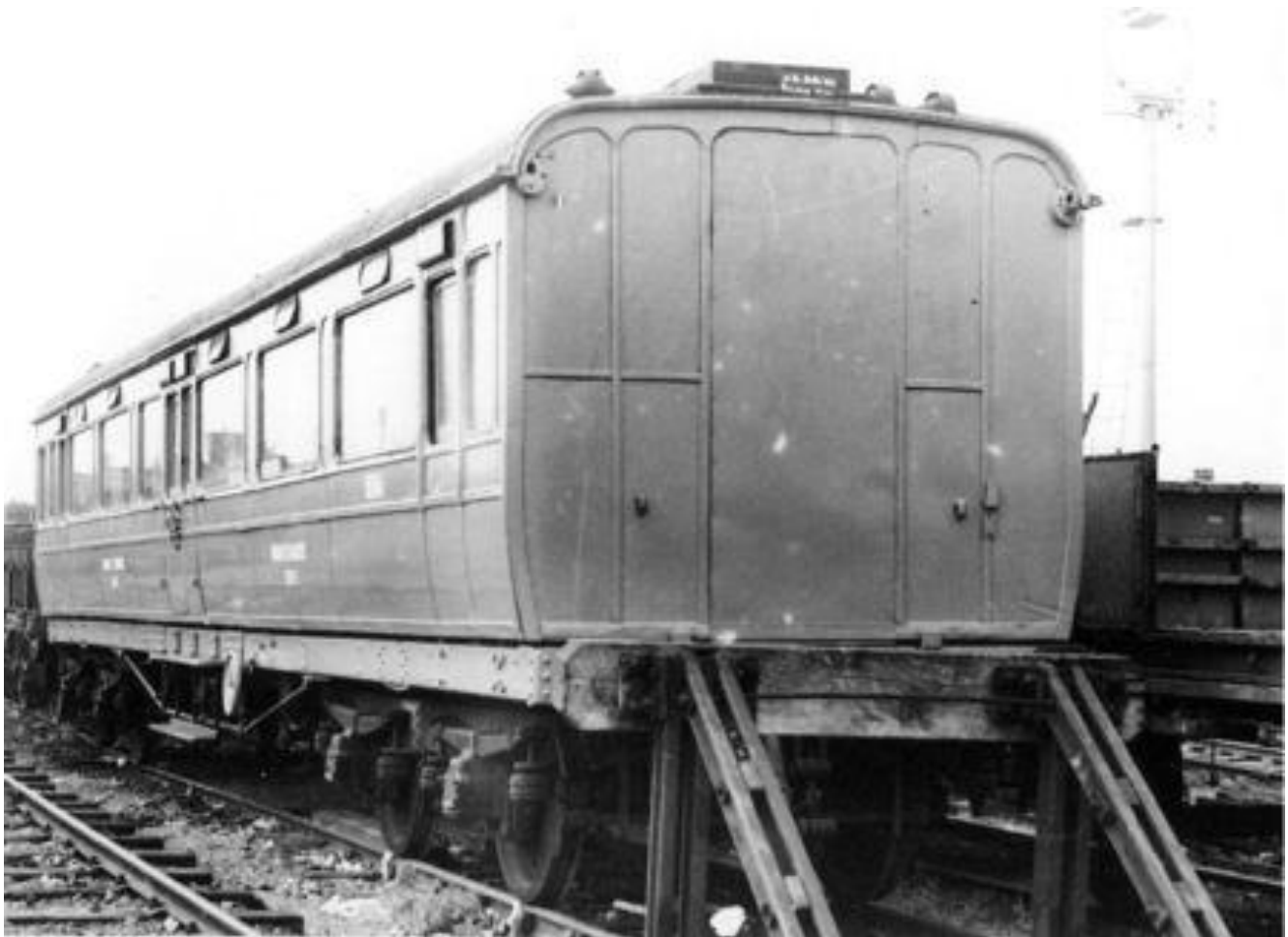


MGWR corridor compo, Broadstone 1903, awaiting breaking up at Inchicore 1969. Also ex-GSWR 6-wheel passenger brake. (M.H.C. Baker)

Mullingar was not only a graveyard but also, for a time, an embryo preservation centre. Sadly, this eventually failed but much of the rolling stock moved elsewhere. Let me give one example of a Mullingar resident which seems not to have survived. This was the last remaining Waterford, Limerick and Western carriage, one of only six bogie vehicles that that railway ever owned.

I first came across 540A, formerly 935, the latter number being painted inside the guard's compartment, at Drogheda in August, 1973. We had first met in, I think, 1969, at Sallins in the sidings there forming part of the Inchicore Trial Train and seemingly, despite its coat of grey paint covering just about everything except the windows, in pretty good condition, no body sag and obviously in

reasonable running order. By August, 1974 things had deteriorated considerably, and I recorded: “much worse than before, but still very solid-sounding roof, white lincrusta covering, low, studded green upholstery in end compartment, two seats on either side facing forward, ornate carved wooden bench ends, steam heater indicator showing ‘medium, on and off’, two long central compartments, small middle one (lavatory?), guard’s compartment at far end, toilet at the other, in from coupe.” Externally I found the initials W&LRy embossed on a bracket on the underframe beside the buffers. On looking up 935 I found it had indeed become 540A, but had also served as a Radio Saloon RS21. Built by Metropolitan at a cost of £1,200 it was originally a first/second composite, and had been converted to an invalid carriage as long ago as 1919. The Inchicore register noted its building date as 1902 whilst Richards and Pender, in their GSWR Carriage Diagrams, published in 1975, give it as 1896 as does Ernie Shepherd in his Waterford, Limerick and Western Railway - added proof that not everything in the register can be trusted. 935/RS21/540A moved again, to Mullingar where, looking even sadder but still more or less intact, it was marked as reserved for the RPSI. Does it still exist?



***CIÉ 518A, ex-MGWR 94, later AM10, open 3rd, built Lancaster 1910, Heuston 1970.
(M.H.C. Baker)***

We can perhaps let that example serve as one of the ones which got away, whilst at the same time giving most grateful thanks to those who made great efforts, often faced with official indifference, to preserve the fine selection of vintage carriages we have today. Perhaps the most notable, indeed after the State Saloon 351, the most famous Irish carriage, is 861. Built at Inchicore in 1906 as part of the boat train for the opening of the Fishguard-Rosslare service, this 66 feet long, 38½ ton, twelve-wheel clerestory, is a wonderful example of the heyday of Edwardian rail travel. It was very nearly scrapped

in the early 1960s but was retained for a film contract in 1966 and was then put on the Inchicore Works Train. This, members may recall, gave many veteran wooden-bodied carriages a last, sedentary opportunity to serve, trundling between Heuston and Inchicore morning and evening with CIÉ employees. Returning from a visit to the Works in the summer of 1970 I managed to ensconce myself in a first class compartment. The upholstery was ornate, if faded and dusty, the light globe was full of rather dirty water which gave an excellent impression of the tide receding and returning as we rolled gently down the hill to Heuston. This was clearly my very last chance to ride in its wonderful but no doubt doomed sixty year-old splendour. Doomed it was for I next saw it in the summer of 1972 at Sallins where, along with its companion 896, an arc-roof, 64 seat, 52 ft long third of 1907, it was in the sidings where so many of its predecessors had paused on their way to demolition at Mullingar. I had mentioned to various friends in CIÉ how sad it was that this wonderful example of the Inchicore carriage builder's skills was about to be lost, but others were doing much more than just talking and in the nick of time the RPSI stepped in and whisked 861 up to safety at Whitehead.

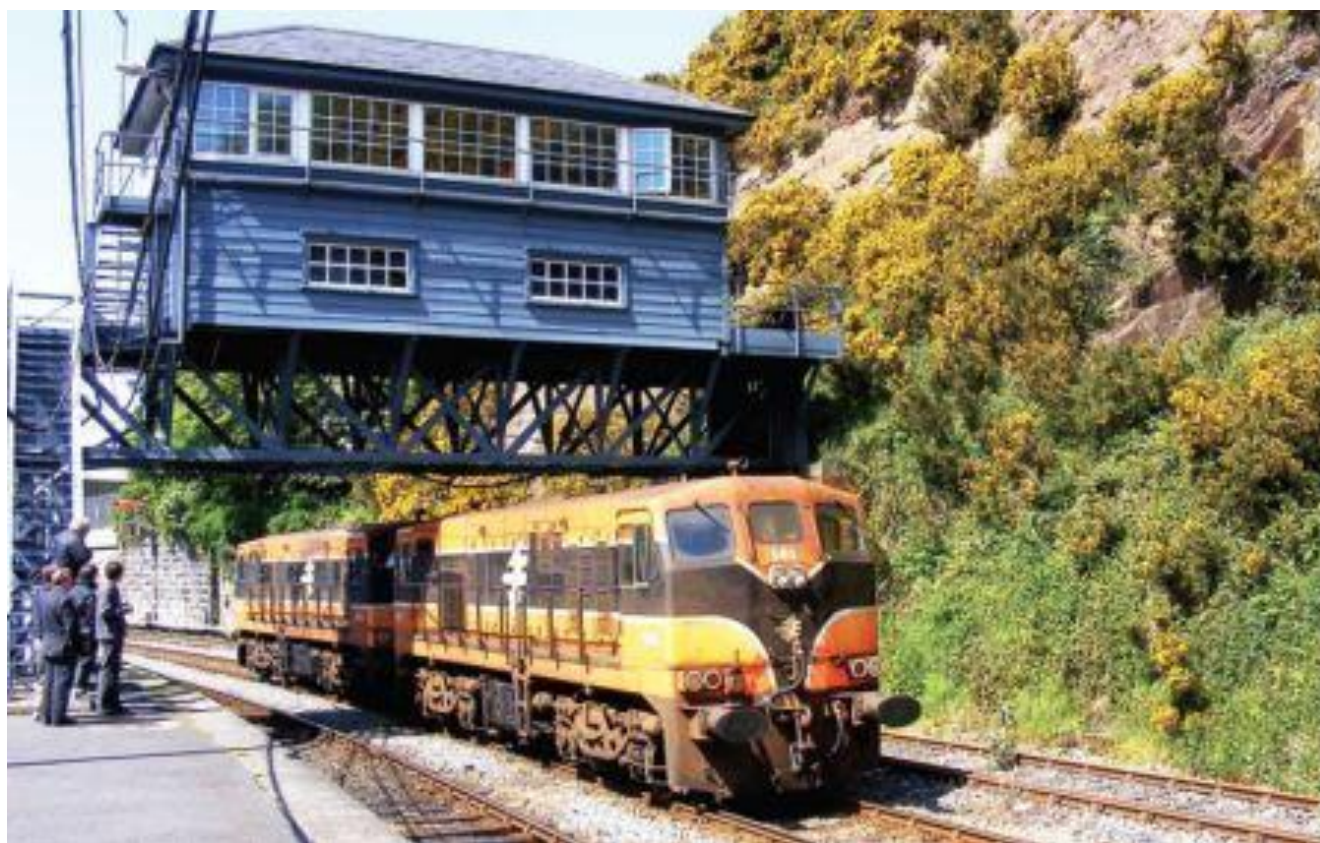


Last year of wooden-bodied suburban set, Pearse, August 1972. (M.H.C. Baker)

Although six-wheelers did find their way into departmental use in the 1960s and 1970s their antiquity and smaller capacity meant there were rather less of them than bogie carriages. However, three were parked in the sidings outside Heuston for many years and Drogheda had an example kept under cover and looking remarkably intact. One of the finest bogie carriages was 518A, parked just beyond the platform end at Heuston and later moved to accompany two other grey-painted bogie carriages at North Wall, one of them ex-DSER with that distinctive type of roof shape - parabolic I think was the official term, a cross between arc and elliptical - unique to the company. 518A had started out in 1902 as 94,

the pride of the Midland Great Western, a handsome open third with six big picture windows on either side and later served as ambulance car AM10.

Rather less grand but very long-lived was a rake of former GSWR bogie non-corridor carriages which each summer in the late 1960s and early 1970s worked Dublin suburban services. My wife, Maeve, got an early foretaste of what she was letting herself in for when, whilst we were only just engaged, in September 1967 I insisted that we ride in a 65-year-old arc-roofed non-corridor third from Connolly to Bray. At this period CIÉ had put its oldest carriages into the 4xxx series and at the end of each summer several would be scrapped, so that by their last season the rake of six veterans included at least two corridor carriages, one of early GSR origin. Wooden-bodied Inchicore-built corridor carriages dating from the 1920s could still be found strengthening long-distance trains until 1972 but all disappeared that year when the BR-built Mk2s, the Super Trains as CIÉ widely advertised them, entered service. The very last wooden-bodied CIÉ bogie carriage in ordinary service was 1893, one of a batch built at Inchicore in the very early days of the GSR, mounted on underframes bought from Belgium by the MGWR. It was a 96-seat brake third, a most useful vehicle which had served the GSR and CIÉ faithfully for all but fifty years but when I took a last ride in it just before it was taken out of service in 1973 was a poor, miserable, uncomfortable old thing - though perhaps hardly worse than some of the ex-railcars converted to push-pull with peripheral seating which continued to be inflicted on long-suffering Dublin commuters until the DART opened new horizons.



The shape of things to come: “Small GMs” 141 & 171 under Waterford Central cabin, about to work the Comeragh railtour to Dublin via Limerick Junction, 9th May 2009. (C.P. Friel)



Having taken water from the tank later found wanting, No.186 pauses in the Up platform at Ballymena with the Mince Pie & Mulled Wine train on 27th December 2009. (J. Cassells)