

# FIVE FOOT THREE



MAGAZINE OF THE RAILWAY PRESERVATION SOCIETY OF IRELAND

# **FIVE FOOT THREE**

## **No.57**

### **Winter 2010/11**

**Editor: Nelson Poots**

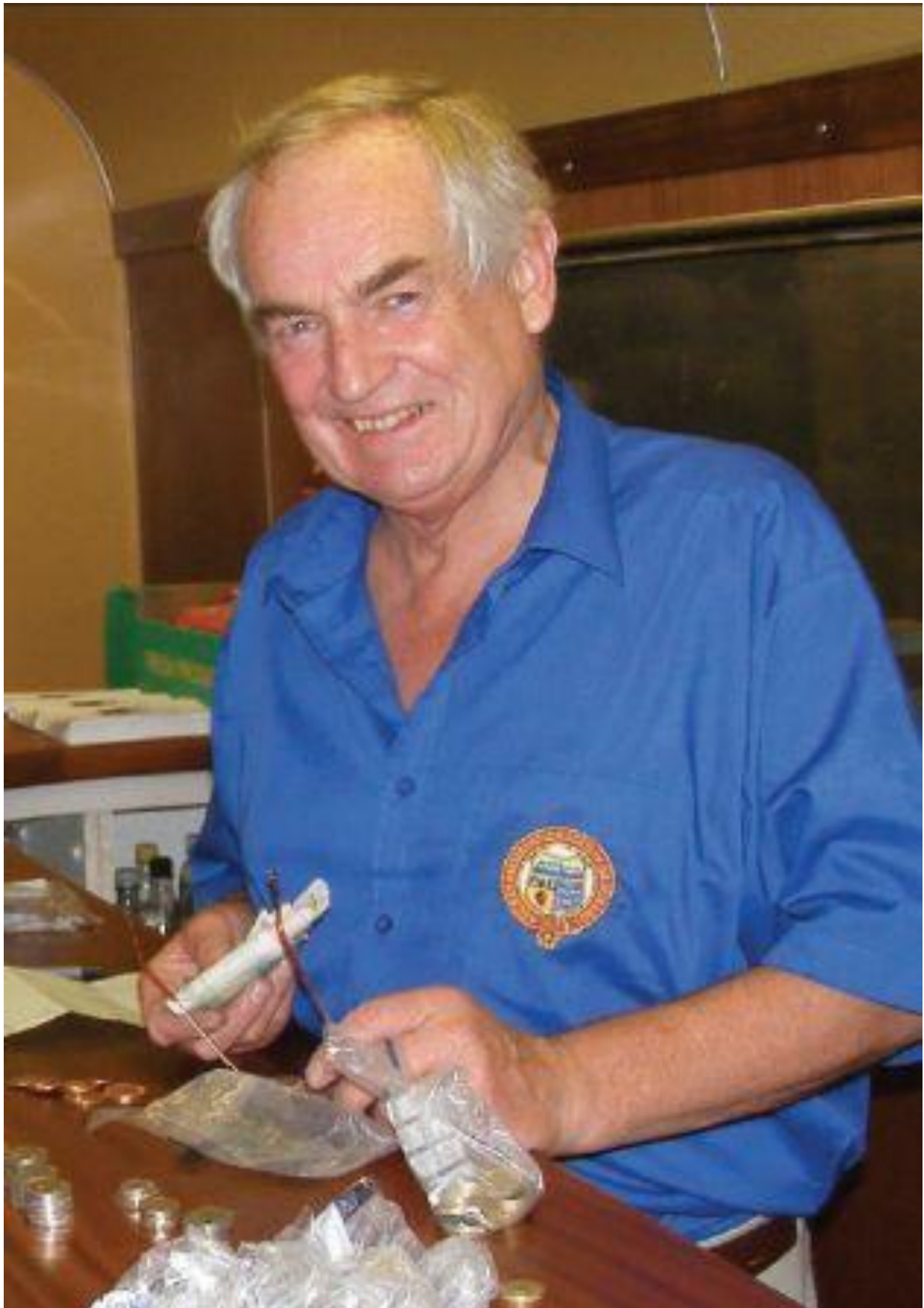
#### **CONTENTS**

---

Editorial	
Chairman's Report	David Houston
News From Council	Paul McCann
Development Report	Denis Grimshaw
Locomotive Report	Peter Scott
RPSI Diesel Department	Mark Healy
Dublin Carriage Report	Niall Kelly
Whitehead Carriage Report	Francis Richards
Whitehead Site Report	Dermot Mackie
Northern Operations	Mervyn Darragh
Dublin Area Operations	Stephen Cooke
DSER Turns From 1960 To The End Of Steam	David Houston
Dan Renehan: A Retirement Tribute	J.A. Cassells
The Guinness Is Good	Mark Walsh
Emly Railway Station	Nicholas Ryan-Purcell
Billy Steenson	J.A. Cassells
Lesser Known Facts - The Swilly	W.T. Scott
Irwin C. Pryce	Nelson Poots
The GS&WR At The Turn Of The Century	Alan O'Rourke
Book Review	

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

***Front Cover: No.4 storms through Trooperslane on the way to Belfast for the Cultra charter on 27<sup>th</sup> August 2010. (P. Lockett)***



*Peter Marsden, August 2008. (C.P. Friel)*

## EDITORIAL

---

Several years ago your editor, perhaps presumptuously, likened himself to Janus, the Roman god who looked both backwards and forwards - only to find more recently that FFT's original editor, Drew Donaldson, had done likewise many years earlier! However, for better or worse, being what is euphemistically described as a senior citizen does give one the inclination to compare what was with what is and to wonder whether, with the seemingly ever-increasing flock of guardian angels hovering over us, life nowadays is really much safer than it used to be. How did the now elderly achieve that state without them? Could it have had anything to do with the now unfashionable concepts of common sense and personal responsibility?



*The Editorial mentioned nicknames. Here, Tony Renehan has presented Gerry Mooney with a Milky Bar, much to the amusement of brother Dan and Ken Fox. (B. Solomon)*

However, leaving that particular hobby-horse in its stable and looking further backwards to the RPSI's early days it is sad to note that in the last year several persons associated with the Society from then have now passed on. Former York Road shed foreman Billy Steenson was an enthusiastic supporter of the RPSI and did his best to ensure that redundant equipment at York Road did not all go to scrap. RPSI founder member Irwin Pryce was well known to him and made a major contribution to the Society's objectives over the years. Also now no longer with us are former drivers Harry Loughlin, Peter McCann and Bertie "Budgie" Wright. The latter reminds one that, unlike the modern but unimaginative Chazza, Gazza, etc., most nicknames used to reveal something about their sometimes reluctant recipients. Budgie was noted for whistling; there were Batman, Sunshine, Moneybags, The Healer and The Wasp, while one Dublin railwayman with numerous offspring had the name of a famous stallion conferred on him! Retired now, but alive and well, are Tony and Dan Renehan who,

from unlikely beginnings, kept the torch of steam alight in Dublin and eventually passed it on to their younger successors. We wish them well.

Bi-directional Janus now comes into operation. Anyone reading the archived copies of FFT will see that in the RPSI's early days it seems to have been assumed that No.171 and No.186 would head our railtours until they required major repair - but then what? Moira was at one stage suggested as a base and various branch line options were also explored. We eventually settled on the former Whitehead excursion station and shed; and what a change there has been since then, with new track, new buildings and an engineering capability that must rival any in the UK preservation movement. One gets the impression that Dublin originally tended to be seen as a source of learned articles and a repository for railway literature - things have certainly moved on since then!



***At Whitehead on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2010 with West Coast Rail's Ron Smith are: NIR Inspectors Stephen Faulkner, Michael Hamill, Stuart Andrews and Guard Tony McAuley. (C.P. Friel)***

Unlike most preservation projects elsewhere, what we did not have was a line to run on. Even the Whitehead train rides were never out of sight of the almost bare platform, while visitors could admire a rather grotty site dedicated to the storage and repair of engines and rolling stock. However, although we still won't have a line of our own, in addition to now having more engines and carriages than our founders dreamed of, major plans are in hand for making Whitehead a much more attractive place for visitors - see the 2020 report.

In FFT No.54 your editor, rashly as it turned out, referred to Charles Friel as being perhaps the last of Ireland's black & white railway photographers. To quote a saying of the late G.B. Howden, he has since been disabused of that notion, some of the work of at least one other such practitioner appearing in this issue. In no way does this downplay the contribution of Charles who, for umpteen years, has

unfailingly turned up illustrations for even the most obscure of subjects. Having said that, one should also express appreciation of all those who, over the years, have contributed by way of photographs and articles, even if sometimes the acquisition of reports could be compared to the extraction of teeth!

## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

David Houston

In this, my first report, I want to open by thanking my predecessor Johnny Glendinning most sincerely for his service to the Society during his term in office. I am pleased to record that Johnny continues to be very active in Society matters, and has proved to be of great assistance to me in my settling into my new role. I also want to thank the members of Council and the various committees for the guidance and assurance they have given me.

In the last edition of Five Foot Three I noted Johnny's comments about 2009 having been a busy year. Be in no doubt 2010 has been no different! Your Chairman's hope of a honeymoon settling-in period proved to be a definite non-runner. You will read of all that has been happening during the year in the various reports elsewhere in this edition. There have been some developments of particular importance which have special significance for the future.



*RPSI trains seldom visit Larne Harbour but this undated shot shows No.4, with inconveniently marshalled Diner 87, under the upper quadrant signals unique to that station. In the background are the now demolished signal cabin and the remains of the British Aluminium works. (Barry Pickup)*

The first development I would like to mention is the 'fallout' of new EU legislation which requires the Society to become in effect a stand-alone train operator in the south, utilising the Iarnród Éireann infrastructure and supported by a Safety Management System (SMS) approved by the Railway Safety Commission. A lot of work is going into achieving this goal. It remains 'work in progress' at the time

of writing, with a view to obtaining the required approvals and licences to operate, hopefully, early in 2011. Much of what has been achieved so far is due to the hard work and dedication of Denis McCabe, Safety Officer South, who has taken on the task of writing and assembling a coherent, workable and acceptable SMS with great dedication. I am very grateful to him for all that he has done. Obtaining the approvals and licences is obviously vital to the continuation of Dublin-based operations. I hope to be able to report on a satisfactory outcome later in 2011.

As has been mentioned many times under various headings, the Society must look to the future and seek out ways and means of ensuring that operations continue for future generations to enjoy. The 2020 Committee was formed with this as its objective. The Committee's achievements are set out elsewhere, but I would like to mention the recent success in getting a commitment of support from the Heritage Lottery Fund for the development of our Whitehead base. This is a great achievement and exemplifies the professionalism and dedication of that committee. I wish them continued success in their endeavours.



*No.85, then newly restored, prepares to leave Whitehead in 1985. (Barry Pickup)*

Our recently created 'Diesel Department' has achieved a lot in the short time since it was set up. With four locomotives and lots of commitment both in terms of finance and planning for the future already in place, I wish them continued success. I look forward to learning in the not too distant future that they are ready and willing to operate our first preserved diesel-hauled railtour.

To close, I offer sincere thanks to all those working members who contribute so much, day in, day out, in all sorts of operating and climatic conditions, and to the managerial and operating staff in both railway companies for all their help and enthusiasm throughout the past year. 2011 holds many challenges - nothing new about that - but maybe we are at our best when battling against stiff gradients and striving to get over the summit!

I suppose for an ordinary member the year past was fairly uneventful; trains ran and locomotives suffered injuries just like any other year.

Behind the scenes, Council members and their various sub-committees have been working frantically on a number of fronts, primarily:

**Whitehead 2020:** It is hoped to report on this separately, but suffice to say significant progress has been made in obtaining funding for a station building at Whitehead and a Stage 1 Heritage Lottery grant. The latter will assist preparations for an application to HLF for full funding for the development of Whitehead.

A meeting of active members and post-holders took place early in the year to discuss the implications of the proposed plans. That meeting considered the threats to the Society's future: ageing membership, loss of heritage engineering skills, lack of continuity of work, falling volunteer numbers in the next decade. The proposed responses were: increase the number of seats on trains, increase the number of trains run, increase the real price of fares, make Whitehead into a paying public heritage engineering museum, increase dramatically the amount of money we raise each year. The problems in meeting these aspirations were: requirement for at least 3 main line steam locomotives and 1 steam shunter, extra NIR and IÉ train crews, extra RPSI crews and train stewards, more mainline coaches and especially a dedicated corporate/wine and dine set, improved maintenance and storage, improved financial accountability.

**SMS:** Under recently introduced EU legislation, the Society is now obliged to obtain approval from the Railway Safety Commission (RSC) to operate its trains. This approval applies to all operators over the main line infrastructure in the Republic of Ireland. Much work has been done towards reaching this objective, ably led by Denis McCabe. However, the RSC has had to concentrate its efforts on getting Iarnród Éireann's application approved and to ironing out any resulting difficulties. Consequently, their work on the RPSI's application has had to take second place. The fallout of this is the postponement of the 2011 railtour until September, with the cancellation of the Dublin programme of trains until further notice - currently estimated as July, but hopefully sooner!

**Finance:** Funding of all the expansion plans is a major problem, the promise of grants notwithstanding. The finance committee is seeking to increase income and reduce expenditure where possible. The main outgoings are TPWS, crew training, insurance, locomotive overhaul and Whitehead land purchase. Areas where changes could be made are staffing, extra trains, higher fares, raising of membership rates, increase in grants, membership/public appeals, etc. There is a similarity to the recommendations above at the 2020 meeting, and all are being actively considered. In the meantime, the operations committees have been asked to increase their surpluses - no mean feat if it comes off, given the difficulties currently being experienced in Dublin and with expected weekend closures on the Larne line during most of the summer.

**Governance:** A number of meetings have taken place to discuss how the Society is affected by the Companies Act 2006 (common to NI and RoI) and the Charities Acts 2008 (NI) and 2009 (RoI). The committee gave special consideration to: RPSI corporate governance; operating policy; statutory legal requirements (child protection, equality, smoking, health & safety, etc.). It also recommended that the child protection policy should be drawn up in conjunction with the Downpatrick & County Down Railway, with input from HRA and NI Museums Council. These actions were agreed, and the first changes will be the change of name from 'Council' to 'Board', with all its members being officially known as directors. Changes to the Memorandum and Articles of Association will be required and the next AGM should see moves on that front.

New members on Council this year were Mark Healy, John Lockett, David Orr and Alex Richardson.

Mark Tyrrell and Mark Walsh retired at the AGM, as did Johnny Glendinning who didn't remain out of work for very long as he took up the post of Chairman of HRA (Ireland). We were sorry to lose Peter Marsden during the year as he felt he had to resign due to ill health.

Meanwhile work goes on in the Locomotive and Carriage Departments. No.4 is due to retire from traffic in 2011 and, hopefully, No.461 will return. Like it or loathe it, another Cravens carriage has been turned out in the blue livery in Dublin, and significant work by the Mullingar team went into the provision of a matching bar car for the set. In Whitehead the installation of a generator in Mk2 463 continues, while NCC 87 has been turned out as a moving museum and the externally funded overhaul of NCC 68 and GSWR 861 has commenced. At Whitehead, a new fitter and two new apprentices joined the ranks.

Acquiring a permanent southern base remains a priority, with sites in Dublin and Dundalk currently under consideration. The additional strip of land at Whitehead has now been purchased, significantly depleting the strategic reserve funds. Not all of the land is required and there may be scope for selling part of it. Also, the final instalment of the payment for the main site was made during the year.



***With a rather larger machine than No.186, at Grosmont on the North Yorkshire Moors Railway are NIR Inspectors Stuart Andrews and Hubert Anderson (in hi-vis) and Ron Smith (West Coast Rail) and Driver Chris Cubitt (NYMR). (Mary Friel)***

The driver training process continues both north and south. With the retirement of one driver in Dublin and the possibility of one in Belfast moving jobs, we could be back to only two drivers each. So it is vital that training continues. A job description for trainee fireman will be circulated in NIR shortly, inviting applications from among their driver pool. During the year two NIR driver assessors were

passed in the role of steam driver/fireman, with two more having had partial training. It is thanks to the Heritage Lottery Fund that the Society has been able to continue this training.

Our trains continue to be very well supported despite the state of the economy, especially in Dublin. Belfast trains suffered a bit early in the year but picked up magnificently at Halloween and Christmas. Unfortunately, NIR line closures are due to continue during 2011, and while we can now visit Coleraine, steam trains north of there are still not possible. The Portrush branch is expected to be relaid in 2011 but budget cuts have pushed back the Londonderry line renewal until 2014/5.

The email news facility for the public now has over 1,400 addresses subscribed, and it was found to be a major aid in marketing of trains during the year. It was also used to give up-to-the-minute updates during the extreme wintry conditions over the Christmas season.

Likewise, the email bulletin to members continues to provide up-to-date news, with 730 members (64% of the total) now signed up.

During the year CIÉ required us to increase our public liability insurance to €26m (approximately £25m). This is a significant increase from the £15m which was in place and does nothing to reduce annual expenditure. However, we did manage to negotiate a phasing in over four years. Despite this, it was another year of broadly stable insurance prices, and Karen McLaverty and Lesley Browne of Marsh have dealt efficiently with all our requirements, and my thanks to them.

As reported last year a tri-partite committee has been set up to jointly develop railway heritage with the Downpatrick & County Down Railway and the Ulster Folk & Transport. Moves on this front are progressing, albeit slowly.

Society news to the wider enthusiast market has had a fillip with the recruitment by Steam Railway magazine of Robin Morton as its Ireland correspondent. So we can all look forward to having words put in our mouth once more!

The 2010 membership round-up is:

	<b>2010</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2004</b>
NI	411	413	411	399	391	386	380
RoI	408	403	403	387	380	375	375
GB	290	291	303	299	290	294	284
Overseas	30	30	31	35	34	35	32
Adult	650	653	679	688	676	685	696
Senior	370	350	339	298	289	275	247
Junior	14	21	19	33	29	31	24
Student	17	15	13	8	8	6	5
Family	10	21	19	14	15	14	21
Life	56	57	57	57	58	58	59
Societies	3	3	4	4	4	5	5
Honorary	19	17	18	18	16	16	15
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1,139</b>	<b>1,137</b>	<b>1,148</b>	<b>1,120</b>	<b>1,095</b>	<b>1,090</b>	<b>1,071</b>

Thankfully, the overall total remains fairly static, but we are slowly becoming a 'grey' Society!

As always, thanks must go to all who have served on Council ('the Board'!) throughout the year. The burden increases annually and some of the new sub-committees this year are referred to above; thank you to all who elected to serve on them. Specific Secretarial thanks go to Charles Friel who organises Belfast meetings, as successful as ever in the new venue at Orangefield. 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 (Legal Advisor); Barry Carse, Dublin area membership queries; Nelson Poots (“Five Foot Three” Editor); Mary Glendinning, answer-phone.

## **DEVELOPMENT REPORT**

**Denis Grimshaw**

Following the presentation of our development plans and proposals to the meeting of working members held in Lisburn in January 2010, work continued on the preparation of our Heritage Lottery Fund bid, which was finalised and submitted on 11<sup>th</sup> August. This was a major exercise, with detailed proposals, background information, costing and cash-flow calculations, and some 60 pages of closely typed A4 with narrative and interactive financial spreadsheets.

In late spring, we heard that we had been successful in obtaining a major grant from GROW (Generating Rural Opportunities Within) South Antrim - an EU-supported rural development programme. This grant of some £225,000 is in respect of a programme of works at Whitehead comprising a new station building based on the design of the former NCC Whiteabbey station building, which had been designed by Charles Lanyon, together with upgrading and surfacing of the entrance road to the workshop area, and new secure steel fencing to the entire site.



*The “2020 Committee”, l-r: John Lockett, Tony Dean, Derek Young, Helen Keys (consultant), Denis Grimshaw, Johnny Glendinning, Robert Mowbray and Brian King. (J. Lockett)*

The main items which were intended to be covered by the HLF application were:

- Further extension to the carriage shed, to enable all our Whitehead-based stock to be kept under cover.
- A separate carriage workshop, to release space in the locomotive workshop and avoid working on

carriages in the locomotive sheds.

- A separate paint shop for locomotives and carriages.
- A new and larger foundry.
- New secure stores facilities for materials, parts and equipment.
- Installation of one of our 60ft locomotive turntables.
- A signal box to control mechanical points and semaphore signals at the platform line and run-round loop.
- Additional parking area for visitors and staff.
- Safe walkways and explanatory signage for visitors.

Representatives of several of the organisations which we had identified as potential “match-funders” were present at the launch of refurbished UTA (NCC-designed) Dining Car 87 and the upgraded former stables building on 25<sup>th</sup> August, giving the opportunity for site tours and briefings for these visitors.



***Mary Glendinning and Vera Lockett watch as Robin Morton turns on the charm at the 87 Launch on 25<sup>th</sup> August 2010. (C.P. Friel)***

This was followed up by a conference hosted at the offices of the NI Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (DETI) at Netherleigh on 29<sup>th</sup> October 2010, attended by top level representatives of DETI, NI Tourist Board, Carrickfergus Council, Heritage Lottery Fund, Larne Enterprise Development Co, SEUPB (Special European Projects Board), Translink, NI Railways, and the RPSI.

By this time, we had already submitted our HLF application, and were anxiously waiting for the

announcement of our success or failure. We were delighted to hear on 20<sup>th</sup> November of our successful award of an initial £165,500 HLF Stage 1 Development Grant to prepare much more detailed designs, costings, business plans, and our audience, education and interpretation plans. Subject to satisfactory completion of these to the required standard, we should in due course receive the balance of the total £1.85 million HLF grant.

Having got over the shock of our success - in stiff competition with several other major projects elsewhere in the UK - we are now continuing with the detailed planning and other arrangements, as well as continuing to chase after potential match funding. The HLF grant, however, will only cover some 60% of the capital cost, leaving the Society to find the remaining funding required. The current recession does not help, of course, as finance is now in rather short supply, but we do have some time available to continue our efforts, due to the overall timescale of the project.

Meanwhile, the GROW-funded station building project is proceeding apace. We hope to select and appoint a Project Manager for the combined GROW and HLF projects early in 2011, and get the detailed design work under way for site construction work to start in the autumn.

Whilst most of this article so far has concentrated on our Northern operations at Whitehead, there is no intention of ignoring our Dublin-based operations. We have already been advised by Iarnród Éireann that we will have to remove ourselves from Inchicore Works in due course, as most of the ground occupied by RPSI coaches and other vehicles will be required for the Dublin Interconnector railway which will surface at Inchicore after linking the GNR and GS&WR lines by a new underground line through the city centre. Whilst there is likely to be a delay in this project due to the current economic climate, it is still likely to happen sometime in the foreseeable future.

For this reason, the Society has been investigating the availability and merits of potential RPSI sites with the CIÉ Property Board and Iarnród Éireann. Ideally, a site in the Dublin area would be highly preferable, to avoid long-distance travelling by our Dublin-based working members, and to minimise empty train mileage to and from our main market base in Dublin.

One site at Cabra on the Heuston (Islandbridge Junction) to Connolly link line is being investigated, whilst a smaller locomotive-only depot at North Wall has also been suggested, as has a potential carriage storage facility at Dundalk to supplement a future base in the Dublin area. However, this is very much 'work in progress' at present, and no decisions or even firm recommendations have yet been made on this issue.

## **LOCOMOTIVE REPORT**

**Peter Scott**

---

This year's Locomotive Report is being written in changing times. In Dublin, the locomotive shed at Connolly Station is now closed, and our arrangements for stabling, coaling and servicing of engines are under review. However, in the immediate future this issue is academic since no steam operations will take place until the Society's Safety Management System is up and running. Until now, RPSI trains have been run within the Irish Rail Safety Case - which expired at the end of the year when Éire introduced the new European Directive on Interoperability. The last steam loco to be based in Dublin - 2-6-4T No.4 - returned to Whitehead light engine on 16<sup>th</sup> January, together with the small quantity of tools and spares that were kept at Connolly shed. Hopefully it will soon return to a more permanent location and operational future!

At Whitehead, changes are also on the way. Major developments to the site and buildings are referred to elsewhere in the magazine. The construction phase is likely to be disruptive to on-going overhaul work. Management of the Workshop activities is under review. And after all this, more intensive steam services should result, bringing in turn yet more maintenance activity.

Another change is the acquisition of ex IE General Motors diesel locos, the eventual object being to run

a certain number of our trains using them. B141 is in store at Inchicore and B142 is already in use for shunting at Whitehead.

As they say in China, we live in interesting times - although avoidance of the implied curse would be desirable!



*No.461's boiler is lowered into the frames for trial fitting on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2011. (P. Scott)*

### **Steam Locomotives**

**No.3 "R.H. Smith". LP&HC 0-6-0ST. Boiler exam, Downpatrick.**

No.3 - commonly known as "Harvey" for reasons which can be explained to the curious in private -

continues on hire to the Downpatrick and County Down Railway.

**No.3BG. A. Guinness, Son and Co 0-4-0ST. In traffic, Whitehead.**

Whitehead shunting and open day loco.

**No.4. LMS NCC 2-6-4T. General overhaul, Whitehead.**

The TPWS/AWS fitment was completed and has proved satisfactory in operation, although pre-trip inspections have become more arduous in consequence. Approval to operate at increased speeds following TPWS fitment has been somewhat delayed and at the time of writing is awaiting the completion of formalities.



*With No.461's boiler lying on its right hand side, Jim Adams and Billy Clements work on crown stays. At that stage, 9<sup>th</sup> June 2010, there were still many more stay holes to be drilled and filled. (P. Scott)*

Loco No.4 is now approaching the end of its current boiler ticket, and will be coming out of traffic during the year. Because of continual demand for the “Jeep” from both Belfast and Dublin Operations Committees, we propose to proceed with overhaul as rapidly as possible, and to this end some materials are already on site - boiler and superheater tubes, for example. A much quicker turn round should be achievable this time, since major repairs to boiler, frame and working parts were carried out at the last overhaul, and our workshop capabilities have improved considerably since then. Work has already started on overhaul of the valves and pistons, jobs which should be completed in time for the loco to operate briefly in the early summer before the major part of the 10 year overhaul gets under way.

In the longer term, we are investigating measures to improve the availability of the 2-6-4 tank loco, which in the first instance would mean the provision of strategic spares - for example tyres, valve liners and superheater.

Last year's report mentioned damage to the rocking firebars on this loco. We have changed our coal supply and the result is promising.

#### **No.186. GSWR 0-6-0 goods engine. In traffic, Whitehead.**

No.186 excelled herself on this year's well patronised "Mince Pie" train to Dublin - and back again, since the planned locomotive swap was not able to take place in Dublin. At this time of year a well-heated train is probably more acceptable to passengers than keeping time - No.186 was able to do both, within the constraint of running out of path on the way back due to extra time needed to coal up and service the loco in Dublin.

Due to difficulties with both storing and handling coal at Connolly Station in Dublin, an effective method has now been established whereby the coal is stored for us by a local coal merchant and then brought direct to the locomotive as required by his lorry with its own grab.

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

The overhaul of loco No.461 continues as the first priority in the Workshop. The lion's share of the work is completion of the boiler repairs, following renewal of much of the inner and outer firebox. Making and fitting of water-space stays is now complete, and the boiler has been trial fitted to the frames. Work will shortly move on to retubing and then hydraulic testing. Assembly of valves, pistons, crossheads and other mechanical work, which has progressed on a standby basis over the last couple of years, is now getting higher priority. The tender has been lifted off its wheels for attention to bearings and springs. Some attention is needed to corroded tender platework.

The chimney was found to be extensively cracked and was expeditiously repaired by Messrs Metalock at Coventry.

#### **No.85 "Merlin". GNR(I) 4-4-0 compound express passenger loco. Overhaul, Whitehead.**

After No.461, the next overhaul priority is No.85. Work is currently progressing on overhaul of the cylinders, valves, wheelsets and bearings. Inspection of the main frames, bogie frame and splashers has revealed a rash of slack rivets which are being renewed.

Being a compound loco, No.85 has a number of additional features which do not appear on the two earlier GNR(I) 4-4-0s, No.171 and No.131. The most obvious is the two outside cylinders - together with the third cylinder between the frames. The GNR(I) compound was based on the Midland Compounds (the only remaining example being No.1000 which is currently on display at Highley on the Severn Valley Railway). The Midland system applies high pressure steam to the inside cylinder, which then exhausts into the two larger outside low pressure cylinders. The cranks for the outside cylinders are at the normal 90 degrees, so the resulting exhaust is 4 beats to the bar not 6 as might be imagined for a three cylinder loco. The additional features which appear on the cylinder block are the "non-return" valves - essential for starting the loco - and the "by pass" valves which assist in free running when shut off. No.85 is designed for express passenger work with few stops and no hanging around - and definitely not for shunting. Another unusual feature is the slide valves for the two low pressure cylinders. Originally these were "balanced" valves and had an additional sealing arrangement which relieved some of the steam pressure forcing the valve onto its seating. This was quickly removed when the locos were new - the story being that the whole arrangement was so heavy that no-one could lift it into place.

We have a book explaining all the above and much more, which anyone interested can have for the cost of copying it!

The bogie on this loco is fitted with volute springs, a number of which were found to be broken. The original 1932 drawings specify coil springs - both these arrangements are unusual for a GNR(I) 4-4-0 locomotive, where leaf springs on the bogies were normal. Volute springs are nowadays hard to come

by and even harder to pay for, so we investigated substitution by the original coil springs at about a fifth of the price. At the same time, we were reluctant to deviate from something that had clearly been changed for a good reason, even though the reason was lost in the mists of time. The reason for the change eventually did indeed come to light - apparently the locos suffered from poor ride quality with the original coil springs. So No.85 is to get volutes in spite of the expense.

No.85's blast pipe had suffered from severe wasting, and was actually worn into holes which had been patched to keep the engine operating. A new blast pipe was cast at Whitehead foundry and at the time of writing is having its flanges machined and drilled.



*The flanges of No.85's newly cast blast pipe being machined. The hardest part of this operation was getting the work accurately set up. (P. Scott)*

**No.171 "Slieve Gullion". GNR(I) 4-4-0 express passenger loco. In store, Whitehead.**

Since 2002, my annual loco reports have stated that loco 171 is "in store" and requires overhaul - like the proverbial broken record. Is it time that something a little more optimistic was written about this loco which, after all, was the unanimous choice as the foremost candidate for preservation when the RPSI was formed back in 1964? *[But see recent appeal. - Ed.]*

**No.131. 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. firebox plates.

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

Requires major repairs including renewal of cylinder block.

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

Requires major overhaul.

**No.202. GNR(I) 0-6-0 heavy goods loco. Cultra.**

The cut-away model loco is now on display at the Transport Museum at Cultra. We are compiling an explanatory note to accompany it, and have some details as to its history - if you have any particular information, please let us know since some of the details are obscure.

### **Diesel Locomotives**

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

Requires engine and gearbox overhaul.

**No.1. CSÉ Carlow Ruston and Hornsby diesel mechanical shunter. Out of use, Whitehead.**

The “Carlow” loco is so called because it was acquired from the sugar beet factory at Carlow.

It seems to have been numberless until numbered “1” by the Society. This loco has been side-lined by GM B142, which has taken over the heavy shunting duties, and the Unilok, which can likewise tackle the lighter jobs. It requires rectification of a gearbox fault.



*Fittingly for a volunteer of mature years, Gordon Buick has found a means of resting his legs as he paints Drumboe’s driving wheels. (P. Scott)*

**Unilok UTA Road-Rail shunter. In traffic, Whitehead.**

The Unilok returned to Whitehead since it is no longer required to shunt at the Transport Museum.

Repairs to engine and hydraulic pipes were carried out, and the machine is available for light shunting.

**102 “Falcon”. NIR Hunslet Bo-Bo diesel electric loco. Awaiting repairs, Whitehead.**

102 has been acquired by the Transport Museum at Cultra. Repair work is to be undertaken to make it both movable and displayable.

**B142. IÉ General Motors Bo-Bo diesel electric locomotive. Shunting duties, Whitehead.**

The loco has received basic essentials including batteries and anti-freeze.

**Contract And Other Work**

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

On 22<sup>nd</sup> January, a major milestone in the restoration of Drumboe was reached when the frames were placed on the wheels, using the short length of mixed gauge track recently installed in the Workshop. The loco was then ceremoniously pushed for several yards by the wheeling team - a short move for Drumboe but a major event in the eventual return to action of a County Donegal Railway locomotive. The loco probably last moved in 1962.



*Given the limited space available, these happy chappies are probably not pushing Drumboe’s newly wheeled frames as hard as it might appear. (P. Scott)*

Drumboe will now be moved out of the Workshop to release the space for work to take place on the main line locos. Work on the cylinders, pistons and valves will however continue whenever possible. Refurbishment of the working parts is well advanced, but significant boiler overhaul work and expense still remain. The boiler will require major platework renewal and replacement of missing attachments.

My thanks are due to the Site Squad for putting in the extra rails - the job had to be done around the stands supporting the locomotive, which did not make for easy work.

### **No.1. CSÉ Orenstein & Koppel 0-4-0T. General Overhaul.**

This shunting loco is being overhauled for the Downpatrick and County Down Railway, similar to the work done to sister engine No.3 several years ago.

### **No.9. Hill of Howth Tram Car. Repairs to wheelsets.**

An unusual job for the Workshop at Whitehead is refurbishment of the wheelset journals and bearings of No.9 tram, for the National Transport Museum at Howth.

### **Carriage Work**

The train line generator is being installed in Mk2 brake coach 462, and work is proceeding with running gear on this vehicle.

### **Apprenticeships**

From time to time the Society has provided placements for engineering students from local Colleges. A new venture is the employment of apprentices by the Society. Two such have joined us recently - most of their time is spent in the Workshop at Whitehead, with one day per week at a Training Provider.



*Whitehead apprentices James Spurler and Michael McCann at work on No.85's eccentrics. As that is not a noisy job their headgear would suggest that riveting is taking place nearby. (P. Scott)*

### **RPSI DIESEL DEPARTMENT**

**Mark Healy**

Early last year, the Diesel Department was created as part of the Locomotive Department, to give the Society a mainline diesel capability. This followed a presentation to the Council's January meeting by members Ken Fox, Mark Healy, Kevin Meaney and Hassard Stacpoole. These members had formed an

informal working group which put together a business plan with funding support after discussions with interested members, then Chairman Johnny Glendinning, Irish Rail's CME Phil Verster and Heritage Officer Gregg Ryan. The funding will come from private sources, outside the RPSI's normal finances. The proposal outlined how heritage diesels could continue to operate on the mainline as part of the RPSI and included plans to establish a working fleet of a minimum pool of four locomotives comprising already preserved B141 and B142, a third 141 Class and 121 Class locomotive 134. Following the acceptance of the group's proposals, Mark Healy was co-opted to Council as assistant locomotive officer (diesel) with responsibility for the RPSI GM diesel fleet.

21<sup>st</sup> February 2010 saw a new era in diesel preservation when B141 and B142, freshly repainted in their original black and tan livery, worked the "Diesel Do" railtour from Connolly to Longford.

On 28<sup>th</sup> April, B142 was moved from Inchicore works to Whitehead to act as pilot, with B141 remaining in Inchicore. Part of the diesel department's strategy envisages a fleet primarily based in the South but with one locomotive based on a rotating basis at Whitehead.



*Ex Iarnród Éireann GMs 141 and 142 at Longford. (M. Healy)*

By Autumn 2010, 175, currently confined to use as Inchicore works pilot, had been identified as the most suitable of the remaining 141s to join the RPSI diesel fleet. It is hoped that it, along with 134, will transfer to RPSI ownership early in 2011.

In early December a large quantity of suitable spares, which will help keep the diesel fleet operational, was purchased from Irish Rail. The stock ranges from washers to an engine crankshaft and all have now been secured and moved into storage.

Mark Healy has also been in discussion with implementing a works programme on the Inchicore based fleet. This will include an induction for RPSI Diesel department volunteers. Looking forward to 2011, it is hoped that 134 will be restarted and recertified for main line operations as well as ensuring that

B141 and 175 remain in operational condition and available to work RPSI trains.

## DUBLIN CARRIAGE REPORT

Niall Kelly

The past season may well be remembered as one that saw a variety of both steam and diesel hauled trips. However, regardless of motive power, the need for carriages remains a constant in the Society's operations.

For most of the operating season the running set was made up of Heritage vehicles 1383, 88, 2421, 1463, 1419 and 1916, with BR van 3185 being used to provide heat on the early diesel trips. It was a shorter formation than those of previous seasons; a combination of the lower haulage capacity of No.186 and the need to run round in the short loop at Wexford were factors influencing this. As a result brake 1949 (GNR 9) did not run this season. The Ireland Fund charter to Wicklow on 20<sup>th</sup> June saw 1383 temporarily swapped for all-first 1142. This was the GSWR carriage's only outing of the season. Out of service vehicles 1335 and 1506, together with TPO 2977 and mess coach 1529, remain safe and sound inside the former Carriage 1 shop at Inchicore, thanks to Iarnród Éireann.



*Former CIÉ State Coach 351 on display at Utrecht, Holland on 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2010. (A. Lohoff)*

The Heritage set operated the season up to and including the “Best of Both” tour on 3<sup>rd</sup> October. Brake standard 1916 then had a rather unusual outing later that month. On the 29<sup>th</sup> it transferred from Inchicore to Connolly behind “Enterprise” diesel 8208. The next day it went to Mullingar to act as a brake vehicle in the transfer of Craven bar 1514 home to Inchicore. This short train was hauled by IÉ 083. The Cravens set was used for the Santa season, with Park Royal 1383 attached as it has a 70-seat capacity, souvenir shop and sluice room for cleaning mops and buckets, storing cleaning equipment, etc. Craven 1508 also possesses a shop and a sluice room but has a low seating capacity. Thus it was

decided not to use her on the sold-out Santa trains. For the record, the full Santa set formation was 3185, 1505, 1523, 1541, 1522, 1514, 1532, 1539, 1383. One innovation of these trips was the mounting of specially made “Santa Special” name boards to the carriages throughout the month. The environmentally conscious amongst you will be glad to know these are made of 100% recycled material!

The Santa Specials were plagued by frost leaks. Some we managed to fix, only for the pipes to burst again with the low temperatures. This affected not only the toilets but also the steam heating in the BR van. Fortunately, most passengers came warmly dressed and there were few complaints; most appreciated the effort made. The steam heating supply was eventually repaired, as were the toilets in 1541. It is amazing to think that these did us two trips per day on one fill without running dry!

State Saloon 351 may not have had any runs this season but nevertheless represented the Society when it travelled to Holland! This was for the “Royal Class - Regal Journeys” exhibition at the Dutch Railway Museum in Utrecht. This took place from April to September and the carriage was displayed amongst its counterparts from various other European countries. Much work was put into preparing the carriage beforehand and it is a credit to those involved. It also made a rather strange sight on Dublin’s quays!



*The interior of refurbished bar car 1514. (M. Hoey)*

Meanwhile, work continued at Inchicore and Mullingar as always. There are in effect three working days every week spread out amongst the Dublin carriage team. On Wednesdays the Carriage Presentation Team (CPT) sees to it that the carriages are kept spick and span for our passengers. Saturdays see one section of the Carriage Crew tend to bodywork restoration on the Cravens as well as performing running maintenance and servicing tasks on the operational set. The Sunday team’s work

varies between the Mullingar based projects and the heavier maintenance work at Inchicore. Some other work occasionally takes place on weekdays to speed up projects as required.

Of course, the carriages must be watered before each trip. This is usually done in Connolly either the night before a trip or in the early hours of the morning. If the set comes over late that complicates things further. Watering at Inchicore is less than ideal as it involves hoses being laid a considerable length in order to reach the nearest hydrant. This necessitates laying the hoses up an embankment and stationing people at different points to keep watch. There are also several portable water containers throughout the train that can be used to clear blocked toilets in the event of a carriage running out of water. Apart from the Heritage and Cravens sets the Dublin team also stewards and waters Whitehead's Mk2 set when it visits IÉ lines beyond Dublin.

Work on the Cravens continued this year. After a long delay, due to some technical difficulties with the paint spray machine amongst other things, 1523 finally emerged in RPSI blue livery in time for the Santa season. It is hoped to turn out more Cravens in this livery during 2011. In November a few Cravens had their running boards replaced and it is hoped to continue this programme on the remaining vehicles.

The Mullingar team was kept busy on the renovation of 1514, which made its revenue-earning debut on the Santa trains on the 4<sup>th</sup> December. The work done is superb and allows the Cravens set to offer bar facilities on a par with those in 2421 of the Heritage set. Amongst its features is a Formica counter-top and beautifully varnished woodwork. The vestibules sport a cheery cream and red colour scheme.

In 2011 the Mullingar team will turn their attention to restoring BR van 3173, which has yet to run in Society service. This van has a different interior layout to 3185 so the two vans are not entirely alike. It is also hoped to renovate the interior of some Cravens to give them a more "period" look.

Naturally, none of this would happen without the dedication of volunteers across the Department. It has been deliberately decided not to mention any names, simply for fear of leaving someone out! Of course thanks are also due to staff in Iarnród Éireann, whose co-operation has been invaluable. Here's to a successful 2011!

## **WHITEHEAD CARRIAGE REPORT**

**Francis Richards**

---

Over the last 12 months considerable work has gone into improving the train electrics with much of the electrical load being moved from the battery supply, allowing longer emergency lighting times and better ventilation and lighting powered by the on-train generator. We are now entering the annual inspection time but with very little outstanding work to be performed on the running rake.

463 has its generator installed and the work on the electrics is under way so that approval can be obtained, allowing work on the more useful 460 to be undertaken.

303 is nearing completion and a start can soon be made on 304, volunteers permitting!!

On the heritage front, diner 87 is now available for Sunday train ride days and similar events, with electrics completed and a new gas certificate obtained. The small artefact museum area is receiving favourable comments from the public.

68, the 1922 Midland railway side-corridor vehicle, is painted internally. External top coat, lettering and varnishing are outstanding but by publication time it should have received its new flooring.

861 is undergoing a very major overhaul, with large amounts of rotten timber removed and more to go! We shall be going to tender for replacement timbers shortly.

All in all, a very satisfactory year with few problems.



*Diner/Museum car 87 gets an airing at Whitehead on 21<sup>st</sup> July 2010. (M. Walsh)*



*Edward Friel adds finishing touches to 87's interior. (C.P. Friel)*

If one word summed up our activities this year it would be 'concrete'; we mixed it, we laid it down in large amounts, we even dug it up on occasion, and many of the sleepers we moved were made of it.



*Site squad with Atlas at work under the King's Road bridge on 19<sup>th</sup> August 2010. (D. Mackie)*

During the big freeze in January we took delivery of 20 tonnes of stone for the carriage shed floor but were unable to do the necessary shunt to spread this at the back of the shed because all water supplies

for the steam engines were frozen. A gift of 150 bull-head concrete sleepers came from NIR when they rationalised their Ballymena PW yard and were delivered by Thomas Hamill & Sons when his team cut up flat wagon R5. In addition, 2,000 litres of red diesel were drained from Hunslet 101 by John Williams and John Lockett, before it was scrapped. We also moved three woodworking machines from the stables to the carriage shed and its container annex. Plastic drainage pipe was laid at the foot of the blast area retaining wall and the ferrous skip had a new floor fitted prior to filling with No.186's old boiler tubes.

February and March were extremely busy for the Site squad. We finally laid the stone mentioned above, with guidance from Errol Stafford, but the emphasis was on relaying the main line between the bridge and platform crossings, as this is the only time of the year when major PW work can be carried out. It was made possible with the generous donation of the concrete sleepers mentioned above, with almost 100 old wooden sleepers being removed and replaced. While the job was made a lot easier with the Atlas machine it was not straightforward, as the concrete sleepers are deeper in profile and each position had to be hand picked out by the squad, ably assisted by Gordon Hunt and Ian Stewart. Although the weather was cold it was, thankfully, dry and the job was completed on 18<sup>th</sup> March with final keying and levelling by a good team including David Lowry. Ahead of time and under budget!

The platform was cleared of any remaining sleepers and made safe for Easter operations with all the site point levers and switches given a thorough cleaning and oiling. A scrap drive, with the help of Thomas Charters, was made following the successful repair of the skip floor. Thanks to the redoubtable efforts of Francis Richards, we got a new set of identical locks on all the gates and doors at Whitehead. They can be opened with one key and copies were distributed to relevant personnel. A short underground conduit was laid between the Foundry and the pattern store container to facilitate an electrical supply to the latter.

Putting No.186 into No.5 shed road at the end of March revealed a rotten long timber under one of the shed rails. Fortunately we had an equivalent timber in stock and, once the engine was carefully moved out of the shed, we were able to replace the offending item. Early in April the Heavy Lift pit was pumped out and the remaining sludge was bailed out by hand. The cleaner and safer working environment greatly facilitated the removal of No.85's wheels from its frames and a bogie swap for coach 935. Movements of locomotives over No.1 shed road in the vicinity of the Barrack Street water column gave great cause for concern later in April as the track was seen to be badly out of gauge. Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> saw preparations for replacement of the old timber sleepers with a coach bogie being used as a simple flat wagon to bring in 16 concrete sleepers from our stores, opposite the platform. The following Thursday a good squad including David Thompson and Robin Morton, with the help of both the JCB and the Atlas machines, allowed us to completely refurbish the track, including new keys. These had been severely corroded by the ash used as the track fill in this area. All was just in time for the arrival of GM B142 a few days later. May was also busy, with the first application of weedkiller to the site and another scrap drive, with a full ferrous skip going for recycling. The accumulation of ash from the locomotives had become a problem so a hired skip was filled by the JCB. Additional watering points together with new hoses were installed in the carriage siding by Denis Campbell and Owen Smyth. This greatly simplifies coach watering and new nozzles were fitted to the two fire hoses on site.

For the last twelve months we have been able to work more easily and quickly with our Atlas machine but movement of items about the site has been hampered by our lack of a dedicated wagon. Necessity being the mother of invention, we have used an old Mk2 B4 bogie to move crossing gate posts and concrete sleepers, but this required a lot of temporary packing to clear the central pivot and transverse bolster. We reckoned that, without the latter, we could make a bogie with a flat surface - just such an item was available - but without wheels. A spare pair of wheels was sourced in June and the springs were carefully packed by Philip Newell to give clearance above the rims. Cross steel bracing pieces

and a steel flat deck, together with connecting brackets for the Atlas tow bar, were then welded on by the paid staff in July, under the guidance of Peter Scott. The flat deck was given a coat of paint before load testing with concrete sleepers. The addition of 6 of these, a weight of approximately 2 tons on one end, was passed with flying colours with good clearance between the wheel rims and the flat deck.

Early in August we took delivery of almost 200 concrete sleepers, thanks to NIR who were relaying the Magheramorne loop. These were stacked on the Whitehead platform prior to their removal to a safer location and our new flat wagon really came into its own. Sleepers, in lots of 16, were loaded onto the wagon and moved under the Kings Road bridge where they were off-loaded by the Atlas and stacked by the Site gang. On 12<sup>th</sup> August we shifted 112 sleepers, which would have been impossible without the wagon, finishing the job the following Thursday (see photo). Good progress was made creating the superstructure of the blasting shed by Mervyn Fleming and Bill King-Wood. The site got a second spraying of weedkiller and a general tidy-up in time for the official launch of Dining Car 87.



***Laying the extra rail for 3ft gauge into the workshop, 17<sup>th</sup> November 2010. (D. Mackie)***

Early September saw glorious sunshine and the replacement of a long crossing timber and two wooden sleepers with concretes in time for the European Heritage Open Day. Late September we replaced a crossing timber at the King's Road Bridge point and, on the afternoon of the last day of the month, we laid 6 cubic meters of pre-mix concrete in the carriage shed. We made excellent use of the 3BG engine to remove the contents of No.1 carriage shed road, part of which formed a train for a series of trips up and down the site for Whitehead Primary School in the morning. Concrete arrived at 1pm and, with the lorry able to reverse into the back of the carriage shed, all concrete was off-loaded by 2pm and levelled by 3pm under the expert eye of Joe Galbraith. This completed the central walkway in the shed.

October saw some needy repairs to the frog of the carriage shed turn-out which, over the years, had sustained a broken chair and two sheared bolts. The rest of the month was spent putting in a further

45 ft extension of the three-foot track at the back of the Workshop to store a partly rebuilt Drumboe. However, to assemble the locomotive on its wheels, we needed a track within the workshop and this was our major project for November. A gap had to be put in the concrete apron at the rear of the Workshop to accommodate a third rail, which meant cutting two long slots and then removing the material between with a kango hammer. When finished, the first 30 ft section of rail was slotted into the gap. After careful measuring and levelling it was concreted into place. A further 30 ft addition to this section inside the Workshop was slotted into place in early December with help from Trevor Taylor and Alan McRobert after moving some of the jacking points which support Drumboe's frames. The chairs used to carry this third rail were packed with wooden blocks and bolted into holes drilled in the centre of the concrete sleepers. I reckon this may well be the only modern dual-gauged track in Ireland!

Preparations for the Santa trains included renovating the large water tank at Lisburn, ably supervised by James Friel. It was cleared of weed and leaves, the main branches of the all-enveloping ivy were cut at ground level and the float valve repaired. In addition, several rail joints on the platform at Whitehead were lifted and packed. We rounded off our activities for the year by sweeping several inches of snow off the platform - a first for the Site team and then sprinkling it with salt kindly gifted by Irish Salt Mines at Eden.

All in all it was a busy and eventful year so why not come along and join us. All volunteers are warmly welcome.

## **NORTHERN OPERATIONS**

**Mervyn Darragh**

---

2010 turned out to be a very busy year involving 29 steam operations worked by NIR crews. To allow essential work to locomotives there was an unusual number of light engine movements in both directions between Belfast and Dublin.

To facilitate the completion of TPWS and AWS fitting to No.4 after the 2009 Dublin Santa train season the locomotive worked light engine on Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> January to Whitehead, while to enable No.186 to fulfil a Dublin Easter operation this locomotive transferred light engine back to Dublin on Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> March.

Easter Monday fell on 5<sup>th</sup> April and, complete with TPWS, No.4 worked in pleasant weather two heavily loaded Easter Eggspress trains from Belfast Central to Whitehead and return.

A very unusual working took place on Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> April when Irish Rail at short notice informed NIR that it was dispatching small GM locomotive B142 to Whitehead. The locomotive had been selected for purchase and was crewed by Irish Rail men to Whitehead, with an NIR pilot driver provided from Belfast Central onward. The locomotive transferred to Society ownership after arrival. To date this is the last known working of a 141 class on the mainline (besides Dublin shunting and dock trip workings), under Iarnród Éireann ownership.

The big May tour, the Dalriada Railtour, commenced and finished in Dublin but focused on Northern Ireland Railways, operating over the extended weekend of 6<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> May. This enabled maximum use to be made of both No.4 and No.186. The weekend started on Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> May when NIR GM 113 worked the Society's Mk2 set. The ensemble arrived in Dublin on time without incident.

Friday 7<sup>th</sup> May saw the now customary very popular diesel railtour - The South Wexford Railtour - worked from Dublin Connolly to Rosslare Strand and then across the threatened Rosslare to Waterford line. Return was via Carlow and the Cork main line to Islandbridge Junction and on to Dublin Connolly. Irish Rail's GM 081 worked the fully-booked train throughout the day. Many passengers were anxious to travel in case it proved to be the last chance to sample locomotive haulage on the threatened Rosslare to Waterford line. As it turned out, it was the last locomotive hauled passenger

train before the Irish Rail suspended services from 18<sup>th</sup> September. Good running all day meant that the schedule was maintained, except for a hiccup at Kildare when a local train was pathed in advance of the special.

On Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> May No.186, with an Irish Rail crew, headed for Whitehead. It has been a while since an Irish Rail crew worked a steam train to Belfast and they were no doubt glad to breast the summit near Newry with such a small locomotive. At Belfast Central an NIR crew took over with a prompt departure for Whitehead, where No.4 was waiting to take over. It sported one of the headboards carried on the last spoil train 40 years previously, on Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> May 1970. There was a prompt return to Lisburn for water before a reversal and a non-stop run to Ballymena. Replenished with water, the locomotive sped to Belfast Central for most, and on to Whitehead for others.



*No.4, with “Last Stone Train” headboard, at Ballymena during the “Dalriada” tour on 8<sup>th</sup> May 2010. (C.P. Friel)*

Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> May, bright but chilly, saw No.4 heading the train for Coleraine, with a spirited run to the destination. While the engine was turned, watered and serviced the local eating establishments did an excellent, if unexpected, business. Following a water stop at Ballymena running was purposeful on to Belfast and Whitehead. As the afternoon advanced No.186 hooked onto the train and we were off again, this time to Bangor and return, giving passengers a view from the other side of Belfast Lough.

No.4 once more took the train on Monday 10<sup>th</sup> May and a fine run was experienced to Dublin. After a short stay NIR GM 113 (which had remained in Dublin since Thursday) returned the Mk2 set to Belfast and Whitehead where the railtour ended.

The traditional Tuesday heritage coach tour visited the preserved corn mill in Annalong that had operated until 1965. After lunch at the Harbour Inn restaurant the party set off to the nearby Silent

Valley and Ben Crom reservoirs where a very interesting conducted tour by a representative from Northern Ireland Water explained the history and workings of the fine structures.

The organising of the big annual railtour is a vast task involving numerous members and without that commitment it would not happen. Also deserving of thanks is the dedication of both NIR and Irish Rail footplate crews as they too are prepared to go that extra mile, both literally and metaphorically, to ensure the tour's success. But most of all thanks must go to our participants from Ireland, the ever-faithful Great Britain regulars and to the 19 visitors from the USA, one from New Zealand and two from Norway.



***On 10<sup>th</sup> May 2010 Rita Henderson supplies some nourishment to Eddie Creamer, with Brendan McQuaid, former stationmaster at Dundalk, behind her. The fine condition of that station is largely due to the efforts of the latter gentleman. (C.P. Friel)***

The following Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> May saw No.4 work light engine Dublin to Whitehead. It had not been possible to return No.4 with the train on the previous Monday as the drivers would have been out of their permitted driving hours.

Working under a full line closure late on Sunday evening 23<sup>rd</sup> May No.4, accompanied by 5 Mk2s, undertook a successful series of TPWS brake tests between Whitehead and Belfast.

A welcome charter from the Northern Ireland Housing Executive took place on Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> June. This involved an afternoon start to, and an evening return from, Coleraine in connection with the Executive's Shared Future programme. The formation comprised No.4, 7 Mk2 carriages and Dutch Van. The following day, Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> June, No.4 returned light engine to Dublin to enable a series of early summer trains to operate out of Dublin.

The popular series of Steam and Jazz trains ran on four consecutive Friday evenings commencing on 11<sup>th</sup> June. Except for the first, which was relatively lightly loaded, the trains were largely full. The weather was kind and there was a good reaction to the ever-popular Apex Jazz Band. Unfortunately on the 25<sup>th</sup> June operation a signalling problem at Lisburn prevented No.186 from running round the train and the only solution was to run light engine to Portadown. This added approximately 45 minutes to the planned Lisburn departure time. To compensate, the band played on.

1<sup>st</sup> July proved an eventful evening. Having undergone earlier intensive training on the North York Moors Railway under the supervision on West Coast Railways senior driver assessor Ron Smith it was the turn of two NIR assessors, both rostered as crew, to undergo a follow-up test by Ron. Both passed as steam drivers and firemen. Again, problems with Lisburn signalling meant the train returning from Carrickfergus had to terminate at Belfast Central. Regrettably, one of the assessors took ill on the return carriage working and at Greenisland was removed to hospital. He has since made a strong recovery.

To facilitate a number of Portrush Flyers and other heavy loaded trains No.4 was returned to Whitehead on Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> August, while No.186 was worked south. In an effort to reduce light engine costs the opportunity was taken to operate the transfers as a Steam Enterprise. The day proved to be of mixed fortunes. No.186 kept good time to Dundalk but thereafter clinking of the fire brought about a stop near Kellystown for a blow-up, resulting in arrival in Dublin being somewhat late. No.4 on the return working provided an excellent run home.

Two Portrush Flyers operated on Sundays 22<sup>nd</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> August although steam operated only to Coleraine. With the Portrush Branch line temporarily prohibited to steam locomotives until a planned track relay programme is complete, the Society much appreciated the provision by NIR of a CAF set to take our customers onward to Portrush and back to Coleraine. Passenger loadings were healthy but could have been better. The afternoon excursion to Ballymoney helped supplement the operational income.

Translink once again supported the Portadown-based Country Comes to Town event on Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> September by assisting the Society to provide a steam train as one of the attractions. The late confirmation that the train would operate meant a frantic marketing effort and liaison with the organisers. Many tickets are normally sold on the day but the morning dawned ominously with a light drizzle that by mid-morning had turned into incessant rain which remained for the rest of the day. While numbers were somewhat down on previous years the weather did not deter those Lisburn, Lurgan and Portadown customers from sampling steam and the rail travel experience.

Another welcome charter ran to on Monday 27<sup>th</sup> September to the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum. Over 200 delegates, many leading cardiologists from around the world attending a "Computers in Cardiology" seminar in Belfast, took time out to visit the museum. Behind No.4 they travelled to Bangor and detrained at Cultra on the return journey. All appeared to enjoy the experience.

The annual Broomstick Belle trains to Whitehead operated on Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> October. This is proving to be an ever-popular event but as ever does not see a strong uptake in ticket sales until Halloween week. All children received spooky bags containing seasonal goodies while our own balloon modellers saw that all children received a customised modelled balloon.

To enable the heavily loaded 9-bogie Dublin Santa Trains to operate, No.4 and No.186 transferred on Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> November under the guise of an Autumn Leaves operation. It is good to report that all operated to plan and it was an excellent day out. No.4 with 4 Mk2s and Dutch Van arrived into Connolly platform 5 around 10 minutes early. On the return No.186 was 10 minutes late on leaving but maintained time, arriving into Belfast Central 10 minutes down on the booked schedule. This was an excellent effort by a small goods engine.

Severe winter weather hit Northern Ireland in early December, but the Santa trains, all sold out by late

November, operated to Whitehead on 4<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> December, with a late afternoon working to Lisburn on the 12<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>. Portadown to Lisburn trains ran on Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> December. Over the first weekend trains worked through fresh falls of snow but in bright very cold sunny weather. By the second weekend snowfall had eased but the weather was bitterly cold. The final weekend was the worst, with arctic winds and fresh heavy snow making operating the trains a challenge to say the least. Thankfully, most of our customers made it to Belfast but with some locations well-nigh impossible to access or exit some had to stay at home. A frozen water column in Lisburn delayed our efforts on 5<sup>th</sup> December somewhat, and on Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> December the morning empty carriages working was held at Jordanstown until a failed railcar was removed from Whiteabbey. Our trains operated with delays reducing as the day advanced and our thanks to NIR for ensuring that they still ran.



***Framed by Samson and Goliath, Stephen Glass has No.4 en route to Bangor on 27<sup>th</sup> September 2010. (C.P. Friel)***

In between all the Santa activity a first for the Society was when a Belfast church chartered our train on Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> December under the name of Steam and Carols. The train operated to a mystery destination, Newry, where there was much festive singing in the new station concourse. Before departure the church choir had sung in Belfast Central station, entertaining Translink customers and train passengers alike. It proved to be a very successful evening and could be repeated. A special word of appreciation to the locomotive crew who worked the train tender-first on the return working into a worsening snowstorm.

The final operation of the season, but strictly speaking in the new year (2<sup>nd</sup> January 2011), was the Mince Pie & Mulled Wine train from Belfast to Dublin and return. Traditionally based around yet another locomotive swap, that indeed was the intention this time. No.186 hauled the train southwards and, despite a few watering and hot box detector issues, successfully reached Dublin. However, No.4

was found to have sustained some damage due to the severe frosts over the holiday season and was unfit to travel, this only being discovered when being lit up. No.186 was hastily serviced by the operating crews and returned to the train for the return journey. It was a bit of a struggle to keep up with No.4's schedule and some delays were experienced. However, good running was the order of the day and the passengers and train were delivered to their departure points.

In conclusion, a word of thanks to all the members who worked and assisted to make our trains operate over the past year, during the winter season especially. Without each, too numerous to mention, nothing would have operated. Also to NI Railways and Iarnród Éireann at all levels; practical support from their footplate crews, and to management's co-operation and understanding.



*No.186 has just arrived at Newry with the Carol Train on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2010. (C.P. Friel)*

Finally, as No.4's 10-year operating ticket draws to a close, we see the imminent return to traffic of our Dublin and South Eastern Railway 2-6-0 No.461. This locomotive has undergone a heavy overhaul, with a substantially new copper firebox that should see very many years of renewed service. Work on the overhaul of No.85 is advancing, while hopefully there will be a quick overhaul turn-round for No.4. Operationally the future is encouraging and a refreshed locomotive fleet should encourage passenger patronage.

## **DUBLIN AREA OPERATIONS**

**Stephen Cooke**

It was a year that began and ended with snow and a year which also provided a number of firsts for Dublin operations. The RPSI acquired diesel locomotives in the form of a number of small GMs, while developments on IÉ meant that the RPSI is now the only owner/operator of conventional coaches on the Irish railway system. The year began on 21<sup>st</sup> February, when B141 and B142 hauled a chartered

special to Longford to mark their acquisition. Lineside photographers were rewarded with the sight of the two locos freshly out-shopped in their original 1962 livery, painted by skilled Inchicore paint-shop, hurrying through the snowy landscape. The heritage set was well presented and the leading engine also sported era-appropriate headlamps to complement its 1960s decor. Shortly after this trip B142 went to Whitehead.

The next operation was on 6<sup>th</sup> March when an Irish Traction Group “141 Class Farewell Tour” charter was operated. However, due to the unavailability of such locomotives, an 071 class had to be substituted and 078 left Connolly station on its 135 mile journey to Sligo where any visiting locomotive are now few and far between. Stopping at Dromod on its outward journey for around 2 hours allowed passengers to venture across the road to visit the Cavan and Leitrim Railway, although some opted to quench their thirst at the nearby pub instead! Arrival in Sligo allowed our crews to water the heritage set before re-tracing its footsteps back to Dublin Connolly.



***Heading north on the Dalriada tour, No.186 nears the top of the Wellington bank. (John Friel)***

April saw the first steam operation of the season. On Easter Monday No.186 hauled a modest train of 6 bogies on the Midland line to Mullingar on an “Easter Eggspress” outing in conjunction with our now regular hosts Belvedere House, Gardens and Park. An all-inclusive fare allowed passengers a coach trip to Belvedere where the younger contingent embarked on an egg hunt while their elders absorbed the beautiful surroundings. This is an unusual day for our operations which normally operate on a weekend. A slightly late departure from Mullingar saw a late arrival back in the capital but this did not cause any major issues with our passengers. The month also closed with steam operation when 25<sup>th</sup> April saw a pair of trips made to our regular Santa train haunt of Maynooth with No.186, which was in fine form on the day for some Dublin Shuttles.

Although 2010’s annual May Tour took place mainly on NIR’s rails the now regular Friday diesel tour

was a Dublin operation. “The South Wexford Railtour” was aptly chosen for this year’s outing as speculation had arisen over the line’s rumoured closing. Just a few months later, 081 and six RPSI Mk2s provided passengers with much needed coverage over the line. The clickity-clack of the jointed rail combined with the rumbles of a heavy GM gave passengers a swan-song event as this was the last time a conventional engine and carriages was to visit the line before closure, 106 years after initial opening.

The following day an Iarnród Éireann crew took No.186 up the GNR mainline. This event marked the first time IÉ crews worked a steam special north of the border since Merlin returned to Whitehead in 2004. Despite being a small goods engine No.186 took the feared grades of Kellystown and Wellington banks in her stride on the 113½ mile run between the two cities. The engine was then handed over to the NIR crew.

The first “Sea Breeze” excursion kicked off on 6<sup>th</sup> June when No.4 hauled a train of seven heritage vehicles to the now shortened destination of Wexford. The journey terminated at Wexford, as an increased number of service trains over the line caused pathing issues for the RPSI. Nevertheless, a run from Enniscorthy was provided for the Co. Wexford crowd, the local trip giving passengers a scenic 20 mile journey along the banks of the River Slaney and into Wexford town. The lack of a turntable in Wexford didn’t seem to bother the footplate crews as both good time and steaming caused little or no time loss.

The following trip was again to be a “Sea Breeze” excursion and the mid-summer sun allowed all of the parties involved in the trip to soak up much-needed sun in the renowned sunny south-east. This time arrival at our half-hour stop in Enniscorthy was welcomed by a brass band and the locals even provided interested participants with luscious strawberries that certainly cleansed the palate and put a smile on their faces.

The final “Sea Breeze” outing to Wexford saw the last opportunity of travelling behind the “Jeep” before our Summer season drew to a close. A brisk run down the south-eastern line, together with magnificent coastal views and sounds of a hard working engine, saw the last steam charter leave Wexford on 25<sup>th</sup> July. Well, for another year at least.

The 8<sup>th</sup> August saw No.186 once again return to Dublin to finish out the Autumn season and a trip to Wicklow two weeks later went without any hitches. The 50 mile round trip returned to Dublin at around four in the evening and gave the crews a chance to enjoy a relaxing day. The final steam special of the year before the busy Santa season was, like the beginning of the year, a twice return trip to Maynooth which saw our age-old No.186 lift, again, a load of six bogies up the steep bank of Glasnevin Junction to Liffey Junction. A packed train-load of passengers were pleased to see the sun lingering in the skies that little bit longer before the arrival of Autumn.

The “Best of Both” railtour again saw a contingent of diesel enthusiasts travel on the RPSI heritage set. A unique trip down to Arklow and return to Dublin saw the loco-hauled train arrive on platform 7 before it continued to Mullingar to collect the newly out-shopped Bar Car 1514 that had been converted from an open standard to a newly laid out bar facility by our Mullingar team. Passengers looked on in amazement when a feathered signal aspect meant that the train, headed by 073, was routed down the Newcomen Junction line before rejoining the MGWR line at Glasnevin. Unfortunately, due to brake problems on the day, 1514 was left behind and was hauled back on the 30<sup>th</sup> October by 083 with Society’s 1916 providing the brake for the short formation.

2010 will perhaps be best remembered for its Santa season, if not the events that could possibly have prevented them from taking place. In what was probably the harshest winter in half a century the inclement weather certainly tested the strengths of RPSI and IÉ crews alike. However, while the accumulation of snow and ice had caused havoc on the majority of other transport networks, our annual

Santa season was not going to be hampered and all concerned just got on with it! The sub-zero temperatures froze the water tanks on the Cravens which did prevent us providing toilet facilities on the first weekend, but these problems were resolved the following week.

In the midst of the snow, on 5<sup>th</sup> December, it was time to say a fond farewell to our senior driver Dan Renehan. Having started his steam career alongside his brother Tony in 1968, the efforts they contributed over five memorable decades will not be soon forgotten. The Renehan brothers were the first generation of diesel drivers to begin to learn the workings of steam locomotives. Much of their extensive knowledge was acquired from men who had regularly worked with steam throughout the late thirties and during the grim emergency years. Thankfully, their knowledge has been passed on to the drivers who will now succeed them and we look forward to seeing the brothers travelling on our steam trains in the near future instead of on the footplate.



*During the Dublin Santa workings No.4 draws its train into the Boston sidings. (B. Solomon)*

The following weekend's train saw a temporary end to the snowy conditions which was a particularly welcome sight to the RPSI and IÉ crews and of course the passengers! On 19<sup>th</sup> December the final Santa train arrived back at Pearse Station with joyous yet fatigued crew. With close to 5,000 passengers enjoying Santa, selection boxes and steam over a three week period it was certainly another successful year for the RPSI. Luckily the adversities of blizzards and bank bailouts didn't make a huge impact on passenger numbers and we would like to thank our loyal passengers, hardworking volunteers and the staff of Iarnród Éireann at all levels who together helped make this year's operations a success.

## **DSER TURNS FROM 1960 TO THE END OF STEAM**

**David Houston**

The summer 1960 timetable saw the virtual closure of five halts between Westland Row and Dun Laoghaire, thus eliminating the largely steam worked locals to that point. However, steam workings did not vanish altogether, for the Dun Laoghaire boat trains continued on as usual.

At this time on a normal weekday four steam locomotives were required to work the service in the morning, and three worked in the evening. The first working of the day was the Dun Laoghaire goods which comprised about six wagons and van and ran from North Wall Midland yard, departing at approximately 05:30. This train sometimes worked to Dalkey and back to Dun Laoghaire if traffic offered. The locomotive off this turn then worked to Westland Row on the 07:10 boat train.

The second locomotive worked down with the 05:45 empty stock from Westland Row, and returned there with the 07:30 from the Pier.

The third locomotive worked light from Broadstone shed to work the 07:37 to Kingsbridge where it was then available for most of the morning as pilot.

Finally, the fourth locomotive ran light from Broadstone to Westland Row to work the 08:00 to Dun Laoghaire Pier, shunted Dun Laoghaire yard and worked the first parcel post vans to Westland Row.



***Ex-GN S class No.174 "Carrantuohill" shunts the 'Gas Tanks' at Dublin Amiens Street on 25<sup>th</sup> September 1960. (D. Houston)***

The locomotive off the 07:10 from the Pier returned on the 08:30 ex Westland Row and, although its next duty was to take any remaining post vans back to town, it frequently ran light through to Broadstone. The locomotives off the 07:30 and 07:37 trains also returned to Broadstone during the course of the morning, but the fourth remained at Westland Row, mainly to shunt the meat factory sidings. About 12:30 this locomotive worked what was known as the 'Gas Tanks' to Inchicore. Comprising principally empty oil gas tank wagons for recharging, this working was also used as a method of getting diesel locomotives and railcars to the shops when Grand Canal Street depot could not affect repairs. This train returned from Inchicore at about 14:00 - generally comprising two gas tank wagons and a goods brake van, although at this period quite often one or two condemned locomotives could be included, destined for Dundalk. On arrival in Westland Row the locomotive shunted the yard

until its next booked turn - the 18:35 parcel post and boat train to Dun Laoghaire Pier.

The other two locomotives required for the evening boat trains left Broadstone at about 16:00 and usually ran light to Dun Laoghaire coupled together to work the 18:30 and 18:50 from the Pier respectively, then working the 19:10 and 19:50 back from Westland Row.



***J9 0-6-0 No.354 with the 13:23 Westland Row to Dun Laoghaire prepares to leave Westland Row on 11<sup>th</sup> June 1960. (D. Houston)***

After the three down boat trains had arrived in Dun Laoghaire two locomotives returned to Westland Row with post from the inward sailing, and the third shunted the quays before working to North Wall with any goods traffic offering. All three locomotives were usually back in Broadstone by 22:30.

The foregoing gives an idea of the steam operations on a normal Monday-Friday in the summer. Saturday usually produced two extra locomotives in the morning to cater for the extra sailings, but three locomotives usually sufficed in the evening. Sunday rarely produced steam - none was rostered - but I have known some fine Sundays when up to four locomotives would be seen on seaside trains, and this meant that the boat trains were worked by steam also; two locomotives in the morning and one in the evening. Thus we have a fair idea of the steam picture in the summer of 1960.

Winter 1960 showed little change in the locomotive requirements; four locomotives still being required in the morning, and three in the evening on weekdays. However a most interesting development took place in relation to the Saturday service. The first Saturday of the winter timetable saw a return to steam of the 13:10 Amiens Street-Greystones and its 14:32 return. This was a Saturdays only working, and as such did not fit into a diesel diagram, hence the return to steam. The locomotive booked for this turn was usually the best that Broadstone could provide, and No.197 "Lough Neagh" spent quite some time on this turn until being replaced by No.261 which was ex-shops from Inchicore. After working these turns the locomotive went to Westland Row and remained there until boat train time.

April 1961 saw the end of Broadstone shed, and about half of its allocation was transferred to Amiens Street, the remainder being dispatched for scrapping. The summer 1961 timetable brought a big change on the South Eastern in that all trains were now rostered for diesel haulage. This was indeed a shock, but was bound to come about at some time. However, although total dieselisation did come about, it did not last. The small margin of surplus diesels that CIÉ had always worked with did not allow for any extra traffic in connection with additional sailings, and 2<sup>nd</sup> May saw the reappearance of steam on special workings. Very soon after - the next week in fact - steam started a gradual comeback, the diesels becoming scarcer as the months passed.



***13 class 0-6-2T passes Sandymount with an unidentified working on an unrecorded date in the 1960s. (D. Houston)***

In winter time diesels are even harder to come by, and the winter of 1961 was no exception. Everything was back to steam with the exception of the 19:50 to the Pier. The steam diagrams carried on where they had left off, with this one exception, and even the down evening Rosslare service could be seen quite often leaving Amiens Street behind a T2 tank or a J5 0-6-0, going of course to Westland Row only to change to a diesel locomotive off the shed at Grand Canal Street.

As a result of the 19:50 boat train being dieselised - they got the locomotive for this simply by running the up Galway mail through to Dun Laoghaire minus the TPOs - an extra empty train had to run up from Dun Laoghaire in the evening, loading to nine bogies at times. It was worked by steam as the class 121 diesel locomotive off the Galway was not allowed to haul the train nose-front.

Christmas, as in former years, provided non-stop steam activity on boat and postal trains, running virtually round the clock in the week coming up to Christmas, and again for a week or so afterwards. Things remained static for the rest of the 1961/2 winter, and the summer of 1962 was virtually the same as the summer of 1960. One interesting move, however, was that the up Galway mail to the Pier - 19:50

ex Westland Row - was often steam for the last section, loading to 12 bogies sometimes, and often 11 bogies. This was quite a task for a J15 or T2 tank, and of course the return empty train was also steam hauled.

By the end of the summer of 1962 it became obvious that steam would not last very much longer, not only on the South Eastern section, but also on CIÉ as a whole. The locomotive stock was reducing rapidly, and there were now another 50 diesel locomotives in service or on order. Thus, although steam was commonplace at the beginning of the winter 1962/3 timetable, by Christmas it had got very scarce. Then February 1963 saw the very end of steam, except for enthusiasts' specials.



***Ex GN UG class 0-6-0 No.80 with an Up working at Dun Laoghaire Pier station in 1962.  
(D. Houston)***

From what I have written it will be seen that the 20 miles of line from Dublin to Greystones, and in particular the seven miles to Dun Laoghaire remained a lively pocket of steam right up to the very end. However, enough of the 'historical' aspect, and more details of the locomotives used.

In 1960 Broadstone had about 30 locomotives in working order on its books, along with about 15 locomotives which were very doubtful runners. Of the serviceable locomotives, about ten were ex GN which were quite often interchanged with locomotives at Amiens Street, Drogheda and Dundalk, so the actual locomotives varied quite a lot, and those used latterly on an average day on the DSE were usually three ex GN and one CIÉ locomotive. Consistent performers were No.197 and No.203 and tank No.3. No.203 was not a popular locomotive with crews, being in run-down condition on transfer to Broadstone.

My very last runs with steam took place on 9<sup>th</sup> February 1963. UG No.80 was provided for a rugby special for the short run from Amiens Street to Lansdowne Road - a footplate run fittingly, given the occasion - and J15 No.172 worked the return special to Amiens Street. So ended an era!

Looking back now to the last years of steam on CIÉ which, as it happened, had a strong focus on my local line, they were great days. Lots of motive power variety and friendly footplate crews, resulting in numerous footplate trips; some sprightly running at times too. And all happening within 20 yards of my hall door - what more could an enthusiast want?

## **DAN RENEHAN: A RETIREMENT TRIBUTE**

**J.A. Cassells**

---

Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> December would have seemed to most passengers like just another day of Santa trains in Dublin. But it marked the end of an era, for when driver Dan Renehan stepped down from No.4 at the end of the shift not only a forty three year railway career, but also a whole chapter in the history of Irish main line steam came to an end. In January 2009 his brother Tony's career finished on the footplate of the same engine: almost two years later four decades of linkage between the RPSI and the Renehan family finally come to an end. Dan's retirement was marked in the time-honoured way with a fusillade of detonators from his colleagues at Connolly Depot, and travelling in the train on his final run were three other retirees: John Kealy, George Dunne and Ray Kearns, who along with Dan had aggregated a total of over 160 years of railway service!

Railways were in the blood of the Renehan household. Bill O'Reilly, the loco foreman at Amiens Street, Tommy Leahy loco controller at Inchicore and John Doyle, the senior Works Policeman, were all friends of the family, and from their earliest days Dan and Tony were no strangers to engine sheds and loco footplates. As young lads they were privileged to meet not only the last of the steam crews in the Dublin area, but also the Great Northern and NCC men who saw out steam on the UTA at the end of the 1960s. Throughout his own career Dan often recalled the wealth of experience, and the fund of railway stories, he began to accumulate in those early days. Railway enthusiasts as well as railway employees, Dan and Tony became members of the IRRS and RPSI: one of their earliest railtours as passengers was the IRRS's 1961 tour of the Dublin area with ex GNR JT No 91. Throughout their careers they have made good friends on both sides of the footplate, fascinating - and educating - lay enthusiasts with their insights into their work.

In addition, Dan has written extensively over the years in the IRRS Journal, in Five Foot Three and in the brochures produced for our May railtours, and his work has covered both the steam era and the development of diesel power on CIÉ. His article on "GM Locomotives Ten Years On" in the IRRS Journal must rank as one of the finest studies of modern traction development in Irish railway literature. Just one aspect of the hobby has always left him cold: whereas his brother Tony is an avid student of locomotive performance, train timing is one topic in which Dan has no interest at all!

Young men of their generation were too late to have started as traditional loco cleaners - the last steam enginemen were employed by CIÉ when Tony was 6 and Dan was 2! - but the brothers eventually fulfilled their real ambition by way of the Traffic Department. While Tony's first experience of the footplate was as a snatcher man on the Midland goods and mail trains, Dan learned a lot about railway operation (and also unofficially about engine driving) during his time as a banking guard at the North Wall. It was a bustling place in those days - three yards with associated stores, ten shunting pilots and a huge workforce. Any train over 24 wagons was banked if a 20-ton van was provided: up to 33 wagons were banked to North Strand Junction, and anything in excess of that to Cabra. Some years ago Dan wrote a fascinating description of his early career in Five Foot Three - one of the few accounts in print of the work of a goods guard in the loose-coupled era.

The turning point in Dan's life came in 1969, the year he became old enough to apply for a transfer from the Traffic to the Locomotive Department. After the same rigorous training that his brother Tony had undergone three years previously, he too passed out as a diesel driver. But the story had really begun the previous year, when Dan and Tony expressed an interest in being "support crew" in September 1968 for a steam outing to Kilkenny for which the RPSI hired No.186 to the IRRS. Colbert

Dunne (“The Healer”) and Gussie Leonard were the crew that day, and the young Renehans clearly impressed them. The following year the lads volunteered on the same basis for the RPSI “Brian Boru” tour to Cork and Limerick. Thereafter they became willing students under the instruction of senior Inspector Ned Comerford, a man who had a great influence on Dan’s career from 1970 until he transferred to Connolly shed in 1982. Ned had been a main line fireman since the 1940s: his exhaustive knowledge of the rulebook, insistence on correct procedures, and total intolerance of any short-cuts were a formative influence on many young men, Dan Renehan included.



***IE driver Robbie Jolley presides over colleague Dan Renehan, an astonishingly hirsute Santa and an Elf. (B. Solomon)***

Dan and Tony appeared so regularly on steam engine footplates over the following twenty years that it was sometimes hard to remember that their ‘real’ job was in diesel cabs. But they were refining their experience all the time, and it was a matter of great pride when, duly examined, they both passed out as steam drivers. Dan’s familiar black beret was replaced by a driver’s cap for the first time on 11<sup>th</sup> May 1991 when he took his place as the rostered driver on No.461. Of the many turns he worked over the following twenty years, he remembered particularly his 1994 experience with No.171 from Dublin to Dundalk, with NIR fireman Noel Playfair: “I often travelled on ‘S’ classes on the GNR, but I never thought I would have the chance to drive one on that hallowed main line”, was his recollection of a grand day.

Over the years Dan has had his hand on the regulator of every RPSI main line engine, and brought steam into every terminus on Irish Rail - even over NIR into Belfast Central as well. Whether coaxing steam out of shy engines, or keeping fast ones under control, he has thoroughly enjoyed himself as a steam driver and fireman. He has been a guide, supervisor, counsellor and friend to the rising

generation of trainee enginemmen, to RPSI footplate reps and to serious enthusiasts keen to know more about the job. His encyclopaedic acquaintance with the railway system has solved most problems: not every driver would know, for example, that dry sand could be got in Clonsilla! Few things - with the possible exception of the turntable at Claremorris - have ever defeated him. Most of all, he and Tony have on many, many occasions, made themselves available regardless of their own comfort and domestic arrangements - just so that the RPSI wouldn't be let down, or so that an engine could be got home, whatever the disruption. That kind of selfless devotion to duty was part of the tradition they were born into, and as a Society we have relied on it time and time again.

Ever the rounded man, Dan Renehan in retirement will surely have more time for his interests in history, opera, and overseas travel, and hopefully will continue to write on railway affairs. His greatest legacy to this Society will certainly be the young men he has educated into the second post-steam generation on Irish Rail, and the advice he has passed on to RPSI workers, not least our representatives on the footplates of countless steam tours. Dan - and Tony - thanks for everything, and enjoy a long and happy retirement!

## THE GUINNESS IS GOOD

Mark Walsh

It has been a busy year for the RPSI and the Society's first loco has been quietly pulling more than its weight at Whitehead to ensure that operations and restoration work can continue unhindered. Shunting is one of those trades which have largely disappeared from the modern railway, but it is one occupation which the RPSI has excelled in preserving; the Whitehead site often being likened to a game where you have 16 squares, 15 numbers in the wrong order and one free space to play with.

In this environment No.3BG both excels and is frequently required - she had 26 days in steam during 2010 including two consecutive late nights shunting the MRSI train, acting as a much needed yard pilot during the May Railtour and featuring in the launch of Diner 87. A shunt with No.3BG is the perfect training ground for the next generation of mainline RPSI loco representatives and keeps up the skills of those already on the ladder. She offers a more relaxed environment, with shorter steam raising times than for the mainline, and less experienced people can get hands-on with the engine and deal with any issues that arise and become involved in the shunting operation. Each day starts with No.3BG's diminutive bunker, which perhaps holds half of a tonne, getting filled by gangs shovelling coal from the bucket of the loading shovel at the platform end. On a typical day she will not burn any more than this and will not require a refill of her tank.

Each year there are summer Train Rides within the Whitehead site - and increasingly, specials such as Schools Days and Victorian Day to tie in with a Whitehead-wide community event. Indeed, it has been learnt that Train Rides draw more interest when they are run in conjunction with Whitehead Community or national events. In 2010 these operations ran on 24<sup>th</sup> July (Whitehead Community Day), 25<sup>th</sup> July, 1<sup>st</sup> August, 12<sup>th</sup> September (European Architectural Open Day) and 27<sup>th</sup> November (Victorian Day). Throughout these days a total of 997 people travelled and over £2,500 was lifted in fares, shop and tea bar - so these open days are definitely worth the effort. Indeed, on these days the proportion of younger faces is larger each year, leading one more experienced member to suggest he starts adding an 'X' after his name to indicate limited mileage although I do not think we are at that stage yet. *[For the uninitiated, at the UTA takeover many GN engines received an X to denote withdrawal when next needing major repair! - Ed.]*

Three years ago a new friend for No.3BG emerged in the form of brake van No.81 'Ivan' who performed on all the train rides bar 27<sup>th</sup> November when it was wrapped in cotton wool at the back of the carriage shed for the winter and the priority was using 462's steam heat on a wintry day. 'Ivan' was of course restored by the Society's Youth team (see FFT No.54), which numbered ten at the time and which now numbers fifteen. It is pleasing to note here that all the original ten have stuck with the RPSI

and the expanding team have since refurbished Diner 87 to become a small exhibits museum and continue its role as tea car on open days.

Ex LMS-NCC first/second compo coach 68 is now on the stocks being refurbished, in large part due to grant assistance from the NIMC, and is intended to emerge in the summer to complement No.3BG and Ivan on Train Rides and offer the public a more period experience than the current stalwart metal Mk2 181 can provide. In the case of 87 and 68 it was felt by Youths that it was a case of “use them or lose them” and this is a way of ensuring they both earn their keep and their place in the carriage shed.



*A good head on the Guinness? Temporarily unemployed on 18<sup>th</sup> December 2010. (C.P. Friel)*

While no single project has conjured up the same universal interest and cohesion amongst the Youths as ‘Ivan’ did, there are a number of projects on the cards which they are contributing to - refurbishment of the brakes and seating areas of 463, the total overhaul of 935, locomotives No.461 and No.85 (including seeking a grant for her tender), as well as on-going running maintenance of the operational steam locomotives, Unilok and coaling shovels. It is also still the aim to signal the yard once we get a secure perimeter fence.

All those in the Youth team are very much aware that at some stage the responsibility for ensuring the RPSI continues will be on their shoulders. It should be extremely gratifying for Philip Lockett that in addition to those he coaxed in 2006 to restore ‘Ivan’ there have been more active volunteers recruited. Two of the original “Youths” have served on Council, one has become Locomotive Running Officer and another his assistant, two have become employed as apprentices at Whitehead, and one may well become a future carriage officer. All are very keen that Irish steam should survive through their generation. It could perhaps be said that no Northern Operations could now run without their input at Whitehead towards getting the trains out. And of course they started Hunslet 102 too, but that was just

being show-offs!

## EMLY RAILWAY STATION

Nicholas Ryan-Purcell

Emly Railway Station was located at Mile Post 113½ on the Dublin to Cork mainline between Limerick Junction and Charleville. It was opened on the 1<sup>st</sup> January 1880. The total cost of building the station was £1,830.

Initially, in addition to the stationmaster, employees included three signalmen and three linesmen. The linesmen walked the permanent way from Emly to the Boro Road Bridge, then from Emly to halfway to Knocklong station, making a daily check on the security of track keys. Unlike modern track fastenings, these were little blocks of oak about 8 inches by 3¼ inches by 2½ inches, securing the rail in cast iron chairs which was fastened to the sleepers. Occasionally, keys would get loose or fall out due to the vibration of the trains and had to be driven back in using a large hammer.



*Emly station, looking towards Limerick Junction. The main station buildings are on the Down side. Beyond "Bagnall's Bridge" the signal cabin and signalman's house are on the left and right of the level crossing. The sidings and goods store were adjacent to the Up line which has since been lifted, while the crossings were replaced by an automatic barrier. (N. Ryan-Purcell collection)*

The stationmaster lived in a detached house at the left-hand side of the road, just before the Level Crossing.

At one time Stephen Barry Walsh's coal company of Kilmallock had one of their coal stores in Emly Railway Station. The company also had coal stores in other stations such as Buttevant, Croom and Limerick Junction.

The coal shed was approximately 25 feet wide, 50 feet long and 10 feet high. The roof was made from

timber trusses and was covered in heavy layers of felt which occasionally needed to be tarred to prevent water seeping in. The back of the shed was blocked off with sleepers standing upright, while the front was open. There was a siding alongside the coal shed for storing or unloading goods. Turf, coal or coke was discharged into the yard or the shed. Turf was tipped as close to the shed as possible before being put into the shed, using a turf fork.

In the coal shed were scales with a large scoop. The scales were capable of weighing up to one cwt (hundred weight = 50kg). Customers came as far away as Templebraden, Kilross, Kildeely, a mile beyond Galbally and beyond Lattin.



***“Bagnall’s Bridge”. (N. Ryan-Purcell)***

Open wagons were used for coal, coke and turf. Covered wagons were for goods that should not get wet. The cattle wagons had dividing gaps on the sides and on the top to let in fresh air.

Adjacent to the coal shed was an office with a telephone. This had a handle which had to be cranked to call the post office. In those days, people had to telephone the post office to get put through to another house or a business. The telephone number of the post office was Emly 4.

There was a fireplace in the office to keep warm during the winter months. A weighbridge for weighing the horses’ carts was alongside the office.

In October 1951/1952, over 80 wagons of cattle were loaded at the station. On Fair Days the local children always had the day off from school.

Water had to be hand-pumped to supply the station toilets. At one time, a signman, Tim Lowry, grew strawberries but as they were alongside his garden railings, they were often picked by passers-by.

On one particular year, the National Farmers Association ran a train from Emly to Dublin for the Spring Show. Posters at every station advertised the running of the train. The NFA guaranteed CIÉ that there would be approximately 300 people from Emly for the train, which stopped at Charleville, Kilmallock, Knocklong, Emly, Limerick Junction, Dundrum, Goold’s Cross and on to Dublin, where it arrived in Dublin at 10:00. Buses brought them from Kingsbridge Station to the show. The train left

Kingsbridge at 19:00 that evening.

At one time a group of people travelled to Youghal every Sunday, being picked up at Emly at 11am and arriving back that evening at 18:00.

The mail train, which travelled very slowly, collected mail at Emly at midnight and also at Limerick Junction and Dundrum.

Emly station was closed on 9<sup>th</sup> September 1963. The 'Bagnall's Bridge' footbridge was moved to Birr, County Offaly, in 1979 to provide access to the Camcor Park.

---

## **BILLY STEENSON**

**J.A. Cassells**

---

Billy Steenson's death, just over seventy years since he joined the railway in 1941, removes yet another of the enginemen who were still driving steam trains regularly at the time the RPSI came into existence in 1964. A larger than life character, he was never short of a story, or a memory of some stunning footplate achievement. Not infrequently he would regale railway company with the tale of how he and Jimmy Keenan on mogul 93 ran like the wind to Ballymena on the 5:40 Derry, intent on claiming the prize of two pints which would be left beside the water column until 6:10, but no later!



*The late Harry Ramsey and Billy Steenson with Jeep No.52 which, although one of the younger of its class, was among the first group to be withdrawn in 1965. (J.A. Cassells)*

As a fireman at York Road in the early 1950s, Billy numbered among his contemporaries many of those who saw out steam on NIR and later crewed RPSI trains from the 1970s to the early 1990s: men like Tom Crymble, Rab Graham, Willie Gillespie, Percy Mitchell, Jack McAuley, Davie McDonald, Willie McKenna, Harry Ramsey, R.J. ("Batman") Simpson and Bertie Wright. Among them too was Archie Morrow, well remembered in the RPSI, whose career as a steam driver was to take him across the world to the East African Railways.

From the 1960s onwards, Billy was a familiar figure on the footplate, in the shed foreman's office at York Road, and finally in Belfast Control until his retirement. Though his strident tones became more than familiar over the radios in diesel cabs throughout the system, his first love of steam never left him. A visitor to his dismal portakabin in the last, pathetic, days of the old York Road station came upon an animated argument involving Billy, Bobby Vance and George Greer - about the relative merits of the Scotch Engines they'd fired as young lads!

He took a considerable interest in our engines: a quiet Sunday afternoon would often find him giving vocal, and occasionally pungent, counsel to small groups of Society members who worked on the Guinness engine and No.186 when they were based at York Road. Visiting enthusiasts were never turned away - though if they didn't have an RPSI badge, they were required to buy one from him before being allowed to look around the shed! On occasion, Billy filled in as loco inspector on the Portrush Flyer, and a well-known newspaper photo of the 1970s showed him with a battered teapot pouring a cup of tea for the late Willie Graham who was firing that day. A couple of years ago he was brought to Ballymena for a last look at No.4. Frail as he was by then, he still had the capacity for some robust badinage with the engine crew.

Another link with the age of steam now broken, and the Society extends its sympathy to Billy's family circle in their loss.

## **LESSER KNOWN FACTS - THE SWILLY**

**W.T. Scott**

---

The Londonderry & Lough Swilly Railway, to give it its full title, had almost 100 miles of track actually in County Donegal. Its title was impressive but in fact its Derry terminus was almost on the city boundary and Lough Swilly could only be seen for about five miles from Tooban Junction to Buncrana where the line turned inland towards Carndonagh. On the way to Carn, as it was called by the men, the most northerly station in Ireland, Rashenny, was passed. The line from Tooban Junction via Letterkenny to Gweedore and Burtonport gave a view only of the mudflats at the southern end of Lough Swilly. Burtonport station was built on a rough rocky shore with great loads of rock brought in to level it and it survives today even after 70 years of neglect. The 10 miles from Gweedore to Burtonport was through the Rosses, a barren, treeless and thinly populated area.

The only junction on the Swilly was at Tooban where it was surrounded by the Rivers Skeog and Burnfoot. Its only access, other than by train, was by a two-plank bridge over the Burnfoot. Although some interchange of goods took place there few, if any, passengers bought tickets to Tooban!

The station had a long island platform, either side of which could be used by trains from any direction. Joe Cassells has suggested elsewhere that the GNR(I) had the shortest signal arms in Ireland but there were a couple at Tooban which would come a close second. The signal cabin there was manned by John Doherty who had a hunch back and on my visits I sometimes helped by pulling a few levers for him. There was also a tame crow which perched on the cabin for food. Tooban's only other feature was a fine diamond crossing at the end of the station.

The Swilly's Derry terminus was called Graving Dock, after a little dock owned by the Harbour Commissioners. It was the ugliest building on any railway and passengers sometimes walked past it, not realising its function! The further one got from Derry, the more handsome the stations became. Buncrana had an impressive two-storey building of local stone dressed with yellow brick. Ballymagan, Rashenny and Clonmany also had fine two-storey buildings, while Carndonagh was similar to Clonmany but larger. The stations on the Letterkenny to Burtonport extension were often two-storey, as at Kilmacrennan, and were said to be the only two-storey buildings in West Donegal! Many of the stations, however, had a serious drawback in that they were a long way from the villages they purported to serve. A station name with the suffix "Road" guaranteed the traveller a good walk to the

village, as at Kincasslagh Road and Dunfanaghy Road.

Apart from its inconveniently placed stations the Swilly did not believe in pampering its passengers: the trains were not steam-heated and lighting was by acetylene gas, although later a crude electrical system using bus batteries was installed. Third class carriages had wooden seats and even in first class the upholstery was thin. Second class survived until 1929 and had cushions on the seats but not on their backs.



***4-6-2T No.16 in 1931 at Ballyliffin, where no urgency is apparent. The station, ¼ mile short of being Ireland's most northerly, exemplifies the Swilly's substantial buildings. (Real Photographs, W.T. Scott collection)***

The most striking vehicles on the Swilly were the three covered bogie wagons, 89-91, intended for the Burtonport fish traffic - dead fish paid better than live passengers! The high noon for passenger traffic on the Swilly was during the first World War when trains ran out to Fahan carrying girls to entertain the crews of Royal Navy warships based at Fahan and Buncrana. This service revived in WW2 when up to nine trains ran between Derry and Buncrana from 5:00am to 9:45pm; some were Saturdays only. A corresponding service ran in the up direction with extra trains in the morning to carry workers into Derry.

Unlike most Irish railways of the time, the Swilly numbered its trains. Trains crossed at Tooban Junction, e.g. No.1, the 8:00am ex-Derry, crossed No.11, the 8:10am ex-Buncrana. Tooban Junction was at its busiest around 11:50am, when three trains arrived - Nos.23 from Letterkenny, 21 from Derry and 13 from Buncrana.

The Swilly was also involved in maritime activities; it ran a motor boat service, weather permitting, from Fahan on the Buncrana line to Rathmullan and also used a paddle steamer "Lake of Shadows" (another name for Lough Swilly) until about 1930.

Weather conditions, with gales gusting to 100 mph, greatly affected the Swilly. The Owencarrow

disaster is well known. I had the privilege, in August 1952, of travelling on the footplate from Derry to Letterkenny with John Hannigan who had been the fireman on that evil night of 30<sup>th</sup> January 1925 and he gave me his own account. He had had to walk three miles through the gale to Creeslough to get help. By coincidence, he was the driver of the engine which hauled the last lifting train over the Owencarrow viaduct in 1947. The viaduct was a structure of great pride to the Swilly crews and John was sad to know that he would never cross it again.



***4-8-0 No.12 with a mixed train at Burtonport on 24<sup>th</sup> June 1937. After closure of the line beyond Letterkenny in 1947 No.12 worked the lifting train, subsequently lying out of use at Letterkenny until sold for scrap in 1953. (H.C. Casserley/W.T. Scott collection)***

The Swilly had at least four other wind-related accidents - at Pluck in 1884, Owencarrow in 1906, Dunfanaghy in 1922 and Crolly in 1923. The management finally heeded advice from the government and put 4 cwt of iron in each compartment of the Burtonport line carriages and installed an anemometer at Dunfanaghy Road where a wind speed of 112 mph was recorded in 1927. When wind velocity reached 60 mph open wagons were not allowed in the train and above 80 mph all trains were cancelled. Despite their weather problems the Swilly were lucky at Owencarrow in 1925 as the gust which blew the carriages off the line occurred at a point where there was a short embankment between the girders and the masonry arches. If the gale had struck a few seconds earlier the train would have been lifted off and fallen over 40ft to the valley below, making a disaster approaching Tay Bridge proportions.

The Owencarrow viaduct was 380 yards long and 40 feet high; it had two masonry arches and fifteen girder spans. The girder spans were of wrought iron while the vertical piers were of cast iron. It was the largest viaduct on the Irish narrow gauge. In addition to the Owencarrow the company had two other viaducts to maintain - Barnes Gap, just before the Owencarrow, 60 yards long and 60 feet high, and Faymore, an 8-span 50ft high girder structure near Creeslough. Also, on the Carndonagh extension there was Marndoran bridge. These structures cost a lot to maintain and it is not surprising that the

Swilly kept maintenance to a minimum, thereby earning reprimands from the Board of Trade.

It is commonly suggested that narrow gauge railways were built for cheapness but they were not cheap. £5,000 per mile would be a low estimate and to this should be added the cost of transshipment where broad and narrow gauge met. It was claimed that less land would be needed than for the broad gauge but land was cheap in West Donegal which the Swilly tried to serve. Parliament said the west of Ireland needed light railways to serve the decreasing population but the problem arose because of the confusion between light railways and narrow gauge railways. Light railways meant something on the French lines style, running through the countryside with few station buildings or signals, whereas narrow gauge railways in most of Ireland meant main lines of 3ft gauge but built to 5' 3" gauge standards. The Swilly's hinterland lay in the "congested districts board". A government report stated "there were two classes in the congested districts - the poor and the destitute, the former helping the latter". Neither class was capable of providing the railway with much revenue and for its income the Burtonport line depended on fish landed at that port. This declined during WW1 as German naval activity saw fewer trawlers venturing out. Fish traffic from Lough Swilly stopped when Buncrana became a naval base and only naval vessels could use it. The Swilly never recovered from WW1 and the Troubles which followed it.

It is hoped to deal with the Swilly's varied locomotive fleet in the next issue of Five Foot Three.

## **IRWIN C. PRYCE**

**Nelson Poots**

In May 2010 all those who knew him were saddened to hear of the death, from a pulmonary embolism, of Irwin Pryce, at the early age of 64. Many had wondered what the C in the familiar initials of ICP stood for - his funeral service revealed that it stood for Coleston.

Unlike Irwin, who was a RPSI founder member, I only got involved in 1970 but before long we seemed to get on well together and thus there began a long friendship which was not inhibited by his being an inveterate train timer, whereas I have never had any such interest. Much later, we ended up living quite near each other and would take turns as to whose car to use to go to Whitehead. Perhaps due to advancing years, we would often spend some time discussing whose turn it was!

There appeared to be something dynastic about his name, whereby he was Irwin IV and his son is Irwin V. His railway pedigree was sound, his father having risen through the ranks in the GNR Traffic Department, serving variously as relief signalman and goods guard before he joined the elite group of guards working the Enterprise Express. His final appointment was as station inspector at Great Victoria Street, hardly deigning to acknowledge the existence of the UTA who became his employers after 1958. Irwin delighted to recount how his father would unpick the green piping from the trousers of a new uniform, and substitute black GNR bone buttons for the UTA silver ones. In addition to facilitating his travels, this ensured that ICP's first, but by no means only, love was the GNR, and in the early 1960s he managed to combine study with railway photography in locations in the Goraghwood area. Many a Saturday the faithful "Runwell" bicycle would be unloaded from the 8:15 in preparation for a day's photography down at Knockarney, or up to Mullaghglass and over to Adavoyle. At times, photography was mixed with other non-railway activity. Ian Wilson recalls one glorious autumn day in 1963 when Irwin appeared with his bike at Goraghwood for the 2:45. Having stowed the machine in the van, he arrived in the compartment triumphantly bearing a large plastic bag filled with blackberries, the harvesting of which had filled the time between the trains he had been photographing. However, the passage of a fast run to Portadown was interrupted by the appearance of what appeared to be large drops of blood on the Pryce logbook. A few moments confusion followed before it became apparent that the plastic bag, now residing on the luggage rack, was far from watertight and was now dripping copious quantities of blackberry juice on to the seats.

Despite this duality of effort he subsequently emerged from Queen's University with a BSc in Chemistry and took up a teaching post in Ballygomartin (later Cairnmartin) Secondary School, where he eventually became head of department. A side-effect of this was that, in my former occupation, he and I would occasionally compare notes on youths who had absented themselves from their studies to carry out depredations in North Down. He could also give the pedigree of many of those from the Shankill area who had achieved infamy during the Troubles!

Irwin was not merely content to time and photograph trains but had a comprehensive knowledge of how locomotives worked and of those who worked on them. This was not confined to the GNR, nor to Ireland, nor even to the British Isles as from the early 1970s he had made several excursions to Europe with like-minded friends. The first of my many trips with him in Ireland and to other lands was to Portugal in 1975 and, like him, I became interested not just in "all our yesterdays" Irish steam but in working steam worldwide. Perhaps due to an aversion to exposing himself to any more sun than was required for a good photo, he showed no interest in visiting Cuba, to which I made several annual pilgrimages until 2003. Our last trip abroad was to China in 2005, by which time "genuine" steam was almost over worldwide.

In 1983 the two of us did a trip to South Africa and two incidents will always stick in my mind. The first was when we enjoyed what must have been the world's best fillet steak in Ermelo. Next day, not far away, we took our cameras into a field where we met a young man with his dog. Unlike me - again - Irwin tended to show friendship to dogs and patted this animal and allowed it to rub against his legs. Only when we got back into our car did it become apparent that the beast had rolled in something unspeakably vile!

Years before that, and nearer home, Irwin had struck up a friendship with Bill Scott, this developing into a weekly meeting which I joined several years later. Thus, with the aid of a few pints, the world in general and the RPSI in particular were regularly put to rights, this often involving Irwin's somewhat scathing sense of humour. One of his sayings when describing some stressful occurrence was, "I'm a patient man but ...". This was invariably greeted with derision but more recent events showed that his claim was not entirely unfounded when in addition to his regular Whitehead activities he took on the daunting, and often frustrating, task of setting up procedures for establishing the competence of both NIR and RPSI operating staff - something of which other bodies might well take note. In a recent Five Foot Three article he pointed out that passing a man to drive used to take only one page whereas the present procedure took no less than 250 - this was no exaggeration, as I've seen both!

On the subject of paperwork, although he did not go in much for buying railway books, in addition to his logs and photographs Irwin had a substantial collection of material relating to railway operation which is being gradually sifted through by some friends in order that nothing of potential value will be lost. Should any of this be saleable the proceeds will be donated to the RPSI.

In recent years Irwin became somewhat disaffected with what he perceived as the priorities in the locomotive department and transferred his activities to carriage work, while remaining available for locomotive duties. Sadly, more recently still, matters relating to his personal life brought about a disassociation from Whitehead activities and, to some extent, from his former friends. However, his contribution to the RPSI over many years has been noteworthy, culminating, I would suggest, in his work on the competence procedures.

I, and many others, mourn the passing of a friend of many years.

---

## **THE GS&WR AT THE TURN OF THE CENTURY (PART 3)**

**Alan O'Rourke**

On the Waterford, Dungarvan & Lismore line, services still used the old South station at Waterford. Fair connections were made at Mallow but only one train a day ran through to Cork. Passenger services

left Mallow at 8:20am, 1:45pm (mixed Fermoy-Waterford) and 6:5pm. Up trains from Waterford were 10:10am, 4:20pm, and 6:25pm (mixed to Fermoy). Through goods were 12:40am Cork-Waterford and 5am Waterford-Mallow, both being mixed for part of their journey. Lismore had its own goods, 2:45am ex Cork, back to Mallow at 9am, whence the wagons were forwarded on the down Newmarket goods. Fermoy enjoyed quite a lush service of six passenger trains a day each way, made up by westbound local departures at 7:35am, 3:20pm, and 5:10pm (through to Cork). Up locals left Mallow at 10:55am and 4:15pm and there was a 6:40pm Cork-Lismore train. Piloting or a combined train must have got the engine off this service back to Fermoy and there was an unbalanced 10:30pm goods Fermoy-Cork. On Saturdays only a passenger train was provided at 7:40am from Lismore-Waterford. The best service for the 75 miles was 2 hours 42 minutes, by the 6:5pm ex Mallow. A footnote allowed the 8:20am down passenger to convey “important goods traffic” to Fermoy off the night goods from Dublin.



***Cork Glanmire Road station in 1939 sees J15 No.176 and a rebuilt 301 class 4-4-0 with a Rosslare train. (O.S. Nock/C.P. Friel collection)***

Basically four passenger and two goods trains were provided each way Mallow-Tralee, with the added complications of passenger trains turning into mixed and vice versa at intermediate stations. An extra up service was provided by the 7:30pm mixed mail, which made Mallow in 3 hours 5 minutes, only about half an hour slower than the three passenger services. Neither down goods had passenger accommodation. All services seem to have used Mallow as the eastern terminus but good connections were provided to and from most trains. On the South Kerry all stations was the rule except for one “semi-fast” each way. From Mallow trains were: 8:15am. mixed as far as Headford; 10:40am. semi-fast omitting Lombardstown, Ballybrack and Gortatlea; 1:40pm; and 7:45pm. Up from Tralee trains were: 7am, running mixed from Farranfore; 1:55pm, the fast one, leaving out Ballybrack and beyond Headford calling only to pick-up passengers for Dublin; 3:20pm; and 7:30pm. mixed mail.

Ballybrophy-Nenagh and Nenagh-Limerick appear as separate tables. One through service is suggested and a second down journey could be achieved with a half-hour wait at Nenagh. The through mail-goods from Dublin reached Nenagh at 10:10am and passenger services were provided ex-Ballybrophy at 11:15am, 5:7pm and 8:50pm. Four up services were provided from Nenagh at 8:8am, 2pm, 4:50pm

and 6:30pm. The last must have been combined and double-headed, for at Roscrea it became passenger only and a separate goods through to Kingsbridge followed on half an hour later. South of Nenagh passenger trains ran at 8am, 12:45pm (mixed) and 6:8pm. Up trains from Limerick were 10:40pm, 4pm and 7:30pm. The engine shedded at Killaloe had a varied day. It began with a morning passenger to Birdhill and back, then marshalled up a mixed, leaving Killaloe at 1:20pm and apparently losing its passenger facilities at Birdhill, heading off to Limerick as goods only. However, it became a mixed back, following ten minutes after the 4pm Limerick to Nenagh. It was allowed 50 minutes to Killaloe. Finally it repeated the morning return passenger working to and from Birdhill. For unknown reasons, the 4pm passenger ex Limerick went flying through Birdhill. Eastbound passengers from Killaloe were by the generosity of a footnote allowed free travel down to Castleconnell to scuff their heels there for 2½ hours and join the rogue train there.



*Two venerable machines at Banteer with a Killarney-Mallow train, date unknown; J15 No.187 (with “cupboard door” smokebox) and D19 4-4-0 No.8. (Loco Publishing/C.P. Friel collection)*

Youghal and Queenstown each had an early morning goods returning late afternoon. Youghal had five passenger services each way, most of which ran non-stop to Queenstown Junction, calling by request only for Youghal line traffic at other stations. Queenstown had sixteen arrivals between 7:35am and three minutes after midnight. An equal number of up services left starting at 5:25am through to Kingsbridge and finishing with the 11:10pm to Cork. On the branch, through Dublin trains tended to omit some stops and Fota only had request stops: three down and six up. Shades of the “Greystones Express” appeared in the form of the 9:30am commuter train ex-Queenstown and 5:20pm back from Cork, which called at Rushbrooke only. Queenstown also had the down American Mail at 6:57am on Thursdays only. The Portarlinton-Athlone line was still something of a backwater, in fact a somewhat reluctant addition to the system left over from the skirmishes with the MGWR forty years before, and it would not reach full mainline status until the Galway and Mayo trains were diverted over it seventy-

odd years later. There were three passenger and one through Dublin goods daily. The goods kept to the south of the Shannon but the passenger trains were allowed between five and twenty minutes for a visit to the Midland station “when traffic offers”. All but one train called at, or could at least be flagged down at the MGWR exchange platform at Clara. Down trains left Portarlinton at 10:30am and 4:35pm, while Kingsbridge sent down a through train at 5:30pm. Up services left the GSWR station at 8:10am (through coaches to Dublin via the early morning Queenstown train), 2:10pm and 7:40pm. The last mentioned provided a connection into an express at Portarlinton and then ran as far as Kildare itself. An engine based at Banagher worked two passenger and one mixed to and from Clara providing good Dublin connections. Clara must have got very congested about 8:20pm when it had to cope with crossing two passenger trains, shunting the up goods and finding a siding for the branch train!



***J15 No.102 shunts a substantial Dublin train at Cobh (formerly Queenstown) in 1960. (C.P. Friel collection)***

Turning to the other branches, Tullow had three passenger and a goods each way. All up services seem to have run through independently to Kingsbridge, but only one down train did so, and the balancing seems to have been done by some local Sallins-Kildare services. The 34¾ miles from Sallins to Tullow took about eighty minutes. Birr had three passenger and two mixed each way, but on Wednesdays one up mixed was sacrificed to provide a connection into the Nenagh cattle special. The Mitchelstown branch had quite an impressive service, with an early morning goods, five passenger and one mixed down; up to Fermoy there were four passenger and two mixed and the goods. Running time was 25-40 minutes, and such an intensive service required two crossings at Glansworth. Similarly, Newmarket had seven return passenger services, the last up being mixed, and a through goods from and back to Cork. The Castleisland branch loco worked five local services to and from Gortatlea, plus an evening train to and from the metropolis getting back from Tralee at 7:5pm to end its working day. One service each way was mixed.

Kenmare was another “one engine in steam” line, with a Wednesday only early morning through service to and from Killarney, back in time to perform the usual daily departures of 10:40am, 1:50pm, and 7:20pm (mixed) from Kenmare, returning from Headford at noon (mixed), 3:5pm and 9:15pm. The

Valencia Harbour branch was longer and more complex, although the pattern of service was practically the same as at closure nearly 60 years later. Tralee sent down a goods at 4:15am which provided third class accommodation from Killorglin. No times are quoted after Cahirciveen but a footnote states that the locomotive and van with the mails were to continue to Valencia and back “at once”. The other down services were 11:5am and 4pm ex-Farranfore. Finally, there was a 5:15pm passenger Tralee-Killorglin. This train and its return at 8:30am to Tralee were the only services not still recognisable in the 1959 timetable! Other up services were 8:25am and 1:20pm passenger to Farranfore and 4:30pm mixed mail to Tralee.



***J15 No.133, with the 11:00 mixed from Headford Junction to Kenmare, pauses for water at Morley's Bridge. (R.M. Arnold/C.P. Friel collection)***

The “Southern Railway” seemed to need two Clonmel-based locomotives. One worked a return goods to Thurles and the other engine handled three services with passenger accommodation. One morning crossing at Fethard was required. The little Waterford & Wexford Railway, stranded 23 miles from the nearest GSWR railhead at Ballywilliam until the South Wexford line was built, had two passenger trains a day from Wexford North to “Harbour Station” (i.e. Rosslare), and an extra working on Saturday for good measure, with a running time of about 35 minutes. The Cork & Limerick Direct (which ended 48 miles from Cork and only reached Limerick by running powers) at least made some attempt to justify its title, with two daily through passenger services from Limerick at 6:35am and 11:35am to Cork and 5:20pm to Charleville only. Up services were 7:15am ex-Cork and 2pm and 7:7pm ex-Charleville. There was also a through Cork goods each way. Passenger trains were allowed an hour each way Limerick to Charleville.

On Sundays the GSWR was rather more generous than the GSR could afford to be thirty years later. Most mainlines had some sort of service, if often dictated by the Post Office contracts. Mitchelstown alone of the short branches had the luxury of one train each way with connections to and from Cork. The following lines had a full Sabbath rest: Ballywilliam, Rosslare, Athlone, Mountmellick, Banagher,

Nenagh, Birr, Killaloe, Thurles-Clonmel, Fenit, Foynes, the Cork & Limerick Direct, Newmarket, Kenmare, Castleisland, Valencia and north of Ennis. To Ennis, the mixed mail ran at 2:30am and an up mixed mail at 8:30am did provide rather slow connections to Dublin and Waterford. On Sundays a train left Kingsbridge at 9:45am for Cork, calling at all stations Newbridge to Blarney and giving off connections to Limerick, Waterford (via Lismore) and Tralee. The other mainline train left Kingsbridge at 8:35pm taking connections from Tullow at Sallins, from Waterford at Kildare and had connecting services each way at Limerick Junction. One through service to Waterford was given: down at 9am (with a connection to Tullow at Sallins) and up at 5:50pm via Carlow.



***On 28<sup>th</sup> July 1959 J15 No.139 prepares to leave Kenmare with the 09:35 to Headford Junction.  
(B. Hilton/C.P. Friel collection)***

The American Mail ran on Sundays with the same timing as Thursdays, but the other Dublin-Cork Sunday services were slow, about 6½ hours. Three up Sunday trains were provided: 10:45am all stations with connections to and from Limerick; 2:30pm express (connections to Tralee, Waterford via Lismore and Maryboro' to Kilkenny); 10:6pm mail, with connections each way at the Junction. From Limerick trains left at noon (passenger to the Junction only); 11pm Waterford mixed mail; and 7:30am mixed mail over the North Kerry. The last train returned from Tralee at 7pm. Up trains were 1:50pm passenger from the Junction and 9pm mixed mail from Waterford. One passenger service was provided each way Mallow-Waterford. The Tralee line had a mail goods and a passenger down and one passenger and one mixed mail up. On Sundays, Youghal had three and Queenstown eleven passenger trains each way plus the American Mail. This was, of course essentially a winter timetable, and in the summer, there were many special services for weekend sports events, excursions, etc.

The last section in the table is an appendix showing the Pay Carriage's two week cyclical tour of the whole system, reminding us that at this time many of the company's servants did not have bank

accounts, and received their weekly stipend in cash. For those who like statistics, I include the best time times and average speeds for 1901. Anyone with access to a current timetable can look up how things have changed.

Route	Down services	Up services	Best time	Best average speed (mph)
Dublin-Cork *	5	6	3h 45m	42¼ **
Dublin-Limerick	8	5	3h 10m (N)	39
Dublin-Waterford	4	4	3h 32m	31¼
Dublin-Tralee	3	4	5h 30m	37½
Waterford-Limerick	4	5	3h 05m	25

\* Only through Dublin-Cork services have been included. For other routes, through trains and reasonable connections have been counted. Seasonal extras and trains running on selected weekdays are not included.

\*\* The American Mail (Thursday and Sundays only) averaged 43½ mph North Wall-Cork.

N Via Nenagh



*At Mallow on 15<sup>th</sup> July 1953 D2 4-4-0 No.330 is piloting sister No.329 on the 3:15pm Cork-Dublin Mail. (R.M. Arnold/C.P. Friel collection)*

A final observation is that the standard of prose in these manuals, although pedantic and repetitive in places, is remarkably clear and unambiguous, compared to the impenetrable or confusing jargon which many people use to write instructions these days.

References:

Doyle O (1967) Rosslare Harbour Irish Railway Record Society Journal 8 (42): 10-29

Murray D (1993) Mallow-Waterford Irish Railway Record Society Journal 18 (121): 236-51.

Tatlow J (1920) Fifty Years of Railway Life London: the Railway Gazette

## **BOOK REVIEW**

---

**The Belfast & County Down Railway, Desmond Coakham, Colourpoint Press,  
ISBN 978 18906578 73 2, A4 hardback, 276 pp, b&w photos, £25**

For some time past, word had it that Desmond Coakham was in the throes of producing a book on the "County Down" and eventually a launch was planned at the RPSI's November 2010 meeting, when the author was to give an illustrated talk based on material not included on the book. In the event, the author appeared but, due to a last-minute problem, his book did not until December, just in time for Christmas and well worth the wait.

Given the size and scope of the book, it is surprising that Mr Coakham had anything left to talk about as it must represent the best part of a lifetime's experience and research. Just one example: on p.150 is a drawing by the late Harold Houston of the probable outline of an 1848 engine. Since Mr Houston died in 1987 this would suggest that research was well under way then - indeed the author, long retired, describes spending many of his lunch hours perusing ancient records.

With due respect to other works on this subject, this book puts them all in the shade, going all the way back to the earliest days of the BCDR and covering every aspect of the railway, from rather shaky beginnings and through its "glory days" until its near death at the hands of the UTA. Inevitably, much of the earlier part of the book relates to what might be termed administrative matters and, as such, might be expected to be dull reading. However, Mr Coakham manages to cover this aspect in an agreeable style while giving the reader an insight into his own views. One feels, for example, that he sympathises with the one-time Loco Superintendent, Miller, who was regularly over-ridden by the more academically gifted Civil Engineer, Culverwell.

Given the nature of the subject matter in the earlier part of the book, although there are numerous diagrams and track plans, photographs here are comparatively sparse. Pleasing shots do pop up in surprising places, some from the camera of the late William Robb whose family home overlooked the line near Comber. However, from Chapter 12 "The BCDR As We Knew It" onwards there is a profusion of photos and diagrams.

Although I recall the standard 4-4-2Ts appearing briefly on the Larne line I had never laid eyes on a Baltic and, in view of horror stories from elsewhere, I was looking forward to finding out more about them. Their genesis is described in detail - Culverwell (him again!) appears to have been fixated on the 4-6-4 as "the perfection of the tank type" - and, although there are no horror stories here, they were certainly something of a disappointment. The book concludes with appendices giving details of practically everything that moved, along with a very comprehensive index.

**NP**



*No.4 sported an unusual headlamp code on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2010 - location unknown. (M. Walsh)*



*No.186 leaves Whitehead with snow-covered empty stock for the first Santa train on 18<sup>th</sup> December 2010. (J. Adams)*



*Next day, Jordanstown's awkward signal having been sighted, No.186 erupts into action. (J. Adams)*