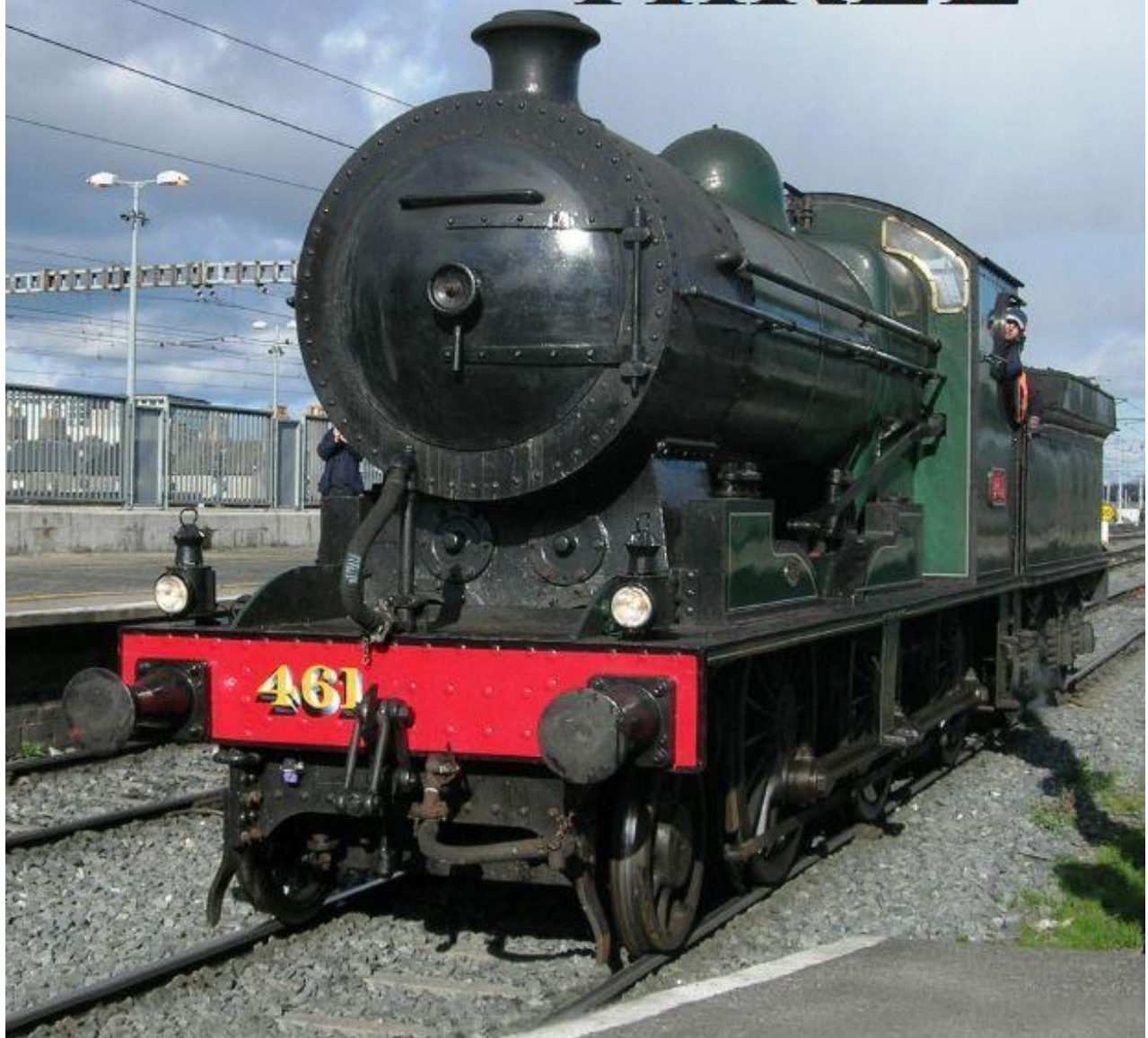


FIVE FOOT THREE



THE MAGAZINE OF THE RAILWAY PRESERVATION SOCIETY OF IRELAND

FIVE FOOT THREE

No.58

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Editor: Edward Friel

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

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***Front Cover: No.461 arrives at Dublin Connolly light engine from Dundalk on 4th March 2012.
(C. Meredith)***



The Guinness engine on rides duty at Whitehead on 21st August 2011. (C.P. Friel)



Sleeping giants No.186 and No.461 tucked up in Whitehead shed on 12th February 2012. (A. Lohoff)

From time to time the writer has mentioned the two-faced or, more politely, bi-directional Roman god Janus. On this occasion, the rearward aspect reveals that the writer took on the job of producing Five Foot Three in issue No.34 in 1987 with the stated intention of “keeping the covers a respectable distance apart”. With the aid of contributions from many helpful persons, that aim has been achieved and the resulting productions appear to been well received.



The outgoing Editor hard at work on No.171 on 14th January 2012. (E. Friel)

However, a simple subtraction reveals that (a) the number of years involved exceeds the age of some of our younger active members and (b) those years have passed at an alarming rate.

It is a curious feature of the RPSI that our active members are mostly around or past retirement age or in the twentyish age group, with not too many in between. Obviously the younger group, whose numbers hopefully will increase, will be ever more involved in the future of the Society and it seemed appropriate that one of their number should take over the magazine. It must be admitted that, with technology advancing by leaps and bounds, there was also an element of an old dog's reluctance to learn new tricks!

Hence with the approval of our esteemed Secretary, to whom the Editor is basically a sub-contractor, I approached Edward Friel to see if he would take on the job. To be honest, I had already put the idea to several other persons and I'd suspect that this got back to Edward who was probably wondering when I would get around to actually asking him! Anyway, he agreed and I have no doubt that he will do an excellent job, being skilled in what I understand is termed Information Technology and also having the advantage of being able to draw at first hand on the knowledge and photographic archive of his father, Charles. His age may also lead him to take a less jaundiced view of the world than his predecessor. Due to changes in the RPSI's constitution one of his first tasks will be to find a new title for the long-standing and informative News From Council. Briefings from the Board? Perhaps better not, since nowadays "briefing" tends to be associated with Parliamentary back-stabbing!



Ronnie Spence, Heritage Lottery Fund; Nelson Poots, fireman; Catherine Mason, Chief Executive, Translink; and Peter Scott, driver, on the footplate of No.461 at the locomotive's launch on 13th October 2011. (C.P. Friel)

Not much more need be said. I was annoyed with myself when issue No.57, which I had intended to continue what had started in No.56, i.e. all colour except for archive photos, did not turn out that way due to a misunderstanding at our printers, to whom I am nonetheless grateful for their help and co-operation over the years. Initially, I had the idea that No.58 would be a joint effort with Edward but, recalling the saying about two cooks in the same kitchen, felt it better to step aside and let him get on with it.

So, with my thanks to all who have contributed in any way in the past, it's over to you, Edward.

EDITORIAL

In recent years we have heard a lot about the role of the younger generation in Railway Preservation. I would like to begin by redressing the balance somewhat by paying tribute to the older generation, and to the previous Editor in particular.

In his 24 years at the helm Nelson has produced almost half the total number of editions of Five Foot Three published to date, and somehow found the time to act as one of the loco department's hardest working volunteers. He is still to be found swaging tubes, shunting the yard, or looking after the engine on a long night's "Steam & Jazz" alongside other volunteers much less than half his age. I'm sure I speak for all of them when I express the hope that he will continue in these roles for a long time yet - it would be a daunting prospect to try and cope without him.

Indeed, the same words go for many of our volunteers; when I say Nelson is not unique it tells us something about what that older generation is made of. It is inspiring to find the RPSI's earliest members still at work, and indeed we could do with more from that age bracket - the spare time of the freshly retired means they have just as much to contribute as the youthful freshly employed! Anyway, the RPSI today needs volunteers in a lot of different roles, physical and otherwise.

Whatever their ages, our volunteers continue to branch out and tackle new tasks and responsibilities as the business of 'preservation' becomes ever more complicated. For a long time now we have seen ourselves as amateurs acting in a professional manner, and this has never been more true than it is today - not just in running and maintaining trains, but in the tireless back room work of discussions and meetings and form-filling. Our dealings with external bodies, be it the railway companies, local and national government bodies, or potential funders, are leading the RPSI to develop a more professional, more businesslike attitude to its own management. Not only does this inspire the confidence of these external bodies, it carries great potential for making our organisation more efficient and financially stable.

The new Safety Management System is a prime example. The RPSI was given a considerable challenge, but it has been met. Our back room volunteers not only did what was needed to keep our trains running, they showed our willingness to accept grave responsibilities and contributed greatly to the increasing maturity of management in the RPSI, which bodes well for our future.

Our future is of course a matter of some debate and concern. Five Foot Three readers will be aware that investment is being sought for grand schemes to make the RPSI sustainable in the very long term. Two separate reports on these plans can be found in this issue as Denis Grimshaw brings us up to date with recent developments, while Johnny Glendinning goes back to basics to give an overview of the many different aspects of the plan - and why they are there. Some of the other reports allude to developments we would not necessarily have chosen to make - were we capable of writing ourselves a cheque for a few million pounds. Most obviously trying to turn Whitehead into a fully fledged museum at the same time as a heavy engineering works is a great challenge, a balancing act of enormous proportions - but then again so was the SMS.

Hopefully these articles will be of some use in explaining to members why the RPSI has taken on these and other challenges as we move on into a different, more professional, and hopefully just as enjoyable, future.

Finally, my thanks go to all the contributors to this issue, and also to W.T. Scott, Alan O'Rourke and Michael H.C. Baker whose fine articles readers can look forward to in future issues - with so many current events to relate, space is a little tight!

I hope readers will forgive the time it has taken your new Editor to assemble all the material. You will notice there is little reference to the first trains of 2012 - since some reports are older than others it seems best to give these events thorough and consistent coverage in the next issue.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

David Houston

2011 started off with one major challenge. This was the compilation and approval of our Safety Management System for approval by the Railway Safety Commission (RSC). A target date of 1st July was set for resumption of operations, and happily this was met. In the last edition of Five Foot Three I mentioned the commitment and dedication of Denis McCabe, Safety Officer, South, in his effort to get us 'over the line' in this regard. Helped by Denis Grimshaw, in particular, their efforts bore fruit. The Society was the happy recipient of the necessary certificates at a ceremony in the offices of the RSC on 1st July - right on time! The Society is now a Railway Undertaking as defined by EU legislation. My thanks are also due to Gerard Beesley, Railway Safety Commissioner, and his staff for their guidance and understanding in ensuring that the Society achieved this important status. The upshot of all this is that the form of our relationship with Iarnród Éireann (IÉ) has now changed, and we are now subject to audit and review by the RSC.

Needless to say, with no operations out of Dublin for the first six months of 2011, the impact on the Society's finances was serious, but as the hiatus was hopefully a 'one off' event; we can expect revenue in 2012 and subsequent years to settle back into a more predictable pattern.

We have, in the main, had a busy year in all of our various activities, and the reports of the relevant officers can be read elsewhere. The 2020 Committee had a particularly busy year with the proposed development of Whitehead foremost in their minds. Considerable progress in terms of planning and seeking of financial support was made. Possible developments in the Republic were also focussed upon. I wish this Committee well in its endeavours.

The new relationship with IÉ arising out of the approval of our Safety Management System provided an opportunity to review the way we interact with the company. Liaison was put on a new and much more effective footing. Heretofore the various Society officers met with their IÉ counterparts on a somewhat 'ad hoc' basis. New structures are now in place which have resulted in a much more efficient and businesslike environment where all issues are channelled through a single contact point in the company and progressed from there.

The Society co-hosted with IÉ a high profile event in October when state coaches 351 and 5408 were put on public display at Heuston over the bank holiday weekend. The event was formally opened by President Mary McAleese on what was one of her last official duties before retiring from office. Many Society members were present and the President mingled with them after the opening ceremony. The Society was heavily involved in the planning and management of the event which provided much goodwill for us. I am most grateful to IÉ, and to Dick Fearn, CEO, in particular, for including us in such a high profile way in this prestigious event. Society Vice-President Sir Kenneth Bloomfield spoke at the event, and my thanks go to him for willingly doing so.

Whilst mentioning Vice-Presidents I must record the death of long standing Vice-President Dr Garrett FitzGerald who passed away during the year. Dr FitzGerald was a strong supporter of us over many years. The Society was represented at his state funeral. With the passing of Dr FitzGerald a concerted effort was made to 'recruit' new Vice-Presidents. I am pleased to record that our efforts were successful and I extend a warm welcome to Robert Guinness, Nora Owen and Dr Joan Smyth.

Looking to the future there are plenty of challenges to overcome. Plans for the Whitehead development are reaching a critical stage; the search for a Dublin base needs some new momentum; our diesel group are itching to get going with the return to running order of recent acquisitions; the need to generate

more money to fund so much is unrelenting. Our whole operation is dependent on a dedicated group of volunteers who strive to keep locomotives and coaches in serviceable condition, and on a very small team of professional footplate men. The need to expand this team to provide some flexibility and crews for increased operations is critical and will need addressing in the coming year as a top priority. Without footplate crews no trains move and income suffers accordingly. Hopefully 2012 will see this long standing shortage overcome at last.



Representatives of the RPSI and the Railway Safety Commission, with the newly granted safety certificates, on 1st July 2011. (Tony O'Shaughnessy)

As I write these notes I learn with sincere regret of the pending resignation of John Lockett as Vice-Chairman for health reasons. John has been a great support to me in my role and his input to many aspects of Society activities over the years has been significant. I wish him well for the future, and hope that he will be able to continue as an active member.

I could not complete my report without recording the Society's grateful thanks to our friends in Iarnród Éireann and Translink NI Railways for their continued co-operation, guidance and help afforded at so many levels. It is greatly appreciated and vital to our continued operation. Also sincere thanks to our volunteers who ensure that the Society functions on a day to day basis. Without their enthusiasm and dedication the Society would achieve little.

Last year's report recorded that to the casual member the year past appeared to be fairly uneventful, despite significant work taking place behind the scenes. The same cannot be said for this year, and that same member would need to have been extremely casual, if not actually comatose, to not have noticed it was an unusual year.

I will first report on the same major areas of activity as last year, namely:

2020 Project: Hopefully, there will be a separate report on the developments arising from the project. But it is fair to say that this has been a driving factor in a lot of the changes in the Society in recent times.

Although there have been some delays and setbacks, significant progress has nevertheless been made in developing the project for ultimate submission to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for consideration. A number of the delays can be attributed to the need to schedule match funding from other sources so that ultimately the actual monetary cost to the Society is minimal.

One of the requirements of HLF is a separation of the trading elements from the Society itself. The first, wholly-owned subsidiary company, Heritage Engineering Ireland, has now been registered and should be operating during 2012. An indication, however, that matters would not be as smooth as hoped for came with the resignation late in the year of two of the originally appointed directors. And more careful consideration will need to be given to the setting up of the second company to run the events and marketing side of the business.

It remains to be seen how successful, and how costly, this separation of trading will be, but it is a requirement and so we move on!

As part of potential funding HLF require a greater emphasis to be placed on education and it is pleasing to report that Joe Cassells and Ian Wilson, both of whom are retired teachers and long-standing members, have agreed to sit on a committee to develop Society plans on that front.

The 2020 committee members are still seeking to strengthen their numbers from Dublin, especially now that one of the two southern members will not be serving in the coming year. It is particularly important that southern representation should be increased, preferably from 'new blood', to help tackle the threat of not having a Dublin base should Inchicore become unavailable to us. Although this threat has eased of late it still exists and it is becoming more difficult to work on locomotives there.

Safety Management System (SMS): It was a frustrating time in Dublin during the first half of the year, with no trains permitted to run, but the patience of all involved was rewarded in July when the SMS approval was granted. It was indeed a mammoth task - the procedures run to 90 documents - and the Society is fortunate to have had the experience and dedication of two such members as Denis Grimshaw and Denis McCabe, especially the latter who put in untold hours and had numerous meetings with the authorities to ensure everything was in place on time.

Governance: Another process which ran during much of the first half of the year was a review of how the Society is managed. It concluded at the AGM in May 2011 when, at an EGM held in advance, significant changes were made to the Memorandum and Articles of Association, namely: a change of name from 'Council' to 'Board', with all its members being officially known as directors, and a change to the Board's powers allowing it to set up subsidiary companies, plus the correction of a number of anomalies. The documents are always available on the Society's website for those who wish to view them.

The AGM elected 15 members, only 3 of whom were elected into named posts (Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer), the rest being simply Directors. At a Board meeting immediately following the AGM, safety-critical appointments were made from within their number to ensure the smooth and safe

running of the Society.

The Council (as was) and Board are not immune to criticism and there certainly was some received late in the year when the inevitable frustrations arose over the failure to have a steam locomotive available to operate the Christmas season in Dublin. While not all of the contributing factors could be laid at the feet of the Board, there is no doubt that there is room for significant improvement. And it is to be hoped that those who identified failings will have likewise identified candidates from within the membership who would be ideally suited to help address those failings. One of the aims of the new Board structure, with its absence of named posts, is to make it more attractive for members to get themselves elected. Surely a good thing!



The RPSI continues to defy expectations and broaden its activities. Gleaming in the sun on 14th January 2012 are the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum's 102 and B113, after some impressive cosmetic work at Whitehead. With them is our own B142, which has received a lot of patient tinkering (rather than the utter neglect predicted in some quarters). She has become a very much more capable and reliable shunting engine than she was on arrival. (E. Friel)

One of the aims of the governance meetings was to progress the establishment of a child protection policy. This was given some impetus during the year and Vice-Chairman John Lockett was instrumental in drawing up a procedure which would satisfy the relevant authorities north and south. It was a frustrating business as it quickly became apparent that various bodies, mainly in Northern Ireland, had differing views on what level of checking should be carried out on volunteers working with children and vulnerable adults. The agreed outcome is that the Company Secretary (yours truly) should head a small committee consisting of an RoI deputy (Joe McKeown) and an NI deputy (Johnny Glendinning). The committee will oversee the self-certification of all working members, i.e. volunteers will be required to return a form listing any criminal convictions. Where appropriate, medical issues will also be listed. For those members dealing directly with the public or children, a disclosure from the

appropriate RoI or NI vetting authority will be required. Certification has already started at the top with Board members. All this is a significant administration headache but it is a middle course and could have been worse - some bodies were suggesting that every volunteer should be vetted. Such is the world we live in today!

Finance: Unlike most years, it was known in advance that 2011 would be a lean year. So, early on, strict budgets were worked out for the spending departments, and the earning departments were tasked with increasing income by 10% where possible. Unfortunately, it also required the postponement of expenditure on driver training projects for the year. The annual accounts will tell how successful these worthy aims were.

It was a welcome back to the Board this year for Norman Foster, who bravely agreed to be co-opted to the role of Treasurer, left vacant at the AGM.

On a sad note, we had to report on the death of our Vice-President, Dr Garret FitzGerald. While this event was not responsible for, it did give an urgency to, the search for new VPs to strengthen the Society's top tier. It is pleasing to be able to report that we now have three new VPs, giving us a President and four Vice-Presidents (two north and two south). A very big welcome to the new boys and girls.

Spurred on by the Board's request to increase income, the Belfast Operations Committee introduced a First Class package to the Portrush Flyer; it included champagne, picnic hamper and waiter service. Very successful it was too; it's just unfortunate that it may not be repeated this year if the locomotive position is not suitable.

There was a major scare on the insurance front during the year when it was suggested that to work under SMS might require public liability insurance of around £200m. Happily, this did not turn out to be the case, although the position wasn't clarified until very near the time for signing the SMS. It made for some very nervous discussions with our brokers. Despite this, our premium did rise significantly due to increases by our PL insurers - from £42,500 to £49,500 in total. Karen McLaverty and Lesley Browne of Marsh have been very helpful during the year, having dealt efficiently with all our requirements, and my thanks to them.

There were two separate opportunities this year to meet with railway company managers and other benefactors. The first was the launch of No.461 and NCC 68 at Whitehead on 13th October. The next was at the launch of the State Coach Exhibition at Dublin Heuston on 28th October. There were speeches, which were extremely complimentary to the RPSI, by both railway company chief executives - Catherine Mason (Translink), who spoke at Whitehead, and Dick Fearn (Iarnród Éireann), who spoke in Dublin. At the latter the Mark 2 carriage 5408 was officially retired and passed into the Society's care. It will, like 351, remain in State ownership but be in Society control under special agreement.

Although there was no expenditure on driver training, there was still some progress. In December advertisements were posted in Translink depots inviting drivers to apply to become trainee firemen. It is hoped to appoint recruits and to start classroom training before Easter.

Another driver training project started during the year with Whitehead locomotive personnel visiting Downpatrick on a number of occasions to train DCDR crews - another example of close co-operation.

Good news during the year was the approval by Translink to allow No.461 to operate. Unfortunately, delays in submitting the paperwork meant that similar approval was not gained for carriages 303 (Open) and 463 (Corridor Brake First).

In July a significantly large bequest was received from the estate of a deceased member. This was a great help to the Society's finances in a difficult year. It is a delicate subject, but if you feel you would like to benefit the Society after you are gone, please see the help provided in the "Gift Of A Lifetime"

leaflet that Society has produced. These have been issued periodically and can be sent out again on request.

A cross-border project started up by member Will Glendinning to bring together retired railway personnel from Dundalk and Portadown to meet and record their reminiscences has been started under RPSI auspices. The project has already attracted an International Fund for Ireland grant.

Consideration has recently been given to the setting up of a single ticketing and marketing system for the Society. It is early days yet but a few avenues are being explored. It will probably come under the responsibility of the new events company in due course.

The 2011 membership round-up is:

	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005
NI	408	411	413	411	399	391	386
RoI	384	408	403	403	387	380	375
GB	285	290	291	303	299	290	294
Overseas	26	30	30	31	35	34	35
Adult	589	650	653	679	688	676	685
Senior	391	370	350	339	298	289	275
Junior	11	14	21	19	33	29	31
Student	15	17	15	13	8	8	6
Family	13	10	21	19	14	15	14
Life	56	56	57	57	57	58	58
Societies	2	3	3	4	4	4	5
Honorary	19	19	17	18	18	16	16
Employee	7						
Totals	1,103	1,139	1,137	1,148	1,120	1,095	1,090

Unfortunately, the overall total is down from the previous year and it can be assumed that this coming year will continue that trend, but it would be good to be proved wrong. The subscription increase for the coming year probably won't help but it is the first in 8 years and hopefully members will understand that it couldn't be delayed.

As always, thanks must go to all who have served on the Board throughout the year. The burden increases annually (significantly this year!) and some of the new sub-committees this year are referred to above; thank you to all who elected to serve on them.

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); Mary Glendinning (answer-phone); Johnny Glendinning and Joe McKeown (Child Protection Committee). Particular thanks go to the retiring (retiring? never!) Nelson Poots, Five Foot Three Editor since issue 34 in 1987/8, and a warm welcome to Edward Friel who takes on the job with this issue.

The normal thanks to the railway companies must be added to this year with the inclusion of the Railway Safety Commission.

LOCOMOTIVE REPORT

Peter Scott

Last year I commented on the reduced facilities for steam locos at Connolly station in Dublin and expressed the hope that matters would improve. In some respects they have - for example, the coaling arrangement whereby the coal is delivered by a lorry with its own grab is very neat. However, the lack of facilities for anything but routine servicing and coaling at Connolly means that only a loco in well

proven condition can be stabled there, and there is little scope for building up a maintenance team. Unfortunately, this meant that Loco No.461 could not be based in Dublin during the “Santa” season since the loco was running in and needed the back-up of the Whitehead facilities. While we have managed to stable a loco at Connolly for a good number of years now, the location has gradually become less and less suitable with the disappearance of facilities appropriate to steam locos and the introduction of rigorous safety procedures. During the Santa season, the loco shed was tantalisingly closed and the turntable beside it was out of use. The provision of adequate steam facilities in the Dublin area is a basic requirement for operations based on Dublin and I hope this major issue will receive the attention it deserves.



Loco running volunteers James Friel, David Orr, Nathan Lighthowler, Ryan Downey, Adam Lohoff, John Lockett and Philip Newell with No.4 at a Whitehead open day, 30th July 2011 - her penultimate day in steam. (C.P. Friel)

Steam Locomotives:

No.3 “R.H. Smyth”. LP&HC 0-6-0ST shunting engine. Boiler exam, Downpatrick.

At Downpatrick, awaiting a decision on boiler repairs. A new set of tubes is required along with other boiler repairs.

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

Whitehead shunting and Open Day loco. After another busy year the “Guinness Engine” needs new boiler tubes before steaming again, as well as being due for 10 year boiler attention in less than a year’s

time.

No.4. LMS NCC 2-6-4T loco. In store, Whitehead.

No.4 came out of traffic at the end of July at the expiry of its 10 year boiler ticket. Ironically, approval to operate at the increased speed of 60 mph following fitting of TPWS equipment came through just after this.

Dismantling of No.4 could proceed but has been postponed because No.171 has “jumped the queue”, as mentioned below. Some preliminary work will proceed in the meantime.



No.461 on 14th January 2012, with a few of the locomotive department volunteers who toiled for so long on her restoration. (E. Friel)

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

No.186 continues to operate reliably and has well repaid the effort put into her overhaul. No.186 is now approaching the end of her 10 year boiler ticket and will come out of traffic at the end of 2013. Her performance on the May tour to Kilkenny and M3 Parkway then to Whitehead was noteworthy. Of course, no matter how well a J15 may perform it is still a small loco with a limited train capacity and maximum speed of 45 mph. The requirement now seems to be for big trains and tight schedules so whether No.186 is overhauled again is for the “locomotive strategy” debate.

While the turntable at Connolly loco shed is out of commission, we have made use of the Dublin and South Eastern turntable at the far side of Connolly station. This table together with a water tank is perched in a cramped location next to the loop platform. It was used to turn No.186, albeit with some

reluctance and the application of pinch bars. It can also turn No.461 but not the GNR(I) locos which are too long.

No.461. DSER 2-6-0 goods engine. In traffic (running in), Whitehead.

The overhaul of No.461 was completed during the summer, and the loco was first steam tested on Wednesday 20th July. The inevitable 'snagging list' was then attended to, as well as completion of electrics and painting. After some debate it was decided to apply CIÉ green livery - the rationale being that the loco is now exclusively on passenger work and so can legitimately carry a passenger loco livery. [See separate article. - Ed.] The only authentic livery would be grey (like No.186) - if anyone really wants to suggest that, let him stand forth! (There is actually a suggestion that the loco was green when first delivered in 1922 as DSER No.15 - but the only evidence remaining for that is a cigarette card produced at the time. Since the DSER livery was known to be black lined out in red, there is some doubt in the matter, but those versed in historical accuracy could maybe enlighten us.) [See also *Fred Graham obituary*. - Ed.] The green livery has received favourable comments - the only detail remaining being regarding the propriety of the cast number plates.

No.461 began testing in earnest with a training session on 8th October. The first out-road test was on 12th November, when brake and clearance trials were carried out. Approval to operate in service was not forthcoming in time for the loco to figure on the Halloween trains, and the necessity for a period of running in and troubleshooting based at Whitehead meant that the loco was unfortunately not available to go to Dublin for the Santa trains there. No.461 operated on the last Whitehead Santa weekend, and then worked the "Haggis" train to Portrush on Sunday 29th January - a combination of a proving run for the loco and a celebration of Burns Night.



Brian Hill is a man with a fine bearing - one of No.85's to be precise! 6th March 2011. (E. Friel)

No.85 “Merlin”. GNR(I) 4-4-0 compound express passenger loco. Under overhaul, Whitehead.

The mechanical overhaul of No.85 is progressing well. The wheelsets and bearings were overhauled and the loco was placed back on its wheels on Sunday 8th May 2011. Work has continued on the cylinders, pistons and valves. New low pressure slide valves have been made and are being fitted - a somewhat expensive item, but unfortunately the existing valves were found to be severely worn and unlikely to last even with our modest mileage between overhauls.

Large quantities of carbonised lubricating oil have been extracted from the steam passages in the cylinder block - a horribly awkward and dirty job but which should have the satisfying outcome of better performance.

The boiler has just received its 10 year examination for condition of plates, stays, rivets and welds. No serious problems were found and planned work will now proceed with renewal of some firebox seam rivets and stays, followed by re-tubing.

The tender has also been receiving attention to worn brake rigging and axlebox liners. The wheelsets and bearings have been refurbished and the tender is now back on its wheels. The work on the tender was part funded by the Northern Ireland Museums Council - funding that we have access to thanks to our status as an accredited museum.



Thomas Charters (with helpers!) re-fitting No.85's refurbished left connecting rod on 5th November 2011. (C.P. Friel)

No.171 “Slieve Gullion”. GNR(I) 4-4-0 express passenger loco. General repair, Whitehead.

No.171 is of course now the subject of an appeal for general overhaul. The magazine Steam Railway has carried several articles, which together with the Society's own campaign has resulted in some sizeable donations. Plenty more is needed and all help is appreciated!

It is hoped that the loco can be returned to traffic by 2014 - the 50th anniversary of the formation of the

RPSI. Regarding No.171 itself, an even more significant anniversary would be 2013 - the loco was originally built in 1913. However that is felt to be too much of a tall order and 2014 is more achievable. More definite plans can only be made after the loco and especially the boiler have been dismantled and examined, and a work plan established.



No.171's boiler emerges from the frames on 23rd February 2012. (J.J. Friel)

The boiler was lifted out of the frames on 23rd February, using the gantry cranes. It will now be opened up with all tubes removed for thorough examination.

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

Some preparatory work has been carried out and some items have been acquired with a view to eventual restoration.

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.



Overhaul of the UFTM's 102 gathering pace on 26th April. Access holes had to be cut to repair the drop light windows. (C.P. Friel)

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.

Requires gearbox overhaul.

Unilok UTA Road-Rail shunter. Repairs, Whitehead.

The Unilok developed clutch problems and the engine has been split for investigation.

B141. IÉ General Motors Bo-Bo diesel electric locomotive. In store, Inchicore.

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

In company with all the remaining ex-Irish Rail 'Baby' GMs, B142 has covered many miles prior to acquisition by the RPSI, and will require general overhaul if it is to see main line use. Also required would be the fitting of the mandatory Train Protection equipment if it is to operate on NIR lines.

Other Diesel Locomotives

At the time of writing, we are finalising the acquisition of Irish Rail GM locos 134 and 175, together with spares.

Contract And Other Work:

102 "Falcon". NIR Hunslet Bo-Bo diesel electric loco. Railway Gallery, Cultra.

102 has been cosmetically overhauled for display at the National Museums Northern Ireland Railway Gallery at Cultra. Repairs included renewal of corroded bodywork, repairs to lamps, droplights and roof hatches, removal of severe dents in the roof and repainting in the original maroon livery. Together with B113, it was moved there during the early hours of Sunday 22nd January - the two locos being sandwiched between two operational NIR GM diesels, since the brakes on the two museum locos were not operational. The move was carried out at night to avoid interference with normal NIR traffic.



NIR GM locomotives transporting the UFTM's new acquisitions through Holywood, towards Cultra, in the small hours of 22nd January 2012. The consist is 113-B113-102-112. (E. Friel)

B113. Sulzer Bo-Bo diesel electric loco. Railway Gallery, Cultra.

Dating from 1950, locos B113 and B114 were the first main line diesel electric locos built for CIÉ, and were of course the forerunners of the major dieselisation programme which was to see the displacement of all steam locos from the CIÉ by 1962. Like Hunslet 102, the loco was temporarily resident at

Whitehead before being moved to the Transport Museum at Cultra. It was delivered to Whitehead by road on Thursday 12th May and since then has been given basic cleaning and refurbishment of the remaining equipment. Unfortunately B113 has suffered from major cannibalisation as well as the ravages of time. It last operated in the early 1970s.

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

Major overhaul of the frame, tanks, bogies, wheelsets, cylinders and motion was carried out with the help of “Interreg” funding which contributed to the employment of our full time personnel. Since the end of the Interreg assistance, work has continued as time permits, some of it as training for example in riveting the frames. The repaired cylinder blocks have been refitted to the frames and some missing fittings have been renewed. All work done is to operational standards and it is hoped that eventually the loco can be returned to active service.

No.1. CSÉ 0-4-0T Orenstein and Koppel loco. 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. The motion has been overhauled and assembled, and work is progressing with pipework, brake gear and boiler cladding. New side tanks are being constructed and the existing cab overhauled.



Jeff Spencer boring out the valve liners of O&K No.1 on 20th July. (R. Edwards)

Whitehead Workshop Developments

No-one can argue that the facilities at Whitehead would not benefit from improvement. There is insufficient covered room for all locos and coaches, and either historic vehicles or operational ones have to lie outside in all weathers. Like any preservation site there are stored items awaiting overhaul

(some day) and the local resident who “thought it was a scrap yard” could hardly be faulted in this impression. The facilities for visitors are poor, although we do try to accommodate by providing conducted tours during Open Days - and having witnessed same I must commend the efforts of our volunteer tour guides. Hence our ambitious plan to improve both engineering and visitor facilities with the aid of external funding.

But there is a major problem. Engineering - especially railway engineering - and visitors just do not go together easily, and there are major safety and access problems. Part of the proposed development is to permit as much unrestricted access as possible, while keeping visitors clear of possible hazards. We must not consider ourselves as insulated from the general public - after all, where else do our members and eventually our active volunteers come from?

The planned workshop extensions must fulfil the dual role of providing the above access as well as the fundamental one of increasing working space and enabling improved engineering and staff facilities.

Part of the development involves the setting up of a separate Engineering Company to handle both RPSI work and outside contracts. This Company will be owned by the RPSI, and any profits from its operations will be reinvested in the RPSI. At the time of writing, the new company known as Heritage Engineering Ireland Ltd has been duly formed but is not yet trading. It is probably fair to describe the RPSI as a volunteer organisation with full time professional assistance - on the other hand, Heritage Engineering will be a professional organisation with volunteer assistance. It is vital that the RPSI does not compromise one of its greatest assets - the ability for both volunteers and professional staff to work together in the roles that suit them best.

WHITEHEAD CARRIAGE REPORT

Francis Richards

Another successful year's running with the Mark 2 set based at Whitehead in main line service and good use made of the newly refurbished heritage stock carriages 68 and 87 which perform on train ride days.

Major activity by the electrical squad has been performed with the aim of reducing battery requirements on the carriages. Most of the running rake is now completed with ventilation motors and the main lighting load being supplied from transformer rectifier units directly powered from the train line. This leaves a much reduced demand on the batteries to support emergency lighting, public address and, of course, secondary door locks. This will extend battery life both in the short and long term.

The improvements to the electrical system have allowed better use of steam heating, which has however resulted in comments from our customers of being too hot or too cold. Fine tuning is still required as is the fitting of saloon thermostats to control the temperature.

New (to us!) vehicles 303 and 463 are in with NIR for acceptance. 303 is an ex Irish Rail Mark 2 with luggage area, two toilets and what must be the smallest guard's compartment in the world! The vehicle is the only one that we have that is genuinely dual heated, being steam heated and electrically heated. 463 is an ex BR Mark 2 1st class side corridor brake which has a new generator fitted to provide power for the train line. This will have the effect of providing an additional 24 seats to the train by replacing 462 when steam heating is not a requirement. 303 will in turn provide an additional 18 seats if used in place of 180 or 181.

Both vehicles are restored internally and look good. 303 is painted externally and has minor electrical work outstanding (PA and lighting control for which 'original' BR type connectors are no longer available). 463 requires a further undercoat and then top coat and varnish. The vehicle is now under cover in the shed to facilitate painting.

Future activity will see 304 completed this year. 304 is also an ex Irish Rail open Mark 2 and is

internally restored but awaiting its turn for external painting. Also due to arrive at Whitehead is 5408, the ex Presidential Saloon. This will bring its own challenges in preparation for a return to the main line, particularly in respect of the air conditioning plant which will be a new experience for us.

The saga of Dutch steam heating van 462 and boiler approval continues but I am placing great hope on the next visit of the new boiler inspector.

Changes to test procedures have meant electrical modifications to the control panels which have been successful in bringing 'low low' water level circuits into operation. The (home made) circuit diagrams have been updated. At the last inspection the 'B' boiler left hand sight glass was found to be defective. The sight glass had not operated correctly in its 15 year lifetime. Hole drilled, testing under way.

Heritage vehicle 861 has now had all infested and rotten wood removed. There is not a lot left. As a part of the GROW funding for Heritage Engineering Ireland a sum of money has been set aside for wood-working machinery



The quest to find good wood in GS&WR carriage 861 has involved losing a lot of material, as seen here on 19th April 2011. (E. Friel)

These funds, augmented by our sponsor for 861's overhaul, will provide a planer thicknesser and a spindle moulder to allow us to prepare and shape our own timber with (I hope) a considerable reduction in costs.

Little movement on the wagon front except to say that Ivan continues to be a regular part of the steam

ride consist and is popular with crew and spectators alike.

BELFAST AREA OPERATIONS

Mervyn Darragh

I am pleased to report on behalf of the Belfast Area Operations Committee a very successful operating year.

The season started very early as reported in the 2011 edition of Five Foot Three with the Minced Pie and Mulled Wine train on Sunday 2nd January. No.186 managed a marathon day operating to and from Dublin, due to the very late non-availability of No.4.

No.4 returned light engine to Whitehead on Sunday 16th January.

Our Easter operations comprised out-road trains, with the Easter Eggspress from Belfast to Whitehead on Monday 25th April hauled by No.4, and in-house train rides on the Tuesday (report elsewhere). The 'Eggspress' has previously consisted of two return trips but a third was added this year to meet demand.



Philip Lockett and Ruth Mackie sample a luncheon hamper left over from those they have been serving First Class passengers on the Portrush Flyer of 10th July. (C.P. Friel)

During the early part of 2011 the Society was working to comply with the Railway Safety Commission's requirement to attain an approved Safety Management System licence to operate trains in the Republic. This thankfully was obtained on 1st July, after much hard work by a dedicated Society team. Unfortunately the traditional May International Heritage Railway weekend had to be postponed until the licence was granted.

A successful and full Bangor Belle train operated from Lisburn on Saturday 28th May. At Bangor we can run round a maximum of six vehicles so as usual the train consist had to be planned to maximise the number of seats available. No.186 did the honours with the highlight a most competent climb of Holywood bank on the outward journey to Seahill.

A very welcome charter operated on Thursday evening 9th June to the UFTM Cultra for Nike UK. No.186 again did an admirable job.

The traditional Steam & Jazz season commenced on Friday 10th June, running on four consecutive Fridays to Ballymena. No.186 worked the first train, pulling 6 bogies, the remaining three trains being handled by No.4 and 7 bogies. The performance of the Apex Jazz Band at the Ballymena and Antrim stops was as good as ever.

The dates for the three Portrush Flyers on Sundays 12th June, 10th July and 31st July were decided through a combination of signaller availability for the Portrush mechanical box and No.4's boiler certificate ending on 2nd August. The first train, albeit with limited advance confirmation from NIR, was well filled, partly due to a very large party from Whitehead and the Islandmagee area. An innovation was the provision of first class travel on both July trains, with quality food hampers and waiter service. Both trains were fully loaded.



Driver Steven Glass and No.4 both went out with a bang on 31st July with a splendid return run from Portrush to Belfast. They are seen here climbing Ballyboyland bank. (C.P. Friel)

Wednesday 20th July saw a second charter operated to the UFTM for the British Association of Paediatric Surgeons. No.4 was the train engine. 20th July proved a very busy day at Whitehead with three main line locomotives in steam - No.4 to take her train, No.186 for testing following boiler work and No.461 to make her first moves under her own steam since overhaul work began.

Following the granting of our SMS licence, No.186 transferred light engine to Dublin on Tuesday 2nd

August so she could work a number of steam operations in the Dublin area.

The deferred May tour, the Province of Leinster, could only be confirmed on 1st July. With the relatively short advertising lead-in time to the selected dates - around the second weekend in September - the numbers travelling were, not unexpectedly, slightly less than usual. However, it proved well worth the effort to proceed with the railtour. NIR GM 112 worked the Mark 2 stock to be used on the railtour to Dublin on Thursday 8th September. With No.461 caught up in the railway acceptance process it fell to No.186 to take the railtour train throughout. This is a deceptively good and powerful little locomotive as was borne out by her running from Dublin to Kilkenny and back on Saturday 10th September. The following day the locomotive achieved a first for a preserved locomotive, reaching M3 Parkway north of Dunboyne on the reopened portion of the Clonsilla Junction to Navan line. This was followed by the first steam train out of the new Docklands station with a spectacular climb from Newcomen Junction past Croke Park to Glasnevin Junction, on the way to Mullingar.



No.186 prepares for a Santa Special on 17th December. (E. Friel)

Monday was a wild and stormy day with gale force winds. Our start was delayed as we waited for the arrival of our second driver from Belfast. He had missed the first Enterprise due to the conditions and the second was itself delayed by the weather. Detraining from the rear of the Enterprise he literally jumped on board the locomotive as our train pulled out. Despite the delayed start and CTC initially forgetting about looping the train at Mosney as scheduled, time was made up and we arrived in Portadown early, after non-stop running from Drogheda! The Iarnród Éireann and NIR crews are to be commended for their spirited running, and fully entering into the enthusiasm of the weekend.

The Halloween Broomstick Belle trains operated on Sunday 30th October. There were two trains to

Whitehead and a third to Lisburn, all with No.186 as motive power. Over 700 passengers were carried and the tried and trusted formula again worked very well.

After considering reams of paperwork submitted by the Society, the NIR Review Panel agreed to No.461 being granted a "licence to test" on the main line. Sunday 13th November was the appointed day. It started with No.461 moving gently with the Dutch Van from Whitehead to Carrickfergus and return. Following adjustments, No.461 proceeded with an empty train of 4 Mark 2s and van to Belfast Central and return, during which brake tests were performed to satisfy NIR engineering requirements. The day concluded with a further return working to Carrickfergus.

The test findings were then considered by an NIR Review Panel, who then made their recommendation to the NIR Approval Panel, comprising senior NIR managers. They convened and agreed that No.461 would become an accepted locomotive to operate on their tracks. Certification for the locomotive to operate public trains took effect on 28th November.



Steven Glass (top left) with fellow NIR steam men Stuart Andrews, Gary Moore and Noel Playfair, at Portrush for the last Flyer, and evidently enjoying themselves despite the drizzle. Steven has been involved with the RPSI since he was at school, volunteering to work on carriages, track, shunting and anything else going on at Whitehead. After joining NIR he became a highly competent steam fireman before passing out as a driver in February 2009 and demonstrating his skills on the other side of the footplate. He is a great loss to the RPSI. (C.P. Friel)

The Santa season of trains operated over three weekends beginning on 3rd and 4th December. In total 14 trains operated, 10 of them from Belfast Central to Whitehead, with 2 to Lisburn. Two trains operated

from Portadown to Lisburn and return on Sunday 4th December. These trains are very popular and all had sold out by the last week in November, a month after tickets going on sale. Unfortunately potential customers had to be turned away - a situation that will continue until No.85 returns to traffic to pull heavier trains. No.461 was eased into revenue earning traffic during the last Santa weekend.

The season overall was very successful and special thanks are due to all who helped make it happen.

Due to operational reasons, regrettably, there was no day steam return working to Dublin, despite its popularity in recent years. In total there were 25 workings involving NIR crews, all steam, except for one diesel hauled.

Finally, the 31st July Portrush Flyer proved operationally to be a sad day. Driver Steven Glass, a friend to many of us, worked his last steam train for the Society. He and the family emigrated to Australia in the autumn. He is now believed to be driving huge mineral trains in Western Australia. Good luck, Steven!

DUBLIN AREA CARRIAGE REPORT

Niall Kelly

2011 may have seen a rather abridged season in Dublin in terms of operations, but behind the scenes, Carriage Department activity continued on as much as ever, with a range of projects undertaken during the year.

Our year started on Saturday 8th January, when work commenced on preparing Craven 1506 for its bodywork overhaul. Initially it seemed that this would be a straightforward job. However, sanding down revealed the Dublin end roof-dome to be significantly damaged. Repairs necessitated the application of several layers of filler and fibreglass. The body panels themselves also required a fair amount of filler; over a tin of the stuff was consumed before the project's conclusion. A wet and dry sanding helped smooth off the bodywork prior to painting. The carriage also underwent a much needed deep clean. The painting itself took place over the course of the October Bank Holiday weekend.

Undercoating was carried out on the Saturday with the application of gloss taking place the following day. Some of the crew had to juggle this job with their duties manning the State Coach Exhibition a mile down the line. On 11th November 1506 undertook her first RPSI outing, albeit without passengers, when the Cravens were transferred from Inchicore to Connolly Valeting Plant for their annual exam. The carriage finally entered revenue earning service on 3rd December's Santa Specials, five years to the month after she finished up her IÉ career on the Ballina branch train. Her entry to service was a small milestone in itself: it meant that all ten of the Society's Cravens have now operated on an RPSI train at some stage. In practice only nine of them are ever likely to be available for traffic; 1529 is now used as a mess coach and source of spare parts, not to mention 'target practice' for would-be coach painters!

Catering vehicle 1508 has had its temporary bar removed and four bays of seating reinstated, thus reverting it to a 47-seater. The bar had been fitted in 2008 to provide such a facility until a full bar could be provided in 1514. The entry of the latter vehicle into service made the temporary structure redundant, so the opportunity was taken to maximise the carriage's seating capacity. The former cafeteria area (fitted by Irish Rail in 1990) has been retained for use as a souvenir shop.

Craven 1523 had been out-shopped in 2010 but still required interior repainting. A small team set to work on this during the year, transforming the old battleship grey scheme into blue and cream to match that in 1541. The toilet compartments also underwent something of a revamp: they are now decorated in red and cream. The mirrors were replaced in the process, new ones being fitted on the morning of the first Santa Specials.

Meanwhile over at Mullingar shed the team commenced the overhaul of BR van 3173. This vehicle has actually been there since May 2007 but its overhaul had to await the conversion of Cravens 1522 and 1514 to catering vehicles. So far much work has gone into removing the life-expired panelling and

replacing it with new material. It is also intended to fit out the van with proper crew facilities. This van is not entirely identical to its sister 3185: 3173 has its guard's box located towards the end of the vehicle, whereas in 3185 the compartment is more centrally positioned.



Initial preparation for painting No.1506 on 16th July 2011. (Dublin C&W Team)

The earlier part of the season also saw work done on repairing the plumbing that had sustained frost damage in December 2010. This ensured that all toilets were serviceable in time for the running season. In October and November some of steam heating pipes were removed from the Cravens and replaced with new copper material. The result was a very warm train over the course of the Santa season.

Concurrent with all these projects the Carriage Presentation Team (CPT) laboured away as usual. This group meets on Wednesdays and does a fine job in making sure that the running set is kept in pristine condition for our passengers.

Following many months of hard work the RPSI SMS was accepted by the RSC in July enabling the

operation of trains once again. The Society provided IÉ with a rake of Cravens for a run to Portlaoise and back on 19th July, hauled by GM 218. From a Carriage Department perspective this allowed us the opportunity to look for any defects prior to commencing the season proper, with an inspection carried out in Sallins loop. All was in order and the Cravens went on to form the backbone to DAOC operations in 2011.



An intriguing ‘before and after’ view on 29th October. (Dublin C&W Team)

Although the “Province of Leinster” railtour and its associated workings utilised Whitehead’s Mark 2 set rather than the Cravens, the Dublin Carriage Department was still heavily involved, being entirely responsible for carriage and locomotive watering throughout the weekend. As in 2010, the use of locomotive No.186 restricted the running set to six carriages (including the van) for most of the season, although a longer set was turned out for the Santa trains. Hopefully the return of No.461 to Dublin in 2012 will allow seven/eight coach trains to become the norm again. Arguably the Cravens may not have quite the same charm as the Heritage Set, but they still offer an opportunity to travel in a unique Irish coach design not to be found elsewhere; quite a contrast to the UK where the majority of mainline tours are made up of BR Mark 1/2 type stock. In terms of promoting tours to the overseas market, this may well be a selling point in itself.

The Heritage Set was not used during 2011. Unfortunately, our faithful Brake Standard 1916 is in need of a major body overhaul something which is unlikely to be feasible anytime soon. This is particularly problematic as 1916 is also the generator vehicle for the Heritage Set. One solution under consideration

is to change the wiring in our heritage vehicles so that they can be powered from our BR vans. On a positive note, plans are underway to commence the overhaul of 1335 in 2012. This fine carriage - believed to be the only GSR-built carriage in existence to retain its running gear - has not run since 2005, and its return is much anticipated. The bodywork of catering vehicles 88 and 2421 will also undergo attention as time and manpower permits.



Under a fresh coat of blue paint on 30th October. (Dublin C&W Team)

Having enjoyed a sojourn in Holland the previous year, 351 did not stay out of the limelight in 2011. October saw work undertaken towards preparing the vehicle for another prestigious exhibition. Work was initially focused on servicing the carriage for its annual exam, followed of course by the important task of ensuring that she was spotless inside and out. The display took place over the October Bank Holiday weekend. It was opened by the outgoing President, Mary McAleese, on Friday 28th October, in a ceremony attended by invited guests of IÉ and the Society. For the small sum of €2 the public could have a guided tour of not only 351 but also its rarely glimpsed successor, Mark 2d 5408. The latter vehicle is to be placed on loan to the Society on a similar basis to 351. The carriages were positioned neatly out of the way in Heuston's platform 1 for the course of exhibition. As IÉ no longer have any vacuum-fitted brake vehicles of their own, 3185 assisted in the transfer of the vehicles to and from Inchicore. Not being invited to the ball, she was banished back to Inchicore out of sight during the event itself. As useful a vehicle 3185 may be, 'presidential' is most definitely not the word to describe it, externally or internally!

In concluding this report it only remains to acknowledge the commitment of our hardworking

volunteers, with thanks also due to all the staff in IÉ who helped us throughout the year. Looking to 2012, initial work will include maintenance to get the set fit for the coming season. As mentioned earlier it also intended to begin the restoration of 1335, while the overhaul of 3173 will continue at Mullingar, with another Craven being brought in for bodywork attention/repainting at some point also.



Lining application in progress on 5th November 2011. (Dublin C&W Team)



The end result on the evening of 5th November. (Dublin C&W Team)



Gleaming in the winter sun between Santa trains. Grand Canal Dock Dublin. (Glen Cusack)

DUBLIN AREA OPERATIONS

Stephen Cooke

The year 2011, like the two preceding years, was a turbulent one. For the RPSI it has also been a highly significant year.

Firstly we didn't turn a wheel on the IÉ system for the first half of the year. Due to Irish and European law, each railway operator is now required to have a safety management system in place. The size of the task meant that the Railway Safety Commission had to process the IÉ applications - there were two, infrastructure and operating - before ours could be assessed. This process is detailed elsewhere in the magazine, suffice to say we are now an independent operator in our own right under the Railway Safety Act of 2005, with all that implies by way of additional rights and responsibilities. This setback to running was turned into a positive as more concentration could be now given to the behind the scenes process of carriage restoration and preparation. Our volunteers were busy applying the finishing touches to 1506, the next Cravens carriage to be rolled out of Inchicore Works. This vehicle was in a sanded condition and awaited a number of coats of paint before being presented alongside its 'paint sakes' in our Santa Train season.

With a mandate set for the submission and subsequent achieving of a Safety Management System by 1st July, it took hard work and determination for such a milestone occurrence to take place for the Society. Now that such a SMS was in place this gave the RPSI the proud title of being an individual operator on

the Iarnród Éireann network, a status that was received with great pleasure by all involved with the RPSI.

The first official operation under the Society's new running status was not witnessed by a single passenger. Due to the lengthy 'Winter' break the Society requested a running in trip for the Cravens. 218 took seven Cravens and 3185 from Inchicore to Portlaoise. Thankfully all was well and four days later the first official operation was run.



IÉ 076 at MacDonagh Station, Kilkenny, before leaving for Dublin Connolly on a pleasant day on 23rd July. (Tony Cooke)

The first revenue earning operation under the Society's newly formed SMS was on 23rd July when a trip was ran from Dublin Connolly to a 'mystery destination'. This was the first mystery train operated since the regular seasonal mystery trains ran in the late 1970s. The train consisted of 080, five Cravens and 3185 and ran to Kilkenny. Passengers were left guessing as to the destination until the set passed Kildare. A clear day gave the large number of passengers ample opportunity to wander around the Marble City and some visited Kilkenny Castle which was available to visit in conjunction with their RPSI ticket. 076 was sent from Waterford as run round facilities were restricted by PW work in the newly relaid station prevented 080 from running around. Such issues as these have become a reality for the Society when operating to our less regular haunts. The return leg arrived on time and offloaded its grateful passengers.

The first steam operation of the year was on 7th August when the RPSI teamed up with the Malahide

Lions to operate a charter from their hometown to Wicklow.

This was the second time the Society has teamed up with the Lions. No.186 with five Cravens and BR van travelled to Malahide to collect its awaiting passengers and was greeted by a brass band. Having disembarked in Wicklow, the Lions contingent remained in the county town while the locals got the chance to sample some travel to Arklow. On this trip our overseas assessor was on hand to check on the competency of our regular steam drivers. This assessment was successful and standards were reached on the day.



Same location, different train. This time No.186 is at Kilkenny on 10th September preparing for her own journey to Dublin. (Tony Cooke)

Exactly three weeks after this, No.186 was steaming again with the same five Cravens. This time the train was chartered to 'Trinity Foundation'. A reluctant GNR turntable in Connolly gave trouble on the morning of this charter which resulted in the engine having to be turned on the DSER turntable beside platform 7, the first time a steam engine was turned since No.461's use on crew training in 1995. No.186 attracted a large gathering of bemused onlookers. The engine did get to its starting position and left slightly late. The customer requested a return journey from Pearse to Mullingar and the train was fully booked. While the Mullingar turntable can be temperamental, on this day it was signalling issues that prevented the engine from being turned, meaning the outing had to return tender first. Not a day for turntables! This caused a slight delay back in Pearse Station and, with 207 available to release the J15, the crew called it a day on what was ultimately a very successful operation.

Our annual three day tour took place over the weekend of 9th-11th September. The now annual Friday

Diesel tour ran from Connolly to Limerick via the Nenagh branch. 072 did the honours on this occasion and enthusiasts were given an ample number of photo stops at each station along the branch. 080 then returned the set of RPSI Mark 2s to Connolly, which turned out to be the second time this engine worked a Society outing in less than three months. Saturday saw the steam take over when No.186 took the Mark 2s to the same location visited by No.4 three years previously. The journey to Kilkenny didn't seem to hamper the little engine's spirit and no real obstacle stood in its way on the outward or return leg. Not even 'The Gullet' challenged the engine. The last number of years has seen a falling number of passengers on our annual three day tour. Let's hope the 2012 tour brings us more sales.



072 and the RPSI Mark 2s pause for photography at Birdhill during the 'Silvermines' tour on 9th September. (C.P. Friel)

Sunday saw two new locations for an RPSI train to visit. Loco No.186 and Mark 2s left Connolly for an outbound journey to M3 Parkway to the northwest of the city in County Meath's newest railway line. The train headed from the capital to Clonsilla where it diverged from the Sligo line and onto the new line, mapped by cut granite mileposts and littered with oddly coloured ballast. Water was taken at M3 Parkway as it would be almost 50 miles before it would have a chance to fill up again. An 071 class hauled the coaching stock to Docklands as a lack of run around facilities prevented No.186 from being released. Shortly after the arrival by diesel, No.186 followed and, after a metaphorical deep breath, tackled the tough incline from the North Wall to Glasnevin Junction via 'The Walls' separating the Royal Canal from Drumcondra's Whitworth Road. This rare sight was filmed by RTÉ cameras for their 'Capital D' series; they were also on hand to get an insight into steam raising before the day's outing. No.186 showed no signs of ageing or camera shyness and a modest run was made on to Mullingar.

With the success of July's 'Mystery Train' the Society felt it was a perfect chance to operate another 'Mystery Train'. None in 30 years but two in four months! This time Limerick was the destination. As with the two day 'Silvermines Tour' 072 left Connolly on 1st October with a rake of Cravens in tow. It followed its path to Ballybrophy and took the branch into Colbert Station. The return leg operated back through Limerick Junction via the 'Direct Curve'. The returning 071 did however cause trouble just

before descending into the Phoenix Park Tunnel. A replacement loco was attached to the entire consist and hauled the set back to Connolly around one hour late.

The next gathering of RPSI rolling stock was one of a stationary nature on the weekend of 28th October. IÉ and the Society ran a joint exhibition in Dublin Heuston Station, when the public got a chance to look round two Presidential carriages - 351 (built by the GSWR in 1902) and 5408 (a converted Mark 2 originally built in 1972). The exhibition was opened by President Mary McAleese on her penultimate official public engagement as president. President McAleese spoke highly of the RPSI and our efforts in the preservation world and remarked that she was unique as being the only president to have travelled in 5408 and its predecessor which was also on exhibition. In total just over 700 people visited the exhibition and most were impressed, particularly by the specialised craft work in the restoration process of coach 351.



The former DSER turntable was used to turn No.186 on the evening of 10th September. (C.P. Friel)

With the unavailability of locomotive No.461 the Society was forced to operate this year's Santa operation using diesel haulage throughout. No.461 had been anticipated to operate but unforeseen circumstances gave the Society no choice but to take such measures. However, the star of the show was still on board to provide his festive cheer to our younger contingent while the elders sampled some of the fine mulled wine and draught beer that our catering facilities had to offer. The majority of the passengers over the twelve trains, more than 4,000 of them, were understanding about the lack of steam and were grateful for the efforts that our volunteers went to contribute to its continuing success. It was also the first time in 5 years that a full rake of Cravens carriages were operated and possibly the only time that a Craven set contained two catering vehicles. These Santa trains were also the first such time that our newly painted vehicle 1506 was to run in its glossy blue shine, and indeed in RPSI ownership! Diesel haulage throughout the operation meant, of course, no need to water the motive power, and this allowed for a speedy turnaround time and virtually no delays. The RPSI are thankful to Iarnród Éireann for the use of their diesel locomotives throughout.

Date	Journey	Consist	Weight of Carriages (tons)
19 th July	Inchicore - Portlaoise - Inchicore	218 + 7 Cravens + BR Van	238.08
23 rd July	Connolly - Kilkenny - Connolly	080/076 + 5 Cravens + BR Van	180.68
7 th August	Connolly - Malahide - Arklow - Malahide - Connolly	No.186 + 5 Cravens + BR Van	180.68
28 th August	Pearse - Mullingar - Pearse	No.186 + 5 Cravens + BR Van	180.68
9 th September	Connolly - Limerick via Nenagh - Connolly	No.186 + 5 Mark 2s + Dutch Van	192.10
10 th September	Connolly - Waterford - Connolly	No.186 + 5 Mark 2s + Dutch Van	192.10
11 th September	Connolly - M3 Parkway - Docklands - Mullingar - Connolly	No.186 + 5 Mark 2s + Dutch Van	192.10
1 st October	Connolly - Limerick via Nenagh - Limerick Junction - Connolly	072 + 5 Cravens + BR Van	180.68
December 3 rd , 4 th , 10 th , 11 th , 17 th , 18 th	Pearse - Maynooth - Pearse	Various GMs + 8 Cravens + BR Van	266.78



The Society's Charles Meredith shows President Mary McAleese around 351. (C.P. Friel)

Some trends can be easily explained on paper. Other trends are more like the figures produced from Whitehead Train Rides which can be baffling whichever way they are viewed:

In 2010, we welcomed 934 passengers to Whitehead over 5 events; in 2011 we ran 11 and welcomed 1,513. The 2011 takings were roughly £6,000 - more than double those for 2010. So far so good - the head-scratching begins when trying to predict which days are good to run on. Why, for example where there a mere 17 visitors on the 17th of July, 200 a fortnight later on 30th and back down to 60 two weeks later again on 14th August with the same advertising and tremendous effort by steam raisers, shunters, dining car attendants, shop assistants, tour guides and all the other roles people volunteer to fill?



A tour party under the guidance of John Friel (right) are intrigued by Nathan Lighthowler's and Chris Hill's labours on No.85 on 11th September 2011. (E. Friel)

The reason is that those Open Days which attracted most visitors were those tied in with greater events to which we were an added attraction:

Date	Passengers		Date	Passengers
26/04/2011	189		14/08/2011	60
19/06/2011	147		21/08/2011	128
16/07/2011	118		28/08/2011	Cancelled
17/07/2011	17		10/09/2011	173
24/07/2011	Cancelled		11/09/2011	142
30/07/2011	200		26/11/2011	241
07/08/2011	98		Total	1,513

In 2011 26th April = Easter Tuesday, 19th June = Father's Day, 30th July = Whitehead Community Festival and 10th & 11th September = European Heritage Weekend and 26th November = Whitehead

Victorian Fair. Weekends where we went it alone produced much less impressive results.

But enough of talking like one of our Lottery Consultants. Behind the statistics running the Train Rides produced 3 different locos (No.3BG, No.4 and No.461) giving unequalled opportunities for several new volunteers to try out steam raising. A big welcome to the RPSI to Colin Smyth, Ryan Downey, Chris Ragg and Chris Hill. Unfortunately, a few cancellations were necessary; due to No.461 requiring all hands to re-wheel her tender (24th July) and finish the painting (it was thought around 28th August that she was for the main line on 3rd September - an event which never happened). As someone said, "It looks like the Loco Running team is also the Loco Overhaul team is also the Operations Engine Crew."



No.4 on rides duty with 68 and 81 on 30th July 2011. (Lynn Stanfield)

A very welcome addition to the Train Rides fleet of vehicles is newly refurbished carriage ex-LMS(NCC) 68, the 1st/2nd ex-Midland coach of 1922 sent over by the LMS to Belfast in 1941 to replace rolling stock lost in the Belfast Blitz. 68 has been restored using a 66% grant from Northern Ireland Museums Council and generous donations from members and The Syndicate in London. 68 now complements perfectly Diner 87 and brake van 81 (do I have to mention this is 'Ivan'?) and whichever steam loco is 'it' for the day. Many thanks to all who donated to 68; you are most welcome to visit and have a look at the results.

WHITEHEAD SITE REPORT

Dermot Mackie

Despite the very cold weather in January, progress was made on a number of fronts. The laneway had

its numerous potholes filled by Alan McRobert and Robin Morton with a mixture of track ballast, old foundry sand and fine ash, which compacted down well. The blast house had both the side and roof cladding attached by Bill King-Wood while the large, garage type, up and over access door was installed, following slight modifications, but still required the springs to be fixed in position and the electrical squad made good progress on the installation of both power and light.

An excellent start was made on the replacement of 20 old wooden interlacing sleepers on the platform crossover which were giving cause for concern. The four rails were lifted together with ten of the wooden sleepers, and digging out by John Wolsley, Owen Smith and Denis Campbell allowed the placement of five concrete sleepers. Re-sleepering with concretes was completed at the end of February. Work in this area highlighted the lack of reasonable drainage and the next few weeks were occupied with the digging of a trench between the platform and main roads to allow the water to run towards the King's Road bridge. This has proved successful, and has reduced the serious water-logging in this area.

Thursday 10th March had the Site squad assisting in a large shunt to replace the bogies under coach 300 and adjust the position of the lateral springs in the bogies of Hunslet 102. The following Saturday was set aside for the latest round of shunter training. Six candidates volunteered for the programme, which included a lot of preliminary home study. All braved the elements on the day for a range of practical tests with No.3BG in steam and the morning was finished off with a detailed written examination. It is very pleasing to report that all the students passed both their practical and written tests and have gone on to provide excellent help on the duty rosters throughout the year.

On a lighter note, Thomas Charters and I re-commissioned a toilet, in the stables, a very useful addition to the only other facility, which is in the Tarry.

Saint Patrick's Day saw the track gang with Ian Stewart at Cullbackey goods yards, where an exploratory dig was carried out on the site of the three ton hand crane which NIR would like us to remove. Shovels and spades shifted a lot of tipped rubbish and with the machine fully exposed, a plan of removal was been put in place for April. However, when this was tried with a Hiab lorry, it would not budge and a rock breaker will be required to demolish the base.

Dismantling of two good sets of B4 bogies for carriage 463 were seen as an urgent priority, which we tackled as a handy indoor job. Following sand blasting of parts, new springs were installed in the bolsters during the rebuilding, but three other B4 bogies of poor quality were sold for recycling for £1,200. In addition 750 litres of diesel oil was recovered from Hunslet 102 and a start was made on a ferrous scrap drive. The hot dry weather in April was ideal for the first weed spray of the year and all the points were given a dose of lubrication and a series of rail joints tightened with new bolts before the Easter train movements.

Early May saw the arrival, on a low loader lorry, of the vintage diesel locomotive B113 from Dublin, and the site gang, including David Thompson and Tom Mathers, gave help in the building and dismantling of the ramp for offloading. A final push on the scrap front saw a filled ferrous skip and David Lowry removed a trailer load of aluminium; all very useful income. A day was also spent tidying the yard and bagging old blasting grit and lopping of overhanging branches in the laneways and June saw further pruning of the by now large trees and bushes on our perimeter by the usual suspects including Gordon Hunt and Trevor Taylor.

Later in the month the JCB filled a skip with ash and was used to carry stone to patch the potholes in the laneway. After this it was given a well earned service and the Site received its second application of weedkiller.

The busy Steam and Jazz season meant the coaches were in need of a good exterior clean and all hands including Geoff Moore were pressed into action to do the necessary wash and scrub.

An arrival of a large order of steel plates in early July required both the Atlas to offload and the JCB to transport them to be stacked on the frames of Drumboe, outside the back of the workshop. Under the direction of Mark Walsh, and with help from Philip Newell, four ground signal dollies were placed in strategic positions within the main yard using the Atlas, which also dug the necessary holes. On 13th July a large shunt required help to move an almost complete No.461 and tender out of the workshop, to be replaced by No.171 and Drumboe, complete with the sheets mentioned above. The following day I sprayed the weeds and grass in the Coleraine turntable. The next week we had a ferrous scrap drive and repaired the damaged tarmacadam on the steps of the platform shop.



The Site squad in the wilderness at the back of the site in May 2011. (Geoff Moore)

The end of July saw us doing some routine track maintenance in time for the Summer train rides and a series of foundations were dug for a lean-to to be built at the back of the site for steel storage. We also manoeuvred two refurbished Hill of Howth tram wheel sets into vans, for transport back to Dublin.

The first two weeks in August were taken as a holiday for the squad and our first task on return to Whitehead was to remove all the old rails from under the platform edges. This had the dual effect of tidying up the track and removing materials from the easy reach of scrap metal thieves, who are an increasing concern. Our own scrap drive in early September included the dismantling of an old CP air compressor to remove the Ford D4 diesel engine, which is of the type used in our coal shovels. The result was a full ferrous skip which was worth several hundred pounds and the removal of old copper stays from a boiler plate also generated two hundred pounds. A detailed topographical survey of the site was completed this month which will be essential for our proposed developments.

Unfortunately a spread road caused derailment outside the carriage shed on the Saturday evening of the European Architectural Heritage weekend. I was able to temporarily pin the track back together on the Sunday morning and this allowed completion of the programme and safe storage of stock in the shed. However, subsequent examination revealed 11 old, decayed, long timbers at the crossing of numbers

one and two carriage roads and, once the four rails were lifted, these were replaced with 22 interlaced concrete sleepers. We also assisted Mervyn Fleming in the erection of the lean-to mentioned above.

October started with the hand digging of a trench to allow re-direction of the electrical supply to the sand blasting shed. Repairs to our ferrous skip, the bottom hinge and bracket of a yard gate and replacement of a sleeper in 5 shed road were all facilitated by Peter Scott and the workshop staff. Monday 3rd October saw the appearance of McLaughlin and Harvey, the civil engineers, who were to spend the next 6 weeks using our platform and tracks as a base for the extension of the Whitehead station platforms. We finished jacking and packing our repaired tracks into the carriage sheds during this week, in time for the launch of loco No.461 and coach 68. After the successful event the Site squad retired to a local eating house for a celebratory lunch.



The Site squad celebrate the launch of No.461 and 68 on 13th October 2011. (Gordon Hunt)

Following the placement of the electrical cabling we filled in the trench mentioned above. On the morning of Thursday 20th the JCB dug a deep hole at the back of the site to ascertain the depth of the water table which was found to be in excess of 2 metres and the afternoon was spent cleaning the train for the forthcoming Broomstick Belle.

As part of the preparations for the HLF project at Whitehead, I liaised with RPS and the ground survey team to arrange a series of test borings around the site to ascertain both the quality and depth of the sub strata. This work was completed at the end of October and I am pleased to report that preliminary findings confirm the water table at a depth of between 2 and 3 metres and dense boulder clay at 4 metres below ground level. The former will obviate the need for piling while the latter should make for excellent foundations.

The Site squad in November replaced two large timbers under the points which give access to the Carriage and Loco shed roads from the platform crossing.

In addition we had to make extensive repairs to the King's Road bridge point lock, which had been damaged by the platform contractors. A large, very rotten sleeper in number 5 shed road was giving major concern, in light of its imminent use for the long term storage of No.4, and was also replaced. As part of the ongoing preliminary working up of the HLF contract I co-ordinated both an Asbestos and Wildlife survey of the Whitehead site.

In time for the Santa train season, the platform lights were refurbished by the electrical squad, all points greased, fish plates and keys checked and new steps made up to the water tower. This rounded off a busy and eventful year. If you fancy some exercise in the fresh air you would be very welcome to join us.

DICTIONARY DEFINITIONS



'Craven Carriage'

DEVELOPMENT: THE BIG PICTURE

Johnny Glendinning

Most articles in Five Foot Three cover past history and current activities, but we all need to take an active interest in the future of the Society. Whilst we cannot change the past - regrettable as many former events such as railway closures and the scrapping of historic locomotives and rolling stock may have been, and we do our best to manage the present - we do have the opportunity to influence the future and to plan for the long term survival, development and enhancement of the RPSI and its aims and objectives.

This is not just for ourselves, but for the younger and future generations who would otherwise never experience the ambience of 20th century train travel, with lots of routes, steam or iconic diesel

locomotives, carriages with opening windows, side corridors, proper restaurant cars, and widely varying types and configurations of trains - so far removed from the uniform hermetically-sealed multiple units of today, however efficient these may be.

Looking at the options for the Society as it presently stands brought home a few hard truths, which did not augur well for our longer-term future. These included:

- Ever-increasing safety and environmental regulations and restrictions.
- Further loss of traditional engineering and operational facilities and skills.
- Loss of vehicle storage space and engineering support from the railways.
- Legislative changes in responsibilities for railway operations.
- Diminishing RPSI volunteer workforce, requiring more paid staff.
- Ever-increasing costs in relation to all the above.

Despite this worrying picture, there has been no real ‘external’ opposition from governments or the railway companies to our continued operation - in fact quite the contrary - provided we find the means to meet all the safety, technical and other requirements.

The Society’s response to this scenario was to set up a “2020” Committee to investigate and develop options for the future. The Committee commissioned three major reports to help the Society to rationalise the way ahead in the longer term future, and ensure that there would be sufficient interest and support - in the community at large as well as our own membership - to allow our restoration and maintenance work and our train operations to continue. These reports were:

- Conservation Management Plan
- Access Plan
- Audience Development Plan

The Conservation Management Plan identified that the RPSI collection accounted for some 51% of railway heritage items in the whole of Ireland, whilst through our partnership agreement with the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum and the Downpatrick & Co Down Railway this figure rose to 81%.

The Conservation Plan highlighted the ongoing work which would be required to conserve, restore and maintain this heritage, and the range of resources and facilities which we would need to achieve this aim.

The Access Plan dealt with the means of ensuring that the maximum number of people from the community at large would be able to see and, where appropriate, experience through travel, our historic trains and other items.

The Audience Development Plan identified what would be needed to ensure that future passengers and visitors would be able to learn and appreciate the relevance and importance of what we do. This would become even more important in the future when public knowledge and awareness of the former size, intensity and social and economic value of railways could become greatly reduced.

Consideration of these plans led in turn to the Society’s 2020 Development Plan, with a careful analysis of the physical, financial and manpower resources which we would need in the future, concentrating initially on our main base at Whitehead, but not ignoring our Dublin and Mullingar based activities.

The 2020 Committee gave a formal presentation to the RPSI Council and representative working members at a meeting in Lisburn on 16th January 2010.

The way forward was seen as “moving up a gear” (or should we say “opening the regulator a bit further”!) to significantly increase the scale of our activities and earn much more money to finance our enhanced engineering and other costs. Whilst it was hoped that this increased activity would encourage

more volunteers, it was fully recognised that the majority of the extra effort would have to come from paid staff.

To achieve this in the most economical way, it was proposed that two subsidiary Social Enterprise Companies (SEPs) would be set up - nominally “Irish Heritage Railway Company” and “Heritage Engineering Co. Ltd”, to operate our trains and public facilities at Whitehead and other potential future sites, and to restore and maintain our locomotives and rolling stock. There would be many benefits in the creation of SEPs, particularly in terms of training and other grants.

It was also recognised that the governance of the RPSI would need to change, to be “fit for purpose” to effectively and efficiently manage the subsidiary companies, and to protect our historic and irreplaceable assets.

Outline plans had already been developed over the previous couple of years for the long-term development of the Whitehead site. This will greatly extend the secure covered accommodation for engines and carriages, extend and enhance the locomotive workshop, provide a separate carriage workshop, a separate paint shop, a new foundry, and adequate secure stores facilities for materials, parts and equipment.

Other facilities will include a 60-foot locomotive turntable, a signal cabin to operate mechanical points and semaphore signals on the platform line and run-round, and a substantial station building on the platform. The roadway leading to the RPSI site will be resurfaced, and the entire site will be provided with secure steel fencing.

An application was made to an organisation known as GROW South Antrim - an acronym for “Generating Rural Opportunities Within South Antrim” - a rural development organisation funded by the EU, for a grant for the station building, roadway surfacing and secure site fencing.

The first good news was our success in securing the GROW grant. This has allowed the Society to continue the detailed planning and design work for the facilities envisaged.

The station building will be a replica of the former Belfast & Northern Counties Railway station at Whiteabbey, which had been designed by Charles Lanyon. It will house a reception area (concourse), ticket/information office, souvenir shop, café, toilets and office accommodation. There will also be a canopy over part of the platform area.

The Society hoped that the majority of the capital funding for the overall Whitehead development might be obtained from the Heritage Lottery Fund, and an application for this was prepared - no mean feat - the application form alone was some 60 pages of closely typed A4, with lots of interactive financial spreadsheets!

This is where our previous Conservation Access and Audience Plans became a major asset. The HLF simply does not finance restoration or maintenance work, however important, in isolation. Their ethos is that all work and facilities must be aimed at adequately displaying and explaining the relevance and importance of the “collections” - in other words - Access and Audience Development as well as Conservation.

However, even if we were to secure a major HLF Grant, this still left the little matter of the “match funding” (the other 40% or so which would not be funded by HLF) - at least another £1.5 million or thereabouts!

We therefore spent a lot of time and effort during the spring and summer of 2010 lobbying various governmental and other potential funding organisations. In due course, we will also have to put our hands deeply into our own pockets as well, so various fund-raising ideas are currently being developed - you will be hearing from us!

Key

- Land owned or leased by RPSI
- Original NCC structures (1903)
- RPSI structures (1966 - present)
- Planned building 2012 - 2013
- Planned buildings 'Stage 1'
- Planned buildings 'Stage 2'

Planned carriage workshop

Planned workshop extensions

'Old' engine shed

'New' engine shed Completed 1981

Planned 60' turntable

Stables

Planned station building

Planned Signal cabin

Platform Partly rebuilt 1977

Heavy lift cranes Completed 1995

Carriage shed Officially opened 1993

Henry Dunleath workshop Officially opened 2006

Planned carriage shed extensions

Railway Cottages

Sinks

Adelaide Avenue

Adelaide Place

Malpas Road

BM 51.6

Plans for the building work at Whitehead have been through many revisions - but this rough sketch, based on a 1962 map, gives an idea of what is planned. It should not be taken as entirely accurate, especially in terms of track layout. Note that the two workshop buildings marked in yellow are not rail connected.

Several of our potential 'match-funders' were present at the launch of refurbished Dining Car 87 and former stables building at Whitehead on 25th August 2010, giving the opportunity for site tours and briefings for the various interested parties.

This was followed up by a conference hosted at the offices of the NI Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (DETI) at Netherleigh on 29th October 2010, attended by very senior 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 on 20th November. The entire RPSI membership, as well as many others, must have been delighted to hear 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 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.

It is not all about site works, however. An essential element of the overall plan will be a step-change in the scale of our train operations - Southern as well as Northern. This in turn will require more main line locomotives in traffic throughout most of the year - tentatively three of the larger engines (No.4, No.85, No.171 and No.461) - so that we can be reasonably sure of one main locomotive available at both Whitehead and Dublin throughout the operating season. We will need the revenue from more trains to finance the overall programme.

Whilst most of this article so far has concentrated on our Northern operations at Whitehead, there is no intention of ignoring our currently larger 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 link the GNR and GS&WR lines by a new underground line through the city centre. Whilst there may 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 and discussing 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. However, this is very much 'work in progress' at present, and no decisions or even firm recommendations have yet been made.

A further possible development is the establishment of a subsidiary carriage storage facility and possibly a small museum/exhibition area at Dundalk, on the site of the recently closed Ardee Road freight yard (the former GNR trackbed from Dundalk Central Junction towards Dundalk West

Junction). Whilst far from ideal in terms of our Dublin-based workforce, it has the advantage of being in an area covered by potential SEUPB (“Interreg”) grants, being in a border county (Louth). This could lead to significant external funding, which would not be available in the Dublin area.

The Society is working hard to resolve the Southern base issue, to ensure the ongoing security of our locomotives and carriages, whilst finding a practical solution to the various other issues which this has raised.

SNAPPER & SHOOTER



DEVELOPMENT REPORT

Denis Grimshaw

Whilst there has been little evidence to date of any physical progress on our Whitehead or other development proposals, a huge amount of planning and design work has taken place over the past year.

Press adverts were placed for the appointment of a professional Project Manager to undertake the preparation of the highly detailed reports required by the Heritage Lottery Fund and other potential funders, and to review and assess the output of our external design teams. Following a structured selection process, Siobhan Dillon was appointed as our Project Manager for the Whitehead development.

A further competitive selection procedure was then undertaken for the appointment of a design team, to prepare the designs, drawings, calculations and detailed cost estimates for the buildings and other infrastructure, and to undertake the necessary Planning and Building Control applications. Following a thorough analysis of the submissions received, and marking in accordance with our set criteria, development consultancy firm RPS (not to be confused with RPSI) was appointed as the lead design team, supported by Ostick and Williams as Architects. Other members of the design team include Quantity Surveyors, and Mechanical and Electrical consultants.

As an essential part of our HLF Stage 1 design grant was the selection and appointment of Interpretive Designers, to ensure that our locomotives, carriages and wagons, as well as our restoration and engineering work, would be fully accessible for viewing and interpretation by as large a number of visitors as we can attract and accommodate.

Thus, following another selection procedure, Griff Boyle Design Management (GBDM) was appointed to this role.

An indicative layout of the development was prepared, and discussed in detail with the various RPSI departmental officers and our external advisors. After a number of iterations and possible layouts, a final design for the Whitehead development has now been agreed.

This has been a much more complex process than may be imagined, due to the often conflicting and in many cases very stringent requirements of secure storage, workshop space, train operations, public viewing, display and interpretation as required by HLF and designed by GBDM, Planning Authority requirements, Building Control requirements, the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA), available space, and by no means least - cost. We also need to be able to keep our engineering and restoration work and our main line train operations going whilst the building works will be in progress.

The station building, however, is being mainly financed by GROW (Generating Rural Opportunities Within South Antrim) - an EU-supported rural development programme. As the GROW funding has a shorter time-frame than HLF, we will need to start work on the station building this autumn in order to meet GROW's financial deadlines.

Meanwhile, we are now planning how we can manage to operate our Whitehead site and works during the proposed building programme, which will require the removal of all of our non-restored vehicles from the "back of the shed" area where the extensions to the workshops, locomotive sheds and carriage shed will be built. One possibility is the excavation of most of the grass bank between our site and the NIR Larne Line for the provision of one or two additional sidings. This would entail more cost, however.

A couple of areas where physical progress has been evident at Whitehead have been the site investigation survey, with numerous bore-holes to determine ground conditions well below the surface, so that foundations can be designed, as well as an ecological survey which we were legally required to undertake, to ensure that we will not destroy rare or protected animals (particularly bats) or plants.

Once we have the final cost estimates for the proposed development - which are expected imminently - we will have to match these against our agreed and anticipated funding, and decide what we can and cannot build at this stage. (The outcome of a further major funding application is anticipated by early spring).

With our costs and funding offers in place, we then have to make our formal Stage 2 application to HLF, for the balance of the £1.8m which we had requested in our Stage 1 application. Provided we can submit the Stage 2 application by late spring, we should receive a response by autumn. It must be realised, however, that Stage 2 approval is far from automatic, despite our receipt of Stage 1 HLF funding.

Whilst our plans for Whitehead are now well advanced, we are still urgently seeking a site in Dublin, to ensure that our southern operations can continue if or when we eventually may have to vacate Inchicore. Discussions with Iarnród Éireann and CIÉ Group Property have been continuing, and one recent development has been a possible short-term (provisionally two years) lease of the former GNR(I) Locomotive Shed at Connolly station in Dublin, which is no longer used by IÉ. Whilst this could accommodate our Dublin-based steam and diesel locomotives, it would not be able to hold our total Dublin-based carriage fleet.

Finally, we are still discussing a possible museum/carriage storage centre at Dundalk with IÉ and CIÉ, provided this would not preclude a future site in the Dublin area.

No.461'S GREEN LIVERY

James Friel

For the first time since the 1980s, an RPSI locomotive has been put into traffic in a livery it had never carried in company service. This article will try to explain how this came about, and to show that despite the livery being new to the engine, how we tried to follow historical precedent in getting it to look as it would had CIÉ applied it in the 1950s.



No.461 at Coleraine with a running in trip on the 18th November 1990, with a slightly oversize flying snail and painted cab-side numerals. (C.P. Friel)

No.461 has carried a variety of liveries - she was reputed to have been delivered in DSER lined green, and later carried the drab GSR grey that No.186 carries at the time of writing. For a period in the 1960s she carried either a very dark grey or black with painted numerals and flying snail on the tender. While

out of service she was painted in an approximation of DSER lined black for Open Days at Inchicore. In RPSI service No.461 has carried unlined white undercoat, plain black with painted numerals and flying snail, and more recently plain black with number plate and other details picked out in red.

CIÉ painted a number of its engines green in the period following The Emergency until the end of steam. The classes so treated included all the 4-6-0s, some Woolwich moguls, some of the Dublin suburban tank engines, B4 No.467, D12 No.305 and D14 No.61. No.461 and sister loco No.462 were not painted green at this time. However, given that CIÉ apparently painted some engines green at random, the notion of us painting No.461 in green didn't seem so far-fetched.

The thought that we had a CIÉ engine which could have (but didn't) receive the green livery while in CIÉ ownership, and the apathy that the grey livery of No.186 excited, made painting No.461 in green seem very attractive.



The livery No.461 carried for most of her preservation career to date, on 9th May 1992. She is finished in plain black with cast number plates picked out in red. (C.P. Friel)

Passengers, and potential passengers, have always been impressed by No.171 and No.85 in blue, while the darker engines, No.4, No.186 and No.461 never seemed to grab as much public attention. This in itself was a powerful argument against painting the locomotive in a dark livery again.

Having made the decision to paint the engine in CIÉ green, efforts turned to researching the details of the livery.

RPSI founder member, and well known railway modeller, Drew Donaldson, made some effort in painting his models in what he considered the correct shade of green, including one of No.461. His models in CIÉ green were painted to his own concoction, which he mixed from Humbrol model enamel paint colours. A sample of Humbrol mixed to Drew's exact specifications were used to colour match the gloss topcoat and the undercoat for No.461.

For the colours of the lining and edging we again turned to Drew Donaldson, this time to the book he

co-wrote with Jack O'Neill and Bill McDonnell, "A Decade of Steam on CIÉ in the 1950s".

"The green was of a dark Brunswick shade. Panels were edged in black, with a thin separated white line inside, corners being plain right angles. Boiler bands (green) were edged in black, with a double fine white line in the centre, a GSWR tradition. The emblem, on tenders (popularly known as 'Flying Snail') and numerals (on cab or tanks sides) were in eau de nil, edged with gold. The front buffer beams had black edges. B1a No.802 carried a much lighter shade of green in 1952-3."



Drew Donaldson's model of No.461 carrying both the original DSER boiler and an interpretation of CIÉ green livery. (C.P. Friel)



No.461 on launch day, 13th October 2011, with all painting completed. (C.P. Friel)

After a lot of measuring of No.800 in the museum at Cultra, and comparison with pictures of members of her class in the livery, we came up with a white line of $\frac{3}{16}$ ", separated from the black edging by a green line of $\frac{5}{16}$ " wide.

The final touch was the buffer beam numerals. CIÉ appear to have used the same transfers as the UTA and NCC used. Many photographs were studied to get the shape correct, the 4 was easy as No.74 in the UFTM still retains its UTA applied transfers. The numbers were scaled and printed onto paper, then attached to the buffer beam with masking tape. Then each line was scribed into the soft paint of the buffer beam with a sharp knife. The numbers were then hand-painted using these lines for guidance.



After initially running without them, No.461 gained CIÉ 'Flying Snail' emblems on the tender sides just before the "Spare Link" tour in March 2012 - of which more next issue! They are vinyl transfers of impressive quality. This one is on the left side of the tender; on the right hand side, as was the usual practice for locomotives, the symbol is reversed so that the lines at the top always point forwards. (C.P. Friel)

Initially we didn't rush to apply emblems to the sides of No.461's tender - indeed there is some precedent for CIÉ green without the 'Flying Snails' - but eventually they were replicated using an original transfer as reference.

Given the amount of righteous indignation that the liveries carried by "Flying Scotsman" excited in the railway press, the team who had painted No.461 were ready for some flak over painting the engine in a livery it had never carried up until now. However the reaction from the public and from enthusiasts was unanimous - they thought it looked great.

THE HARBOUR REVISITED

'Larne Man'

Several - no, many - years ago I produced an article for Five Foot Three entitled "Next Stop for the Steamer" in which I attempted to set down my boyhood recollections of what went on at Larne and

Larne Harbour around 1950. In those far-off days I was a regular reader of the Meccano Magazine in which was advertised the “Spotter’s Notebook” for which I splashed out something like 1/6^d (7½p), thereby making severe inroads into my pocket money! I can’t recall its layout and sadly it is long lost, but I wish I still had it as not only did I record the (exclusively NCC) locomotives I was then able to lay eyes on but also an almost certainly greater number of ships which visited Larne Lough. To some extent I am reminded of the dual interests of former regular contributor Laurence Liddle, though not possessing his experience or knowledge of either subject. (For those who may be wondering what has become of him, Laurence is living in Australia and approaching his centenary, although less robust nowadays.)



Although published with the earlier article this pre-WW2 photo, taken from the Curran Road overbridge, may be worth another look. With the Aluminium Works on the left, the long siding parallel to the Harbour Rd still has only narrow gauge track. With the building of the Continental Quay this was replaced by mixed gauge running to the diverging point shown in the overall Harbour photo. The bracket signal later sited near the cabin and controlling exit from the goods yard is not yet in place. The mixed gauge track leading to the South End can be seen on the right, with some carriages parked on the run-round road. In the background are the masts of an unidentified Stranraer steamer. The bridge carrying the BAC line to the iron oxide ponds is behind the photographer. Steam appears to be issuing from the far end of the Aluminium Works; was one of the Pecketts in action? (Locomotive & General Railway Photos 7367)

All of which is a roundabout way of saying that what follows will involve ships as well as trains but will hopefully give some indication of the connections between the two. Also, having unearthed and read the earlier article I must now try to minimise repetition. My earliest recollection of anything to do with the railway in Larne is of my maternal grandfather telling me a gruesome tale of a man getting his hand caught between buffers. I was never sure of what the grandfather’s job was but he used to mention the Anglo-American Oil Company and research shows that in the early 20th century he lived

near the station and was described as an agent and collector. He must have taken me on some train journeys as I recall Kellswater and Crawfordsburn, the latter probably being my only steam BCDR journey prior to RPSI operations.

But back to the Harbour. Since leaving Larne some fifty years ago, my visits have been fairly few and, since the Stranraer service moved to Belfast, increasingly far between. With the building of a by-pass road to the Harbour there is no longer any need for onward travellers to enter the town, the centre of which now seems to me to be less inviting than in my youth. For most present-day travellers Larne Harbour is merely the start of a ferry journey to Scotland but when I lived in the town there was much more to it than that.

My earliest childhood memory of the Harbour is of being taken to see the destroyer HMS Cadiz, part of a visiting detachment of the Home Fleet anchored off Larne Lough after the end of WW2. I'd like to think that this included a battleship as that would have been the only time I ever laid eyes on one! I have a recollection of a submarine, I think HMS Seraph, being moored at one of the quays and of being rowed in a boat by my father and friends but whether these events were connected is unclear.

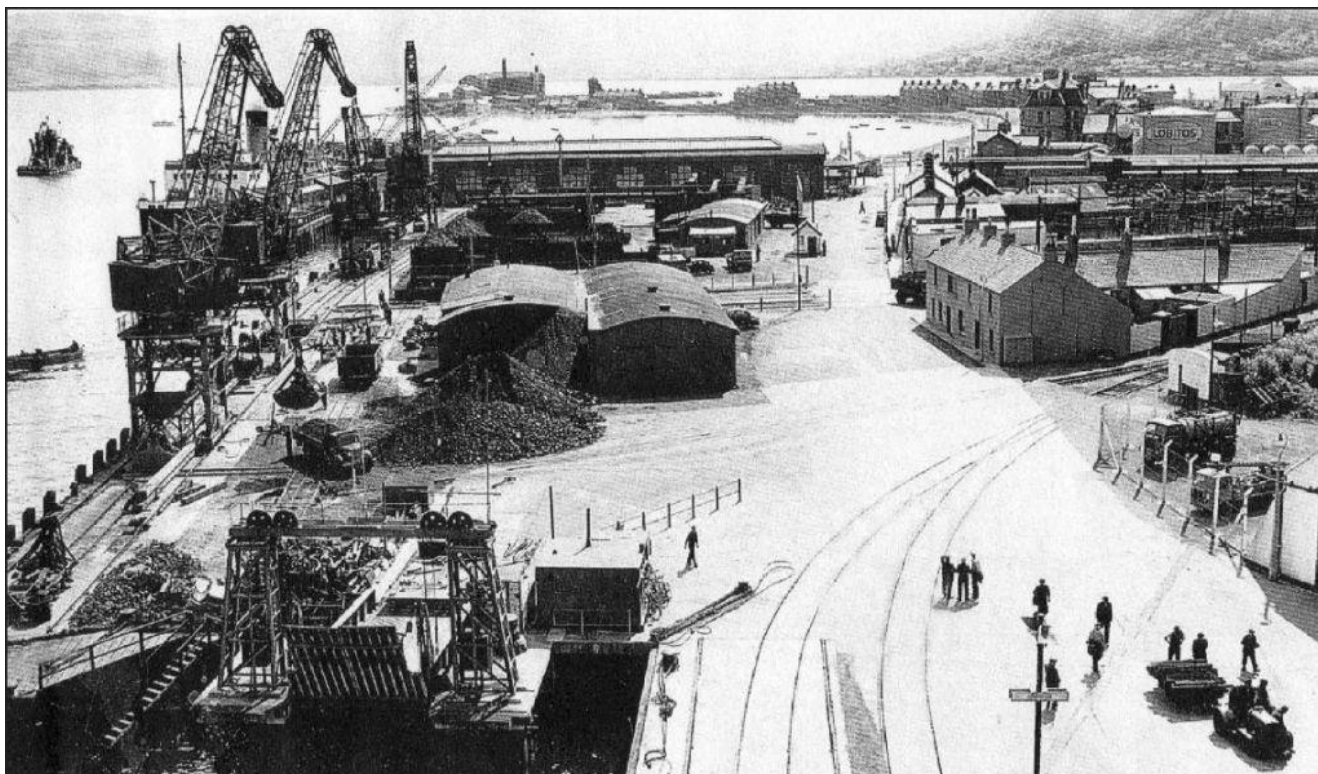
We are told that everyone remembers where they were and what they were doing when President Kennedy was assassinated in 1963. Apart from recalling that I then lived and worked in Newcastle, I haven't a clue, but I remember only too well ten years earlier, when the Princess Victoria was lost. Having heard a rumour that she was having trouble docking, some friends and I struggled on our bikes through a blizzard to the Harbour but there was no sign of the Victoria and the rest is history. Yet another transport interest then was the variety and distant origins of the milk tankers which used the Victoria, such as the Albions of Bulwark Transport of Wiltshire and the Vulcans of Wincanton Transport in Somerset, the latter firm now an international concern. In passing, one might note that these and almost all of the then numerous makes of British commercial vehicles have since joined British locomotive builders in history.

The electrically-operated ramp at the Stranraer quay had been installed in 1939 to serve an earlier, almost identical, Princess Victoria which was on the route for only a few months before being requisitioned by the Admiralty and sunk by a mine in the North Sea in 1940. After the loss of the Princess Victoria in 1953 one of the three train ferries from the English Channel was substituted, their rail tracks being filled in with timber to accommodate road vehicles. This was not their first appearance here as all had been used for military traffic during WW2. I travelled on the Hampton Ferry at least once and found it an uncomfortable experience as the second class accommodation consisted of a vibrating steel shed furnished with wooden seats apparently designed to double as life rafts, while rattling roller shutters kept out a proportion of the weather related to the location of one's seat.

The aforementioned ramp was an unusual structure as it was crossed by mixed gauge track leading to what was then known as the South End via a wagon turntable, of which there were several at the Harbour. Despite this facility I cannot recall ever seeing any rail traffic going that far. At that time the South End was a mixture of ancient and modern, the part nearest the Stranraer quay being of concrete construction but housing an apparently disused steam crane and, in a discreet orifice, pipes leading to the Lobitos storage tanks of Holmes, Mullin & Dunn which occupied a site that is now a car park opposite the Olderfleet Hotel. Their petroleum products were brought in by coastal tankers named after Scottish passes, one being Pass of Drumochter which featured in the rescue of survivors from the Princess Victoria in 1953.

At its southern end this quay turned a right angle, was of wooden construction and housed another inactive steam crane. This part saw little traffic, although I remember seeing at least one puffer of the fleet of John Hay of Glasgow there. It was the Tuscan, which was like the rest of the fleet in being named after a tribe (ethnic minority nowadays?) but unlike the others in being oil-fired and having its funnel abaft the wheelhouse. I was invited on board and shown the engine room which I'd probably

understand better nowadays. More of puffers later. In at least one year I remember a fleet of fishing boats from Campbelltown mooring here, most very smart with varnished wooden hulls and probably in pursuit of the “bonny shoals of herring”. The extremity of this pier had wooden piles with connecting beams but no decking and faced a bay whose far side was bounded by the Curran peninsula and which contained small local boats. At the end of the peninsula was a disused power station and pier. Remnants of the pier may still be there but the power station is gone and the area is fenced off and marked as “Hazardous” although on the way one may view the remains of Olderfleet Castle which lent its name to NCC No.76.

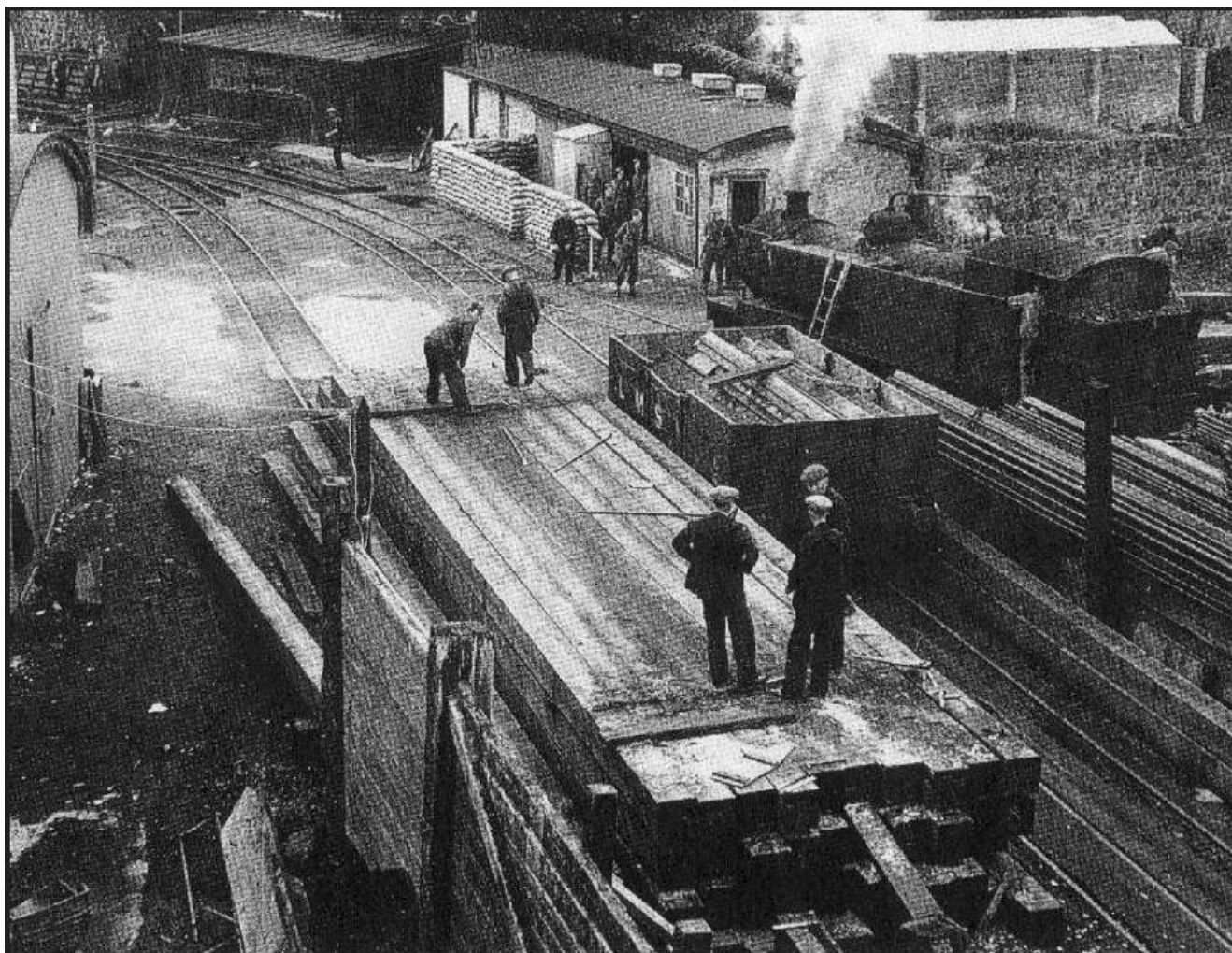


Larne Harbour photographed in the early 1950s, presumably from the crane on the Continental Quay whose ramp is in the foreground. The crane's rails are straddled by the broad gauge lines on the quay. The harbour is unusually empty but on the general cargo quay a crane is loading coal into a lorry with a solitary broad gauge wagon nearby. Mixed gauge track and wagon turntables can be seen, the one nearest the lorry showing signs of disuse. Moving clockwise, out of sight behind the two sheds is the slipway for the Islandmagee ferry, seen departing on the left. Beyond this are Howden's coal bins, and then the station building with the roadway passing between its platforms. The Princess Margaret is at her berth, with its crane just visible, and a dredger from the Westminster Dredging Co is at work on her seaward side. The crane formerly on the South End appears to have been replaced by a derrick. In the background is the Curran peninsula with its disused power station and, top right, the Bank Quays. On the right are the Olderfleet Hotel and the Lobitos fuel tanks. Below that are the outward end of the railway platforms, some sidings and the former Harbour offices with the narrow gauge and broad gauge tracks to the quays diverging nearby. In the enclosure on the right are two lorries, one of which appears to be an ex-Army Bedford whose tank may well contain the blood referred to in the text; the other looks like a Shelvoke & Drewry municipal vehicle. Nearby is one of the Clark Truktractors which could struggle to extract trailers from the Preston ferry on damp days at low tide! (Photographer unknown)

At that time the Harbour had three steam cranes, none of which I ever saw working, but the South End

was also the home of one of six Babcock & Wilcox electric cranes. Its main function then was discharge of coal, often from the Loch Etive, into concrete bunkers used by local firms, onward transport being solely by lorries. At one stage an unusual traffic from the South End was live eels. Although at that time their source at Toome would have been rail-connected, they arrived at the Harbour more conveniently in boxes on a lorry and were emptied into a large funnel from which a pipe led to a small coastal tanker within which they swam while en route to their demise.

In the mid-1950s the South End underwent considerable redevelopment, the first sign of which was the arrival of two or three of the type of floating caissons which had been used in the Mulberry harbours off the Normandy coast in WW2. These were sunk in appropriate positions, sheet piling was installed around them, most of the little bay was eventually filled in and before long the former South End became unrecognisable under a legion of trailers and containers, none of which had any railway connection.



Connecting to the previous photo, but from about 10 years earlier, this was taken during the construction of the Continental Quay, with military persons emerging from the sandbagged premises. The Harbour offices are just visible on the left, where the narrow gauge track is blocked by a pile of what appear to be timber piles for the quay, while the broad gauge wagon on mixed gauge track is squeezed between the timber and sections of sheet piling. Ex-Ballycastle 4-4-2T No.114, withdrawn and sold to a contractor in 1942, is on a disconnected piece of track and is being used as a stationary boiler, presumably to supply steam for a pile driver although it is quite a distance from the quay. (Photographer unknown)

Like the later M2/M5 project, the material for the in-fill came from the overburden at the huge Magheramorne limestone quarry but was conveyed to the Harbour by a varied selection of lorries in which, I regret to say, I took an unhealthy interest. Although it was some 5 miles from the Harbour, I might mention that until the mid-1950s this unwanted material was dumped in a disused part of the quarry before a Bailey bridge, later replaced by a concrete structure, was erected across road and rail to give access to what grew to be an enormous dump. In later years this was the loading point for the Stone Trains on which the UK's last main line steam locos ended their days. At one stage a bridge to Islandmagee was proposed but never materialised. The whole area is now owned by La Farge, successors to Blue Circle Cement, and is the subject of a proposed housing and sports development.

In the later 1950s I visited the Harbour less often but had a somewhat tenuous connection in that my then girlfriend's father supplied provisions to the Dutch coasters which carried non ro-ro container traffic. It surprised me that the railway handled little of what I would have thought an ideal type of traffic, the bulk of it being worked to and from Belfast by a fleet of UTA lorries. To digress further, an uncle of the said girlfriend had an engineering business and constructed a dredging barge which was used to retrieve material from the iron oxide ponds of the British Aluminium Co., of which more later.

Although the rest of the quays have since been rebuilt and re-named, the northern end of the Harbour is still at least partially recognisable from its 1950s form. Indeed, apart from the WW2 construction of the Continental Quay and some track alterations, the general layout of the Harbour in the 1950s had not changed greatly since the early part of that century. Known locally as the New Quay, the Continental Quay housed a crane by Stothert & Pitt of Bath, taller and different from all the others. After the quay began to be used by the Preston ferries this crane was removed and replaced by a derrick-type structure which has now also gone. This quay was also furnished with what was then the only other ramp in the Harbour. Perhaps due to wartime austerity, unlike the Stranraer one, it was manually operated.

Prior to WW2, Frank Bustard had set up the Atlantic Steam Navigation Co. However, war and military service disrupted that project and, when peace returned, he opted for operations nearer home. In May 1948 he introduced a roll on-roll off service to Preston using former tank landing ships (officially termed 'Landing Ships, Tank') - I think Empire Cedric was the first. This offered a slow and sometimes uncomfortable voyage, often delayed by tides in the River Ribble but, augmented by further LSTs, was the beginning of the roll on-roll off services now so familiar to all. However, although some containers were craned onto the upper deck I don't recall seeing any travelling by rail.

As an aside, from time to time there was to be found in the trailer park a vehicle bearing a load so foul that we used to compete for who could ride around it for the longest before succumbing to nausea. It transpired that it contained untreated hogs' hair allegedly en route to being made into shaving brushes! Another, less openly offensive, vehicle bore a tank containing animal blood which was said to be used in the manufacture of fire extinguishers.

The Harbour then had six other electric cranes, all by Babcock & Wilcox, four of which were the swan-neck type and the others with a plain jib. All could operate either a hook or a grab and, with the latter, were ahead of other ports where coal had to be arduously loaded into large tubs by gangs of men with shovels. As already mentioned, there was one swan-neck at the South End, while, between that and the New Quay, the Stranraer Quay had one with plain jib, always used only with a hook. The quay nearest the Stranraer berth, handling only coal traffic, had one swan-neck and one with a plain jib, both permanently operating grabs. This quay continued northwards and, with two cranes handling either coal or general cargo, ended adjacent to the ramp on the New Quay. The third steam crane slumbered at the north end of the Stranraer quay.

The central line of quays did not present a solid front as halfway along was an opening leading to an inlet with a small stony beach and a slipway used by the Islandmagee ferry operated by the Hood family, Dougie being the man I remember and the boat being the Jubilee, although there may well have

been another. The ferry also served Ballylumford power station, opened in 1945, whose workers were wont to crowd on to the extent that there were often only a few inches of freeboard. Hoods also had a contract for relieving the keepers of the Maidens lighthouse and I had a trip out there once, arranged by a parent of a friend. Even had I known it then it probably wouldn't have deterred me, but it is recorded that on at least one occasion a member of the Hood family ended up on the shores of Ayrshire!

Daytime activities on the Stranraer quay included the intermittent loading of what was known locally as the mail boat, the Princess Margaret, at times relieved by the Princess Maud. Cars could be carried on these ships but had to be at the quayside in time to be craned on board. In my youthful wanderings around the Harbour station I used to wonder as to the identity of the RTO, to whom military personnel were directed to report. I eventually discovered that this was the Railway Transport Officer, but the fact that the sign was there in the 1950s would suggest either that it was a relic of wartime or that there was then still an appreciable military traffic.

A siding ran outside the lesser-used No.2 platform side of the station building towards the coal quays to which it was once connected by a wagon turntable. This may have been removed by the 1950s, when the siding was little used and all coal came out via the turntable at the northern end of the coal quay. At that time the covered section of No.2 platform was used only for goods traffic. Two lines ran adjacent to No.1 platform road, the nearest leading to the conveyor mentioned below and also serving as a run-round road for the engines of trains stopping short of the road crossing. After the crossing, the third line branched and led (via the ramp) to the quays at the South End but was little used. In later years the remaining stub opposite the outer platform acquired a gantry for what seemed a half-hearted container transfer operation, finally ending up as repository for withdrawn Mark 2 carriages, some renovated examples of which are now in RPSI service.



Jeep No.8, in mid-1950s, shunting vans from the “Perishable” alongside the conveyor outside the Harbour station building, with a “brown van” next to the engine. (A. Donaldson)

Since the usual Larne line train was only 4 or 5 coaches, the moveable connection between the inner and outer parts of No.1 platform was only used for boat trains, lesser trains stopping short of the road crossing. An interesting train was the “Perishable” - several fitted vans arriving behind various

unfamiliar Scotch engines in late afternoon, at which time I might well have been in the signal cabin, making sure to keep out of sight of the Larne stationmaster who came down to supervise the important evening trains. The Perishable vans, and the 'brown vans' attached to many trains, would be shunted into the siding outside No.1 platform to be unloaded onto the conveyor which ran to the ship from outside the station building, the wall of which had openings enabling goods from vans inside the building also to reach the conveyor. There seemed to be a considerable traffic in mushrooms and Triang prams, the latter from the factory of Lines Bros at Castlereagh. In addition to what went on the conveyor, some goods were unloaded inside the station building onto sturdy four-legged pallets designed to be lifted by crane and which were conveyed to the quayside by three-wheeled Lister trucks. In later years I observed what seemed a cumbersome operation in which the "Perishable" vans were shunted by a MPD set, the length of the 'engine' exceeding that of its train!

As described earlier, the southern end of the quay between the Stranraer Quay and the New (Continental) Quay was solely for coal traffic, mainly Howden's, and part of it formed a bay behind the seaward end of the Stranraer Quay. The coal was discharged by grab either into large wooden bins or into railway wagons which were moved along the quay by an electric capstan and thence via a wagon turntable to the sidings. The capstan had two diameters, in effect producing a high and low gear, and was kept running constantly by its operator who would casually throw a few coils of rope over it and skilfully regulate the progress of wagons by controlled slippage of the rope. A hopper straddled the railway tracks on the quay but was not used, grabs being positioned over wagons by a man using a long pole with a hook. In those untroubled days no-one objected to a young lad sitting on a bollard watching the goings-on and I can remember exactly how coal boats' holds used to be covered or uncovered using their derricks and steam winches.

Coal could be deposited in the bins beyond the reach of a crane by the use of centrifugal force whereby a skilled craneman would slew his crane vigorously, causing the grab to swing outside its normal arc before releasing its contents. Bagged coal for road transport was handled by a hopper-fed machine with a shaking device which graded the coal and filled bags positioned on a weighbridge. These open bags, containing 10 stone (over 60kg), would eventually be humped on the coalman's back from the lorry to his customers - none of your tidy sealed 25kg bags then!

The northerly continuation of the coal quay was a general purpose area handling some coal but in which could more likely be found a variety of vessels ranging from the RNVR training ship Kilmorey through ships bearing Scandinavian timber and paper pulp to Clyde puffers. The paper pulp went either by the narrow gauge line to the mill at Ballyclare, until it closed in 1950, or by broad gauge to Courtauld's factory near Carrickfergus where it and wagons of coal would be shunted by their Peckett 0-4-0STs Wilfrid or Patricia. I have no clear recollection of what the puffers brought in - probably coal - but some left laden with sacks containing a red powder used in the manufacture of protective paints. The source of this was the 'red oxide' ponds into which had been dumped a by-product of the British Aluminium Company's process of converting Co. Antrim bauxite ore into alumina for shipment to smelting plants in Scotland. The Larne part of that operation ceased in 1947 but the red stuff was subsequently retrieved by the dredger mentioned earlier and the processed product was shunted to the quays by one of the BAC's diminutive Peckett 0-4-0Ts which could still access part of the tramway around the ponds by running out the narrow gauge line towards Larne before propelling back up a steep gradient and over a concrete bridge (only demolished in 2011) which crossed the main line. Despite sharing some of the narrow gauge track, the BAC's side-tipping and open wagons were not compatible with those of the NCC as they used link-and-pin couplings whereas the latter had the 'chopper' type. Presumably there was no need for compatibility, although the BAC may have acquired and converted some ex-NCC wagons.

I am reliably informed that, many years ago, a group of camera-bearing RPSI stalwarts visited the

ponds, which in dry weather had a crust on their surface. One of the group was warned about this by his colleagues but pronounced it “safe as houses”, only for this to be followed by an outburst of bad language and the sight of its source up to his knees in red mud! Not for nothing was that area of Larne Lough referred to variously as the “sloblands” or the “glar beds”! Whilst the iron oxide ponds may have been aesthetically unpleasing they were otherwise inoffensive. However, the tide in receding twice daily uncovered mud flats formerly bounded by the railway line through Larne Town, creating an ambience which in warm weather was far from fragrant. Whatever views some may have on the infilling of that area, the good folk of Larne are now at least spared its regular assault on their nostrils.



No.80 “Dunseverick Castle” was Larne shunting engine in early 1950s and is seen here in NCC livery at the Town station, whose signal cabin is just visible behind the tender. The line to the Harbour runs past the buildings on the right and the tide is out, exposing the ‘glar beds’. (W. Robb)

At the start of the 1950s the BAC had three of the little Peckett 0-4-0Ts built between 1904 and 1914. However, as has often been the case with industrial locos elsewhere, the youngest was not the most long-lived and I recall seeing No.3 protruding from the end of the works, as illustrated in Desmond Coakham’s book, although I wasn’t aware then that it was involved in some kind of laundry activity. It was replaced by a Planet diesel brought in from Scotland in 1953. I was also unaware until many years later that No.2 had been sold around 1954 to contractors who used it in lifting the Larne-Ballyclare narrow gauge track, while No.1 remained until final closure of the Works in 1960. Nos.1 and 2 survive in preservation. Thus, the Aluminium Works narrow gauge operations well outlasted those of the NCC/UTA Larne-Ballyclare line which closed in 1950; 2-4-2T No.42 being cut up in its shed at Larne not long afterwards. Apart from noting the latter event, at that time I was obviously paying insufficient

attention to such matters! Presumably the UTA sold the track and left it to the buyer to recover it in whatever way he saw fit but it would be interesting to know how the buyer (George Cohen & Co., I believe) came to acquire No.2 and where they got a driver for it.

No.1 can now be seen at the Giant's Causeway and Bushmills Railway, while No.2 is on static display at the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum.

In addition to ships which berthed at the Harbour, one could observe the passage of John Kelly's coal boats to Ballylumford power station and Magheramorne cement works, as well as Howden's en route to the Bank Quays, formerly served by a siding facing Larne Town. An occasional visitor was the Irish Lights tender Granuaile, alias the "Bad Weather Boat"! In the 1960s Larne Harbour's diminishing coal traffic was transferred to the Bank Quays, now largely derelict, while Ballylumford went over to gas and Magheramorne closed, ending such traffic in Larne Lough and leaving Kilroot power station as the nearest point of bulk discharge - onto a conveyor belt. At one time the Bank Quays had received stone from Carnduff quarry on the hill above. This had had a 2ft gauge tramway but had closed by 1950, leaving only a couple of derelict tippler wagons and the remains of the large wooden trestles over which they had reached the storage bins below.

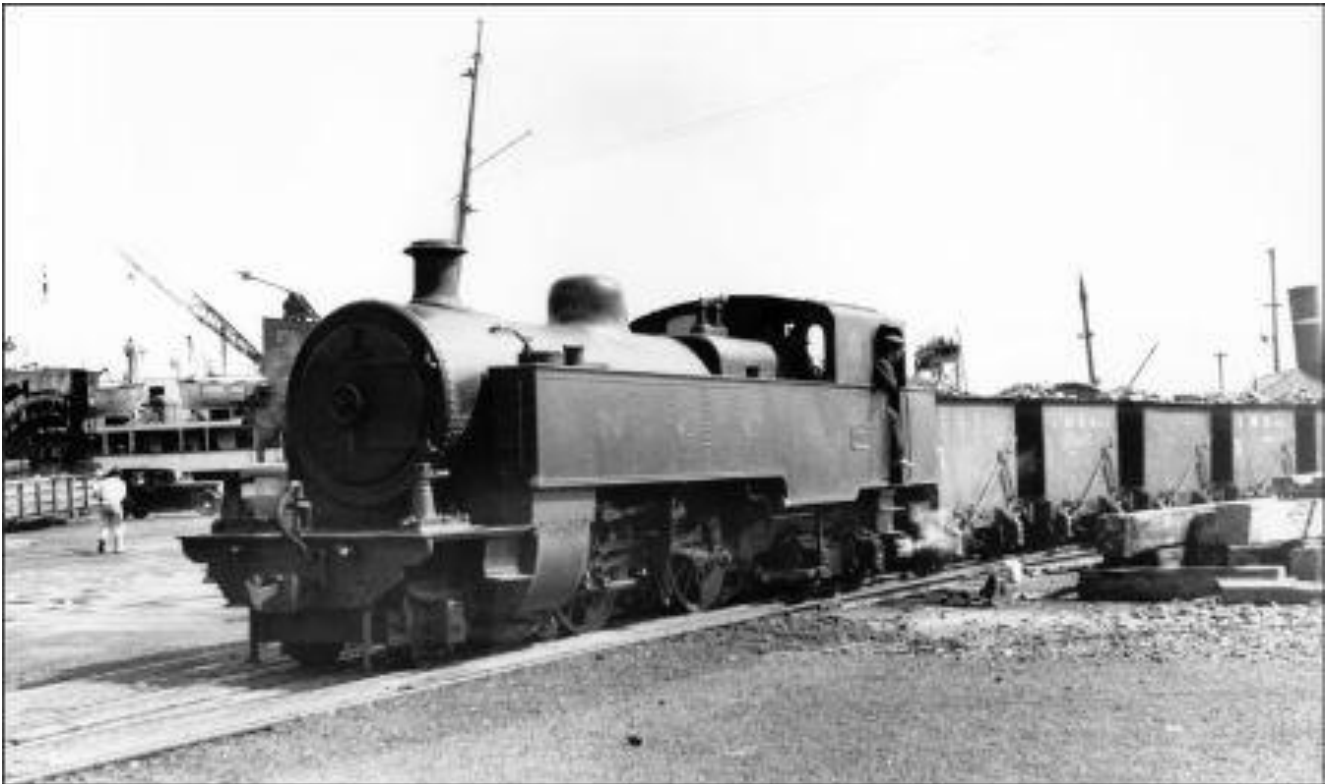


An idle moment for BAC Peckett No.1 on an unknown date. The engine has probably drawn wagons of 'red stuff' from the works to the quay north of the Islandmagee ferry slip and then got out of the way while the wagons are moved by capstan and unloaded by crane on the right. (C.P. Friel collection)

As mentioned in my previous article, my observation of railway matters at the Harbour was assisted by the then junior signalman, Bobby Evans, who, having observed me keeping vigil from the Harbour Road near his cabin, eventually took pity and invited me up for what became regular visits until

curtailed by parental decree. At that time the Aluminium Works lines still had some years to run but the NCC narrow gauge was on its last legs with only occasional trains of coal and paper pulp to the paper mill at Ballyclare before the latter closed. Although I have memories of trains elsewhere on the Ballyclare line, I don't recall ever seeing No.42 at the Harbour (trains probably ran during school hours) although wicker baskets of loco coal were still to be seen on the former cattle dock. A continuing puzzle to me is how Bobby demonstrated the working of the narrow gauge block instrument, which went "dong-dong" as opposed to the "ting-ting" of the main line one - assuming that the Larne narrow gauge cabin was only manned as and when required, how did he get a reply?

Many years later, when the narrow gauge was long gone and the rest of the layout had been 'rationalised', but before the signal cabin had become redundant and running round a train a major operation, I was on one of the RPSI's rare visits to the Harbour and noticed that Bobby was on duty. Nowadays it would probably risk prosecution, but, in those more relaxed days, I made my way to the cabin for a chat about old times. Unfortunately, the chat included the information that only recently someone had paid a visit and had obtained various redundant items including the former track diagram - I wonder where it is now!



NCC No.110 at work on 18th August 1939. Ore hoppers are being shunted to the ship at the South Quay, with the gantry of the Stranraer ramp visible above the first wagon and this may well have been the preferred duty of this engine. The solitary S2 class 2-4-4T No.110 was rebuilt from a 2-4-2T S1 and was not as impressive as its massive appearance would suggest as it was not possible to fit a firebox adequate for the G6 boiler. The revised wheel arrangement led to lack of adhesive weight and frequent slipping - not good for shunting, or when faced with 1 in 36 out of Larne Town! (S.C. Cunningham / C.P. Friel collection)

From a railway aspect Larne Harbour seems to have almost come full circle. The original Short Sea Route was from Donaghadee to Portpatrick but a combination of adverse factors brought about its move to Larne-Stranraer. Ancient photographs show trains in a rather barren area with tall masts in the

background. Matters improved to the extent that proper facilities were provided, served by both broad and narrow gauge passenger trains, although the latter ceased in the early 1930s. The WW2 traffic probably represented the peak of activities since when, whilst traffic through the harbour has increased, it is now road-orientated to the extent that the boat trains formerly serving each end are now a thing of the past. One might have expected that containerisation would have presented an ideal and easily handled traffic for the railway but this does not seem to have been the view of those in high places, to the extent that railways in both parts of Ireland now appear to have set their face against freight traffic in general.

As for the other side of the water, while Larne Harbour remains prosperous, the port of Stranraer seems to be facing near extinction. In the 1990s Stena/Sealink decided to move from Larne to Belfast, making much of the “tiresome” 20-odd miles road difference and offering a high-speed sea journey. (They did have a point as, despite the vast ferry traffic through Larne, the road hadn’t been appropriately upgraded.) On the other hand, this move ignored the fact that within minutes of leaving Larne Harbour the speedy craft could have used full power whereas, as it soon turned out, it had to negotiate Belfast Lough at slow speed and much of Loch Ryan in like manner. Two large new Stena ferries now operate from a point well down Belfast Lough to a new terminal near Cairnryan with a timing of 2¼ hours, i.e. that of the Princess Margaret from Larne to Stranraer - such is progress!

In 1965 British Railways, presumably on the advice of Dr Beeching, closed the direct route between Stranraer and Dumfries, passengers for England then having to head north before diverging via various lines in Ayrshire and, later, via Glasgow - or even Edinburgh.

Stena’s move away from Stranraer will end passenger traffic through that port and the future of the line south of Girvan - or even Ayr - must be in doubt. Meanwhile, on this side with long-abandoned goods and much-reduced passenger traffic, together with the single line through the re-sited Town station, one tends to get the feeling that the line to Larne Harbour is still there because, beyond living memory, it always has been. At one time Larne Harbour to Rosslare Harbour was designated a “Euro route” - is it still so?

REVIEWS SECTION

Irish Traction In Colour by Derek Huntriss

Ian Allan Publishing. Hardback, 29.8 x 21.8 x 1.2cm. RRP £19.99

One very pleasant surprise in recent years has been the emergence of so many colour albums covering Irish railway subjects. The latest is Derek Huntriss’s “Irish Traction in Colour”, which gives a broad sweep of the Irish scene during the transitional period from steam to diesel in the late 1950s and 1960s. Among the contributors, names such as John Edgington, John Langford, John Dewing, Derek Cross and Lance King, recall a generation of regular visitors to Ireland whose work was invariably of the highest quality.

The last days of the narrow gauge are covered in some detail. Some of the locations are familiar, but there are some new angles: a goods train at Castlefin with the driver engrossed in his newspaper; a busy scene recorded from the footbridge at Ballinamore; a very satisfying picture of broad and narrow gauge at Strabane. Moving to the broad gauge, each of the major constituent companies is covered in detail, and some real gems have emerged. Photographs of the northern companies include a rare view of two moguls inside York Road works, evocative pictures of Adelaide and Portadown sheds, some delightful views of local trains around Belfast, a very rare lineside view of the Belturbet branch and a fine study of Great Northern 199 at Enniskillen.

South of the border the range is equally broad. There are places and subjects not often seen in colour: Mountmellick, Fenit, Kingscourt and Ballinrobe; the interiors of the tramcar depot at Sutton and the

works at Limerick; views of both 400 and 800 class engines, albeit in their last days. Aficionados of ships as well as trains will find interesting pictures around the docks at Cork, Dublin and Belfast, as well as the quays at Wexford. Among the minor companies the Sligo Leitrim & Northern Counties Railway is covered in some detail. Rolling stock is not neglected either - a shot of MGWR six wheeled TPO No.3 at Mullingar and a line-up of ancient six wheelers behind the turntable at Galway are particularly notable. The transition from steam to diesel on both CIÉ and the UTA is well covered, and although the content of the book is weighted towards steam, the variety of early Irish diesel traction can be savoured too.

If there is one minor criticism, it is of the captions, some of which do not support the quality of the images. In some illustrations covering 1960s UTA operations, particular trains could surely have been identified without much difficulty, and errors such as the suggestion of a triple-headed relief train from Portrush to Belfast avoided.

Sometimes, too, interesting detail was missed. The caption to the excellent picture on the front cover, for example, might have made reference to the very distinctive train which 207 was hauling, and drawn attention to two most interesting pieces of rolling stock.

This reservation aside, "Irish Traction in Colour" can be recommended as a nostalgic look at the past, a stimulus to the memory of older readers, and a reminder to younger readers of the variety that could once be savoured on the Irish railway system.

JAC

Manx & Irish Lines Remembered with James Boyd

DVD by Railfilms. RRP £20

This DVD is based on films taken by the late James Boyd starting around 1950. In the lively and informative commentary, James refers to the problems of using a wind up 8 mm cine camera. Shots would last only 30 seconds and the 4 minute film had to be turned over in the middle - problems which this reviewer remembers only too well! Most of the footage is in black and white but the later material is in colour. The DVD starts with the Isle of Man when the lines to Peel and Ramsey were open. Former County Donegal Railway railcars 19 and 20 are seen in action. We move to Ireland for the Londonderry-Letterkenny line and for the County Donegal Railway, although James regrets that he has missed the Stranorlar-Glenties line. Next is the Cavan and Leitrim, with emphasis on the coal trains of the Arigna branch. (The Arigna Mine is now open as a tourist attraction - well worth a visit.) The action moves to the Ballaghaderreen with the branch train from Kilfree Junction hauled by an ex MGWR 2-4-0. The sequence which follows is truly remarkable - a journey from Dublin Kingsbridge Station to Cahirciveen on the Valentia Harbour line, with steam all the way. 4-6-0 No.501 hauls the train out past Inchicore where the shed is packed with steam locos awaiting their next turn of duty. At Limerick Junction, all trains have to reverse to reach their platforms. We glimpse 4-6-0 No.407 on a Cork-Dublin train. At Mallow, a Woolwich mogul is at the head of the Tralee train.

After detailed coverage of the trip to Cahirciveen, we jump to the Courtmacsherry branch in West Cork to see 0-6-0T No.90 (now at Downpatrick) pulling a special train along the branch. There follows colour coverage of the lifting train near Drimoleague hauled by 4-6-0T No.464. And so to the Tralee and Dingle. At this stage, the line, engines and stock were retained solely for double headed cattle specials in connection with the monthly Dingle Fairs - what would modern day accountants make of that? Near Lispole, the train halts while the crews go into a nearby house to hear the running of "The Oaks" on the radio! This DVD does not come up to the standard of present day high definition digital video. However, what it lacks in technical quality is more than made up for by the rarity of the fascinating subject matter.

JAF

Both items are available from the RPSI shop, as is James Boyd's excellent book "Saga By Rail: Ireland" at £16.95: www.steamtrainsireland.com/shop

OBITUARIES

Dr Garret FitzGerald 1926-2011

Our esteemed Vice-President Dr Garret FitzGerald died on the 19th May 2011.

A public figure of renown, he served in Government in the Republic of Ireland from back-bencher to Taoiseach.

Throughout his life he displayed a keen interest in all things 'transport' and, in particular, his enthusiasm for timetables is very well known. Aware of this interest the Society approached him, in 1988, to become a vice-president. He readily accepted.

In the intervening years he was always willing to support our Society in whatever way he could. One example of this would be his invitation to President Mary Robinson to perform the official launch of DSER No.461 at Dublin Pearse station on 16th April 1991. In October 2004 his witty speech at our 40th Anniversary Dinner at the Ulster Folk & Transport Museum will long be remembered by those who attended.

Like our President and our other Vice-Presidents, Dr FitzGerald chaired a number of Society AGMs. At one particular meeting when debate got quite 'heated' he quipped that he maybe should return to politics as chairing a cabinet meeting would be easier.

Our Society was privileged to have him as Vice-President. We extend our sincere condolences to his family.

Suaaimhneas síoraí dá anam. [*Eternal peace to his soul.*]



Dr FitzGerald (left) shares a joke with Lord O'Neill, Sir Kenneth Bloomfield and Lady Elizabeth Bloomfield at the RPSI's 40th Anniversary dinner, October 2004. (P. Lockett)

Fred Graham 1914-2011

We said farewell to another of our founder members when Fred Graham died on 27th November 2011.

Fred had knocked about the Great Northern's engine shed at Adelaide since his youngest days. He was probably the last man alive to have seen our No.461 when she came to Adelaide shed for safe keeping in 1922. As DSER No.15, she and sister loco No.16 were sent north to be safe from the civil war then raging in the Irish Free State. Fred was always very clear that the engines were painted green.

In his young days, Fred was the captain of a soccer team that was known for its lack of smoking, swearing and fouls. This had a lot to do with Fred's long membership of Windsor Gospel Hall, just off Great Northern Street and near Adelaide shed. It was said that it and railways played huge roles in his life.

When Fred ran the Sunday Schools at the Hall, there were over 400 children enrolled in more than twenty classes. Fred ran the Hall's famous Sunday School trips from Adelaide to Portrush. Well known about the shed, Fred found it relatively easy to organise interesting motive power for the trips which usually needed two trains for the 600 children plus the adults.

Fred was Prudential Insurance's longest-serving agent and his green Raleigh bicycle was almost part of the landscape of south Belfast. When he was nearing retirement in the late 1960s, he was robbed at gunpoint. Fred had already taken the precaution of stuffing the paper money into his socks!

Fred's love of steam led him to modelling the Great Northern in 7mm. His garage featured a double track main line with stations on each long side. One side of the garage represented Great Victoria Street (which Fred operated) and the other station was everywhere else; places like Newcastle, Antrim, or Portadown as well as his beloved Banbridge where he had family roots.

Fred's friend Leslie Knox operated on the other side of the garage. Like his friend Drew Donaldson, Fred built his own clockwork locos. Some years ago, Fred decided that the time had come to find new homes for his model railway. One outcome was that Harry Mulholland bought a lot of the locos and rolling stock. He converted them to electrical work on his famous Knockmore Junction line (which, in turn, is now finding a new home in Headhunters' Museum in Enniskillen where some of the stock is already on display).

A keen gardener, with an allotment at the back of Adelaide shed (roughly where Fulton's furniture shop is now), Fred often continued his bible study classes there while he and others tended their vegetables (and kept an eye on what was happening at the shed). Fred's gardening continued well into retirement and his deep faith led him to continue his Sunday School teaching until he was well into his 80s.

Fred was a contributor to Five Foot Three with articles on the Newcastle line and the Great Northern PPs. On one memorable night at the St Jude's meeting devoted to Merlin, Fred recalled the arrival of the first Great Northern Compound at Adelaide on his 18th birthday, 25th April 1932, and had many insights into the later history of the class. Fred was a friend of Driver Harry Waterhouse and often recalled evening trips on a Compound footplate with Harry who delivered tightly-bound copies of the Belfast Telegraph to various crossing keepers and then ran like the wind down the hill to Dundalk.

Fred also had a vivid recall of when rugby internationals were played at Ravenhill and the time when Adelaide shed turned out all five S class locos (in blue livery), coupled together, to run down the Third Line to Great Victoria Street to work the post-match specials to Dublin. What a spectacle that must have been!

Thank you, Fred, for sharing so much.

Our sympathies go to his widow Helen and their sons Ian and Craig.



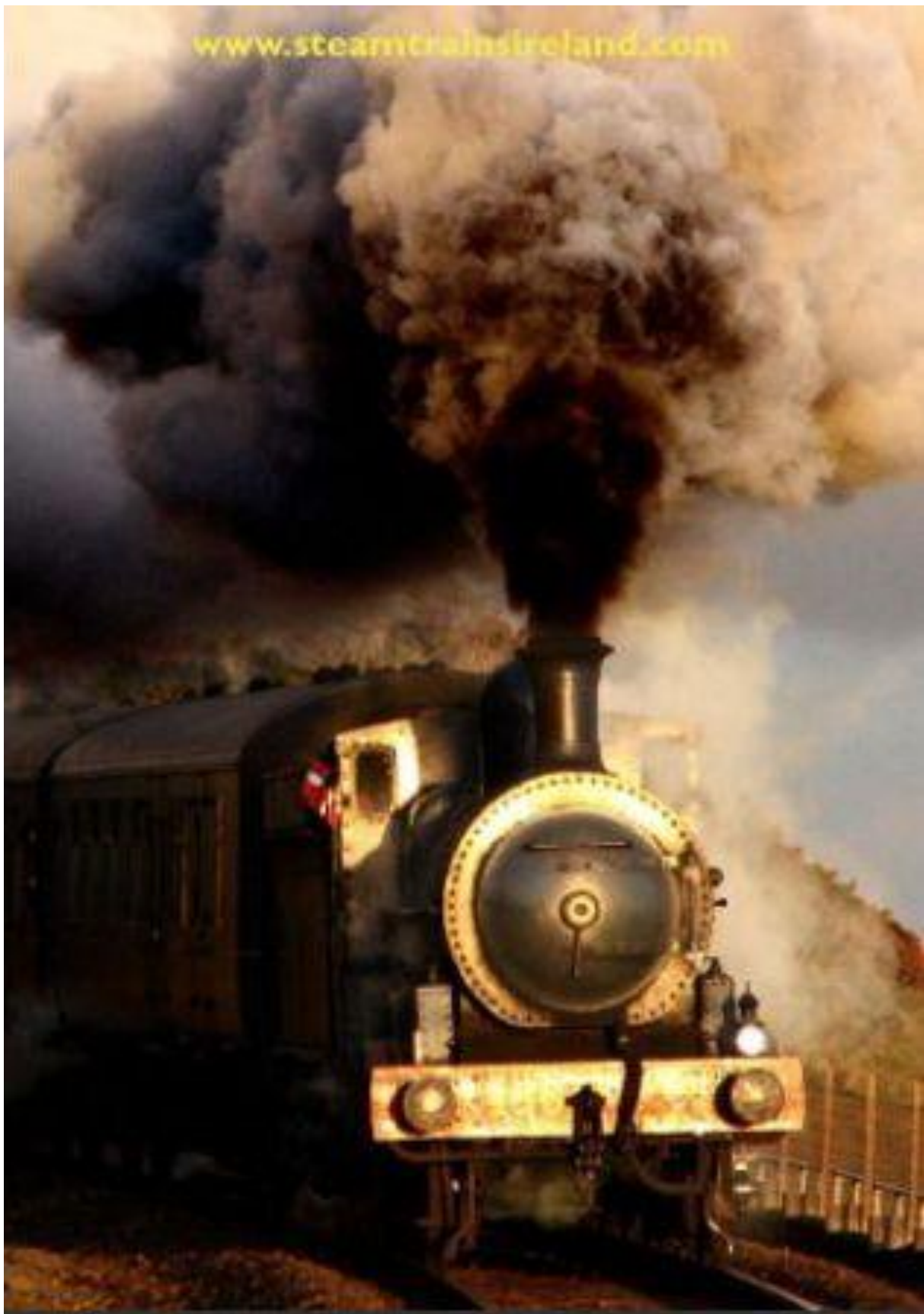
Iarnród Éireann's recently qualified steam men got their first chance to try out No.461 on a running-in trip on 4th March. Here Ken Fox and Robbie Jolley pose at Connolly with the RPSI's David Carse. (C. Meredith)

By the time of going to press No.461 had already clocked up just under 1,000 main line miles - these, and more, will receive proper coverage in the next issue.

Photographers can send their very favourite shots to the editorial address: *Five Foot Three, PO Box 461, Newtownabbey, County Antrim, Northern Ireland, BT36 9BT.*



No.186 passes tender-first through York Road depot in Belfast on the way to Whitehead with a Santa special on 11th December 2011. (E. Friel / B. McDonald)



Just after leaving Whitehead on 17th December 2011, No.186 steams around the point at the Bla Hole and into the evening sun. (M. Crockett)