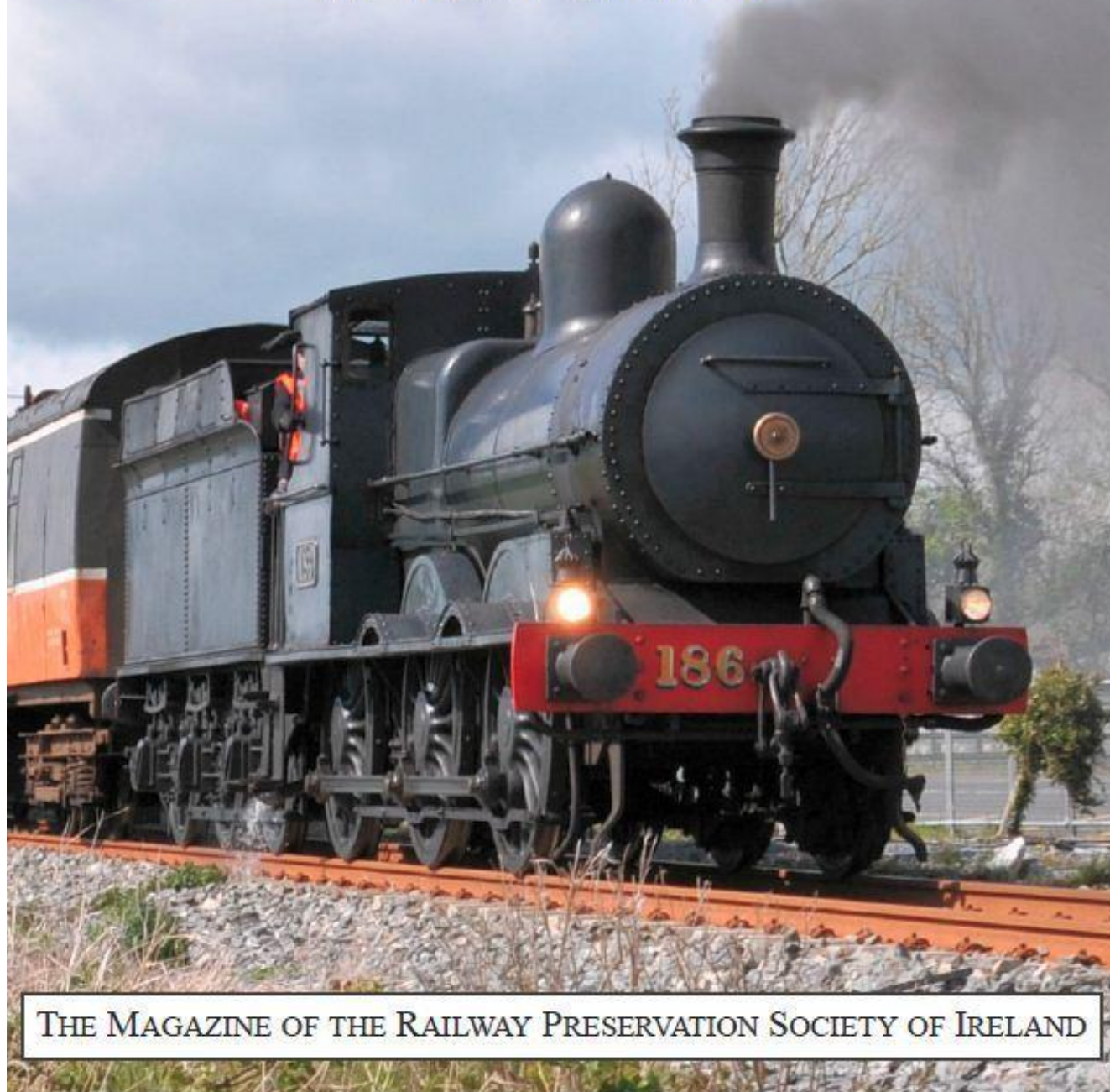


FIVE FOOT THREE



No.59 March 2013



THE MAGAZINE OF THE RAILWAY PRESERVATION SOCIETY OF IRELAND

FIVE FOOT THREE

No.59

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Editor: Edward Friel

CONTENTS

Editorial	
Chairman's Report	David Houston
News From The Board	Paul McCann
Locomotive Report	Peter Scott
Dublin Carriage Report	Niall Kelly
Whitehead Carriage & Wagon Report	Francis Richards
Belfast Area Operations	Mervyn Darragh
Whitehead Site Report	Dermot Mackie
Development Report	Denis Grimshaw
Irish 0-6-4T Locomotives	W.T. Scott
Obituary: Brian Stinson	John Friel

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Front Cover: No. 186 shortly after leaving Athenry on 12th May 2012 with the "South Clare" railtour. (C.P. Friel)



No.186 at Athenry on 12th May 2012 with the “South Clare” railtour. (C.P. Friel)

EDITORIAL

In producing Five Foot Three No.59 I thought it better that it should be complete than timely. Sadly it has turned out to be neither, coming as it does over halfway through the year and with less than the usual battery of reports.

2012 is already receding into the memory, and as you read some parts of this issue you may think that is the best place for it. Yet it had its moments. Despite everything, we have carried thousands of satisfied customers, a beautiful station building has sprung up at Whitehead and, at the start of 2013, we received new support both symbolic and material, with Charles Friel's British Empire Medal and the Heritage Lottery Fund's long-awaited big grant offer.

Given the time of year, though, it seems appropriate to reflect on events yet to come in the next few months.

The Santa trains this year will be the swansong of locomotive No.186. At 134 years old, she is still charging about the main lines of Ireland in a world that her designers would hardly recognise. Admittedly they might have to look twice to recognise No.186 as well, but that isn't the point. As a 21st century dinosaur, No.186 is something special.

She is not so popular with railtour organisers, of course. For much of her career the other operational engine was the multi-talented No.4, and No.186 suffers by comparison. For example, her size meant that her trains had to be one or two carriages shorter than No.4's, with a disproportionate impact on the bottom line of the whole operation. Money is and always has been tight for the RPSI, so naturally thoughts turn towards avoiding the necessity of using her - that is, scheduling locomotive overhauls so that some of the larger engines are always available. In 2004 she was brought in to fill a gap, and it ought to be possible to avoid that gap occurring again - in which case No.186 could end up in the same position of limbo as Lough Erne - just the wrong size for any job we have to give her.

So, in case you hadn't realised it, folks, this year is quite possibly your last chance to see, travel behind, or work on No.186 in steam. All right, engines go out of service all the time, and we never know when or if we'll see them back again. For those of us, though, who got involved with engines just as No.186 came into traffic, it's the first time we have seen the whole cycle of a steam engine's life, from rebirth to impermanent death. As amateur railwaymen we have grown up with her. A ten year cycle of lighting her up, oiling her, firing her, perhaps eventually driving her, over and over again. From the hulking, mysterious form we first saw as teenagers she has shrunk into the sharp focus of familiarity, every creak and rattle as familiar as it was to generations before us. A large portion of our lives spent kicking coal down from her tender, washing out her boiler, filling her tanks, cleaning her paint. Not just a steam engine, she was our steam engine.

And then setting out for adventures, in scorching sun or cutting wind, days she wouldn't steam and days she couldn't be held back, leaping and rolling along with a train full of wide-eyed children behind. And for the RPSI loco rep, standing there, trying to keep his balance, peering anxiously into the lubricator, every one of those miles is a privilege and all the work you put in suddenly seems a very small price to pay to be standing here with the wind in your hair, watching the astonishment on the faces of passing motorists, wondering why on earth more people don't want to do this job.

She isn't the fastest, or the strongest, or the most economical in the world. She's not even the oldest on the main line. But she is unique and irreplaceable and ours. She is older than us all and, unless we really mess up, she will outlive us all. Just like all our engines, in fact: a responsibility, a worry, and a joy. Sleep well, No.186.

So, what else does the near future hold? Those of you with calculators will know that 2014 will be the RPSI's 50th Anniversary year. Once we thought it remarkable that the RPSI had owned No.4 for more than half of her life. We can now say the RPSI has lasted longer than the NCC itself!



Steam over steam: On 10th April 2012, while pulling the “Easter Eggspress” over the Lagan Bridge into Belfast Central Station, No.186 encountered Mark Kennedy’s steam launch Lucinda crammed with off-duty RPSI stalwarts. A fusillade of whistles was exchanged. (C.P. Friel / D. Donnelly)

It doesn't seem such a long time since the 40th Anniversary, when we stopped like climbers on a mountain, turned around and marvelled at how far we had come, with justifiable pride at the fulfilling of what at the start seemed impossible.

Here we are, ten years on; the founder members are ten years older and the younger generations still not present in numbers that would allow room for complacency. We have ambitious plans that could be

our salvation, awaiting the inscrutable judgement of external funders.

The RPSI needs now to have its eyes firmly fixed on the future. Nobody can write a cheque that buys us a few hundred more volunteers, but without volunteers we are nothing. We need direction and inspiration; we need to look up the mountain and see how much further we can climb.

We hope that in 2014 we will get the big investment we have been seeking, that chance at a brighter future. Let's hope we can find it within ourselves to make the best of that chance.

AWARDS

2013 started on a high note. The New Year Honours list included a British Empire Medal for Charles P. Friel, "for services to the Railway Preservation Society of Ireland".

It has been an interesting experience for Charles as the local newspapers of Belfast, Enniskillen, Portadown, Carrickfergus and Dundalk all claimed him as their own, and he received many messages of congratulations from his friends and fellow enthusiasts all over Ireland, for which he extends his warmest thanks.

The whole Society can be proud of this further recognition of the significance of the RPSI and what we do, and by extension the importance of all-Ireland organisations in general.

Charles is pictured with fellow volunteer Christine Friel at Hillsborough Castle after the investiture by Dame Mary Peters on 18th April 2013.

(Picture: Harrison Photography)





At the time of writing news has just been received of another major award for an RPSI volunteer.

On 8th July 2013, in a ceremony at the British Museum in London, Nathan Lightowler was first presented with the Marsh Christian Trust's award for Volunteers in Museum Learning for the Northern Ireland and Wales category. To his great surprise, he was then announced as a joint winner of the overall UK award.

The awards were in recognition of his dedication to the overhaul of No.85 "Merlin". Congratulations to Nathan on his achievement. Simply by doing what the RPSI has always done, Nathan has greatly increased the RPSI's credibility in the museum world, which is sure to help us find support for future restoration projects.

Sadly for us, the skills Nathan has learned have also led to him being enticed away by a job at a preserved railway across the water.

Please come back, Nathan, our need is greater!

(Picture: J.J. Friel)

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

David Houston

Looking at what I wrote for last year's Five Foot Three in relation to challenges that faced the Society in 2011, it would have been reasonable to assume that this would be a 'one off' year. Alas, 2012 has brought its own challenges which I suppose are to be expected in an organisation which strives to develop and spread its message to a wider and more diverse audience.

Indeed the foremost issue to be confronted during 2012, particularly in relation to Dublin based operations, was confidence, or maybe a shortage of it, in regard to operating free of incidents over the Iarnród Éireann network. This issue arose largely due to difficulties with locomotive reliability, and in particular with recently overhauled ex Dublin & Southern Eastern locomotive No.461. A number of operations faced difficulties, and dealing with some dissatisfaction from the travelling public was not a pleasant task. However, in all this it has to be remembered just what a daunting task that the overhaul of a steam locomotive presents. The locomotive department, led by Peter Scott, has performed miracles over many years in the task of restoration and overhauling our locomotives to the standard required to operate over the national network. There is no doubt but that No.461 has had a difficult first year of return to traffic, but I am confident that the problems encountered are now largely behind us, and that we can look forward to a much better level of reliability from this locomotive into the future. As Peter has said on many occasions, not having a satisfactory working base in Dublin makes repairs and basic servicing of locomotives there a difficult task. Hopefully the Society will be able to announce an improvement in this situation during 2013 resulting from negotiations with IÉ which have been going

on now for several months.

Turning to other topics, the Society has continued during the year to develop its relationships as a Railway Undertaking with the two railway companies and the Railway Safety Commission. In relation to Iarnród Éireann, greatly improved channels of communication have been established, and a wide range of topics of common interest are discussed and progressed on a regular and structured basis. Relationships with Translink have prospered too and, if proof were needed of this, the recent opening of their Adelaide Service Depot with the hiring of a Society steam hauled train to bring guests to the opening ceremony is the latest example of this excellent relationship.



Catherine Mason (Translink Chief Executive), John Trethowan (Chairman of the Northern Ireland Transport Holding Company) and Danny Kennedy (Minister for Regional Development), with many other guests, were hauled by No.186 from Belfast Central station to the opening ceremony for the new Adelaide Train Care Depot on 12th December 2012. (C.P. Friel)

Much of the improvement in dialogue with IE has been at the instigation of recently retired Chief Executive Officer Dick Fearn. His support for the Society has been very significant and for this I thank him most sincerely. I wish him a long and happy retirement. In Mr Fearn's place, we welcome David Franks with whom the Society looks forward to having an equally successful relationship in the years ahead.

Reports from the various officers are, as usual, contained in this issue. There is much happening, as is evident from these reports. The most significant, and continuing development is at Whitehead itself where evidence of the fruits of the labours of Denis Grimshaw and his team can now be seen. Denis, with his highly motivated team, has done a huge amount of work in relation to the Whitehead project in the past year. Their work continues unabated. I, on behalf of the current and future membership of the Society, thank them all most sincerely for their dedication and enthusiasm in ensuring that Whitehead

becomes a centre of excellence that all can be proud of.

As the Society comes within sight of its 50th Anniversary it is to be expected that we will say good-bye to some members of long standing who have contributed much to its success. The past year has regrettably seen some significant names pass from us. The Society is most grateful for all that they contributed over many years. May they rest in peace.



No.461 had a successful day on 26th May 2012 with the “Bangor Belle”, seen here approaching Seahill en route to Bangor. (C.P. Friel)

My own tenure as Chairman comes to a close during 2013. When the honour of being elected Chairman was bestowed upon me, I had little concept of the challenges which would face me. I trust that, with the assistance of so many, I have managed to continue with the process of change and of facing the challenges which running a Society such as ours brings with it. The Board, or Council as it was, has been of great support to me during my period in office. I thank them all, as I thank all the ‘ordinary’ members who have supported me during my tenure. Being Chairman of a largely voluntary organisation which operates in two jurisdictions, has operating bases over one hundred miles apart, deals with two railway companies, two legal systems, etc., is quite a challenge. The incoming Chairman will have all these factors to deal with, and who knows, maybe more to come. Whether there is a more efficient way of dealing with the day to day operation of an organisation like ours, with the situation outlined, may warrant some thought. Whatever is decided I wish the Society continued success for the years ahead.

NEWS FROM THE BOARD

Paul McCann

It was a busy year for the Society, with lots going on in various areas of activity.

First of all, though; congratulations to Charles Friel who, in the 2013 New Year Honours List, received

a British Empire Medal for his services to the Society. Well done!

Also congratulations to Johnny Glendenning who was elected as Chairman of the NI Museums Council during the year.

Tradition is a great thing and, as I've started a tradition of reporting on standard items in my reports, I will not break it this year.

2020 Project: While the Committee has been working hard for quite a number of years, it is only now that progress is actually visible to members and public alike.

In August 2012 it was announced that Cleary Construction Ltd had been appointed as the contractor for the new Whitehead Station Building and additional site security fencing. The work duly started on Monday 3rd September, and is scheduled for completion by the end of May 2013. The indications are that it may be finished before then. If you get a chance, do come to Whitehead to view progress; or else have a look on the website where a photographic history is being maintained. Once the foundations had been put in and construction brought up to platform level again, the official laying of the first brick took place on 17th October.

The building will house a visitor reception area, ticket office, cafe with seating for 56 customers, and a souvenir shop. There will also be visual and interactive information and display facilities depicting and explaining the history and background of the railways in Ireland in general, and in the local area in particular.

The £269,000 contract has been financed by GROW South Antrim, Carrickfergus Council, and Ulster Garden Villages, to whom the Society is extremely grateful. It is hoped that the new station will later form part of a much larger development comprising greatly enhanced workshop and restoration facilities and an extensive railway museum, educational and interpretive centre.

It was reported last year that a number of the delays were attributed to the need to schedule match funding for the proposed Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) grant from other sources so that ultimately the actual monetary cost to the Society is minimal. Unfortunately, these delays continue, and an early resolution is sought.

The wholly-owned subsidiary company, Heritage Engineering Ireland (HEI), began operating during 2012 and is establishing a trading relationship with the RPSI. All employees were moved to the new company.

The parallel events company will be set up shortly, as soon as we can find someone to head it up - any offers?

At the AGM it was emphasised that the 2020 Committee need to strengthen their numbers from Dublin, or set up a separate committee, to investigate the establishment of a base in Dublin. Although the threat to our presence at Inchicore has eased of late, it is becoming increasingly difficult to use it as a locomotive, and to a lesser extent carriage, running depot. This became apparent when a minor problem with No.461 during the recent Santa season had to be dealt with by Whitehead personnel as suitable facilities were not available in Dublin; the result being that No.461 missed three of the Santa turns.

Safety Management System (SMS): The system is now up and running and the first annual audit has been successfully completed. Moves are afoot to try to get as much as possible of the northern operating procedures integrated with SMS.

Governance: The changes to the Board at the 2011 AGM were successfully adopted and business carried on throughout the year under the new structure.

A minor change to the Articles was required at the last AGM and it otherwise ran smoothly, although

there was significant discussion on the apparent failure to provide a reliable locomotive for Dublin operations. Hence the 2020 decision referred to above.

The self-certification of all working members has been on-going through the year, although it has to be said that certain members are being very tardy in returning their forms. Hopefully, they will see the light in 2013!

Unfortunately, Vice-Chairman John Lockett had to step down early in the year due to ill health, but Denis Grimshaw stepped in. Denis, however, would appreciate someone to take over the burden of Development Officer, which includes chairmanship of the 2020 Committee, as he has an increased workload as Vice-Chairman.

Finance: The Finance Committee was significantly strengthened during the year as an attempt was made to get to grips with the transfer of the HEI's income and expenditure to a new company and to try to steer the Society through the overall economic downturn. One disappointment was the failure, again, to appoint a Treasurer at the AGM. Norman Foster once more stepped up to the mark, but he is keen to see a properly elected successor - surely not impossible, especially with such a strong financial team now in place!

Our long-standing auditors, Dunne McNulty Nannery, have stepped down. Talks are currently underway with a proposed successor.

The 2012 AGM was much delayed due to problems getting the accounts finalised. To help take some of the pressure off in future the AGM agreed to change the annual accounting date from 31st October to 31st December, meaning that auditing can start in a quiet period and not in the middle of the busy Christmas season.

A major bequest of nearly £20,000 was received during the year which helped to offset some of the increased expenditure. The Board respectfully asks all members to consider remembering the Society in their wills with a bequest, no matter how large or small.

There were no major increases in insurance costs this year, and traditional thanks go to Karen McLaverty of Marsh for her continued help.

On more general matters, again this year, there were two separate opportunities to meet with railway company managers and other benefactors. The brick-laying ceremony in October and the opening of Adelaide Diesel Depot in December (No.186 hauled the dignitaries) saw meetings with funders, railway executives, and also Danny Kennedy, the NI minister responsible for the railways, who also travelled as a guest of a private party on the Bangor Belle during the year.

QUOTE OF THE YEAR



Following advertisements posted in Translink depots in December 2011, inviting drivers to apply to become trainee firemen, two trainees were subsequently appointed. They enjoyed significant training and footplate experience during the year, including a week in May on the “Jacobite” between Fort William and Mallaig. There was further training at the Great Central Railway in the autumn, along with one of the NIR Driver Assessors. By the time you read this one, if not both, are expected to be passed as firemen.

Movement on the process of recruiting Irish Rail staff for steam training has been slower, but has now got under way again.

Good news during the year was the approval by Translink to allow Mark 2 carriages 303 (Open) and 463 (Corridor Brake First) to operate. Approval was also gained for the State Coach 5408, although not with passengers until secondary door locking is fitted.

The 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 saw a significant milestone with the publishing of the book “Across The Tracks”, compiled by Charles Friel, in which a number of those reminiscences are published.

Another milestone achieved during the year was the completion of the Five Foot Three archive on the website - after 13 years! All issues from No.1 to the present are available for public viewing.

The Society’s News-Letter is now available electronically by email, and over 600 members have availed of the facility. That means a significant saving in printing, packaging and postage. Many thanks to all who agreed to take part.

Another electronic first was the opening of a Twitter account. If you, like me, are too long in the tooth to want to know the gory details of how it all works I will spare you. Suffice to say it is hoped that it will be a major aid to marketing our trains, and it is believed that it played a significant part in selling the Easter trains in 2012. Also a help was the public email information list, now being sent to nearly 4,000 email addresses!

The 2012 membership round-up is:

	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006
NI	389	408	411	413	411	399	391
RoI	363	384	408	403	403	387	380
GB	269	285	290	291	303	299	290
Overseas	25	26	30	30	31	35	34
Adult	523	589	650	653	679	688	676
Senior	413	391	370	350	339	298	289
Junior	6	11	14	21	19	33	29
Student	13	15	17	15	13	8	8
Family	71	13	10	21	19	14	15
Life	56	56	56	57	57	57	58
Societies	1	2	3	3	4	4	4
Honorary	20	19	19	17	18	18	16
Employee	7	7					
Totals	1,046	1,103	1,139	1,137	1,148	1,120	1,095

Another year with a decreased overall total, but hopefully the trend will level out, if not rise, this coming year.

As always, thanks must go to all who have served on the Board throughout the year. The burden

remains onerous so thank you to all who served there or on one of the various sub-committees.

The Posts of Special Responsibility to the Secretary for the year were: Charles Friel (Belfast Meetings); Johnny Glendinning (Museum Curator) now retired; 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).

The normal thanks go to the railway companies - thanks for your patience and understanding in a difficult year of locomotive failures.

LOCOMOTIVE REPORT

Peter Scott

Over the last year, the fortunes of our two operational locomotives could be described as mixed. The Dublin and South Eastern 2-6-0 No.461 returned to action at the end of 2011 and has suffered teething problems, partly as a result of somewhat ambitious duties for a locomotive just into traffic, and partly due to an over-generous slice of bad luck. Our normally reliable J15 No.186 also suffered age related problems - it is in the last year of its boiler ticket and keeping it operational has proved something of a challenge.

There are two relevant factors in the above. First, a major problem has been the continuing lack of steam locomotive facilities in Dublin. Even light repairs and simple adjustments cannot be easily done there and have led to needless failures and delays, out of all proportion to the original problem. Once again I would urge action on resolving this vital issue for the Society. If we want to base locomotives in Dublin, it is elementary that we need a proper Dublin base. This means premises where we can work safely and build up both our facilities and our maintenance team.

Second, a major factor is the nature of the train we operate and the type of locomotive that hauls it. Why do we run big trains over long distances, try to fit in with main line traffic, and expect to do so successfully with modest or small sized goods locomotives? One answer is very easy - there aren't too many Irish steam locomotives to choose from!

Most members will be familiar with the Society's steam locos, but some readers may not be, so here is a brief summary of the main line steam locos we have, together with their capabilities and current status (No.85 is, of course, on loan from the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum, while the rest belong to the RPSI):

No	Type	Original Build	Traffic	Load	Remarks	Status
4	NCC 2-6-4T	1947	Mixed	9	Turntables not required	Overhaul under way.
171	GNR(I) 4-4-0	1913	Express passenger	8	Needs turntables	Funding appeal for overhaul.
131	GNR(I) 4-4-0	1902	Express passenger	8	Needs turntables	Future project. Major restoration required.
85	GNR(I) 4-4-0 Compound	1932	Express passenger	9	Needs turntables	Overhaul under way, into traffic later this year.
461	DSER 2-6-0	1922	Goods	8	Needs turntables	In traffic.
186	GSWR 0-6-0	1879	Goods	7	Needs turntables	In traffic.
184	GSWR 0-6-0	1881	Goods	6	Needs turntables	In store.
27	SLNCR 0-6-4T	1949	Goods	5	Needs turntables. Limited range.	In store.

The load is the advisable maximum number of passenger coaches for sustained running without any severe gradients - I am sure there will be differences of opinion!

A natural line can be drawn under the express locomotives, i.e. under No.85 in the above table. No.461 is borderline. Anything below the line is really not suitable for the sort of train that we are currently operating.



No.186 and No.85 during a shunt on 25th May 2013. On tiptoe No.186 can just manage to look No.85 squarely in the chin. Guess which one of these we've been running steam Enterprises with!

So why are we not running the larger locomotives? The simple answer is that we would be, except that they came out of traffic in need of major overhaul. The older locomotives get, the more extensive becomes the work necessary to get them back into action, and the time frame stretches out when restoration work is done on a limited budget and largely by volunteers with limited time to spend.

The current situation is that No.85 has been overhauled and is ready for action this year, and work has started on the 2-6-4 tank engine No.4. The GNR(I) 4-4-0 No.171 needs extensive overhaul and is the subject of an appeal for funding. No.131 came to us in dismantled condition and requires major boiler refurbishment, also a complete tender body.

It is partly to address the above that "Heritage Engineering Ireland Ltd" has been set up. This company is a wholly owned subsidiary of the RPSI, the object of which is to handle the RPSI engineering function and also to take on outside contract work. HEI will employ the personnel necessary to carry out the maintenance and overhaul work on a planned basis rather than the ad hoc arrangement which is inevitable with a volunteer based Society. The down side of course is that there will be a price tag, and the RPSI needs to seriously set about running more trains, or different trains, or other activities - whatever will produce the necessary revenue.



The homecoming R.H. Smyth being persuaded off a low loader at Whitehead on 25th November 2012.

The following is the locomotive position at the time of writing (February 2013):

Steam locomotives:

No.3 LP&HC 0-6-0ST loco “R.H. Smyth”. Whitehead, in store.

Now back at Whitehead after a period on loan to the Downpatrick and County Down Railway. Requires 10 year boiler overhaul including renewal of crown stays.

No.3BG A. Guinness, Son and Co 0-4-0ST shunting engine. Whitehead, in store.

A project has now been initiated to overhaul Guinness loco No.3 and return it to traffic as soon as possible - this will be a mainly volunteer project.

Funding assistance was sought and the Northern Ireland Museums Council has generously provided 25% of the cost up a maximum of £2,500. This loco can be put back into service fairly quickly due to good boiler condition and recent mechanical work, but needs the 10 year inconvenience of boiler removal.



Overhaul of No.3 “Guinness” gathering pace on 1st June 2013 with the aid of a new HEI tool - a 1 tonne overhead crane. This runs on the same rails as the BCDR 15 ton crane but has the advantage of being remote controlled from ground level.

No.4 LMS NCC 2-6-4T mixed traffic engine. Whitehead, overhaul.

No.4 is being dismantled for its 10 year boiler overhaul. Last year at this time it was intended that the overhaul of No.171 would take precedence; however, delays in the necessary funding have left a slot in the workshop's programme. The boiler has been removed from the frames, and is being opened up and assessed for repairs. Due to the extensive overhaul carried out at the last 10 year exam, it is hoped that no major unexpected work will arise. Extensive mechanical refurbishment is not envisaged due to the low mileage since the last overhaul, but some jobs are known about and have been put off pending overhaul, for example replacement of the blast pipe which was corroded to near perforation point.



No.4's boiler is removed for inspection on 14th March 2013. (A. Lohoff)

No.186 GSWR 0-6-0 goods engine. Dublin, in traffic.

No.186 has just passed its annual boiler test and should remain in traffic until December 2013, when it will be withdrawn at the end of its 10 year boiler ticket. Although running well, this loco is at the end of its overhaul period and problems are not unusual. Unfortunately, one such problem arose in Dublin, where it could not be readily fixed and required the loco to be hauled back to Whitehead. More trouble was experienced on the Portrush Flyer operations in August, and took some time to resolve. The loco was back to its usual form for the Christmas operations. In spite of its small size, No.186 has claim to be the Society's most successful and reliable loco, and will be sadly missed when it retires at the end of 2013. There were 118 of the "101" class or J15s and two of them survived into preservation - testament to their good and simple design.

No.461 DSER 2-6-0 goods engine. Whitehead, in traffic.

No.461's steaming has not been what was expected, and performance is being investigated. As well as the obvious checks for steam leaks in the cylinders and valves, this has involved the fitting of instrumentation to record various boiler temperatures, smokebox vacuum, etc.

More seriously, during a special operation to Kilkenny, poor coal quality resulted in delays for fire cleaning followed by a series of events resulting in the right big end running hot. The loco was beached at Newbridge where the right connecting rod was dismantled prior to being hauled to Inchicore. Preparatory dismantling was carried out by Dublin members, and a team from Whitehead made several visits to get the journal trued up and the bearing refurbished and fitted. Truing up of the journal involved the "Egob" - if you don't know what an Egob is, look at the picture! Three days of running in

and proving were carried out between Dublin and Portlaoise.



The ‘Egob’ in action on No.461’s right crank journal on 26th September 2012. A device of uncertain etymology, the Egob has to be laboriously turned by hand for many hours to do the job of the Whitehead wheel lathe in cases where removing an axle is not possible. Here Jim Adams takes a turn during one of a series of visits to Inchicore to repair the effects of a hot big end. (J.J. Friel)

I must here record my thanks to the IÉ staff at Inchicore, without whose co-operation it would have been impossible to effect repairs easily or in the time.

No.461 was back in action for the Christmas trains - only to suffer an injector failure on the second weekend. I must stress that a major contributory factor is the continuing lack of facilities in Dublin. Without any intended criticism, with appropriate arrangements the injector problem would not have resulted in a failure.

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

No.85 has passed its boiler steam test (out of the frames) and the frames and boiler were re-united. After that, progress was more rapid. The boiler cladding and cab have been fitted, also most of the fittings and pipework. At the time of writing, the main steam pipe and blast pipe are being fitted. It was necessary to renew part of the steam pipe and a completely new blast pipe was made. This was about the most awkward item cast by the Whitehead foundry.

One major outstanding item is the fitting of a Train Protection and Warning System and associated electrical equipment, which is now under way. This is necessary to permit higher speed operation, an essential requirement now that pathing of special trains has become harder due to increased speed and frequency of NIR service trains.

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

The appeal has brought in £45,000 to date, and donations are still coming in - plenty still needed! It is hoped that this amount can be greatly enhanced by an external funding source. However, this has meant that work cannot start as planned other than dismantling and investigation.

As a result, the overhaul is being held back and, as mentioned above, the overhaul of No.4 has been started instead.



A series of trips between Whitehead and Belfast on 16th and 17th March 2013 were used to test newly overhauled carriages, train loco crews, and gather performance data from both No.186 and No.461 for comparison. Here No.186 arrives at Whitehead on the 17th, passing the new station building and No.461, waiting to take over the train. (C.P. Friel)

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

The intention is to restore No.131 to operational ability at some stage, but the amount of work is extensive due to boiler condition and missing parts.

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

Requires major repairs including renewal of cylinder block.

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

Requires major overhaul.

Diesel locomotives:

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

Requires engine and gearbox overhaul.



Starting in January 2013 No.85's boiler was steam tested several times outside of the frames before being returned to the frames on a damp 9th February.



The mist has only partly been manufactured by No.461, out of shot to the right.



Back in 2004 we thought we wouldn't see No.85 in steam again - thankfully we were wrong! The engine regained her boiler and tender in February 2013.



An all-new electrical system is being installed (left) including TPWS, which gives warnings to the driver through a horn, a bell, and a 'sunflower' indicator (centre of right-hand picture).



No.85 moved under her own steam again on 6th April 2013. (A. Lohoff)

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

Requires gearbox overhaul.

Unilok UTA Road-Rail shunter. Whitehead, in traffic.

134 IÉ General Motors Bo-Bo diesel electric locomotive (single end). In store, Inchicore.

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

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

B142 is awaiting an oil change.

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

Contract and other Work:

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

The overhaul of the frames, cylinders and motion is nearly complete. The loco is shortly to be placed on its transporter wagon and moved out of the workshop, so that our own 2-6-4T loco No.4 can be moved in. Major work remaining is overhaul of the boiler, provision of fittings, rebuilding the cab and bunker and the braking system. Interreg funding was instrumental in getting much of the mechanical work done, and some work has continued on a training and standby basis, but further substantial funding would be necessary to render the loco operational.

No.1 CSÉ 0-4-0 “Orenstein and Koppel” loco.

Overhaul of O&K No.1 was completed in November and the loco undertook several days shunting and proving at Whitehead before being transferred to the owners, the Downpatrick and County Down Railway, by low loader. As part of the same operation, No.3 “R.H. Smyth” was transferred from Downpatrick to Whitehead.



CSÉT No.1 leaves Whitehead on 25th November 2012 at the end of another successful overhaul project. No.186 shunted on this day to take No.3 “R.H. Smyth” off the low-loader (from Downpatrick) and put the just-overhauled CSÉT No.1 onto it to go to Downpatrick. (M. Walsh)

Wheelset overhaul

The RPSI (now HEI) has carried out several contract jobs to re-profile locomotive driving wheels, and to true up worn or corroded journals and outside crank pins. The inside big end journals are machined by an attachment on the wheel lathe. The work has come from steam railways in Great Britain. The only minor problem has been the 6½” gauge difference - the wheels can’t be rolled along the track but have to be lifted by crane!

HEI Workshop Developments

A number of useful workshop improvements are being carried out, funded by “GROW South Antrim” - the administrators of the Rural Development Programme of the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development. GROW have enabled HEI to provide various tools and machines, also to upgrade the security system. Our thanks are due to GROW for assisting in this significant project.

DUBLIN AREA CARRIAGE REPORT

Niall Kelly

‘Renewal’ seems to have been the main theme of 2012 in the Dublin Carriage Department. A regular year sees primary focus on the overhaul of an individual carriage in addition to running maintenance. Much of 2012 was spent on renewing specific parts across the fleet while individual carriage overhaul took a backseat. Of course regular running maintenance continued as always.

The first project of 2012 was a major programme involving the renewal of gangway curtains in five Cravens: 1505, 1506, 1514, 1522 and 1532. This turned out to be quite an intensive project, beginning in January and continuing through February. With the running season scheduled to commence in early

March this presented a problem - could all of this be completed in time, working Saturdays alone? It couldn't, so an alternative plan was arranged: much of the work would be undertaken on weekdays, with some volunteers taking time off their day jobs in order to attend. The renewal of a gangway curtain is a lot more protracted task than some might think - it takes about half a day to remove an old curtain and just as long to fit the new one. We also took the opportunity to repaint the interior gangway metal where access had previously been difficult. The gangway floor plates were repaired as required. It's worth pointing out that when IÉ most recently overhauled their 2700 and 2800 class railcars they simply chose to remove the cab end gangways rather than continue to maintain them - if that gives any indication of how labour-intensive their upkeep is. Ultimately the commitment of our workers saw this project through and all carriages were available for the start of the running season.



Former buffet car 1508 in the midst of its overhaul in the former Carriage One shop at Inchicore, February 2013. When converted to a catering vehicle, two windows were plated over on one side, giving it a rather distinctive appearance. (L. Tomiczek)

During the summer another renewal programme took place - focused on replacing carriage running boards. Again this required weekday working in addition to Saturdays. One volunteer actually undertook this as part of his work experience programme, in the process gaining valuable maintenance and woodworking skills. Around the same time the opportunity was taken to fit new toilet waste pipes to the Cravens.

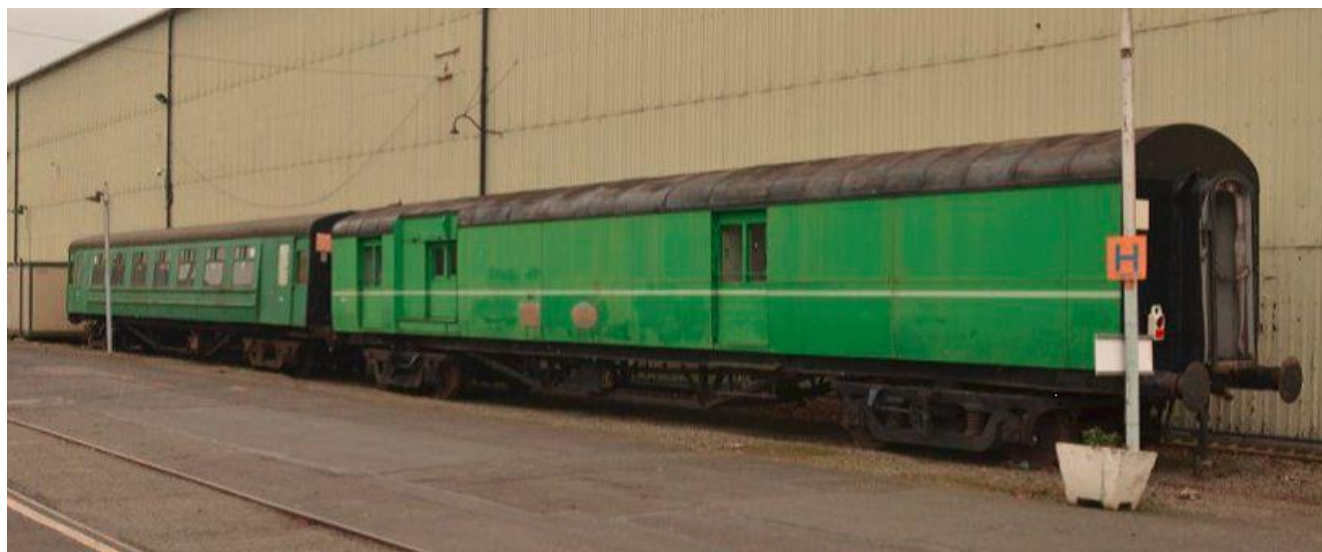
In terms of individual carriage overhaul, not as much work was undertaken as might have been desired. This was down to a combination of factors - the time and manpower we have is limited and priority must naturally be given to essential maintenance programmes such as those discussed above. Another

factor is suitable covered location, or the lack thereof. Not having our own site in Dublin, we are reliant on IÉ to accommodate us on their premises. As a railway operator, they quite rightly have to prioritise their own rolling stock before ours. This meant that it was July before we are able to get the next Cravens carriage (former buffet 1508) indoors for a bodywork overhaul. Some preliminary work was undertaken outdoors on the Oil Road but this situation was far from ideal; aside from being at the mercy of the weather, upper level access and power supply facilities are limited here. This vehicle is in need of quite a bit of attention - several panels requiring major repair work. The door frames are also being renewed. Hopefully it shall return to traffic during 2013 but this is dependent on manpower and other commitments.



The heritage set stored outdoors, and now in need of major attention, at Inchicore, February 2013. (L. Tomiczek)

Another project was door frame refurbishment in bar car 1514. Unfortunately this meant we were unable to provide full bar facilities on our summer trips. However, with the emphasis on shorter trains to run-in loco No.461, we probably wouldn't have been able to include her in the set anyway; it was more desirable to include 64-seater standards than a 28-seater bar car. 1514 finally returned to service during the Santa season.



Rarely glimpsed by the public, TPO 2977 sits in the company of Park Royal 1383 at Inchicore. 2977 saw a rare moment in the limelight when it was used in film work last summer. (L. Tomiczek)

Meanwhile the Mullingar team continued with the restoration of BR Van 3173. The bodywork has been overhauled and an interior refurbishment is well underway. All going well, it is hoped that she will return to Dublin sometime during 2013. This will allow 3185 to take a well-earned rest from her brake and generating duties on the set.

Aside from the renewal programmes and overhauls, regular maintenance also had to be tackled. Normally October and November sees us busy preparing the set for its annual exam prior to the Santa season. This involves many tedious tasks, including the greasing of every single axlebox on the train. 2012 saw a greater rush than usual - the set had to be available in early November for No.461's running-in trials following her bearing repairs. The first loaded test train consisted of 3185 + 1532 + 1505 + 1522. However, on the second day a defect meant a shorter consist was sent out. This consisted of just 3185 + 1532, reminiscent of the pre-railcar Nenagh branch train (only with a steam loco hauling rather than a small GM!).



Now on lease from IÉ, Presidential Mark 2 5408 stored in the former Carriage One shop at Inchicore. Her pending transfer to Whitehead will allow another member of the Dublin fleet to be brought indoors. (L. Tomiczek)

Last year's report suggested that work would commence on some of the heritage vehicles during the year. Although this was the intention, a lack of resources, not to mention suitable covered accommodation, meant that we have been unable to carry this out so far. On a positive note GSWR All-1st 1142 and TPO 2977 did enjoy a brief moment in the limelight during July when they were used in one day shoot for a film entitled "1916 Amhrán na bhFiann" (directed by Keith Farrell).

While all the above was going on, the Carriage Presentation Team, or the 'Wednesday gang' as they are also known, persevered in ensuring that our train was kept spotless for our passengers.



A glistening 461 and Cravens arrive back in Wicklow after working a local trip to Greystones on 15th July 2012. (L. Tomiczek)

Looking to 2013, we will carry on maintaining the running set while the overhauls of 1508 and 3173 will continue. However, we do face two problems that need to be tackled:

- 1) *Manpower:* the Dublin carriage workforce is quite limited in number, even by preservation standards. Two very small teams carry out the respective overhauls at Mullingar and Inchicore, with an attendance as low as three being not unheard of some days. We need to ensure that there is a continual supply of individuals with both heavy and light maintenance skills. If you have any particular skills and are willing to give some of your time we would be delighted to hear from you - and even you don't have any specific skill, but are willing to give a dig-out, we may well have a role for you too.
- 2) *Accommodation:* The need for a suitable site of our own in the Dublin area cannot be over-emphasised. At the time of writing there are only four RPSI carriages under cover in Dublin - 351, 1142, 1508 and 5408. While the pending transfer of 5408 to Whitehead may free up a space, we need to get the remainder of the fleet under cover as soon as possible. We have some wonderful examples of heritage rolling stock, including GNR(I) Diner 88 and GSR Bredin 1335; it would be a terrible shame if these were to decay further due to exposure to the elements. While IÉ have been helpful in allowing us to store some stock indoors we cannot expect them to cater for all our vehicles.

To conclude this report, thanks are due to all the volunteers who persevered to keep us on the move throughout the year, often in quite trying circumstances. We are also grateful to all the IÉ staff in Inchicore and Connolly who helped us along the way.



On 24th March 2012, No.461 waters at Greystones, heading south with the “Spare Link” railtour. (L. Griffin)



No.461 at Howth on 25th March 2012, at the end of the “Spare Link” railtour. L-R: Mark Tyrell, Lar Griffin, Gerry Mooney, Tony Cooke, Robbie Jolley, Ken Fox. (C.P. Friel)



No.186 crosses the N18 at Kiltartan on 12th May 2012 with the “South Clare” railtour between Athenry and Ennis. (C.P. Friel)



Later that day, the “South Clare” arrives in Ennis. The trackbed of the West Clare Railway is in the left foreground, although nothing remains to be seen today. (C.P. Friel)

A year of slow progress in many ways, but with lots happening in the background. The two new vehicles, 303 and 463, are looking good in their new shiny paint (not yet sullied by exhaust smoke!). Operationally it has been a mixed year with some unreliability with the Dutch Van (462) heating boiler, but this appears to have been remedied by the use of a new switch on the high water float valve. 462 will be withdrawn in the summer as electricity can be supplied by 463 allowing body work repairs and wheel set overhaul to take place. Changes to the electrical system in 547 have improved reliability but only time and usage will tell if further changes are required.



No.461 and 5 Mark 2s at Downshire on a trials train on 17th March 2013. At either end of the train are former air conditioned Open 303 and Brake / Generator First 463, both newly into traffic. (C.P. Friel)

The interior of 304 has been stripped and cleaned and work on the exterior will commence with the good weather, if there is some about later in the year.

180 and 181 hand basin water supplies have been unreliable. These are air operated by a little rubber 'bubble' on the floor which hides itself from most of our passengers. The taps are in process of being changed to wall-mounted time-operated push-button taps. This will ensure that little water is wasted and avoids the need for new sinks.

Various vehicles, usually the ones marshalled next to the Dutch Van, have had comments raised about water leaks near doors. This has turned out to be caused by fine ash and clinker from the engine blocking the gutters. Maybe part of locomotive disposal should include the cleaning of the gutters!

The Dutch Van roof has been repaired and painted and a new lid provided to keep rain out of the boiler exhaust. This has proved satisfactory and a second lid will be provided for the other boiler.

300 is receiving a partial paint job after its emergence from intensive care in the loco workshop to replace rusted panels on the lower side of the vehicle. 300 is expected to be back in service very shortly allowing one of the first class vehicles to be next in the queue for similar attention.

In addition to the above and the annual inspections and overhauls, the purchase of a planer thicknesser and spindle moulder is progressing and will bring much needed mechanisation to the woodworking facilities.

A programme is in place to update the ventilation fans on all vehicles (taking full advantage of the 3-phase train line) and includes the provision of modern thermostats to control saloon temperature. Only 547 has been fully fitted so far but the results have been appreciated by all.

BELFAST AREA OPERATIONS

Mervyn Darragh

The 2012 operating season proved to be rather mixed in fortune. It had good days but was fraught with some disappointments. A chronological record is recorded below of the workings organised by the Belfast Area Operations Committee during the year.

To facilitate operational and maintenance requirements No.461 worked light engine to Dublin on Sunday 26th February while No.186 returned to Whitehead on Sunday 25th March.

A first for Easter was to operate trains on the main line on both Easter Monday and Tuesday, 9th and 10th April. The trains were heavily loaded, with 982 passengers carried on the four Belfast Central to Whitehead trains.

The month of May saw the ever-expanding Irish Railway Heritage long weekend event, which now lasts about a week! The South Clare Railtour was the highlight. On Thursday 10th May No.186 and 6 vehicles worked to Dublin. The intention was for this engine to have a cameo role, with No.461 taking the lead. Unfortunately on the weekend prior to the railtour No.461 developed an intermittent steaming problem. Reluctantly the decision was taken in the following days to substitute No.186 throughout.

On Friday 11th May, the North Atlantic Railtour ran from Dublin. This was the first through passenger train from Dublin to Portrush in many a year. The train on return travelled on the seldom-used Antrim to Lisburn branch line (open as a diversionary route but with no regular passenger service). Irish Rail 201 class 230 worked the train from Dublin to Portadown where NIR 111 class diesel-electrics featured onwards. 230 returned the train to Dublin from Lisburn. It was a long and enjoyable day.



NIR 111 at Coleraine with the “North Atlantic” Railtour on 11th May 2012. As it turned out we had to make a lot more use of the 111 Class in 2012 than originally planned. (C.P. Friel)

A decision was taken to return No.461 to Whitehead on Monday 14th May with the railtour instead of No.186. There was some good running but unfortunately the locomotive was found on arrival at Dundalk to be carrying too much heat for comfort in a bearing. The decision was taken to terminate the

locomotive there and work it back at low speed to Whitehead later that day. The train was quickly shunted into the loop at Dundalk to clear the platform for the next Enterprise. An NIR GM was requested to take the carriages forward. After some delay it became apparent that a crew for the GM could not be arranged at such short notice. A request to Irish Rail was made to secure assistance but a locomotive would not be available until the following day. Reluctantly the train had to be terminated. Using No.461, the train was shunted from the loop back to the platform where customers could collect their belongings. Participants made their onward journey to Belfast by boarding the next Enterprise train. During this time permission was withheld to work No.461 light engine, when it was realised the train crew would be out of hours before reaching Whitehead.



The weather suited the mood on 14th May 2012 - a sudden downpour descended as No.461 limped into a siding at Dundalk with the empty Mark 2s. (C.P. Friel)

On Tuesday 15th May the coach tour visited the recently opened Titanic Visitor centre and the nearby Thompson Dry Dock. World War One cruiser HMS Caroline (whose future is now secure) could be viewed in a nearby closed-off dock. The afternoon was spent at the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum transport gallery. The Model Engineers provided live steam train rides on their 7¼" gauge circuit through the walled gardens.

The Bangor Belle operated from Lisburn to Bangor on Saturday 26th May. This coincided with a model railway show in Bangor. No.461 hauled the train - the locomotive's first visit there since 16th April 2001. At each planned stop the locomotive was examined and suitably oiled following repairs to the troublesome big end (see Locomotive Report).

The ever-popular Steam and Jazz trains worked on four consecutive Fridays commencing on 8th June. No.461 did the honours on the first three dates with No.186 doing the last following some necessary repairs. Despite mostly very inclement weather, all appeared to enjoy themselves. New this year was use of the Antrim Branch line. However the branch suffered a landslip after a period of heavy rain, so the last Steam & Jazz had to take an alternative route.

Meanwhile it was necessary for No.186 to be hauled to Whitehead out of steam on Sunday 17th June.

A second Bangor Belle operated from Portadown on Saturday 28th June. Among those present on the heavily loaded train were invited guests: the Department of Regional Development Minister Danny Kennedy and Translink's Head of Rail Services, Mal McGreevy. No.186 with 6 vehicles did the honours.



No.186 was having a superb day on 26th August 2012 - until misfortune struck after Ballymena. The footplate crew were on top form and actually running ahead of time despite an unusually heavy load of 7 bogies for this demanding run up steep gradients. This made the disappointment all the more bitter when the situation became reversed. The engine's failure was not related to the load, so it is sad to relate that we will not see a repeat performance - the new NIR timetable does not allow any paths to Portrush in 2013 that are suitable for No.186. (C.P. Friel)

Three Portrush Flyers were planned for Sundays 19th and 26th August and 2nd September. Unfortunately No.186 did not make it to Portrush. It was a most unfortunate Flyer season and the least said would be prudent. On the first Sunday the locomotive was failed during the course of its pre-trip examination. Luckily an NIR GM was available and arranged at very short notice. For the second Flyer the worst of all operational scenarios happened north of Ballymena, a failure in mid-section on a single line. The locomotive could not make steam and move under its own power. A GM was summoned and an NIR failure and retrieval process was put in place. Eventually the ensemble, after being propelled to Killagan Loop to allow service trains to proceed, was hauled back to Belfast Central. Not the best way to spend a Sunday afternoon. While the locomotive was worked on at Whitehead, a GM was used on the final Flyer. The Society is indebted to NIR for providing diesel hauled substitution and recovery. A word of thanks is also due to our customers for their forbearance during a very difficult time. *[The on-train volunteers also did an admirable job in their dealings with the passengers. - Ed.]*



No.186 approaching Ennis with the “South Clare” railtour on 12th May 2012. (F. Kennedy)

The Broomstick Belle, with No.186 in good health, operated on Sunday 28th October. The Whitehead excursion platform was at that time out of bounds to passengers as the building contractors were advancing with construction of the new replica station building (see Development Report). The route from Belfast Central took in Carrickfergus with a direct run to Lisburn and return to Central.

The ever-popular Santa train season operated over three weekends commencing on Saturday 1st December - five days from Belfast Central and one from Portadown. No.186 was in fine form and worked all the trains. Whitehead Excursion Platform still being unavailable, the Belfast trains ran to Carrickfergus and Lisburn instead. The Portadown trains ran to Lisburn.

The Society was kindly approached by NIR to operate a steam train on Wednesday 12th December in connection with the opening of the new diesel maintenance depot at Adelaide. Various dignitaries, including the DRD Minister were carried on the short journey from Belfast Central direct into the Adelaide depot.

Due to public demand, a Mince Pie train was organised at short notice for Sunday 30th December; a day out aimed at the adults to shake of those post-Christmas blues. Hauled by No.186 the train operated Belfast Central to Lisburn and on to Bangor.

In conclusion, a special word of thanks to all who assisted no matter in what way in making the trains happen. Without each individual fulfilling their distinct role the trains would not operate as successfully as they do.



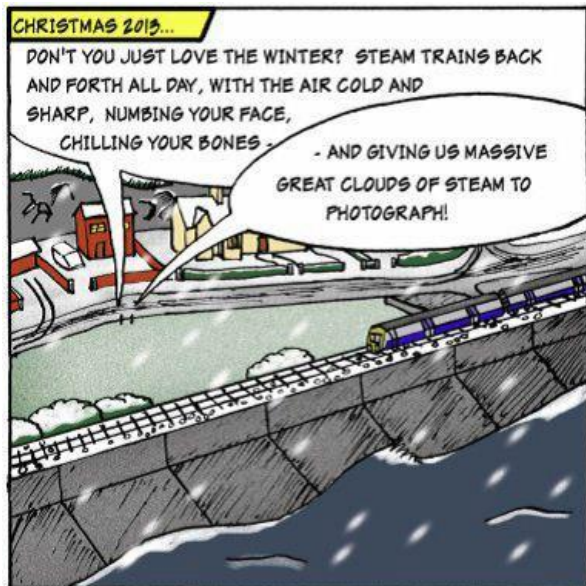
No.461 gets a brief respite in the climb as she heads through Drumcondra en route to Maynooth with the first Santa special of the day, Saturday 15th December 2012. Unfortunately this was No.461's last operation of 2012 as she later failed in the day with injector problems. Despite the efforts of the Dublin loco team, the Santa Specials on the following day were diesel hauled. No.461 made an unexpected appearance in the ITV series Foyle's War in March 2013, evidently shot illicitly during these operations, at a carefully chosen angle where the headboard wasn't too obvious.
(G. Mooney)



No.186 at Adelaide Train Care Depot for the official opening on 12th December 2012 with railcar 4001 beyond. After the failures of the summer, No.186 redeemed herself entirely in the winter thanks to meticulous maintenance. Her performance was flawless over six days of Santa trains as well as her morning as a VIP transport and the outing to Bangor. (C.P. Friel)



No.461 catches the evening sun on the Dargan Bridge in Belfast on 17th March 2013, the second of two days shuttling up and down the Larne line with No.186. As mentioned in the Locomotive Report one of the objectives was to gather data from sensors fitted to the engines. In the end this did not yield any clues as to No.461's frequent shortness of steam, but later in 2013 sources of higher energy coal were identified that may provide the solution. (C.P. Friel)



The first two weeks of the New Year were spent jacking and packing 120 feet of the platform road which had settled, following the busy Santa schedule. Approximately 600 litres of diesel oil was transferred from the second Dutch van (4602), which is situated in number two carriage siding out the back, into barrels which were used to transport the oil to tanks more conveniently situated in the yard.

A final 600 litres of diesel oil was removed from the Dutch van which was put into the GM locomotive B142. The pot holes in the lanes were filled with a mixture of stones and used foundry sand. A Site gang including Alan McRobert, Denis Campbell and David Thompson removed three old and split point timbers on the main running road and replaced them with new ones.

A meeting was held at Whitehead on 2nd February with the head of NIR Infrastructure, a representative of the NI Transport Holding Company and a member of the RPS consultant team. The subject was the possible removal of bank material between our site and the Larne main line to accommodate two sidings. These would be essential to allow the movement and storage of RPSI stock during any forthcoming HLF contracts. While neither NIR nor the NITHCo had any objections to the proposals, they would not fund any of the work and would still maintain ultimate ownership of the land. A survey of the area has shown that the most cost effective proposal would be a single 170 metre siding, which could be built following the removal of about 400 cubic metres of earth.

The end of the month saw the Site squad assisting in the movement of No.85's boiler into the workshop and the lifting of No.171's boiler in the sheer-legs.

March started with a concerted effort to rationalise our stores of old wooden sleepers, ably assisted by Thomas Charters, Geoff Moore and Trevor Taylor. Many of these are being recycled, with the timbers going for lighting up or sold on for garden landscaping. Ten tons of spent ash was sold to a contractor working on the repairs of the Thompson dry dock in Belfast and was used to successfully seal a coffer dam.

A relined clutch plate was installed in the Unilok. The Mark 2 train was split into individual carriages for its annual inspection and the opportunity taken to shunt the yard in time for the return of No.186.

Some bushwhacking was carried out around the perimeter of the site.

An upgrade of the existing intruder and fire alarms was put out to tender.

The train was reassembled and preparations made for the Easter train rides which included internal and external cleaning, filling all water tanks and testing the steam heating system using the Dutch van's (462) boiler. In addition all points were cleaned and greased and repairs were made to the point lever timbers which control 1 and 2 shed roads. The point lever timbers for the outside carriage sidings near to the Workshop were replaced during the Easter train rides with help from Phillip Newell, when the Mark 2 running set was out in service. Help was given by the Site squad in the removal and safe storage of all the boiler tubes and superheater elements from No.171.

Once the Easter train rides were over, we started the preparatory work to facilitate the laying of concrete in the outer passageways of the carriage shed. Unfortunately all this is at the Larne end of the shed and any access always requires a major shunt. The first of these allowed us to clear the passage next to the main NIR line and the following week we laid almost 40 tonnes of crushed stone, after another shunt. We used the JCB to load our PW wagon, which had temporary wooden cribs to hold more stone. It was pushed into the shed with the Atlas machine which also cleared the wagon of most of the stone by sideways use of the jib bucket. Tidying and levelling were done by a good squad of help with shovels and rakes. The next week we shunted again and then we used a stone compactor in the morning and, after an early lunch, we were in time for the arrival of the concrete at 1pm. This was laid and levelled by 2:30 and we had the shunt finished by 4pm. The following two weeks saw us busily

erecting the former Queen's University Belfast shelving system on the new floor. In addition I gave the site its first spray with systemic weed-killer and both the Atlas and the JCB have had their annual service.

The end of May and the beginning of June saw the Site gang assemble a series of 20ft sections of the old Queen's University library shelving in the Carriage shed on the newly laid concrete flooring. In total, with great help from Gordon Hunt, Tom Mathers and David Lowry, we put together over 100ft of this 4-level system which has produced an extensive storage facility for carriage bits and pieces. It also saw the large GROW project for the platform building, fencing and laneway go out to tender. In addition the contract for the upgrade of the intruder and fire alarm for the loco sheds and workshops was awarded in June, also part funded by a smaller GROW grant, awarded to Heritage Engineering Ireland. As you will remember, June this year was the wettest on record, and although we were fortunate to miss the effects of the large floods seen in the Belfast area, it did severely curtail outdoor activities. However, we managed to complete repairs and adjustments on a number of points and crossings and used the wet weather for indoor jobs, like filling the shelves in the Carriage shed mentioned above. A shunter training school was held, neatly fitting into morning train rides and preparations for the last Steam and Jazz outing. I am pleased to report that all 3 candidates were very competent in both the practical and written assessments and have been subsequently rostered as assistant shunters.

Following a short holiday, we returned to Whitehead at the end of July when I gave the Site a second weed-killer application. A long timber in No.1 shed road was replaced and in early August the usual suspects plus a returned John Williams saw two small crossing timbers replaced with four interlacing concretes. The following week we pulled through all the wires required for the first fit on the installation of the improved intruder and fire alarm system. This fulfilled the essential volunteer component of this GROW funded project. On 16th August we emptied the old platform shop of most of its contents, including Santa presents, sign boards and the safe, pending the arrival of the contractors. The last two weeks of the month saw the site gang removing 100 cast iron chairs from old wooden sleepers, which will ultimately make room for the proposed additional siding. The improved intruder and fire alarm system was completed at the end of the month while Monday 3rd September saw the contractors on site for the start of the new platform station building. A steel portakabin, as a short term replacement for the shop, was placed at the Belfast end of the platform. All the counters and display shelving were transferred into the new shop which was fitted out with stock two days later, as the old building was by now demolished. This later became an essential dry and secure store for all the Santa presents.

We recycled more cast iron chairs from old sleepers, bringing the total to over 200. More than half of these are the small-hole NCC type which will be smelted in the foundry while the remainder are of the large-hole GNR(I) variety which can be re-used on new wooden sleepers.

A CCTV system was installed in September, which covers the major access points to our site and is an excellent adjunct to our upgraded security arrangements.

Early in October saw the ferrous skip filled and its contents were sold for over £500, after transport charges. The concrete foundations for the new platform building were poured and we had the official laying of the first brick on Wednesday 17th. Despite poor weather, there was a very good attendance of guests and sponsors and the event was an excellent public relations exercise for the Society.

Steady progress on the fencing was made by the contractor and the Site squad, ably assisted by John Wolsley and Robin Morton, gave every assistance in the movement of materials and the clearing of obstacles and potholes in the laneway were filled with crushed stones.

Now that the platform was secure and would not have passenger access, we started to move track

materials onto this area to clear the ground for the eventual extra siding which we will need to lay in the new year. This activity occupied most of our working Thursdays up to Christmas when we shifted 200 concrete sleepers, 50 wooden sleepers, 300 metres of rail and several crossings and turnouts. On the last working day we had a celebratory meal and said goodbye to Owen Smith, who was sadly retiring from the Site squad. By now the station building had almost all its brickwork completed and was starting to look like a classic NCC structure.

A local contractor did a great job of the necessary excavation of the embankment in January, despite the cold and the snow. Over 400 cubic metres was moved onto our recently acquired ground, thereby incurring minimal transport costs and no landfill tax. Large second-hand crossing timbers from the recent NIR Bleach Green relay also greatly facilitated the trackwork. By the end of February all the crossing and switch timbers were in place and in March rail was cut and fitted in on the main line to allow for Easter operations. Second-hand fish plates and keys were brought from IÉ at Portlaoise, with help from Phillip Newell, and this allowed us to lay the 150 yards of the main siding in April and May.



On 2nd May 2013, the site gang are seen at work on construction of the new siding. The siding is now complete and is presently packed with spare Mark 2 bogies. It's good to have these out of the way as they are awkward to move around. However, when you need to get one out again it is usually the one at the far end! (A. Lohoff)

A fully operational point lever was installed during the last Thursday of May and the Atlas carried out the first crossing into the siding. Early in June all the remaining track materials from the platform were stored on the siding in time for the Steam and Jazz trains. Believe it or not the whole length is now full of acquired Mk2 bogies and 2 complete flat wagons. How did we ever manage without the siding? This has been the biggest job ever tackled by Site squad and I think we can be justly proud of our efforts.

Thank you to all who made it possible.

DEVELOPMENT REPORT

Denis Grimshaw

A lot has happened since the previous Development Report in Five Foot Three 58 last year. In particular, the contract for the new Whitehead Excursion Station Building was let in August 2012 to

Cleary Contracting Ltd of Randalstown, Co Antrim, and building work got under way in September. The building work ran to schedule, and the superb new station building was formally handed over to the Society on 31st May 2013.



A ceremony to 'lay the first brick' (a phrase that was fooling nobody) for the station building was held on 10th October 2012. (C.P. Friel)

Our design team at RPS completed the outline design drawings for the overall development, and the next stage of the design work (RIBA Stage E) is now underway.

We received full Planning Permission for the entire Whitehead Development, as well Building Control approval for the station.

Most of the workload of the 2020 Committee has been taken up in discussions and negotiations with our potential funders, and juggling with the planning of the future building contracts in respect of the amount and timescale of our anticipated funding.

We were therefore delighted to receive confirmation in March this year from GROW South Antrim of a

grant of £798,209 towards the main development phase at Whitehead, followed later in the month by a grant of £1,644,400 from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Whilst this was excellent news, we are still well short of the total finance required for the overall project at Whitehead. Detailed discussions which are still ongoing with another major funder have become much more focussed and positive in the last few weeks - hopefully there is a light at the end of the tunnel!



Whitehead Excursion now has its own station building! (The portaloos are not a permanent feature.)

As there is a rigid deadline for expenditure of the GROW grant by the end of 2014, we sought and obtained approval from our current funders to reallocate some identical or very similar areas and buildings within the overall plan between the funders, so that we can let an advance tender in the very near future for the GROW-funded items. It is hoped that construction work for this phase will commence before the end of 2013.

Although the station building construction work is now complete, we still have to fit out the kitchen and café area, and fit the information/education displays about our railway history and heritage, as required by HLF.

Whilst all this has been going on, our Site Officer and his merry men have excavated a large quantity of the earth bank on the west side of our Whitehead site, installed another set of points off the run-round loop, and laid a new “west siding” which will accommodate about seven carriages. This is an essential step in our overall programme, as we will have to clear virtually all the rolling stock from the “back of the shed area” to allow the new buildings to be constructed. Even with the new siding, we will still need to move some items elsewhere. Any useful suggestions?

The two main GROW grants received to date (the original one towards the station building, and the more recent one for the main development) include significant contributions towards restoration projects, as below:

- GNR(I) S Class 4-4-0 Locomotive No.171
- GNR(I) Directors’ Saloon 50
- GNR(I) Bogie Grain van
- GNR(I) Q Class 4-4-0 Locomotive No.131

- LMS NCC Diesel Railcar No.1
- BR Mark 3 Sleeping Car (external and minor cosmetic works)

Our sleeping car is included in the list as it will occupy a prominent position beside the main visitor route in the future. It is also planned to fit it with a pair of 5'3" gauge bogies off a scrapped IÉ Mk3 carriage, so that it can be moved within our site in the future.

Meanwhile, our Dublin Area Operations Committee has been negotiating with CIÉ Properties to obtain a medium-term lease of the (now disused) former GNR(I) locomotive shed at Dublin Connolly for storage of our Dublin-based engines (steam and diesel) and the facility to undertake restoration and repairs on these vehicles.

For the time being, however, our Dublin-based carriages are likely to remain at Inchicore, until such time as a satisfactory Dublin-area site can be obtained. Whilst we greatly appreciate IÉ's ongoing storage of our carriages, the facilities and working conditions for servicing and maintenance are far from ideal, and a viable RPSI operations site in the Dublin area would be a very major benefit.

Finally, plans for our proposed museum and carriage shed at Dundalk are still on hold, due to the current non-availability of funding. We have, however, now received planning permission for this development.

IRISH 0-6-4T LOCOMOTIVES

W.T. Scott

The 0-6-4T was never a popular wheel arrangement in Ireland. Steam traction lasted in company service for about 130 years and, of the 2,300 engines to run during this time, only twenty-five were 0-6-4Ts - though ironically the last conventional Irish steam locomotive was of that type!

The twenty-five engines were divided among five companies: the GS&WR with nine, the GNR(I) with four, the C&L and the BCDR with one each and the SLNCR which had ten. The Cavan & Leitrim's solitary example was of course 3ft gauge, the only one in Ireland, while Sligo Leitrim was unique in that the 0-6-4T was its principal, and for years, only locomotive type. Beyer Peacock provided fifteen of the Irish total of twenty-five; the C&L engine was by Robert Stephenson, while the nine GS&WR engines were built at Inchicore.

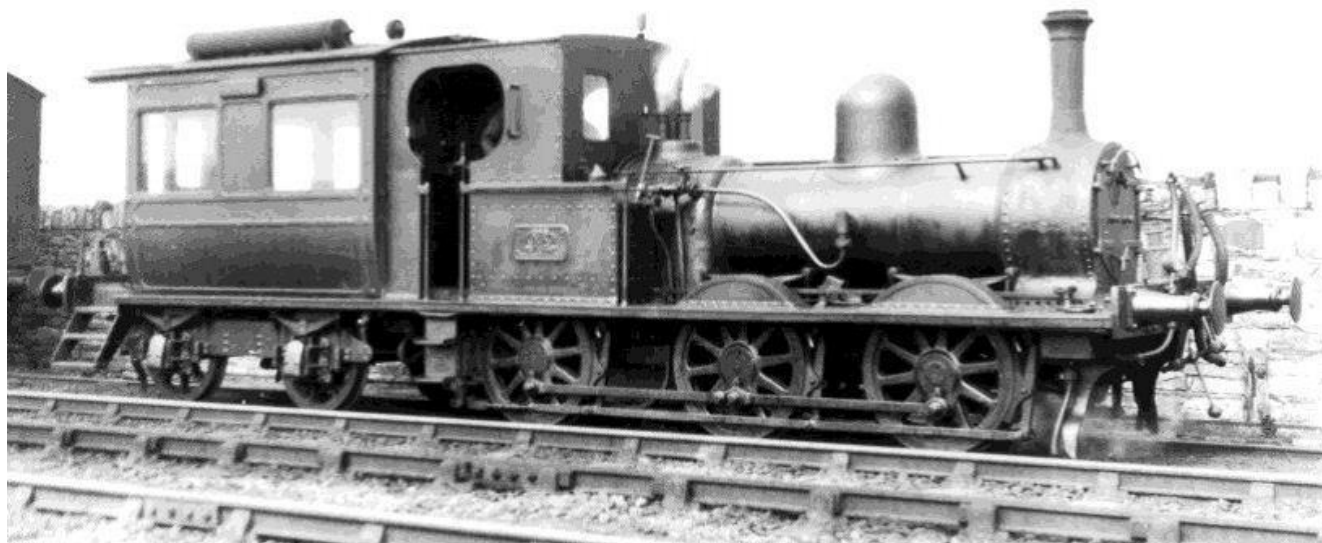
GS&WR

GS&WR Nos. 201-206				
Dimensions		Historical Summary		
Cylinders	18" x 24"	201	"Jumbo" 1895; 0-6-0T 1897	scr 1957
Boiler Pressure	140 psi	202	"Negro" 1895	scr 1910
Heating Surface	985 sq. ft.	203		scr 1940
Grate Area	18¾ sq. ft.	204	0-6-0T 1914	scr 1952
Weight	46¾ tons	205		scr 1928
Water Capacity	1,320 gals	206		scr 1928
Wheelbase	24' 9"			

The first 0-6-4Ts in the British Isles were introduced by Alexander McDonnell at Inchicore in 1876 when Nos. 201 and 202 appeared. Only back tanks were fitted at first but side tanks were added in 1883, giving more water and adhesion. Later engines, 203-206, were built with side tanks. In 1895, 201 and 202 lost their numbers to two new 0-6-0Ts, then becoming "Negro" and "Jumbo" respectively and entering departmental work. "Jumbo" was rebuilt as a 0-6-0T in 1897 and sent to Waterford, spending the next 60 years there and teaching many a young engineman his profession. "Negro" was withdrawn

as a 0-6-4T in 1910. Of the later four engines, 203, 205 and 206 saw out their lives as 0-6-4Ts but 204 became a 0-6-0T in 1914. All six were built for shunting and banking duties around Dublin and Cork. Except for smaller driving wheels they were mechanically identical with the first 101 class 0-6-0s.

206 was armoured as a military engine in 1921/2. As can be seen from the table, the rebuilds outlasted the 0-6-4Ts.



GS&WR No.92 at Inchicore around 1921. For some reason she has two separate vacuum connections at the smokebox end - any suggestions? (Kelland Collection 23046)

The other three GS&WR engines were much smaller and could only claim to be 0-6-4Ts because they were permanently attached to a short carriage. They were numbered 90, 91 and 92. 90 was built for the Castleisland railway in 1875. She lost the carriage and became a 0-6-0T in 1915. No.91 became a saddle tank in 1922 and was scrapped in 1930. No.92 remained a 0-6-4T and became the “Inchicore Cab”, carrying people between the Works and Kingsbridge station. She survived - just - into CIÉ days and was scrapped in 1945, the last GS&WR 0-6-4T.

After many years on static display No.90 was repaired and in the early 1990s worked some trains on the Galway-Athenry line before returning to Inchicore. In 2006 it was loaned to the Downpatrick Railway, moving via RPSI Whitehead where it received some repairs. It is currently out of service at Downpatrick.

GS&WR Nos. 90-92	
Cylinders	10”x18”
Boiler Pressure	150 psi
Driving Wheels	3’8”
Weight	23 tons

GNR(I)

After the convoluted lives of the GSWR engines, the GNR(I) quartet, classed RT, present a uniform

story. They were built by Beyer Peacock to the GNR's specification in 1908 and 1911 to shunt Belfast Docks and work interchange trains between there and the goods yards at Adelaide and Grosvenor Road. A short wheelbase of 13'6" enabled them to negotiate curves of 190ft radius, while their height of only 11'8" enabled them to work through the Queen's Bridge subway to link up with the NCC. They never left this work and the job also provided a link for crews unable to work on the main line, usually due to eyesight problems. A regular turn was the 4pm ex Adelaide to Maysfields sidings (now Belfast Central station) and return with wagons for the Londonderry goods. My favourite was No.23, perhaps because it was the first engine I ever drove.



GNR(I) No.23 approaches Belfast's 'Shaky Bridge' circa 1953. (W.T. Scott)

At the break-up of the GNR(I) in 1958, all four engines were allocated to the Ulster Transport Authority.

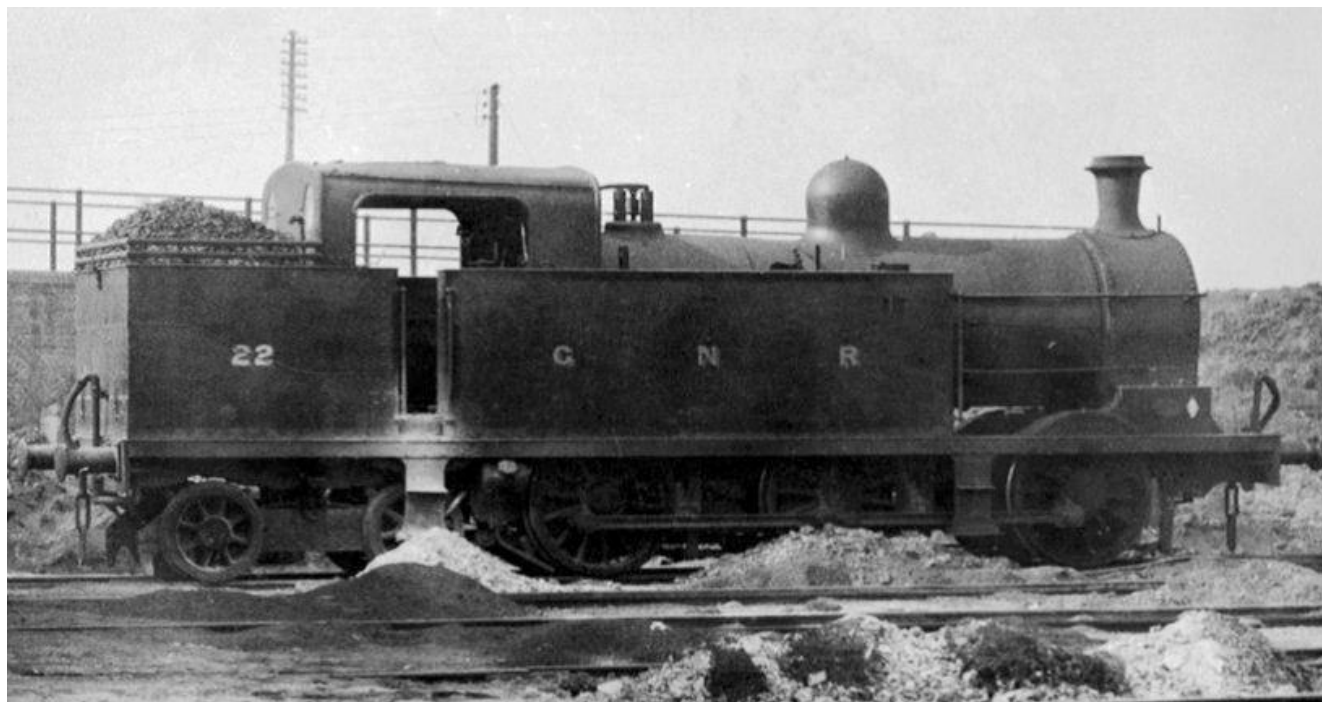
As the RTs had to work through the low subway under the Queen's Bridge, their boiler mountings were cut down and this combined with their 4'3" driving wheels - the smallest on the GNR apart from the crane tank - gave them a massive and powerful, if somewhat squat, appearance. They also had the largest buffers on the GNR - 2ft in diameter. The subway mentioned above was liable to flooding and on such occasions an unlucky shunter had to proceed on foot to ascertain the depth before the engine ventured in!

GNR(I) Class RT						
Dimensions		Historical Summary				
Cylinders	17" x 23"	GNR(I) No.	Built	Maker's No.	UTA No.	Scrapped
Driving Wheels	4'3"	22	1908	5093	-	1958
Heating Surface	1,087 sq. ft.	23	1908	5094	23	1961
Weight	56½ tons	166	1911	5531	24	1963
		167	1911	5532	25	1961

Apart from their small wheels, the RTs were the tank equivalent of the A class 0-6-0s; it was a GNR custom to build tank engines as standard as possible with tender engines of the same size. All four RTs got a heavy overhaul in 1938/9, including modern brake gear, while 166 also received a new boiler at

slightly reduced pressure. The heavy loads handled over the dock lines' incessant curves meant severe mechanical wear and the bogies, which were of the Adams type, sliding with side play controlled by coil springs, had to be reinforced. The driving axle boxes took severe punishment and on one occasion when the engine was lifted a box fell off the axle in halves! Play of 1½" was provided for on the leading axle, with a swivel bushing in the front half of the coupling rod.

The RTs did no passenger work in GNR(I) days but in 1962 No.166 (as UTA 24) worked an enthusiasts' special of open wagons and brake vans round the docks complex.



GNR(I) Class RT No.22 near the coaling stage at Adelaide shed in Belfast, circa 1952. (W.T. Scott)

Cavan & Leitrim

This narrow-gauge (3ft) line was a modest concern with about 50 miles of track and until 1904 had worked its trains with a stud of eight 4-4-0Ts weighing 24 tons, all built by Robert Stephenson & Co. However, these neat and useful little engines were sadly under-powered for the coal traffic after 1900 and so the Company went back to Stephensons for something more powerful. The result was 0-6-4T No.9 "King Edward". The King weighed in at 36¾ tons and looked a modern powerful engine, with pop safety valves, Walschaerts motion, flangeless centre drivers and steam sanding. It was the most powerful engine on the 3ft gauge until the arrival of the Swilly's giants in the following year.

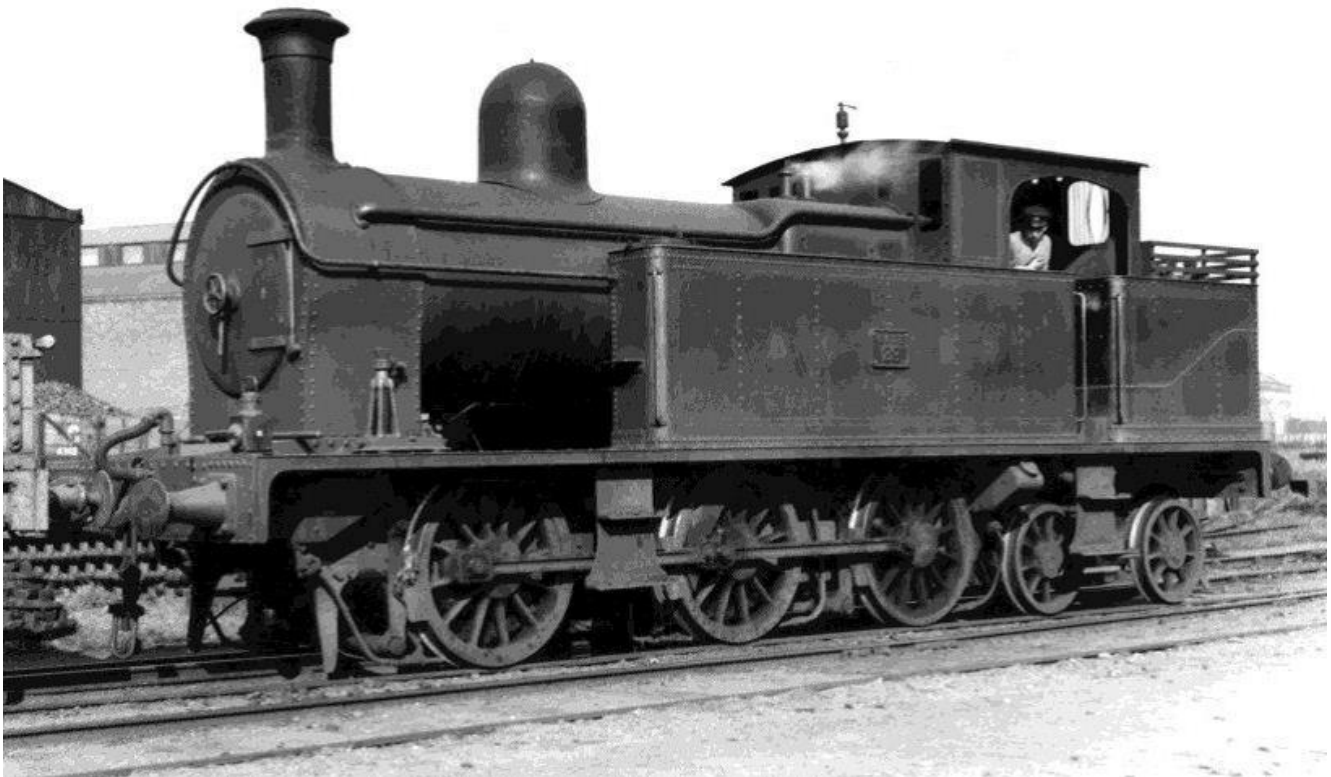
C&L No.9 "King Edward"	
Cylinders	15" x 20"
Boiler Pressure	150 psi
Driving Wheels	3'3"
Heating Surface	746½ sq. ft.
Grate Area	14 sq. ft.
Weight	36¾ tons

The C&L were proud of their engine and its power but within months the downside showed. The King's wheelbase was too long and it spread the track on the many sharp curves. It was tried running

bunker-first but, although safer, there was little improvement so it was virtually banned and ran a total of only 45,000 miles. It was offered for sale but there were no takers and so in 1934 Ireland's most advanced 0-6-4T was scrapped.



Cavan & Leitrim No.9 "King Edward". (Loco & General 6883)



BCDR No.29 at Queen's Quay in Belfast. (W.T. Scott Collection)

BCDR

Like the C&L, the BCDR owned just one 0-6-4T, built by Beyer Peacock in 1923. Like the GNR's RTs which it frequently met, this engine was intended for shunting the Belfast docks, where it could negotiate 170' radius curves, and for working over the Belfast Central line. Its only main line duty was a night run to Holywood after all other traffic had ceased, with coal for the gas works. Easement of the curve through Holywood had resulted in the removal of the gas works siding so this train stood on the down running line while the coal was thrown over the wall into the gas works yard.

BCDR No.29	
Cylinders	17" x 24"
Boiler Pressure	160 psi
Driving Wheels	4'
Bogie Wheels	3'
Coupled Wheelbase	12'6"
Grate Area	18 sq. ft.
Weight	55½ tons

With the ending of steam on the BCDR No.29, now UTA 229, moved over to York Road where its mileage on the NCC amounted to 41,000 though its duties were unchanged. No.29 had a reputation as a coal-eater - up to 90 lbs/mile was quoted and York Road endeavoured to curb this appetite by enlarging the diameter of the blast pipe nozzle, probably to about 4¼", i.e. the rule-of-thumb measurement of one quarter of the cylinder diameter. It never worked a passenger train but was the last BCDR engine to be steamed.

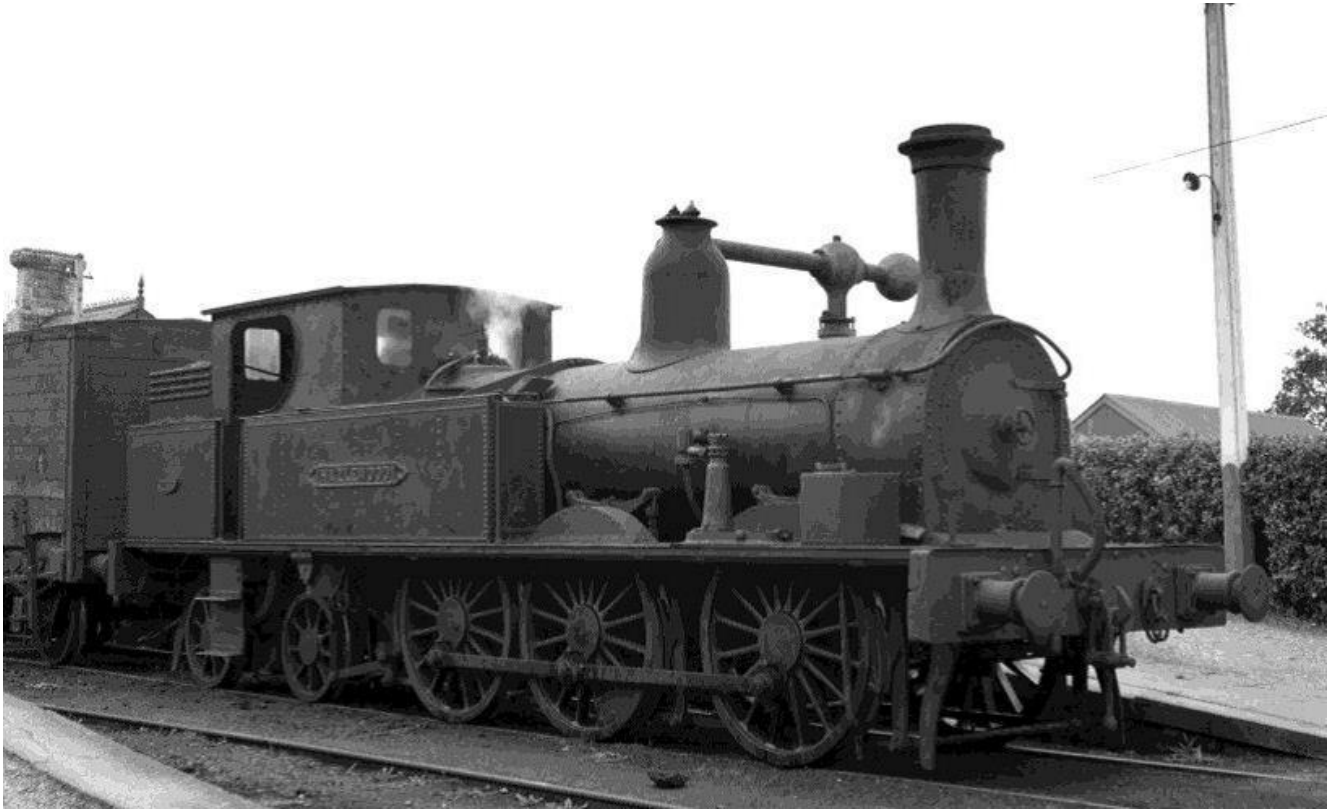
SLNCR

This line was the most impoverished of those mentioned and will always be associated with the 0-6-4T type, on which it depended solely apart from some second-hand purchases of obsolete locomotives from the GNR(I). There were ten engines of three distinct types although each class grew from its predecessor. All were built by Beyer Peacock and were named but not numbered.

Historical Summary			
Leitrim Class	Built	Works No.	Scrapped
Leitrim	1882	2137	1952
Fermanagh	1882	2138	1952
Lurganboy	1895	3677	1953
Lissadell	1899	4073	1954
Hazlewood	1899	4074	1959
Sir Henry Class	Built	Works No.	Scrapped
Sir Henry	1904	4592	1959
Enniskillen	1905	4720	1958
Lough Gill	1917*	5943	1959
Lough Class	Built	Works No.	Scrapped
Lough Melvin	1949	7138	1965
Lough Erne	1949	7242	Preserved
* Delivery of Lough Gill, via Belfast, was delayed by World War I.			

When receiving an order Beyer Peacock would consult its list of drawings to see if they already had a design which would do or could be modified to suit, and so the first batch of 0-6-4Ts was very similar

to a class supplied to South Australia Railways some years earlier. Beyer Peacock also supplied new boilers for the Leitrim class in 1893-96. Hazlewood and all the Sir Henry class lasted until the SLNCR closed in 1957.



SLNCR Hazlewood of 1899 takes water at Manorhamilton on 27th May 1953 while working the 2pm goods from Enniskillen to Sligo. (N.W. Sprinks / C.P. Friel collection NS2015)

Lough Melvin and Lough Erne were the last steam locomotives built for any Irish railway, apart from Bulleid's Turf Burner. Lough Melvin's out of sequence maker's number was spare from a cancelled Garratt order. They were surely the last 0-6-4Ts to be built anywhere and must have been one of the few steam locomotives bought on a hire purchase basis. The SLNCR was still paying £500 per annum when the line closed in 1957. The war had seen an upturn in the company's fortunes and so, optimistically, Lough Erne was ordered in 1946 and Lough Melvin in 1947. Both engines were ready by April 1949 but in the intervening two years the SLNCR's profits had become serious losses and they could not pay for the engines. They were offered to the GNR, the UTA and the South Australian railways but there were no takers. Beyers saw no point in a law suit since the SLNCR could not pay compensation, and so a deal was eventually struck in 1951 whereby the Sligo Leitrim paid a deposit of £3,000 towards the £22,000 purchase price for the pair, with the balance to be paid at £500 per annum - suggesting that the engines would have been very old by the time they were paid off! The engines carried plates on their bunkers stating that they were the property of Beyer Peacock, one of which is now on display at the Headhunters museum in Enniskillen, along with a range of SLNCR nameplates.

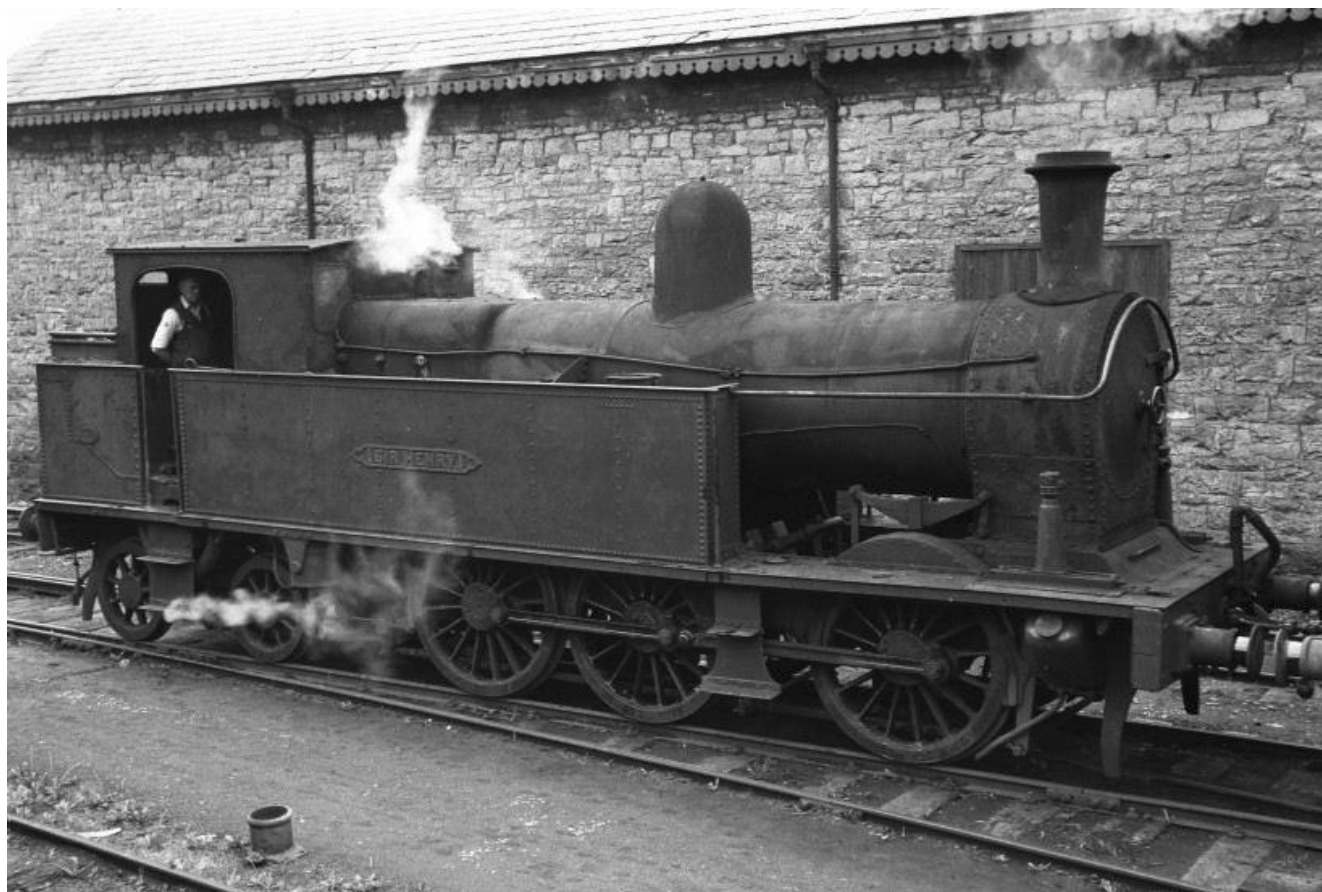
When the SLNCR closed in 1957 Beyer Peacock repossessed the locomotives, only to sell them to the UTA in 1959 at a considerable loss. They were the last rigid tank locomotives to be built at the Gorton works and not often can two such insignificant locomotives have attracted so much notice and notoriety.

In their UTA days Lough Melvin became No.26 and Lough Erne No.27. They did no regular passenger

work although both worked enthusiasts' specials. On one such outing with No.26 some enthusiasts approached Loco Inspector Billy Hanley to see what speed she was capable of. He was not keen and replied, "Sure she's only an old shunting engine." Nonetheless 48mph was got out of the engine - faster than she ever ran on the SLNCR!

Dimensions			
	Leitrim	Sir Henry	Lough
Cylinders	16½" x 20"	17" x 24"	18" x 24"
Driving Wheels	4'9"	4'8"	4'8"
Grate Area	15 sq. ft.	18 sq. ft.	18 sq. ft.
Heating Surface	970 sq. ft.	1,148 sq. ft.	962 sq. ft.
Boiler Pressure	160 psi	160 psi	160 psi
Coal	1¾ tons	1¾ tons	2 tons
Water	1,200 gallons	1,300 gallons	1,300 gallons
Weight	47½ tons	53½ tons	54½ tons

No.27 worked specials in 1968 for the recently-formed RPSI and was eventually bought by its then Chairman, finally becoming a RPSI engine when he moved to live elsewhere. It has now been owned by the RPSI for longer than its previous owners combined.



SLNCR Sir Henry of 1904 on 27th May 1953. (N.W. Sprinks / C.P. Friel collection NS2018)

In 1969, near the end of its former career, No.27 had a very heavy train from the docks and slipped to a stand astride a street in that area. Numerous attempts to restart failed, traffic built up and eventually an exasperated motorist approached No.27's crew and demanded when the train was going to move. At

that time blocking of streets was a common occurrence in Northern Ireland and No.27's quick-witted driver replied, "This is no train, it's a barricade!"

When finally withdrawn in 1970, No.27 was the last steam engine, other than the class WT 2-6-4Ts, to work for an Irish railway company. In RPSI ownership she showed some perplexing habits, not the least being a reluctance to raise steam when lit up - it was said that York Road had been known to light another fire in the smokebox to encourage the process. On what may have been her final annual boiler inspection the long-suffering boiler inspector endured a biting February wind while the crew made repeated attempts to goad the boiler into blowing off. Unfortunately, by the time the needle was approaching the red line the water would be disappearing out of the gauge glass and the injector had to be put on. This tiresome cycle was slowly repeated several times before success was achieved and the inspector could at last gratefully depart to somewhere warmer.

Being rather on the large side for shunting at Whitehead and too small for profitable main line work, Ireland's sole surviving 0-6-4T has lain out of use for many years now and is probably among the longest of the RPSI's long-term projects, but at least it is comfortably housed indoors.



UTA No.26 "Lough Melvin" at Glenavy on 11th June 1960 with an IRRS special from York Road to Bangor. Being based on the Sir Henry class, "Lough Erne" and "Lough Melvin" looked rather archaic next to the older NCC-built locomotives they shared sheds with. (W.T. Scott)

OBITUARY (Brian Stinson 1926-2012)

John Friel

RPSI member Brian Stinson passed away peacefully at home in Bray in December 2012. Brian was diagnosed with Motor Neurone Disease about two years previously and his condition had worsened considerably in the weeks leading up to his death.

Since 2005, Brian produced 22 DVD titles for sale by the Society. His aim was to raise money for the

RPSI from their sale and he sometimes failed to claim any expenses. Over the years, hundreds of DVDs were sold bringing in thousands of pounds/euro. Brian was delighted to be able to use his hobby to benefit the Society.

Most of the DVDs feature our trains seen from the lineside and a few feature the contemporary scene, such as “The Last Days of the South Wexford Line”. Anyone who has taken part in chasing our trains knows that it can involve very long drives followed by equally long waits. However, Brian enjoyed every minute of it.



Vicky and Brian Stinson at Kilrane on 24th March 2012. (C.P. Friel)

He was never content to sit on a train and see possible photographic vantage points go by. He mastered the arts of digital editing, sound tracking and captioning. Commentary and background music were ruled out. In the ‘Top Link’ DVD, there is a series of still shots to cover a presentation to Irish Rail driver Tony Renehan. The applause in the soundtrack came from a video of “The Two Ronnies”!

Brian’s one slight regret was that during his most active period, the motive power was mainly two black engines, No.4 and No.186. He was delighted to hear about No.461’s green livery and of the eventual return of blue locomotives. In the end, he only managed a few shots of No.461.

It was my pleasure to act as Brian’s chauffeur for coverage of Belfast-based trains. A more modest, cheerful person you could not meet. He never complained about anything and if we missed a ‘master shot’ by seconds, he merely smiled.

His legacy is that he has left a priceless DVD record of Society trains over the past six years or so. Those who were fortunate enough to know Brian have lost a valued friend. He is survived by his wife Vicky to whom we offer our deepest sympathy.



No. 461 pauses at Gorey on the way from Wexford to Howth on 25th March 2012 with the “Spare Link” railtour. (C.P. Friel)



No.461 near Maynooth on 29th July 2012 (F. Kennedy)