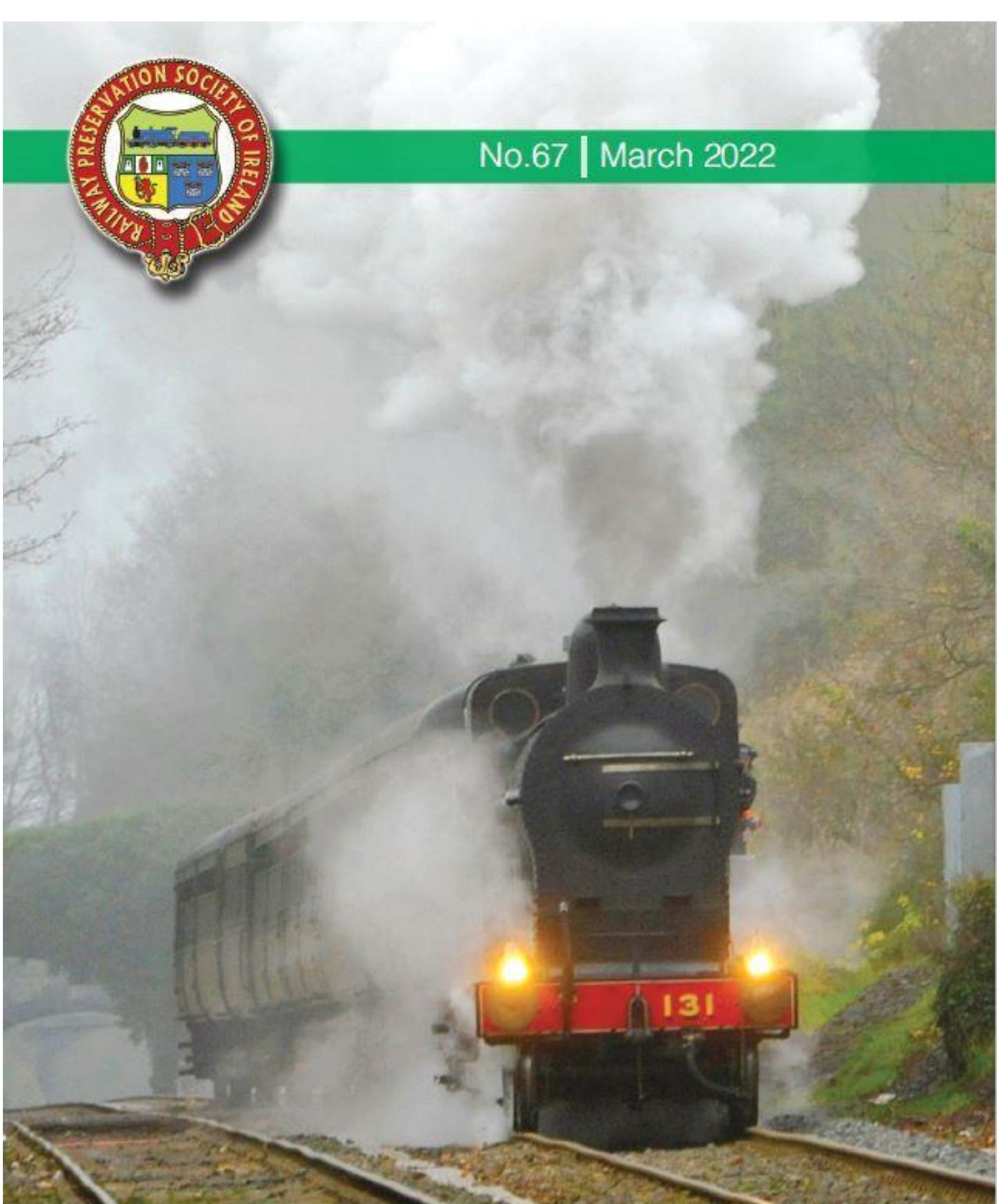




No.67 | March 2022



FIVE FOOT THREE

The Magazine of the Railway Preservation Society of Ireland



COVER: Mainline steam, 2021. Whiteabbey, 19th December. (Photo: CP Friel).

INSIDE FRONT: Guinness engine & grain van, with van 81, 19th September. (Photo: J Friel).

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FIVE FOOT THREE
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No.131 approaches Greenisland with the 10.37 'Wizard's Express' from Belfast (Lanyon Place) on 30th October.
(Photo: CP Friel)

The first nine months of 2021 were not unlike the last nine months of 2020, starting off with the island in near total lockdown. Volunteers duly returned to Inchicore and Connolly when conditions permitted and performed much useful work, although events never did conspire to permit a train to run from Dublin in 2021.

At 'Whitehead' (insofar as that term can be applied to people dispersed in spare rooms between Louth and the West Midlands), as the 2021 lockdown progressed into March, fear began to grow that complacency had set in in the upper echelons and that we were well on course to 'never get out the gate again'. Since mid-2020, mainline steam in GB was observed as barely missing a beat due to Covid, and why were we not making every effort to be out there too? A (virtual) meeting to chew the fat brought those in the most critical areas together to put all their cards on the table and agree an action plan.

You will read of much of what happened following that, but it was a new RPSI generation which drove the re-set process in a tremendous team effort which led to, on 2nd October, No.131 breaking the logjam with a crew-re-assessment train which ensured mainline steam did run in 2021. A significant squad from the operating roster (often bringing 3BG and the handcrane to the party) assisted Phillip Newell, his regular volunteers and HEI in a magnificent effort which, by the end of July, had produced seven coaches. A feather in the Carriage Officer's cap for co-ordinating that.

Operations were run largely on Covid-secure principles lifted from the Jacobite train in Scotland. Perhaps not totally

unexpectedly after such a length of time away, all did not immediately go smoothly when the first 'normal' operations ran at Halloween, resulting in Ben McDonald, Lisa Adair and Translink entering what politicians call the 'negotiation tunnel' for much of November. This finally resulted in permission to run the (highly successful) Santa trains which have perhaps finally got us onto more solid ground for the 2022 season. Now we all know which way is Up.

Thanks as ever to Translink and Iarnród Éireann / Irish Rail for their help during the year, the management of the former in particular gave us the fullest attention in 2021. How's about some meetings with the latter to contemplate turntables which could service the Munster / Connaught areas to move us all away from the traditional 'We Need Number Four' phone calls? We are certainly running to these provinces much more regularly with important customers, yet the ratio of mainline tender to tank is 5:1, with only the former number set to increase. There must be somewhere 60' circles could be dug in Galway and Cork.

Finding a way for the RPSI to properly pass on the baton from the founding generation to the younger generation is undoubtedly a challenge and the constant requirement in recent years for the Editor to put space he'd rather use for historical items to Obituaries of much-loved members will remind. The Editor regularly hears that the lack of young people coming in is the problem, but his counter would be that people loosely of age 18-30, whilst hopefully an investment for the future, will often at some not faraway point require to step back for 15 to 20 years in order to get a career, find a partner and home, start a family. Not to



The fielding of seven coaches at Halloween and Christmas, from a very poor position carriage-wise in March, was one of the major team-effort triumphs of the year. 3BG busily assembles that rake on 21st October. The year is 2021 unless otherwise stated.

(Photo: J Friel)

mention those who move away from Ireland altogether exactly to achieve these.

Since the early 2000's recruitment of young adults at Whitehead has not been terrible, but many are now in, or will soon enter, a stage of changing nappies. The Editor occasionally ponders what happened in the '80's and '90s that an intermediate generation of 45-60-year-old ex-nappy changing 'sleeper members', ready to take on key roles with new ideas yet with deep Society knowledge, is simply non-existent today? The last ten years seem to show, from parallel experiences in both Whitehead and Dublin, that it is generally much too big a stretch to pass the running of a multi-functional, multi-jurisdictional organisation from a Board of retirees to young adults who just do not have the time or experience: this is where Lisa Adair and her team come in. Notwithstanding that Covid forced them mainly to act on the defensive thus far, they have opened

their minds, generated new ideas, formed new external relationships and are now skinning cats in different ways. There is much to look forward to when the time comes to be more adventurous. Transition. Sustainability.

Sustainability should not require the world's largest engine pulling the world's longest train to generate revenue at low fares. Marginally shorter trains at higher fares which a substantially wider range of our engines can haul is surely a much better goal, with a suitable quantity from each operation being funnelled directly into a reservoir for the engine hauling the train or its successor in the works to ensure continuity of overhauls. They can't run more than seven coaches on the Jacobite as even the Black Fives are not big enough to take any more on that line, yet it is a highly lucrative operation and funds its four engines. The RPSI needs to step up and change after the pandemic, refresh its operations and begin to get the most out of its revenue and workshop.

My local Eurospar supermarket is undergoing major renovation and expansion to provide a more extensive and efficient service to its many customers. This must have taken a lot of preliminary preparation and planning for it continues to trade as the work goes on. At the moment, certain areas are boarded off and a lot of the display counters have been moved around. Everything is still there but not quite in the same place. I'll be glad when the work is complete and I have access to a bigger and hopefully better shop.

I mention this because, as I shopped, my mind was on writing this report and the



Engineer and TV Presenter Rob Bell with Chairman John McKegney at the site of the Armagh Disaster during filming for a very commendable edition of 'Walking Britain's Lost Railways' on 26th November 2020. Intending to film Belfast to Bundoran via Monaghan, the backstage story goes that Covid restrictions prevented Bell & the film crew from entering the Republic and so they diverted via the Clogher Valley. They certainly used some dubious scenes of Lough Erne in lieu of the sea at Bundoran!

(Photo: c/o J McKegney)

work your Board has been undertaking in restructuring the Governance of the Society. [Thinking of the RPSI in Eurospar is not uncommon, because Ryan Downey does the automatic announcing in Eurospars. It seems he helps get FFT reports done as well as encourage the purchase of chicken fillets – Ed]. In recent years we have had the Courtney Report, the Marsh Management Risk Assessment report and, just before lockdown in 2020, the well-attended Blue Moss Assessment which took place in Carrickfergus. In all these reports there was much that highlighted the many positives for which the Society is noted, but they also directed our thoughts to the less visible but ultimately vital aspects of good governance and compliance. These are necessary now that we have become not just a railway society, but we are the proprietors of a first-class visitor attraction at Whitehead and an employer of professional full-time staff. They are very much needed to manage the organisation in conjunction with our dedicated volunteers.

This takes time and some getting used to but we are getting there. One of the major changes is the establishment of Management Committees that report to the Board. For convenience they are styled the Belfast and Dublin Management Committees though their remit is much wider than those two cities.

The Dublin Management Committee, DMC, was previously the Dublin Area Operations Committee and it ably chaired by Director and Trustee Board member, Joe McKeown. The DMC has developed a close working relationship with Iarnród Éireann which is of great benefit to the Society. Thanks to IE we have the use of the commodious engine shed at Connolly

Station and its adjoining turntable which is kept in good order and we are privileged to have access to facilities in IÉ's extensive Inchicore Works where our current star diesel locomotive B134 is almost fully restored to full working order and looking pristine. We in turn were delighted to allow IÉ the use of our BR Mk1 Heating and Brake coach for use in their annual Sperry train. We really appreciate such close cooperation of matters which are mutually beneficial. Unfortunately, due to Covid restrictions in Ireland, it wasn't possible to run any public trains from Dublin in 2021. The loss of income from our regular and popular Sea Breeze, Halloween and Santa trains is substantial but the risk in running them was too great. Like their colleagues in Northern Ireland, DMC hope to be back on track delighting and transporting the public in our trains in 2022.

The Belfast Management Committee is chaired by our General Manager, Lisa Adair, and, as with the DMC, it reports directly to the Board. Its function is both to advise the General Manager and to assist her in implementing her plans as approved by the Board. It also acts as the coordinating committee for the activities of the Society's operation centred on Whitehead Railway Museum such as train operations, the Platform 3 café, locomotive and rolling stock availability, our public meetings, events and marketing. In effect it looks after the day to day running of the Society in the north on behalf of the Board. Since its inception, over three years ago, it is becoming more and more effective thanks to the lead given by our GM and its tireless and highly efficient secretary Robin Morton. It has taken time to implement this change, but it really helps our compliance with the best practices of good governance. As a PLC and a Charity, we are responsible both to Companies House and the Charity

Commissioners so Board members have roles both as Company Directors and as Charity Trustees.

This brings me to the Board which in the year 2021 held all its meetings on Zoom. This is a mixed blessing. It makes it easier for members who come from many parts of the country to attend but we miss the social interaction which is vital for getting to know one another. It is intended in the future to have a blend of 'live' and Zoom meetings to try to have the best of both worlds. Your Board always works with the very best interests of the Society uppermost in its mind as it discharges its primary responsibilities for Health and Safety Matters, Finance, Human Resources, Curatorial matters as well the efficient running of the Society by using its resources to the full. Our dreams are great but our reality is rather more limited and frequently involves unglamorous attention to detail. Every Board meeting begins with a H&S report and indeed our Minutes are now laid out in a Safety Management System, SMS, format to ensure full compliance. The Board is very well served by the quiet but totally reliable work of its Secretary, Paul McCann. As Chairman I depend greatly on his knowledge and wisdom on all matters to do with the RPSI.

After H&S the Board has an overriding duty of care to our staff, both paid and volunteers. It hasn't been an easy year for any of us with Corona Virus Alpha, Delta and now Omicron variants rampant in Society. Thankfully as the year began the vaccination programme was rolled out and I, for one, am most grateful for the three doses I have received. Many of our volunteers fall into the vulnerable category so, at all times, we had to have their safety to the fore as well as following the ever-changing government guidelines. The result was that for much of the earlier part of the year our Museum and



The Sperry train, consisting of 086, the yellow Sperry rail measuring wagon and RPSI van 3173 has just arrived at Newry on 14th September, thus marking the true first movement of an RPSI vehicle on NIR since December 2019 and the first of a Dublin-based carriage since possibly the last century. Interestingly, and possibly due to acceptance reasons, the rail-washing wagon was shunted out at Dundalk and did not partake in the short trip to Newry.

(Photo: M Crockett)

workshops had to be closed and no train operations could take place. This could have meant total ruin for the Society were it not for the tireless efforts of Lisa, our GM, to seek out and apply for government, HLF and local authority grants to keep us afloat. I have no hesitation in saying that if it were not for Lisa's acumen and dedication the Society might not have survived this pandemic.

All this is made possible through finance. No money = no RPSI = no heritage trains! The Board has been well served by its Finance Committee over the years. We were sorry that Graham Coulter who joined the Board as Treasurer in 2020 had to step down due to pressure of other work but we are grateful to him for his work for us. Two long serving and highly knowledgeable Dublin members have stepped down from the FC. We are most grateful to Barry Carse and David Humphries for their years of dedicated service in this area. After the 2020 AGM Sue Harpur and Dr Mark Bailey were co-opted to the Board and they have since

been elected at the 2021 AGM held in December. Sue brings her extensive administrative experience to the Board as an active volunteer at Whitehead. Mark, who is also an active volunteer, was also made a member of the Finance Committee and has brought his considerable expertise as a lecturer in economic expertise to bear on its deliberations. From the south we welcomed two new members, Keiran McShera and John Linehan. Both have extensive experience in financial matters. More recently our long time Whitehead volunteer, John White, became an advisor to the FC as the Society adapts to the SAGE accounting system. These new members along with the long serving (suffering?) Johnny Glendinning and John Friel combine to make an excellent and well-informed team. Unfortunately, we still lack an actual Treasurer. Anyone think it's a job they would like to tackle?

At the 2021 AGM held in December our very long serving Board member and Locomotive Officer Peter Scott MBE

stepped down from the Board to allow him to focus more on his projects in the workshop including the new build NCC Mogul No.105 which is progressing as time, and priority Society work, allows. Peter has been a Society stalwart since the beginning and we were delighted when he received a "Heritage Angel" Award as "Best Craftsperson" in the Heritage Rescue category in the annual awards run by the Ulster Architectural Society for his leading role in restoring ex GNR Loco No.131 to full working order.

My thanks to Peter and all the Board members for the way we all work together and without rancour even when different opinions are held. It is as it should be.

While Lisa is our utterly enthusiastic GM she is ably supported by Rebecca Laverty and James Friel. They make a great team. Rebecca has served the society for some time with total commitment and a confident can-do attitude allied to a warm and welcoming personality as our Education Officer, but much more besides including being our Museum Guides organiser. We were delighted when she came back after months of being furloughed in March. Rebecca is always willing to muck in - and even be interviewed by Michael Portillo! This something she has in common with James Friel who last year became our full time Technical Operations Engineer. James was virtually born into the RPSI being the son of our Archivist, Photographer and Meetings organiser Charles Friel BEM but he gained his place as a qualified engineer through a proper appointment procedure. James has now been appointed our Locomotive Officer responsible to the Board. Already James's presence has made a difference in the workshops and the setting of priorities for work. In this he is very ably assisted by Jim Adams the Heritage Engineering Ireland (HEI)

Foreman. Jim is another person who is always ready to help for the good of the Society. HEI is a separate company that uses our premises. The Board is currently considering whether it still needs to be a separate entity since there is so much overlap of work, staff and costs. In the meantime, we wish James well as he enters his first full year in his new role.

Another man making his mark in the Museum, this time by feeding the multitudes, is Rob Davies who since October 2020 has been running our Museum Café now branded as "Platform 3". It is really developing as a popular rendezvous in Whitehead under his imaginative management. Our Marketing Officer, Zöe Latimer, left us in July to further her career in other areas. Little did we realise that the excellent Awards evening she arranged in January 2020 would be her last major appearance due to the pandemic lockdowns and being furloughed. I wish Zöe well for the future.

As you will read elsewhere in FFT we were unable to run many of our usual trains in 2021 but necessity is the mother of invention and so a very successful programme of train rides began in May. These were run under strict Covid regulations and proved very popular especially with families. 2nd October was a red-letter day for it was then that No.131 and a test train ventured out for runs to Greenisland and Maghermorne when the Larne line was otherwise closed for engineering work by Translink. This paved the way for the very successful Wizard Expresses at Halloween and a revised Santa Train offering coming up to Christmas. Santa was, literally, in a bubble to ensure safety; very well he looked too! These trains were nearly all booked out and the public response has been very positive.

None of these trains would be possible if

it were not for the close working relationship we have with Translink both at senior and middle management level as well as with the operating staff. Translink staff take a very positive attitude to the RPSI. They are working with us on new and exciting initiatives for the future once the challenges of the pandemic are behind us. We are fortunate that our President, Dr Joan Smyth CBE, has good relationships with Translink from her days as Chair of the NITHC. I am personally grateful to Joan for all her help and encouragement.

Another heartening but invisible aspect of the Society's life is a steady stream of donations that come from members and the public at home and abroad. These are often accompanied by notes of appreciation for the work of the RPSI. John Friel loves lodging such donations as much as he loves selling books and other items from the RPSI shop which is always worth visiting on our website.

Every time I am asked to talk about the RPSI I am very conscious of those who over almost sixty years have laid the foundations of what we know today. Sadly, hardly a month goes by when do not have to have a time of silence for members who have died. At a very personal level I felt a particular sense of loss when Derek Young died just before Christmas. It was an honour to be asked by his daughter, Liz, to preach at his funeral in Knock Methodist Church which was led by our mutual old friend Dr Harold Good. Derek was man of quiet strength and sound wisdom who worked diligently and imaginatively to build up and guide the RPSI over the years. I thank God for the help he has given me as Chairman.

I want to close by noting a few of this year's highlights. We were delighted that our nomination for last year's Heritage Railway Association Awards, the restored

Guinness Grain Van, was short listed and won a commendation. On 25th September the Van was formally launched at a socially distanced ceremony at Whitehead. The honours were performed by our President, Dr Joan Smyth, who invited the Mayor of Mid and East Antrim Council to unveil the obligatory plaque. This was most appropriate for we are very pleased with the ongoing positive support the MEA Council gives our Museum to which this van is a wonderful addition. Full marks to our curator, Mark Kennedy, all involved in the work and the Heritage Lottery Fund which made it possible. Incidentally this was the only day on which most of the Board members were able to meet face to face in 2021. We did so outdoors and informally, not for a meeting but it was still good to be able to see one another in the flesh

Another red-letter day was at the end of May when the first of our regular Saturday train rides began. These proved to be very popular with the public and greatly added to atmosphere for visitors to the Museum. Our thanks to all the volunteers who got the locos and coaches ready under strict Covid conditions.

There was another welcome and rather remarkable sight when the County Donegal locomotive, Drumboe, which has been extensively restored was lifted on to a low loader to begin its journey across the country to the Donegal Railway Heritage Centre. It made a magnificent sight going over the Glenshane Pass and through Barnesmore Gap, but the most thrilling part of the journey were the crowds who turned out in every village and town from Strabane to Donegal Town. It was like the return of a conquering hero! She arrived in the diamond in Donegal with a Garda escort, her whistle blowing and the acclaim of the multitude gathering there. I hope this relationship forged between the Donegal Heritage

Centre and our Whitehead Workshops will continue until we see her further restored to full working order. I can recommend visiting the centre which is in the old CDR station in Donegal town.

Despite all his Great Rail journeys, Michael Portillo had not previously visited Whitehead. That serious omission was rectified on 13th October when he spent several hours filming for a new series he's making on coastal railways and towns. He was most professional but also easy to talk to. I look forward to the programme in due course and to seeing Rebecca, James and Peter's interviews. They really were a credit to the Society.

Though we could not hold our usual Belfast meetings I am delighted that we now have 'Orangefield by Zoom'. Congratulations to Charles Friel for his new series of monthly meetings with their rich variety of topics and to James for handling the technicalities. The more recent meetings are in the webinar format which is much cleaner though it doesn't allow us to see one another. The beauty

of being online is that members from all over the world can join us.

Finally – yes there is a finally – I want to stress that even in this long-winded report I couldn't mention everyone who gives of their utmost to make the Society what it is and to give pleasure to those who travel on our trains or visit our Museum but I would like them to know that I, for one, greatly appreciate their efforts. You will see much of what they do recorded elsewhere in this magazine for which we are indebted to Mark Walsh who gives us an excellent publication every year.

Once again, we enter a new year under the cloud of Covid but at least the light seems to be beginning to shine through that cloud and soon we hope we will be able to be back to something approaching normality. May it be so. In meantime let us keep steaming - or dieseling - on along the right track, obeying the signals and stopping at the right stations as we enter another year.

My very best wishes to all our members and readers for 2022.



No.131 at a busy enough (considering deliberate number-limiting) Whitehead on 17th July.

(Photo: CP Friel)

Well, 2021 was déjà vu all over again!

For the Society, it was a year that:

- **We operated a lot of Train Ride days and a few mainline trips (eventually).**

As COVID restrictions were eased in late spring we were able to operate train rides from late May and open the Museum from early June. This continued to be the case right through the summer and on a few dates in the autumn.

With a view to running Halloween and Christmas trains to Whitehead, negotiations commenced with Translink, and various hurdles were cleared to allow trial trains and crew refreshers to be run in early October, thus clearing the way for mainline trains to recommence, albeit under strict conditions.

Unfortunately, not having a suitable 'destination' in the Dublin area meant that No.85 and the Cravens remained inactive throughout. This is a serious loss of income!

However, a very successful, if somewhat different, programme of Santa trains was able to operate to Whitehead, and for that we were very grateful.

Also, in November and December, the Society featured largely in a UTV two-part documentary about the Belfast - Dublin train service through the years

And that's where we find ourselves at year end - hopeful that 2022 will be better, but not sure if it will.

- **Remote meetings continued.**

Both the internal and external Society meetings continued to be held online.

There is no doubt that this facility is a convenience for many, allowing business

to be conducted from the comfort of home, especially for those who might otherwise have to travel some distance. But for serious decision-making there is no substitute for face-to-face communication.

Likewise, Zoom has allowed members outside the greater Belfast area to experience our winter season of public meetings, and this can only be a good thing. However, the social aspects of catching up with old friends and perusing the sales stall at the back of the hall is very much missed. Perhaps in the fullness of time attended meetings can also be captured for online viewing, either live or recorded.

The meetings themselves were, as always, excellent and in no way suffered quality-wise for being online. Well done to Charles Friel and his team.

- **Another Treasurer departed.**

During the year the Board said goodbye to Graham Coulter, who stepped down as Treasurer after only being with us a short while. While it is important that this role is filled, we are fortunate that the Finance Committee has been strengthened and it is doing a great job in trying circumstances, with seriously reduced income. The financial systems are currently undergoing a major overhaul and the benefits of this are starting to filter through.

In a year of two AGMs, Mark Bailey and Sue Harpur were welcomed to the Board. And Peter Scott (after hinting for years) stood down from the Board at the December AGM. Peter has been there right from the start when the Society was set up as a company in 1975 and has served on the Committee / Council / Board ever

since. He will continue to be a presence at Whitehead and we wish him well in his endeavours.

A major change in the Society's Articles of Association was made at the AGM in December whereby time limits were introduced for serving Board members. Also, changes were made to the rules relating to the Company Secretary.

Thus, at present, the governing Board is:

Chairman: John McKegney

Vice-Chairman: Vacant

Secretary: Paul McCann

Treasurer: Vacant

Directors:

Mark Bailey
Mervyn Darragh
Sue Harpur
Mark Kennedy
Fergus McDonnell
Joe McKeown
Phillip Newell
Peter Rigney

External: Dermot O'Hara

• Health & Safety changes were made.

Obviously, COVID restrictions meant a lot of changes needed to be made to allow the public back to Whitehead and, eventually, onto mainline trains. However, day-to-day Whitehead and NI mainline



The Board as it was on 25th September, (Back L-R) Peter Scott, Peter Rigney, Mark Bailey, Sue Harpur, Mervyn Darragh. (Front L-R) Joe McKeown, John McKegney, Paul McCann. (Photo: R Morton)

H&S measures were treated separately from those in Dublin and it was decided to consolidate into one Safety Management System as much of possible of the diverse procedures. For the majority of cases it is a matter of formatting documentation appropriately and Denis McCabe has been advising on how to achieve this; the work is ongoing.

A programme of H&S training for relevant Board members and department heads was undertaken in June.

Volunteers at Whitehead continue to undergo regular disclosure checks. The system was audited during the year by AccessNI and passed successfully.

- The good work of the General Manager's team continued.**

While successful in the previous year in winning significant funding from a number of sources to keep us afloat, Lisa this year was exercised with returning trains for the public. Negotiations took place with Translink, among others, on this front.

The admin team lost the Marketing Officer during the year but gained a Technical Operations Engineer - the familiar to many James Friel.

In an ever-changing climate it has been a difficult year for the team, so well done to them for getting us through it.

- Work continued on locomotives and rolling stock.**

Following a Heritage Council grant, a replacement steam-heating boiler for BR Van 3173 was fitted at Inchicore in October. This was following a stint on loan to Irish railway in August and September for work on their Sperry track inspection train.

During the year work recommenced on our diesel locomotive B134 at Inchicore.

Progress was well documented and the reports are available on our website. By the way, the last of the fundraising models of B134 were sold early in the year.

At Whitehead, following the return to Donegal of CDR locomotive No.5 "Drumboe" in October, the decks are being cleared for major work on No.171 "Sieve Gullion" to start again and it is hoped that the return to traffic will be expedited.

No.3BG "Guinness" was the mainstay of operations during the year, operating 18 train ride days and numerous shunting turns. No.131 performed on 4 train rides and on the mainline trains.

Trundling along in the background as time permits, the Mogul No.105 project continues to make progress. The frames and cylinders have had a trial assembly and there are reports and photos on the website.

A major success during the year was the launch of HLF-funded Guinness grain van 504 in September.

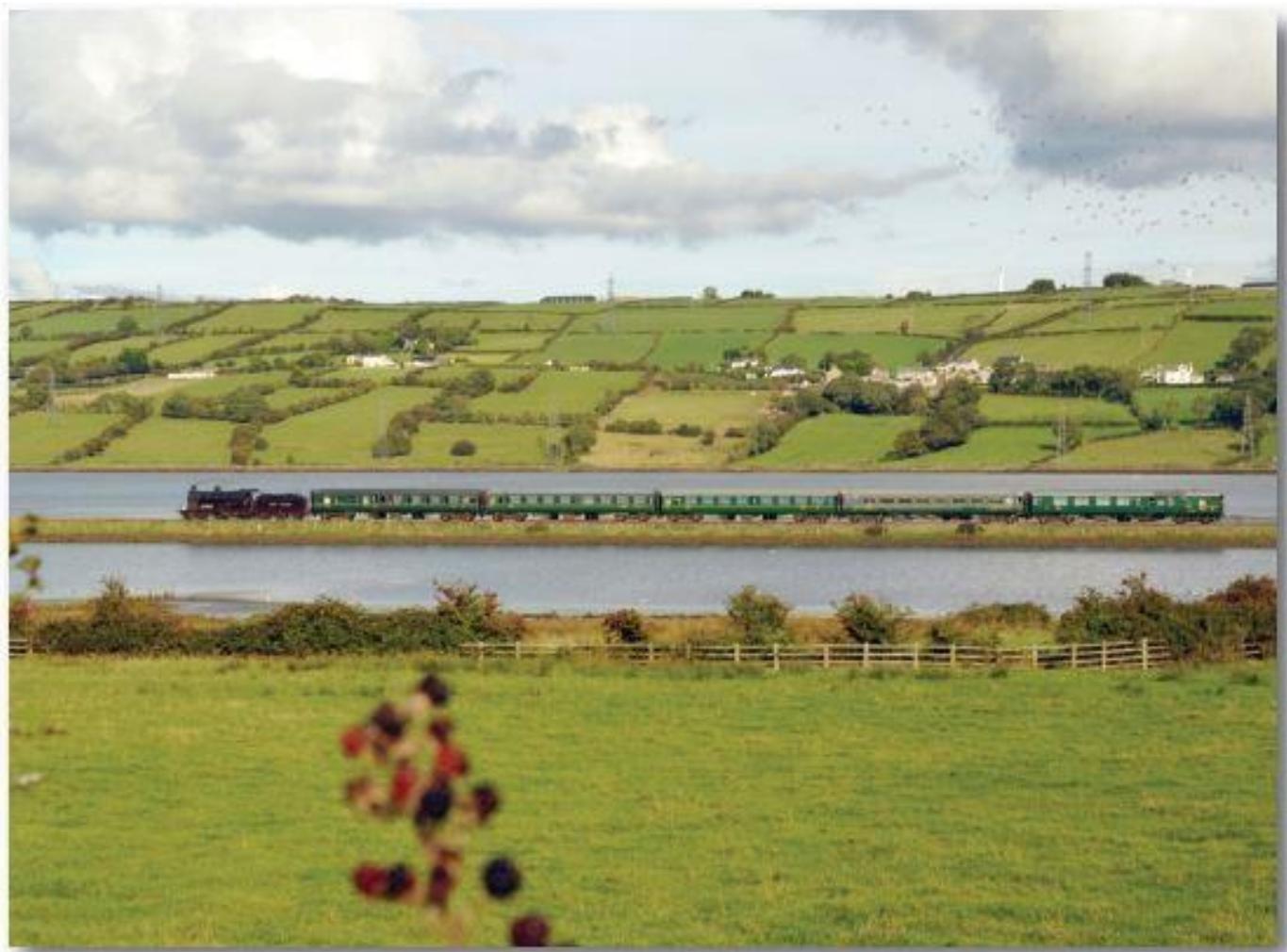
- Membership actually increased.**

The number of members slightly increased during the year, admittedly from a low starting point following the downturn of the previous year. A concerted effort was made to contact former members and the general public, and this showed in the increased numbers.

Hopefully, when we return to a full programme of mainline trains new and former members will be enticed to join the ranks.

- Online facilities continued unabated.**

The website resources continued to expand with reports, photos and historic documentation. If you haven't visited the Members Area then please have a look.



No.131 at Old Mill Bay near Magheramorne on the crew re-assessment, logjam breaking day of 2nd October.
(Photo: CP Friel)

A recording of a short story by Robin Morton about Coach 68 and its interesting life story was added to 68's own webpage. Similarly, a railway ghost story by Ian Sinclair was added at Halloween.

Online sales were impressive during the year, helped by a number of new books - heavily advertised to members and on our social media channels.

This year again, the email Bulletins helped to keep locked down members fully informed of what was happening - as did the Facebook pages to a lesser extent as they are more targeted at the public.

- **We needed to thank everybody.**

As always, thanks must go to all who have served during another busy year on the

Board, a large part of it spent on revising our governance procedures.

The Posts of Special Responsibility to the Secretary for the year were: Charles Friel (Belfast Meetings); Ciaran McAteer (Legal Advisor); Barry Carse (Dublin area membership queries).

Regular contact was maintained with the management of the railway companies, NI Railways and Iarnród Éireann. They continue to be supportive, so thanks to them.

Last, but not least, we are indebted to our volunteers who, despite the restrictions, continued to help where possible. As always, new volunteers are welcome. Will we see you in 2022?

I have just finished reading my 'Five Foot Three' submission for 2020 and what a difference a year makes. At the end of 2020, the first Covid vaccination had been administered to Margaret Keenan. Perhaps this would be the beginning of the end with all of us thoroughly tired of constant restrictions. Perhaps 2021 would be the year that saw 'normality' returning? Looking back, 2021 gave some hope rather than an absolute panacea. We would somehow begin to live with the virus and the restrictions that accompany it. Delta became dominant in the first half of the year and was still a potential grave danger to anyone who contracted it. This, at the beginning of 2021, saw lockdown for the first few months although we were in a

position to attend site from February with a full complement of staff returning to site in April. The first quarter of 2021 for me was very similar to the initial lockdown. There were grants aplenty to apply for from, amongst others, the National Lottery Heritage Fund, Failte Ireland, Mid and East Antrim Borough Council, Department for Communities, and Tourism NI. I now, flippantly, say that I should quit my current role and go freelance filling out these applications! I certainly have enough experience by now. The pain of form filling bore fruit and we are immensely grateful to all our funders who assisted to the tune of over £500k. This allowed us to survive 2021 with little prospect of operating mainline trains,



Michael Portillo (2nd right) at Whitehead on 13th October with James Friel, Rebecca Laverty, John McKegney, Lisa Adair and Joan Smyth.
(Photo: c/o J McKegney)

certainly for the first half of the year. During this period I also was blessed with our first grandchild, Annabelle – not all bad news!

Come April, restrictions were beginning to ease and we could begin to plan a series of Steam Saturdays on site in Whitehead site. To comply with regulations and our 'We're Good to Go' status, we still needed to ensure that our product was bookable online. Staff, volunteers and customers were made aware of documentary requirements and new terms and conditions. Risk assessments were constantly being reviewed and I owe a huge debt of gratitude to everyone who weighed in with their expertise in this regard. Special mention should be made of two people: Ivan McAteer and Jonathan Clinton. Ivan worked rigorously to make sure that we were doing all we could to get the doors open once again, including undertaking an enormous amount of work to get the site compliant with statutory regulations. At this time, to my great disappointment, Ivan announced that he was handing in his notice to take up a post with a previous employer. Personally, I miss his upbeat, if sometimes dark, humour and his ability to make his colleagues at ease in their workplace. Thanks Ivan and keep in touch. Jonathan was incredibly diligent with risk assessing our operations before we began running on site. His thorough contribution is greatly appreciated even though he insisted on regularly pointing out his 'pessimistic' outlook. Jonathan, you never were pessimistic, only realistic and gave me a great sense of comfort.

At the end of April, our Events and Marketing Manager, Zöe Latimer, went on long term sick leave before resigning at the beginning of July. I wish her well on behalf of the Society in all her future endeavours. It was a difficult period for

staffing, on the cusp of operating and under extreme pressure, but there was light on the horizon as I pitched a new role to the Board which was ratified. Whilst recruiting for the role we took a deep breath and opened our doors to the public once more for three days over the late May bank holiday. We had remarkably encouraging numbers and very pleasant weather which lifted the spirits. In all honesty, things felt a bit better. We had had the opportunity to trial our new Covid operations in 2020 for a short period and many of us were now jabbed. Volunteers came back in numbers to help and a welcome buzz returned which was to continue through the next three months.

Recruitment for our new Technical Operations Engineer was completed in the last week of June and our chosen candidate was offered his post with an agreed start date of 5th July. James Friel – perhaps you had heard of him previously, commenced employment with the Society on 5th July and has settled in rather well! On James's first day, unlike any other new start, he was greeted in the office with a 'morning James' before we realised that perhaps a more formal induction might be more appropriate. Welcome from all of us James and here's to many years with the company.

The summer season came and went with numbers up on 2019. Interestingly, we had a larger number of family groups both through the museum and enjoying Steam Saturdays. We also had quite a number of visitors from outside Northern Ireland. It was a busy summer and it was great to see income streams sparking up once again. I was also encouraged to see some of our southern volunteers come up to assist with a number of tasks. Many thanks to Nicky, Glenn and Barry for helping out with the loco crewing and to our very own



Santa, in his snowglobe, on duty on 18th December. To the left is No.171's chimney, into which letters to him could be posted. After a second, Santa would reach down into the snow and apparently produce the child's letter, as if by magic, to great delight.

(Photo: Editor)

Board member, Peter Rigney, for helping with the shop. Another special thanks to Denis McCabe who also ventured north to share his Health and Safety expertise. All very appreciated and a real indication that we are an all-Ireland operation. By the end of our summer operations I had a thought that we should do something to mark everyone's efforts and hosted a GM BBQ. Anyone who had been involved in the summer operations was invited and I carted what I thought was enough food and drink to fell an army to Platform 3. Little did I think that so many people

would turn up and it was great to see. Rob and his staff did the cooking and the craic was great, probably echoing the relief that there were no more weekends for a while. The weather was kind and we are aiming to do the same this year.

September saw focus shifting to what might be required to get test trains on the rails as a precursor to mainline running and 'getting out the gate'. Having remained site-bound for so long, this was not going to be easy and staff assessments would be required alongside brake testing. However, the approach we took was pragmatic and

as the sign in our office reminds us on a daily basis, 'We can do it'. After a false start due to staff shortages, we had West Coast Rail over to assess our Translink footplate crew at the beginning of October. All went well and we began talks with Translink about seasonal events for the rest of the year. At this point I must mention Ben McDonald without whose patience and positivity none of our anticipated activity would have happened. Ben, from my core, thank you. In October Ben also arranged a very useful trip for us and two senior Translink officials on the Northern Belle, a trip designed to relationship build and see what we could aspire to, and a trip which I firmly believe facilitated a resurgence in support for our heritage operations. Thanks to an enormous amount of work, we put Halloween tickets on sale. Sales were slow but picked up well as we reached the event dates. Then, despite everything, monumental challenges and sleepless nights, we were back doing what we are meant to do. The night before our first operation I got home to a locked gate and had a dead mobile phone so climbed over the gate onto a pillar before falling off it. Several hours of A&E later, patched up but extremely sore, I headed to Whitehead to see No.131 disappear through the gate to pick up her first passengers in Belfast. Palpable relief albeit masked by codamol! The second day of operations proved a bit more challenging. The first train got back to Whitehead for the CDL to fail and we had to run a CAF for the second train. Disappointing but looking back, we made money and were back and visible, ready for the Santa season.

In November, our President, Joan, and I met with Translink CEO Chris Conway and Director of Service Operations, Ian Campbell. Once again, their commitment to heritage rail was unwavering and the meeting was both positive and cordial.

Since the pandemic began, I have received tremendous support from Translink senior management and I know what lengths that they have gone to to support us. The Society could not operate without this relationship and I am extremely gratified at the way that it continues to develop. By way of example, we have had to change some of our working practices to ensure that we are Covid aware. During that particular journey, Translink have assisted in every way, leading us to be in a position to run Santa trains which kept passengers, volunteers and staff as safe as possible. Thank you to all involved.

Now to the tail end of the year. One person I haven't mentioned yet is Rebecca. What can I say! The serious amount of work in terms of organising, purchasing, decorating, seat allocation, customer relations became her primary job. Nothing remotely to do with her substantive post but completed without any fuss or complaint. Going over and above is in Rebecca's DNA and I trust she knows how appreciated she is. I do try to tell her once in a while! We did a stock take in November and reckoned that we wouldn't have too many presents to buy so set about stuffing reusable bags with stock on site. Many thanks to the many volunteers who helped, too many to mention but whose contribution once again demonstrates how we couldn't operate without them. We also had to find a Covid friendly way in which our passengers could see Santa hence a bizarre phone call to our Chair requesting purchase of a 3m x 3m snow globe. Not a conversation that I imagine many managers have in 'ordinary' jobs. At around this time, we also found out that restrictions in our southern jurisdiction were such that it was proving impossible to run out of Dublin. This was very disappointing but out with anyone's control. No pressure on the north then!



Adam Lohoff, James Friel and Ryan Downey with No.131 on Train Rides duty on 17th July.

(Photo: CP Friel)

Three weekends of operations ensued in December. We had live music on the platform, Santa in his snow globe, presents in barrels under the canopy, shop sales on the platform, and refreshments in the Stables. Thanks in particular to John Friel, John Richardson, Eileen Armstrong and her team, and our Santa's, Jim Adams, Bill Harvey, Bob Harper and Peter Lindsay. A special thank you to Jim who sacrificed a trip to England when he saw me go into meltdown over the lack of a Santa. Maybe seeing me bereft was the trigger but I prefer to think that loyalty to the organisation might have been what clinched it. I do have one other person to thank personally for his efforts during those mad weekends. Adam Lohoff, even when not rostered, appeared as if by magic to help doing whatever he could. Adam, thank you. We transported about 2,800 passengers and even though we had a few small issues, our new Santa

experience was a success. The train marshals adapted to their new roles with ease and we left on 19th December exhausted but exhilarated.

The Society held their AGM in December. During the year two new Board members were co-opted and they were formally appointed to the Board at the AGM. Both Sue Harper and Mark Bailey have been very supportive and enthusiastic, serving on sub committees and volunteering on site. Welcome aboard and I hope you enjoy your time with us.

Well, that's me. A busy year and hopefully a busy one to come. There are a lot of interesting prospects in place for 2022, none of which I'm at liberty to tell you much about yet. So keep an eye on the website and call in anytime – sure, I'm never busy!

Take care.

As usual here is a resume of the current status of the Society's steam locos and recent work done.

Operational Locomotives

No.3BG, A. Guinness, Son and Co. 0-4-0ST shunting loco, 1919

The "Guinness" engine worked the majority of the shunts and train rides in 2021, with only minor attention required to leaking glands, reseating valves in boiler fittings etc. With the return to traffic of B142 in 2022, the Guinness engine can expect a more leisurely existence, with the diesel engine doing the shorter shunts.

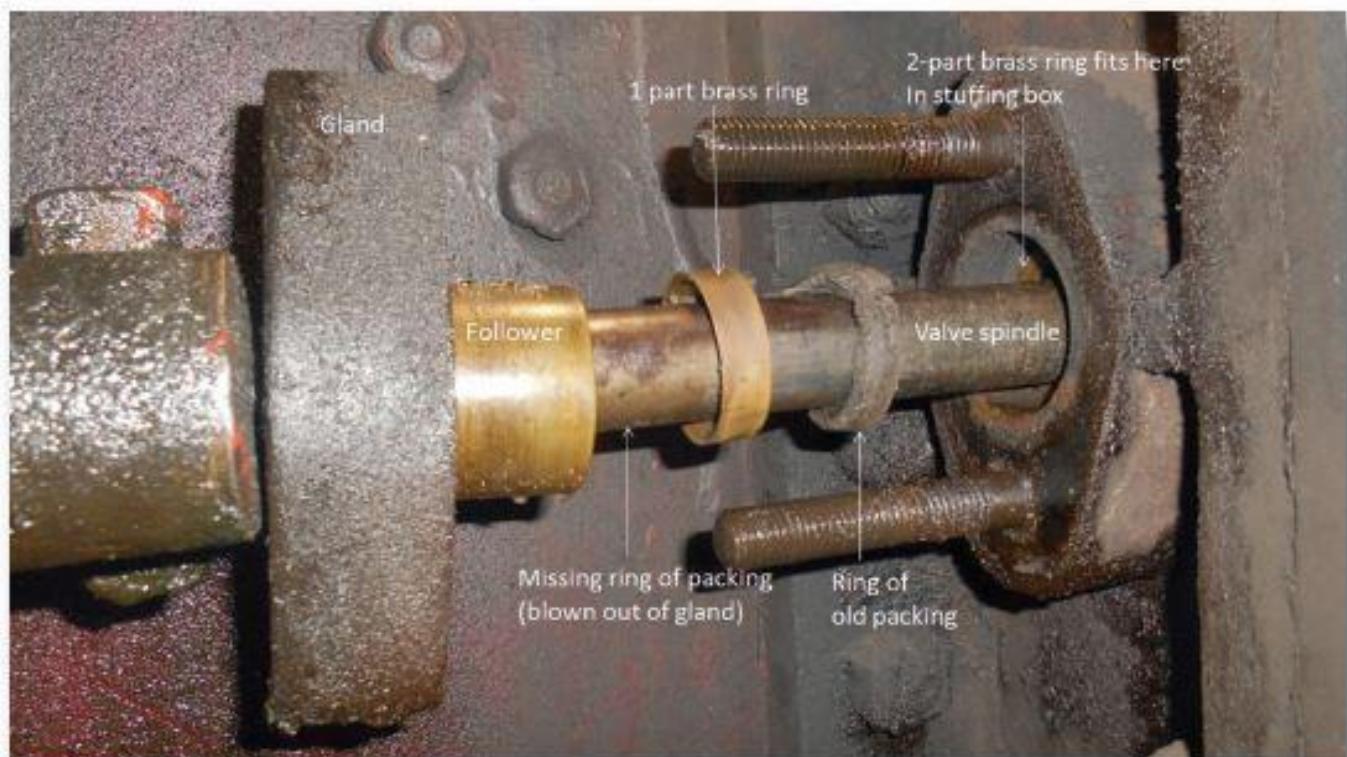
The Guinness engine has acted as the guinea pig for boiler water treatment which we expect will reduce corrosion of boiler tubes and plates from the water side. It has so far made washouts much easier, with the scale coming out as a soft sludge similar to soup from a tin rather

than in lumps. The improved cleanliness of the boiler should also lead to freer steaming, with more of the heat from the fire going through the plates and tubes to the water, instead of up the chimney.

No.85 GNR(I) V-class 4-4-0 compound express passenger loco "Merlin", 1932.

"Merlin" has been based in Dublin for 2021, her only activity being short movements to keep bearings in good condition, and a brief flurry of activity in November to get her through the annual boiler examination. This included her only movement under her own power for 2020 and 2021.

Following improvements made to No.131's injectors, No.85's have been taken to Whitehead to have similar remedial work carried out, and by the time you read this should be back on the locomotive ready for the start of the 2022 operating season. A new tender fall plate and some touch



Anatomy of a deconstructed valve gland on 3BG in July. 'Blows' develop when steam is able to circumvent worn packing and escape out through the gland along the valve spindle. (Photo: Editor)



No.131 receives a power-wash during a steam test on 18th April, her first steaming since September 2020. 3BG, which spent most weekend days in the second quarter of 2021 in steam assisting carriage maintenance, will shortly move off to shunt the D-road paintshop, extracting 302 for the completion of its overhaul, and inserting the withdrawn 180.

(Photo: Editor)

ups to the blue livery were carried out during the year.

No.85's "ten year" boiler life will expire in late 2023, after which she will need a boiler lift and overhaul before returning to traffic.

No.85 is owned by National Museums Northern Ireland and has been on loan to the RPSI from that organisation and its predecessors since 1978.

No.131 GNR(I) Q-class 4-4-0 express passenger loco, 1901 rebuilt 1920.

No.131 had a more active year than No.85. She went through her annual boiler exams in May 2021 and received remedial work to injectors which has improved their reliability. In the middle part of the year, No.131 was used for shunts, train rides, crew training and appearances in two television programs.

She then completed the year by hauling

the Whitehead based Halloween and Santa trains. No.131 acquitted herself well hauling 7 Mk2s on these trains, but a heavier train would be difficult for her to handle on the Larne line, and in particular the climb from Central station over the Dargan Bridge.

Locomotives out of traffic

No.171 GNR(I) S-class 4-4-0 express passenger loco "Slieve Gullion", 1913 rebuilt 1938.

No.171 and tender No.12 were sent to a contractor for overhaul in January 2014. Work on the tender was completed and it was returned to Whitehead in December of that year. Unfortunately, the contractor became insolvent before the work on the locomotive was completed, and it became necessary for the Society to recover the dismantled parts. For transportation, the loco was partly

reassembled, and the boiler temporarily set in place. A separate lorry took dismantled and partly overhauled components – which amounted to a substantial consignment and filled a curtain side trailer.

Since then, some jobs have been progressed, for example overhaul of the big ends and completion of the machining of a replacement valve liner. The driving wheel profiles were also corrected as far as possible – the tyres are nearly down to scrapping size and will need to be renewed at the next overhaul. The piston rods have been renewed.

An appeal has resulted in significant funding for the project and more concentrated work has now resumed – although inevitably disrupted by Covid restrictions.

On the mechanical front, the loco has been dismantled and lifted off its wheels again, so that work could be verified and frame alignment checked. The bogie has now been reassembled and is ready for action. Small adjustments are being made to the horn guides and driving axle boxes, which have been re-metalled and machined. The eccentrics have been refurbished and assembled onto the crank axle.

The slide bars have been checked for wear and are within the limits for truing up and further use. Once the slide bars have been aligned and assembled, the loco can go back onto its wheels.

We hope to have the loco back on its wheels early in 2022. Once it becomes a “rolling chassis” it will be placed in the Dunleath workshop for further work – where it has the facility of the overhead crane.

Work has commenced on the overhaul of fittings, rods and pipework – with the customary annealing of copper pipework.

Regarding the boiler, a major job has been renewal of the firebox crown stay bolts. This work was started by the contractor. As work progressed, it became clear that the condition of the screw threads in the girder stays was such that tapping out oversize was necessary. Renewal of the girder stays will likely be necessary at the next boiler overhaul.

Parts of the door plate lap seams on the copper inner firebox have been renewed due to wasting of the plate edges in the fire area. This involved a specialist welding procedure.

At time of writing, the internal pipe from the dome to the whistle etc. is being renewed. The purpose of this pipe is to take dry steam from the dome to the “castle” or steam stand, from where it branches off to the whistle, vacuum ejector, lubricator etc. No.171 was plagued by dirt carrying over from corrosion within this pipe, requiring frequent cleaning out of the vacuum ejector cones. Loco No.85 also suffered from this problem, and had the pipe renewed. Any problem was pre-empted on No.131 by renewing the pipe during overhaul.

No.4 LMSNCC WT-class 2-6-4T mixed traffic loco, 1947.

No.4 was partway through having her small boiler tubes replaced in March 2020 when the Covid lockdown struck. With a lack of income to fund the rest of the work, and indeed no trains for her to haul if it was completed, the re-tube was paused until it made more sense to return the locomotive to traffic.

No.4's boiler needs to be lifted for examination in 2025, and she is getting to the stage where axleboxes and bearings need major work, so a decision will be made soon on either a return to traffic for a short period, or if we start into her next overhaul immediately once No.171 is completed.



Smokebox doors can be made from 'dished ends' (ie the end of a cylindrical silo) by the wheel lathe, which in many regards would be better named a 'round thing lathe'. Braced by the bar against the opposite centre of the lathe on 6th June, the dished end has been spun in order to shave off a ring of surplus material and bring No.105's door down to the correct size.

(Photo: Editor)

No.4 has also proved useful to the effort to construct No.105, if something does not quite make sense in the W-class drawings, the very similar WT can be consulted and measured.

No.461 DSER K2-class 2-6-0 goods engine, 1922.

No.461 was something of an enigma in her most recent period in traffic from 2011 – 2018. Her problems centred around poor steaming, and a habit of getting stuck on centres.

The boiler she is currently fitted with has only 91% of the firebox heating surface and 72% of the tube heating surface of her original 1922 boiler. This is not something that can be easily changed, but some

changes to the piston valves and the setup of the chimney and blastpipe could reduce the steam consumption and increase the output from the boiler. Watch this space!

No.186 GSWR J15 class 0-6-0 goods loco, 1879, rebuilt with Z class boiler.

No.186, which last ran on the main line at the end of 2013, has a starring role in the carriage gallery beside LP&HC No.3. She is currently the only locomotive on display that visitors can enter the cab, which was cleaned and painted to make it more suitable for budding footplate crew to practice in.

No.184 GSWR J15-class 0-6-0 goods loco, 1880.

No.184 and No.27 have been "marooned" on display in the disconnected No.5 shed road since the beginning of 2018. John White, graduating from working on No.186's cab for display in the carriage gallery, has started stripping paint and rust from No.184 with the aim of making her more presentable for museum visitors. The eventual aim is to display No.184 as a complete locomotive, which will have the added benefit of keeping all of her parts in one place.

SLNCR 0-6-4 mixed traffic loco "Lough Erne", (UTA No.27)

Requires major overhaul. Just like No.184,

No.27 needs a change of circumstances where smaller trains running at lower speeds become desirable before it would make sense to return her to traffic.

No.3 Londonderry Port and Harbour 0-6-0 shunting loco, 1928. (Popularly "Harvey")

The Derry engine continues to educate and entertain visitors in the carriage gallery at Whitehead. She will need some boiler work before returning to traffic, specifically on crownstays which were showing their age when the locomotive was withdrawn.

No.105 REPORT (LMS NCC MOGUL PROJECT)

Peter Scott

It is easy to blame the Covid pandemic for all adverse circumstances, usually with plenty of justification. However, disruption to Whitehead activities has meant more time at home and for some of us this has resulted in progressing work on No.105 which would otherwise not have been contemplated at this stage. Those of us who have suitably equipped workshop facilities have been able to progress pattern making and light machining as well as drawing and other background work.

As a result, a good number of significant items have now been cast and are ready for machining. Most of these are steel castings, a lesser number are cast iron.

The major items are the cylinders, motion brackets, horn guides, and axle boxes. Also other brackets attaching to the main frames – brackets for the valve crossheads, reversing shaft bearings, spring hangers and brake hangers. Machining of the horn

guides and axle boxes has progressed, also the spring and brake hanger brackets.

The cylinders and motion brackets have been machined and their position on the frames checked. It is gratifying to find pre-drilled bolt holes in true alignment. Heavy machining work is contracted out, mainly to Messrs Cooke Bros near Newtownards, with lighter work being done at Whitehead.

One major factor in this project is that many of the working parts of the locomotive already exist, but two major omissions are the leading sections of the coupling rods. Forgings for these have recently been delivered and are being marked out for machining.

The driving wheelsets have had their main journals and crankpins trued up.

Also progressing is work on rebuilding boiler No G8.24. The basic LMS NCC G8AS boiler was used on both the Moguls



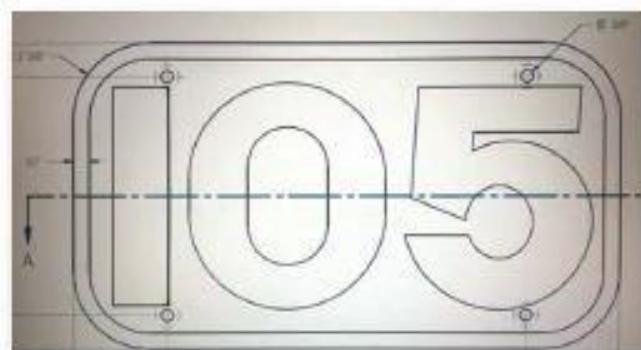
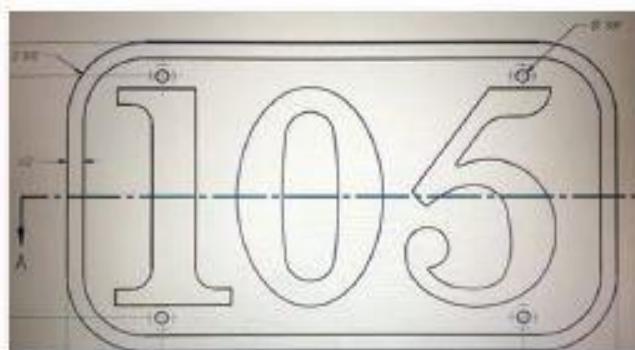
No.105 steadily began to take shape in the workshop throughout 2021. It has gained its bufferbeam (by Portillo!), cylinders and motion brackets.

(Photo: N Lawrence)

and 2-6-4T locos. There were minor differences – for example, the Moguls had plain firebars while the tank engines were equipped with rocking grates. The tank engines, by definition, had tanks along each side of the boiler – and these were attached to the boiler by hinged links requiring extra brackets. (Several tank engines were fitted with ex-Mogul boilers in their later years). Work under way at the moment is drilling of rivet holes in the

new inner firebox. Messrs Israel Newton have been assembling and riveting the boiler barrel rings.

The project to date has been financed by private subscription, and thanks are due to all who have contributed. A wider appeal for funding will be necessary as soon as this is appropriate and in line with other RPSI commitments.



Two possible cab numberplates for No.105. The plate on the left has pre-war style numerals, with the '5' copied from a plate of No.95 "THE BRAID". Indeed, plates like this were carried on the NCC's 3'-gauge No.105. The plate on the right has the simple post-war style of numbers as applied to the Jeeps.

(Images: J Friel)

The Diesel Department in 2021 focused all efforts on repairing the engine on B142 in what was a challenging yet rewarding journey. 2020 ended on a positive note with the award of funding through the generosity of the UK National Lottery Community Fund but any joy was quickly tempered by another set of Covid restrictions.

Moving from the previous conservation efforts, as no funding was foreseeable, with funding now in place a plan was formulated in consultation with Translink York Road, Norman Bodel (Downpatrick and County Down Railway) and Philip Clampett (Irish Rail) to identify the

problem and move forward with a plan to repair the EMD 645 engine. (Three power assembly cylinders had obvious signs of coolant ingress during the root cause investigation).

The decision was taken to rebuild all eight power head assemblies at that point. However, there was no means available to remove the hood of 142 and we quickly realised that a significant quantity of specialised EMD tooling / fixtures and tools not usually found at Whitehead would be required to undertake the repair work.

While the grant funding was significant it



Phillip Newell and Alan McKnight (foreground) rebuilding B142's power assembly head 3, the hole for which can be seen in the engine between Nos. 1 and 5 (of 8), 25th April. (Photo: J Friel)

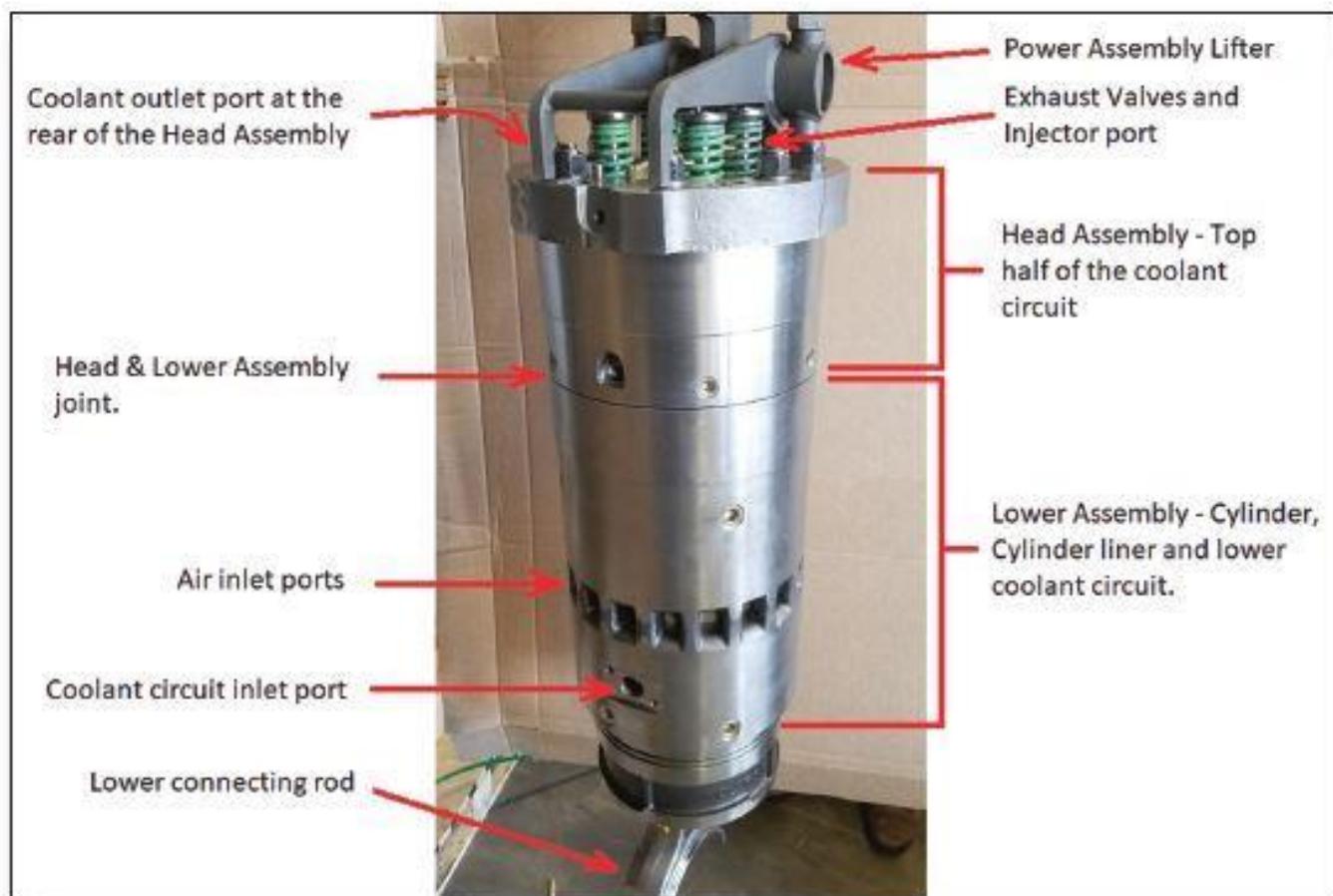
did not cover all the costs of the challenge ahead. Through the efforts of Phillip Newell, Ivan McAteer and John Friel the required tools, equipment and materials were procured with a few donated as we kept an eye on the funds knowing that this was really our only source for the foreseeable future.

Another challenge was experience on EMD Engines and translating procedures into bespoke Whitehead versions. An example is usually the entire power assembly is removed from the engine crankcase and replaced with a refurbished assembly. A range of EMD procedures were used as source material and combined into a bespoke procedure and amended as the first rebuild on power assembly was undertaken.

Before restrictions came into effect the hood was removed from B142 and the locomotive positioned into the wheel

drop road so that the overhead hoist could be utilised removing each assembly head in turn. Special mention to the efforts of Alan McKnight who completed much of the rebuilding work on all eight power assemblies and exhaust and valve assemblies during a period when few volunteers could attend. The last power assembly rebuild was completed in late May.

Work continued in the engine bay setting the valve timing, removing the remaining contaminated oil, and addressing several maintenance issues that would be difficult with the hood in place. With the engine work complete another shunt enabled the hood to be re-joined to B142 at the end of October. Sixteen new brake shoes arrived and were fitted in November. Maintenance of the brake system continues as many components have not been in use since December 2019.



A cleaned up power assembly from B142, with parts labelled.

(Photo: J Clinton)

Early December and all engine connections were checked (and then rechecked a number of times). New oil was put into the engine, and my thanks to the Site Squad & James Friel for their efforts to complete the oiling of B142 to enable a restart over the Christmas Holidays.

The engine was primed with oil and all oiling points on the camshaft and upper deck of the engine checked to ensure oil was feeding correctly. Simultaneously coolant was added, and the cooling system checked for leaks.

At that stage a competency assessment was required for the person who was to attempt a start of the engine. With all pre-use inspection complete and passed the engine was turned over with the starter motor with the test valves opened to ensure no cylinder compression. Having turned over with no obvious indications of problems the test valves were closed

and the fuel primed, tension increased when air appeared in the fuel sight glass, however the problem was quickly diagnosed and resolved. The engine was primed with fuel and started after only a few turns and quickly settled into its normal rhythmic beat. With the engine running a close eye was maintained on the oil and coolant levels throughout the hour and half of operation with no immediate problems obvious. With the engine now proven operational, efforts will now resume on the body work repairs that had been in progressing during 2019.

While a few individual mentions have been provided there are also a wider team of Volunteers who put in their own time and effort to collectively allow the completion of the work on B142. I cannot think of any of the Volunteers at Whitehead that have not contributed which is very much recognised and appreciated.

B134 REPORT

Gerry Mooney

2021 certainly was a year of two halves for B134. The year started with the country in the grip of a Covid wave with the loco dismantled and all but essential work taking place in Inchicore Works. The year ended with a structurally complete locomotive sporting a very modern twist of a grey and yellow livery!

The physical work resumed in July with the skilled team in the FCR shop in Inchicore Works. A large number of outstanding items for the body that were out for fabrication returned to the locomotive and were fitted straight away. The canopy hood which sits over the engine was in a very bad state with many fractures and buckles in the structure. The hood was

removed and cut to enable the work to be carried out on sections which would not normally be accessible to carry out repair. The valance panels beneath the catwalk were fitted and rebuilding of the cab got well underway. At this stage, provision for extra speedometer and CAWS cables was made in the cab. The cab doors were also rebuilt ready to be fitted back on the locomotive.

A major milestone of any restoration is when the livery and paint is confirmed and ordered, this milestone was reached in August with B134. The locomotive will return to service in as near original condition as possible which includes the livery worn by the class when first

delivered. The livery was unique to the class and no other items of stock exist to use for colour reference, this made the task all the more challenging but not impossible.

Around the same time that the 121-class were built, GM supplied locomotives to a number of US railroads using very similar colours in the livery applied. One such railroad was the Carolina, Clinchfield and Ohio. They purchased an F3 type from GM and it wore a livery similar in colour to that of the 121-class. One of these locomotives, Clinchfield 800, was recently refurbished and returned by CSX in Huntington to the grey and yellow scheme.

Contact was made with those involved in the restoration which yielded the original factory supplied paint codes. These codes no longer exist but provided a very solid

base to work from. The one thing that was very clear was that the locomotives were not delivered in a gloss finish but more of an eggshell or semi-gloss finish. Bogies and fuel tanks and buffers would be the only items finished in gloss.

Back in Inchicore, extensive discussions took place with the Paint Shop manager Anthony Walsh. Using the reference codes from the US, PPG who supply the paint to Irish Rail, tried to find an exact match. A number of variations were provided for both the grey and yellow. Determined to create an exact match, the investigation turned to B134 itself.

Beneath the multiple layers of paint applied over the years, small sections of the original colour remain on the locomotive. The layers of paint were carefully removed to reveal enough to



B134 on 16th November, resplendent in the Paint Spray facility in Inchicore Works with its trial livery applied. This will be replaced with the original CIE grey/yellow livery when completed.

(Photo: G Mooney)

confirm the exact match. PPG sent a representative complete with a modem laser device that reads paint samples to provide an exact code for modern paint. This device was used on the grey and yellow and it was taken away to their head office to process the information. The results came back with a colour that is as close as possible to that used by GM when the locomotive rolled out of the factory. These samples were placed next to the original and it was well worth the effort.

The main colour of the locomotive is neither grey nor silver as some would suggest. There is a distinctive light blue running through it and the yellow is not as bright as some photographs would suggest. It is hard to use colour photographs from the period when these locomotives were in this livery as colour rendition and retention in film is nothing like what it is today with modern cameras.

After much cutting and replacement of the refurbished engine canopy returned to the locomotive. Much of the structure on the canopy was rotten and fractured in places. This was all cut out and replaced with new material which was treated against corrosion which will protect the structure for many years to come. The whole frame was also out of line and this has been corrected by the skilful hands of Frank Levin and Barry Erdis in the FCR shop. The locomotive was moved in the shop to facilitate the return of the canopy frame to the locomotive itself. This tedious and precise task was carried out using the overhead crane under the ever-watchful eye of Paul Cassoni.

Work turned to both the inner and outer skins of the cab front. The pillars for these were completely rotten and were replaced with new material. The retro fitting of the original size centre window was also part of this work with the window pan in

position. A good number of the cab floor frame sections were replaced and primed before the new floor went in.

The work continued on the inner skins of the cab and the installation of the window pans. This required a lot of skill from Paul Cassoni to have the skins marry exactly to the existing cab and the reinstalled original style centre window. The installation of this window threw up a curious problem insofar as it impacted on the location of the all-important hot plate! A site meeting took place and thankfully this vital piece of cab equipment has found a new location.

Work on the bonnet continued ahead of the hanging of the new doors. Barry Erdis prepared all the original hinged access panels which are located along the top back to bare metal and repaired as necessary. The roof cover section for the exhaust were prepared and this along with the hinged access panels were returned to the locomotive. The outer skins of the cab front were offered up and after some final finishing from Paul Cassoni they were welded into place returning the face of the locomotive back to how it looked when first delivered.

The restoration of B134 then took to the road and headed out west. In a strange twist, the work was aided by one of its not so lucky classmates, 133. Fortunately for 134, the cab of 133 was rescued and purchased a number of years ago from a scrapyard in Arklow by the Cavan and Leitrim Railway in Dromod. Within the cab a number of original fittings remained including the unique swivel type driver seats.

In the late 1990's and early 2000's a number of the class went through refurbishment work in Inchicore and a number of modifications took place. One of these was the removal of the original



For the trials and in keeping with the style of livery applied, a temporary RPSI crest and the modern numbering system was applied to 134.

(Photo: G Mooney)

type seats and these were replaced with a more modern fixed position type. When B134 returns to service, one aspect of its operation will be bonnet first running. This will require seats with the ability to function in both directions. When it was discovered that 133 retained the original seats, contact was made between the RPSI and the Cavan and Leitrim Railway to see if they could be made available. Shortly after Michael Kennedy of The Cavan and Leitrim Railway made contact to inform us that they would be more than happy to support the restoration with the seats. Arrangements were made and the seats were removed from the cab of 133 and transported to Inchicore Works. The seats and revised section of floor that were in 134 prior to the restoration will be delivered to 133 allowing visitors to the railway experience the cab of a 121-class locomotive.

The seat frames and side panels from 133 went straight for sandblasting and painting. The seat bases and backs were pretty well worn out and had to be fully retrimmed. Robbie Whelan in Inchicore Works, who was the last apprentice coach trimmer to start in Inchicore Works, immediately advised that he would

undertake the job on the seats. Yet again the skills within Inchicore Works will ensure that B134 will be the best it can be when this restoration is completed. Sincere thanks to Michael Kennedy of The Cavan and Leitrim Railway in Dromod for the assistance given.

The work on the actual body of the locomotive then moved towards completion. The main job was the bonnet doors on the drivers side. These were all put in position and welded by Frank Levin and Barry Erdis. Various other jobs were also completed with items such as the lamp irons, front grab rails etc put back on the locomotive. The new cab doors were fitted along with all the grab rails along the side of the bonnet. All of the remaining hinged panels along the bonnet roof returned to the locomotive. The original handrails for the cab steps and bonnet end were then removed and sent for blasting to ensure they look as good as new. The handrails along the bonnet were also pretty bruised and battered. They were removed and replaced with new material which will give a much better finish. The entire team in the FCR shop led by Paul Cassoni and Robbie Whelan and under manager John Gray can be rightly proud of their work.

As part of the restoration work, the locomotive was required to receive primer and a coat of paint to protect all the new material. This was done with many of the fittings off the loco to ensure maximum protection from any possible future corrosion. The team in the Inchicore Paint Spray Facility led by manager Anthony Walsh wanted to make sure the best possible finish was achieved and this is evident in how the locomotive now appears.

When it was decided that the locomotive would receive a topcoat of paint, a batch

of older IE grey was identified in the stores as suitable for the job. This was applied by Brian Dolan and Daniel Kawecki to protect the locomotive as the work continues and will also allow the testing and trials to take place without the risk of destroying or damaging the special paint and finish that will be on the completed locomotive. The opportunity was taken to complete the look with the yellow warning panels and numbers along with a plain RPSI crest. The precision and attention to detail with positioning of these from Brian Lowe, Anthony Walsh and Daniel Kawecki was second to none. The new look was a full team effort from the Paint Spray facility and also included FCR manager John Gray, Gerry Ryan, Willie Kidd, Daniel Ryan and Maciek Sanecki. This new look and livery

generated much positive comment from observers. It would be nice to do a one-off operation of the locomotive in this livery but many factors out of our control will decide if this is possible or not.

When the trials are complete and no more work required, the locomotive will return to the Paint Spray Facility. The original as delivered CIE livery will then be applied using the base now on the locomotive and will protect the structure for years to come.

All of this work has showcased the enthusiasm and skill from the CME staff in Inchicore Works. The entire project would not be possible without the guiding hand and support of Irish Rail Chief Mechanical Engineer, Peter Smyth.



The Irish Rail FCR team stand proudly with the loco after completion of the body overhaul. (l-r); Frank Levin, Liam Larkin, Barry Erdis, Paul Cassoni and Robbie Whelan with B134 on the traverser, 11th October.
(Photo: G Mooney)

Dublin Operations had a busy year maintaining the running set and to a lesser degree the wooden heritage set. We had a regular Thursday Squad in Inchicore each week and Covid restrictions were maintained.

In late February the last of our B134 model GMs was sold. There was a massive response from collectors.

Early in the year we made application to Fáilte Ireland for financial assistance under the “Fáilte Ireland’s Tourism Business Continuity Scheme, Phase 1 Plus”; we were delighted on the 4th. August to receive notification that we had qualified for support under the Scheme. This was fantastic Government support during the pandemic through Fáilte Ireland.

Also in 2021 we made an application to the Heritage Council of Ireland for financial assistance for the restoration of a Heating Boiler for Brake / Heating Van 3173. We were delighted in May to have received information that our application was successful. The boiler was sent off site and returned at the end of the year completed. Fantastic job.

During an inspection of the carriage bogies, it was discovered that 1523 had a problem and a bogie change was needed.

Connolly Turntable had a total refurbishment done to it by Iarnród Éireann, although in June Charles McDonnell and Peter Emmett restored the electric mechanism to full working order. Fantastic work by all concerned.

We had also hired our van 3173 to Iarnród Éireann infrastructure for it to work the Sperry Train. The Thursday crew set about getting the van ready for the hire, with the outside being washed and polished. The

interior was cleaned and all non-essential items removed. Diesel for the generator was topped up and new dummy doors supplied for each end.

Severe pressure was now on Operations to have a full set for the Santa Trains. The old boiler was to be removed from 3173 and the overhauled one fitted, the new boiler was then examined and passed, and then the bogie swap required to take place on 1523. Fair play to Peter Rigney and the Carriage Department, all was done in time. Christmas decorations were put up on 1523 when she was in the Carriage Shops.

During the year steam loco No.85 made a number of appearances outside Connolly Shed, ensuring vital lubrication to moving parts and avoiding static damage to bearings. Similarly, this was also done to the Craven Set in Inchicore; we are indebted to the shunters in Inchicore for their assistance.

It looked as if we would have Santa Trains for three weekends. All the carriages were decorated and prepared. Seating was arranged in pods. Selection boxes were ordered. Calendars were published and printed. Ticket systems were drawn up. Risk Assessments done, paths obtained. But alas, Covid took over. It was so disappointing and tough to have to take the decorations down again and cancel orders etc. Unfortunately the calendars were printed.

During the year, contact was maintained with both Iarnród Éireann and the Commission for Railway Regulation. We also had meetings with individuals and companies that are interested in hiring carriages in some of our trips in 2022 and doing an all-Ireland Tour by steam in 2023.

Our Dublin Management Committee also held Virtual Meetings during the year. We have a comprehensive list of Steam and Diesel Tours in draft form for 2022 and we are so hoping that we can do them all.

We also remember the passing of Margaret Bredin in May 2021. Margaret was part of our Santa Experience every year. May she Rest In Peace.



Paul Hoare and Ritchie Moran working on one of van 3173's doors. (Photo: J McKeown)

The year 2021 was the second year of restricted running for the Dublin set, however this did not deter the carrying out of an extensive maintenance programme. The year commenced with strict restrictions in place and no work parties in Inchicore. We are indebted to OCS security staff who ran the generator once a week during this period. Regular work parties resumed on April 22nd with the easing of Covid restrictions. The following tasks were undertaken during the remainder of the year –

Thorough wash of bogies

Repainting of vestibules in all coaches. This was undertaken by Martin Devlin using spray painting equipment, and together with Richie Moran the work was finished by November.

Fitting of drains on lavatory tanks - this allows the flushing out of sediment and detritus accumulated over the years. The pipework involved is complex, but the work prevents toilet problems caused by sediment.



Van 3173 at Westport, on the Sperry train with 086, 21st September.

(Photo: J Owens)

Carrying out of ultrasonic axle testing by IE. One set of Craven bogies was moved to Whitehead for overhaul.

Work resumed on the restoration of Craven 1539 and refurbishment of the toilets has been completed.

The CRR carried out an audit of procedures for storing vehicles while they are out of use. They made several recommendations which are being implemented.

Van 3173 had an eventful year. During the year a boiler was overhauled to replace the one which supplies heat for the train. On the return of the boiler to Inchicore, the van was moved into Fleet casualty shop number 2 and the new boiler was craned in. The van stayed in the shop while ancillaries and electrics were reconnected.

Earlier in the year, 3173 was borrowed by IE to run with the Sperry rail testing train. This train runs at biannual intervals. The busier lines are covered every six months and single lines are covered annually. It had been hoped that a new Sperry testing unit, mounted on an MPV would be available but this was not the case. Van 3183, which usually ran with the Sperry train, was also unavailable so the RPSI readily acceded to the IE request for the loan of our van.

The train consists of the Sperry testing unit which is fitted in a 40-foot container placed on a 40-foot wagon. It is accompanied by another 40-foot wagon containing water tanks. When the ultrasonic probes are lowered, water is sprayed on the rails (think ante-natal

ultrasounds) and the results are read on the laptops of the two Sperry operators in the van. When the probes are down speed is restricted to 30mph. A limit of 50mph applies when the train is not testing. The van left Inchicore on August 23rd and was taken to Portlaoise for commissioning and testing of the Sperry equipment. In the following weeks the following lines were traversed, with a total mileage of 1,390 –

- Heuston to Cobh
- Glounthane to Midleton
- Greystones to Newry
- North Wall GSWR branch
- Connolly to Maynooth
- Clonsilla to M3 Parkway
- Portarlington to Westport
- Manulla to Ballina
- Portarlington to Galway

The van returned to Inchicore on September 29th when preparation for fitting of the aforementioned boiler commenced, in anticipation of Santa trains which in the event did not run.

In the January 1969 issue of Five Foot Three, Drew Donaldson wrote: It is not generally known just how much the Society depends on the interest and efforts of professional railwaymen. This remains the case and we are grateful to the staff of Inchicore, particularly Peter Smyth CME, John Gray, Manager of the Carriage shops (now known as fleet casualty repair shops 1 and 2) and Aidan Mills of the Laboratory.

Some 21 months since our previous train operation and following detailed discussion with Translink it was agreed mainline trains could resume. The first operation would need to be a glitch finding "shake down" to establish how locomotive No.131 and carriages would perform. Simultaneously the Translink footplate crew and train guards would undergo refresher training under the watchful eye of a West Coast Railway footplate crew assessor accompanied by a vacuum brake guard assessor. Saturday 3rd October was selected as suitable to all interests; the date coinciding with the Larne Line being closed to service trains to enable a redundant over bridge to be demolished near Whiteabbey. The public unfortunately were not permitted to travel. There were two trips Carrickfergus to Magheramorne Loop and return. Due to the vagaries of the signalling system at Carrickfergus, No.131 had to operate light engine to Greenisland to cross over to

facilitate the run round. The operation was successful with mechanical and train crew expectations met.

To meet anticipated public demand the Halloween trains would operate over two days, 30th and 31st October. They were marketed under the guise of the Wizard's Express. The train consisted of No.131 and seven carriages. The four trains were very well filled. Unfortunately, Sunday's first Whitehead train was found on arrival to have a carriage Central Door Locking fault that could not be fixed during the scheduled station lie over time. Consequently, the train was stopped and passengers had to return to Belfast by service train. Translink graciously provided a CAF railcar set for the afternoon train for those who wished to travel. Besides the carriage issue the trains ran to time and were very successful.

The Santa trains with the same consist operated two train days over the



No.131 on the Dargan Bridge with the 13.37 Santa train ex-Lanyon Place, on 19th December.

(Photo: CP Friel)

weekends of 4th, 5th, 11th, 12th, 18th and 19th December. Due to Covid restrictions, instead of the normal on-train Santa experience, Santa was based in a secure bubble on our excursion platform with presents for the children distributed by elves. Adults had the opportunity to obtain a complementary hot drink dispensed at our stables building. To add seasonal atmosphere live music was provided each day on the platform by various entertainer groups. The trains having to be timetabled around the Translink service trains operated largely to or close to time, except for the first train on the second Saturday [it unexpectedly being stopped by an unexpected TPWS activation on an incline near Whiteabbey. Partly due to the rail head conditions and damp atmosphere the driver had great difficulty in starting on the gradient. The last Sandite train had ran over a week previously. Eventually after application of

sand to the rails the driver managed to secure grip and the train, approximately an hour behind time, reached Whitehead. The consequential knock on was the afternoon train ran correspondently late]. All things considered the Santa trains were successful bearing in mind the less than favourable restrictions they had to operate under. A special thank you to our meet and greet team at Lanyon station and to the stewards who were as helpful as ever with our customers.

Looking forward to 2022 let's hope the operating season will occur in line with that being proposed.

Train Rides Notes (a Roster Officer)

Twenty-two Train Rides operated in 2021, 21 public and one, the last one, private for St Gerard's School pupils to meet Snowglobe Santa on 17th December.

Eighteen Train Rides used 3BG, the



Whilst the nine mainline days were the headline of the year, 3BG worked double that number on Train Rides duty. Here she is on the first of her allocated days on 5th June, with 68 and 81.

(Photo: A Dargan)

remaining four No.131: these being the initial three on the Bank Holiday weekend of 29th-31st May, i.e. the re-start of train operations following the easing of covid restrictions, and the 17th July. No.131 was used on 17th July for filming of the two-part 'Enterprise – A Track Record' show which aired on UTV later in the year. One wonders, given its 18 Train Rides and twenty-two shunting days, if 3BG may just have had its busiest year in preservation.

It was encouraging that, apart from a lull in early July, the Train Rides days generally tended to be quite busy with some days exceptionally so: at least bearing in mind the cap on numbers for Covid reasons. Train Rides operated every half-hour between 11am and 3pm with the omission

of the 1230 one for lunch, which gave eight per day. The half-hour interval gave time for the compartments in 68 to be sanitised between loadings. A slight dampener was the failure of a spring on brake van 81 very early in the season which forced substitution to the rather foul, both inside and out, Dutch van 462.

By mid-July, (very mainly) 3BG and No.131 had finally emptied the coal bunker of the remaining supply from 2019... at least Whitehead's, for a lorry duly arrived from Dublin Operations with, according to the driver, 13 tonnes of their leftovers. That would be enough to keep 3BG going for around 52 Train Rides days!

As usual, thanks to all who contributed.

WHITEHEAD CARRIAGE REPORT

Phillip Newell

Our work continued throughout the year on the Mk2 set to prepare them for their Annual Maintenance Inspection by NIR and an external body. This is usually held in the middle of March, though on account of Covid-19 and the passage of time it was rescheduled to July. Five vehicles were presented as ready to run with a further two in the final stages of overhaul. The successful conclusion of these inspections and the issuing of our Annual Inspection Certificate meant that the way was clear for mainline running to resume. This was with seven carriages, though perhaps as a first in society history it was without a dining car for a train of that length. For the record, the operational vehicles are 460, 463, 181, 300, 301, 302, 303.

In addition to the regular movements for bearings and brake linkages a number of full day tests were run throughout the year to ensure that the trainline, brakes, door locks (both manual and electronic)

were performing correctly. We then ran a test train where the rake behaved itself and no areas of concern were identified. Following this we then ran a public train and had a very successful first day of operation on the Halloween trains. This was unfortunately followed by a not so successful second day due to a fault on the CDL circuit. This was very disappointing and even more so for our passengers. The only positive is that our fault detecting skills and procedures have improved as a result. After the Halloween trains, the Santa Season was upon us and the carriages behaved themselves throughout with little of interest to report.

At this point credit must be given to the cleaning team (Joe and Ian) who were able to keep on top of things once we left lockdown and ensured a clean presentable train for our public excursions and train rides.



What success turned out to look like; first-class compartment MK2B 181 entered traffic in 2021. It had not run for nearly a decade and before that its appearances were intermittent at best. Tickets for it sold unexpectedly quickly.

(Photo: J Friel)

As I type, work is ongoing prepping the carriages for annual inspection (to reset the clock back to the first $\frac{1}{4}$ of the year) and we are attending to a range of minor little details such as internal paintwork, varnishing, upholstery etc. One major item we hope to tackle this year is the replacement of some (if not all) double glazed window units which have lost their airtight seal and are misted as a result.

Other work programmed for this year is the completion of the vacuum cylinder and DA valve overhaul project and the renewal of the remainder of the slack adjusters. This work, whilst straightforward, was previously time consuming and heavy, though the combination of a Pit in A road and a new high rise lifting table has revolutionised this, as anyone familiar with the process will no doubt agree.

As regards additional vehicles, 547 is currently waiting in the wings for a lower half overhaul until such times that the current C19 situation improves to acceptable risk levels. 180 has been withdrawn for a general overhaul and

subject to budgets etc. I would hope that we will see this popular vehicle out again sooner rather than later. In the background 304 (the second of our two Mk2Ds) has progressed through overhaul to a point where it could be returned to traffic reasonably quickly with only one technical hitch – it has a recurring electrical fault within the carriage HVAC circuits which will not clear and is likely to require specialist and expensive attention.

On the wooden body front 81 and 68 operated the train rides fairly successfully. At the end of last year we spent some time recommissioning the lights on 68 and this allowed us to work into the early evening which proved productive. Unfortunately, mid-way through the summer season we had a spate of spring breakages, resulting in the withdrawal of 81 first, followed by 68. Fortunately, we were able to substitute 462 (currently taking a break from mainline activities) as a brake vehicle in the first instance. A replacement spring has been sourced for 68 and I am reviewing options for 81.

The current plan is to have both 68 and 81

back into traffic for the summer season as I do not want to spend time breaking and making buckeye connections throughout the season. The events of the last year have unfortunately taken a toll on the overhaul of 861. We had largely completed the corridor side of this valuable and important asset and we were on the verge of starting the compartment side rebuild. However, now that everything appears to have settled down, I am confident work will resume on this vehicle in February. The first part of this process will be to turn the vehicle on the turntable to allow a more efficient concentrated effort to be made – rather than wasting time walking round the vehicle, in addition to facilitating the necessary access steps and scaffold.

Over the last 4-5 years it has been very pleasing to see the C&W regulars increase from 2 to 4 and now to 6 individuals with assistance from several other volunteers – mostly cajoled for specific tasks. This has enabled a greater workflow to be achieved when compared to past years and my thanks go to all those who have volunteered their time and expertise. The C&W team tackle a wide range of varied work throughout the year and all are welcome to lend a hand. Typical activities range from painting to greasing axle boxes, reglazing windows to hanging doors, dismantling and reassembling seats to dismantling and reassembling bogies and everything else in between!



One of the major bugbears both of the Carriage Officer, whose buckeye couplings and nerves it strained, and steam loco crews whose gauge glasses it unexpectedly drained just as they buffed up to carriages, was this change of gradient at the shed door in A-Road. After a few more restrained attempts failed to correct it, in October the Site Squad essentially tore it up and raised the lot, all the way out to the junction with B-Road.

(Photo: J Friel)

The first week in March saw a return to Whitehead Excursion for those of the Site squad who had received their first Covid vaccination. All travelled separately avoiding public transport. Only two persons were allowed into the changing room at any time and meals were taken in the stores away from the permanent staff. Work was outdoors following the guidelines of social distancing. I recommenced a weekly bin collection which fitted in well with the activities in Platform 3. Unfortunately, the JCB needed a new battery, but the Atlas started easily and the Larne forklift only needed its battery put on charge. An excellent result all round, considering that nothing had moved since before Christmas. We emptied the shavings hoppers on the extraction system for the wood working machines and cleaned out the turntable manhole which needed a new water

pump. Track repairs on turnout number seven, which feeds one and two shed roads, required replacement of two large double crossing chairs.

Second week in March we put a new tarpaulin on Railcar No.1 and I gave the site its first weed spray. The following week we helped Peter Scott turn No.171's boiler and tidied the workshop. In the last week we moved B142's hood from flat wagon R3 to flat wagon C310 using the sheer legs. Two grain van bogies were moved from R3 to the upper carpark for storage using the Larne forklift. R3, being unsafe, was cleared for scrapping.

Slackness of the steering joints on the JCB was highlighted in the last insurance report so with great difficulty they were dismantled by Colin Stewart and Willie Hollinger. I bought new pins and bushes which were fitted in the middle of April.



On 6th April, Dermot Mackie uses the Larne Forklift to lift an ex-grain van bogie off a scrap flat wagon, for transport up to the top car park for storage. The second bogie clearly demonstrates the flat wagon's failings.

(Photo: R Thompson)



The wooden frame for the Gazebo has been constructed on the platform on 18th April. L-R Peter Lindsay, David Orr, Willie Hollinger, John Williams, Roy Thompson. (Photo: D Mackie)

The end of the month saw us building escape rails at the Larne end of the turntable which should prevent an accidental derailment and may help the turning of extra-long vehicles.

Opening up Whitehead and outdoor catering began later in the month and, to help with this, we built a large wooden framed gazebo which was used on the last Friday, as part of a very successful barbecue night.

First week in May we fitted the repaired front leg ram on the JCB and also fixed a hydraulic pipe leak on the Atlas. To facilitate the reconstruction of Drumboe we extended the 3ft gauge track in the workshop by about 20ft and cut up 80 old boiler tubes for recycling. Later in the month we pulled out No.131 for her annual steam test and helped paint the recently sandblasted frames of No.105.

The point lever for the turntable needed some repairs and we put up a series of shelves in the loco store with help from John Williams. At this time of the year the

Atlas gets its major annual service and despite the horrendous weather during the "Storm with no name" on the 20th we fixed a major hydraulic burst on the JCB. At the end of the month we carried out an extensive inspection of all the public running track and completed necessary repairs, before a hugely successful and sunny Steam Weekend with locomotive No.131.

The first week in June was busy with many refresher training days and an emphasis on Health and Safety. In the second week we moved a MK2 bogie with the Larne forklift which allowed the Mogul frames to be moved towards Larne; ultimately making room for the final exit of Drumboe. In the middle of the month we received a small wooden model of an engine and tender which was destined to be a painted exhibit on the main road above Whitehead. This delightful item had been built locally and sponsored by the nearby petrol station. Robin Morton and Peter Lindsay helped us to paint it in best GNRI blue. We also installed the re-furbished

Whitehead Excursion platform sign on the signal box. A scrap drive in the following week netted over £500, most of which was copper, thanks to the efforts of David Lowry. Track repairs included a complete dismantle and new bolts for the frog opposite the signal box while all point levers received a fresh coat of yellow paint. Seven of us successfully completed a JCB Telehandler refresher course at the end of the month.

On American Independence Day I ran a shunter/guard training course and I am delighted to report that all five candidates, including three ladies, passed with flying colours. The following week we rebuilt the frog at the bridge point and jacked and packed several platform road rail joints and then took a week off over the Twelfth holidays. The third week in July was the hottest on record and although we did some track work, we quit at lunchtime both days because the heat was unbearable. By now the handbrake on the JCB was very weak so a major overhaul was carried out using No.1 road outside pit. This required a complete dismantle and rebuild together with new brake pads and a new cable. In addition, the course instructor was unhappy that we had no tilt indicator on the jib of the JCB. Correct angle indicators have now been fitted which can be viewed from inside the cab and these correspond exactly with the weight limit charts beside the driver. Finally in July we moved the new boiler cladding sheets for Drumboe round to the blast house for cleaning.

Permanent way repairs and maintenance were a major feature of our first two weeks in August. We replaced a sleeper in the switches to the carriage shed and jacked and packed two rail joints on the approaches to No.2 shed road. All in addition to pulling out 3BG for Saturday train rides, which was becoming a regular Thursday job. The end of the month we

had the annual insurance inspection of all the yard plant; Atlas, JCB and Larne forklift, and I am delighted to report that all three passed without any problems. At this time we also put in an additional 14ft of third rail at 3ft gauge in the workshop to accommodate the movement of Drumboe nearer Belfast and housing of the Mogul frames. During the first week of September we filled the gaps between all the rails with a wooden floor using 450 of the brick sized blocks which came originally from the old Short Strand Sirocco works. Later in the month we put the remains of Drumboe's old cab into the ferrous skip for recycling along with a number of other items which netted £600. The last couple of weeks were busy making room for the crane lifting of Drumboe onto a lorry in early October. This involved the starting and movement of the Muir Hill tractor, a tricky job as the machine had not been used for over four years, and relocating the Larne forklift to the front of the sheds.

Other work at this time involved preparations for the launch of the fully restored Guinness grain van and coaling of locomotive No.131 before its first main line outing with a train in almost two years. We moved the iron worker onto the transporter wagon and tidied the rear yard in preparation for the craning of Drumboe on Saturday 9th October. With the arrival of the large crane, and when shunted out of the Dunleath workshop, Drumboe was lifted onto the low loader lorry for its journey to Donegal. The same crane then put the iron worker onto a ready-made concrete plinth outside the carriage shed.

The following week we pulled out No.131 for Michael Portillo visiting Whitehead and made extensive repairs to our large scrap metal skip which also included a repaint. Using the Atlas we retrieved two B4 Craven bogies from the Larne siding and after they had been steam cleaned

we lifted them with the Larne forklift to the rear entrance of the workshop. By now the exhaust silencer on the forklift was well past its best and a new one was fitted. For some time the A-road approach to the carriage shed door had been giving cause for concern with its sudden change in horizontal angle putting strain on MK2 buckeye connections. A radical vertical re-alignment involving extensive jacking of the track and packing of the sleepers over 60 feet took up the next two weeks of site work.

This resulted in a more gradual approach to the shed and was used successfully on the preparations for the Halloween trains. November was a busy month on the metal recycling front. Six of the worn, large diameter tyres from the locomotives were cut up while one was bought by David Orr and now has pride of place in his garden (see photo). Scrap lead and

copper was also cashed in bringing the total to almost £1100. Fallen leaves were tidied up by George Smyth and Tom Mathers while I tackled the gutters on the stables. The annual service for the JCB was done and preparations were started for the Santa trains by putting up the Christmas tree and bringing out the sledge. During December we pulled out No.131 three times, emptied well stuffed rubbish bins and re-stocked Santa parcels. A new water level indicator was installed on water tower and a curtain side was put on No.1 railcar. Ironically storm Barra did little outside damage on the 7th but a large gust caused a partial collapse of the tiled ceiling in the museum entrance which was repaired by Gordon Hunt and Roy Thompson. Following helping with filling B142 with oil, we ended the season with our traditional fry and mince pies in the station restaurant on the 16th after what had turned out to be a busy year.



Now there's recycling! An ex-No.4 driving wheel tyre in David Orr's garden.

(Photo: D Orr)

HEI is concentrating on completing the overhaul of loco No.171, including repairs to the boiler and tender.

A major job now completed has been to fit new crown stay bolts, which required re-tapping the threads in the girder stays. Washout plugs and studs are being renewed, and the boiler will soon be ready for re-tubing and hydraulic test.

Work currently under way is the fitting and tooling over of patch screws in the firebox doorplate lap seams.

Overhaul of pistons, piston rods and crossheads is continuing, including renewal of the small end brasses, and the fitting of a new valve liner where the original was found to be cracked.

HEI is assisting with carriage maintenance jobs and B4 bogie overhaul.

The main outside contract job has been Donegal locomotive No.5 "Drumboe". The work included renewal of the cab and coal bunker, renewal of the deck platework, making new boiler cladding and assembling the loco for display purposes. Any reusable fittings were overhauled and retained, but most items required

complete renewal. All work to "Drumboe" has been to operational standards with a view to eventual restoration to working order. Once painted and lined out, the loco returned by low loader to Donegal Town for display at the Railway Heritage Centre.

Other contract work includes overhaul of bogies for Howth tramcar No.9 and provision of "cosmetic" running gear for Bessbrook and Newry tram No.6.

A slightly unusual job has been the repair of the water pump from Crossgar. This was a familiar pattern of pump found in many village streets throughout Ireland. It had two large wheels and a handle to turn them – if you were lucky water from the well beneath was produced at the spout, upon which you hung your bucket. The Crossgar pump was damaged in a road accident and the iron casting broken into pieces. It will hopefully now go back into its place (although not to produce any water).

It is HEI policy to concentrate on RPSI overhaul work as its main business. Other contract work is taken on when appropriate. Both RPSI and contract work contribute to maintaining employment and the necessary skills.



There was a birthday party for someone who was 60 in HEI in August. Take your pick from Mark Kennedy, Brian Hill, Peter Scott, Billy Clements, Jim Adams, James Friel, James Spurle, Lisa Adair or Rebecca Laverty.

(Photo: CP Friel)

If the visitors are unable to get to your museum, what do you do? Why, you take the museum to them! With Whitehead Railway Museum closed by lockdown for the first six months of 2021, the strategy agreed by the RPSI Events & Marketing Committee was to reach out to the public through use of the media and social media channels.

Even though the gates were closed, the aim was to maintain the museum's profile as much as possible. The rationale was that we needed to keep the museum in the limelight and to remind people that although we were shut, we hadn't gone away.

A start was made in February when our general manager Lisa Adair made a presentation to an online event run by the NI Museums Council as part of its Let's Talk online series. This provided an opportunity to highlight the museum's activities to an influential group of museum curators from across the province, and useful contacts were made. We didn't forget the members during the closure period. The Events Committee organised a successful online quiz in February which provided entertainment and an opportunity to promote the Society and museum during an otherwise fallow period. The quiz, starring Ryan Downey as quizmaster supreme, also proved to be a useful fundraiser.

Our involvement in Ulster University's Northword short story initiative also kept WRM to the fore. Ian Sinclair recorded two stories – one about coach 68 and the other about the Schoolmaster's Bedchamber on the Blackhead Path at Whitehead. Coach 68 made an ideal subject because of the carriage's links with the Belfast Blitz, the 80th anniversary of

which occurred in 2021. The connection between the Bedchamber and the museum is that one of the photographs on display in our Stables Gallery portrays a station signboard at Whitehead in the 1900s. It makes reference to the strangely named Schoolmaster's Bedchamber cave as being one of the nearby must-see attractions.

The success in April of the Guinness Grain Van 504 project in securing a runner-up place in the annual Heritage Railway Association awards (again, online) provided a further opportunity for publicity which of course we duly milked. The Events Committee had submitted the nomination as we know that involvement in such competitions enhances the RPSI's reputation within the wider heritage movement.

These initiatives were followed by our participation in Mid & East Antrim Borough Council's Industrial Heritage Week in May. The centrepiece on the online programme was an illustrated and entertaining presentation by our own Joe Cassells about the spoil train anniversary. This provided an opportunity to highlight the fact that spoil train locomotive No.4 is an exhibit in the museum. Further exposure came in the form of video shorts of eye-catching workshop scenes by Bob Skingle which we drip-fed onto social media during the week, to much acclaim.

It was not until June 3rd that Whitehead Railway Museum was able to re-open and we were gratified to learn that our efforts to retain market share had proved successful. When the doors re-opened, our visitor numbers actually showed an increase on previous years. While we lost out on school parties, senior citizen



Ian Sinclair at Whitehead, 9th September.

(Photo: R Morton)

groups and overseas visitors (to an extent), we showed a significant gain in visitor numbers from the Republic and from across Northern Ireland. Clearly the public had rediscovered its appetite for a day out and as a partially open-air attraction we fitted the bill, especially on days when the steam train rides were in operation.

We recognise that we have a duty of care to visitors, volunteers and staff and to this end new procedures were introduced. Instead of the usual practice of group guided tours we opted for self-guided tours. Visitors were then free to make their own way around the museum, following an information sheet or tuning into the audio guide on their phones. It meant visitors could pick and choose, and our guides positioned themselves at key points to provide a human face and to answer any questions. The museum's precautions were evaluated by Tourism NI and we received "Good to Go" certification which helped to reassure everyone.

Once we got the green light for re-opening, it was all hands-on deck. Supplies of our publicity pamphlet had been exhausted so with the assistance of marketing consultant Marc Casey a new brochure was produced and distributed. Our own social media was peppered with announcements and stories designed to encourage visitor to come and see us. With the co-operation of Mid & East Antrim Borough Council we were permitted to put a hoarding up at the popular Blackhead Path.

Our Platform 3 café under Rob Davies is a focal point of the museum. Customer levels have been encouraging and we hope that patrons who come initially for morning coffee or lunch will be tempted to return to sample the museum itself. The attractions of the café's famed Ulster Fry were sampled by presenter Liam Logan in September for filming by Macmillan Media of an Ulster-Scots television programme about tourist attractions in the locality. The film crew were so impressed they came back to obtain film

of No.3BG in action.

Thanks are expressed to Bill Pollock and the green-fingered folk at Whitehead in Bloom who visit regularly to attend to our hanging baskets and the planters on the platform. Their efforts help significantly to brighten up the platform. A similar but unrelated initiative produced a flower planter in the shape of a steam locomotive which was positioned at the side of the A2 road to catch the eye of passing motorists.

Over the summer we hosted a couple of visits by independent film-maker Lawrence Eagling from Swimming Head. He produced a short video as part of his "Local Treasures" social media collection and we were delighted to learn it had been viewed by 4,500 people in a matter of weeks. WRM also featured on twinkl, an English educational website which kindly branded us as one of the Top Museums of the UK. This was useful recognition.

Thanks to support from Mid & East Antrim Borough Council the museum is a member of the European Route of Industrial Heritage and this gives us a shop window which extends across the Continent and further afield. John Lockett attends the organisation's annual conference which was this time round held in Ghent. Sadly for him, he was not required to be there in person but had to make do with Zoom.

In similar vein, John is our representative on the Causeway Coastal Route Cluster Group which is a useful network of visitor attractions and hospitality providers in the area. Many mutually beneficial contacts have been made and this encourage local guesthouses and hotels now recommend WRM as a worthwhile destination for a visit.

On September 10th, WRM participated in the annual European Heritage Open Day event, offering free entry to the museum

and pay-for steam train rides. It was a busy day and the influx gave us an opportunity to set out our stall as a museum and hopefully entice visitors to return for a longer look next time.

It was a while since we had held a special event but we wanted to launch the impressively rebuilt Guinness Grain Van, which had been featured in the HRA awards. Councillor William McCaughey, Mayor of Mid & East Antrim Council, carried out the ceremony with Olive Hill from the National Lottery Heritage Fund in attendance. September 25th was a red-letter day and the quality of the rebuild and restoration, plus the outstanding "Going with the Grain" display inside the van, is a credit to the Society. We hope that the van will now take its place in the Carriage Gallery and that will give us a further bite at the publicity apple.

A rather familiar face, albeit clad in disappointingly plain garb on this occasion, was TV presenter Michael Portillo who visited WRM in October to film a sequence for a new BBC2 series about Great Coastal Railways. During his visit he availed of the opportunity to participate in a number of hands-on jobs in the Dunleath Workshop, under the watchful eye of Peter Scott.

Peter himself was in the limelight when he was named as a "Heritage Angel" in the annual awards of Ulster Architectural Heritage. The Events Committee had submitted the nomination and Peter was named "Best Craftsperson" for his role in leading the restoration of No.131 at Whitehead, and we were happy to publicise this notable achievement.

Another winner was Ian Sinclair, whom we nominated for the UK-wide Marsh Volunteer Awards. To our delight, Ian won the Northern Ireland section of the awards, with the announcement being made at a ceremony at the British Museum

in London. The nomination cited Ian's work in producing a video to mark the 50th anniversary of the final spoil train from Magheramorne to Belfast. The "Last Days of Steam in Ulster" movie was posted on the RPSI's website and the award received coverage in the local media.

One of the speakers at the European Route of Industrial Heritage conference came up with the memorable phrase that:

"Museums are nothing without people." This we know only too well and we have been hugely gratified to be able to welcome our visitors back – and to receive so much positive feedback. Those who have visited Whitehead Railway Museum appreciate what a treasure trove it is. We know the people will come back in greater numbers in 2022 – and we know for sure that they have a treat in store.



CURATORIAL REPORT

Mark Kennedy

Most on-site effort in the past year by the team concentrated on assisting Peter Scott, Bob Edwards and others in the completion of the Guinness van and developed a small exhibition inside the van using large photos and a short video of the Guinness Brewery in Dublin, with footage provided courtesy of Ciarán Cooney of the IRRS. The wagon was launched on a Steam Saturday in September with record visitor numbers recorded. Tony Ragg has installed a very smart LED striplight to light up display panels in the van. Once the Guinness van

can be shunted into its display position in the carriage and wagon gallery, we will add a couple of wooden barrels to complete the display. It was great to have Joe McKeown and Peter Rigney up/down from Dublin to help with the launch.

Thank you to our funders; the National Lottery Heritage Fund and the Northern Ireland Museums Council whose assistance has allowed us to progress with many projects during this most financially difficult period. We have sourced £20,000 funding through NIMC towards insulating



The interior of grain van 504 on 8th December with string of LED lights on the ceiling.

(Photo: M Kennedy)

the Dunleath workshop and will be developing a display on sustainability in the coming months to compliment this.

Nearing completion is a publication on Spoil Trains written by Joe Cassells which has also been supported financially by NIMC as part of a Covid Recovery plan.

In November, in a departure from our normal activities, Brian Griffith and Richard Kenny of the curatorial committee spent a day sorting out Santa's Christmas presents stored in the container and an office at Whitehead. This resulted in a considerable saving on the normal annual costs of buying presents.

We have recently received a collection of Des Coakham's high quality technical drawings of various Irish railway vehicles thanks to the foresight of Andy Crockhart.

We have started preparations for a display

on Royal Trains to be exhibited around the museum and in GNR Directors' saloon 50. The BBC have given us permission to show some archive footage showing preparations for the 1953 Royal Train, including an interior shot of 50 ready for The Queen, and of the journey from Lisburn to Lisahally which will be shown on a small vintage Bakelite television set from 1953 (fitted with a modern screen). We have also been collecting some video of the 2016 Royal Train operated by the RPSI, and if any member has footage they would be willing to let us use, please get in touch. We would be pleased to hear from anyone who has objects, images or memories of royal trains in Ireland or the Belfast Blitz. If you have a 450 Class railcar nameplate Killyleagh Castle, or nameplates with royal connections, we would like to borrow them.

The Curatorial Committee's work was recognised at the highest level at the British Museum in October when Ian Sinclair was the NI Regional winner of the Marsh Trust Award 2020 for the short video to mark the 50th anniversary of the end of steam in NI. The video attracted considerable interest online when we had to close the Museum and were unable to proceed with our planned exhibition, helping to keep up public awareness of the Museum during lockdown.

A number of other videos have also been created over the past year with more to come. In partnership with Queens University Belfast we will also be welcoming an American student named Taylor Barcom to make audio recordings of members memories in the next month or two. Please get in touch if you would like to be interviewed about the early days of the society. Last summer we welcomed Dr Fiona Candlin from Birkbeck University of London. Fiona was studying volunteering and the development of independent museums. Not sure what she made of us from an anthropological point of view, but she enjoyed her tour of the museum displays.

After his work on the Guinness van John White has turned his attention to a cosmetic restoration of GSWR loco No.184 which hasn't smelt fresh paint since its starring role in the First Great Train Robbery in 1978. We plan to do condition assessments on the vehicles stored outdoors this year with a view to prioritising emergency repairs. A number of very large tarpaulins is on our Dear Santa list for 2022.

NIMC recently grant-aided the purchase of a small hybrid laptop that can be used as either a laptop or a stand-alone tablet plus a larger monitor. The tablet part can be used to photograph artefacts and is conveniently portable to take to

meetings. This laptop is used primarily by Tony Ragg to keep the museum accreditation and specimen records up to date.

Charles Friel's winter season of Belfast meetings continued online due to coronavirus restrictions and a reluctance to being together about 100 people, average age about 70, to sit in close proximity for up to three hours.

We had been using Zoom Meetings for the 2020-2021 season, but for 2021-2022 we swapped to Zoom Webinar. This meant that it was easier to restrict access and interaction with disruptive individuals attempting to spoil the meeting. Sadly it has the disadvantage of there being no interaction between presenters and audience, and being slightly more difficult for genuine participants to access.

We ran six meetings in 2021 beginning in January with Peter Scott's review of the NCC's W-class Moguls and the ongoing work to revive one at Whitehead. Joe Cassells followed with his recounting of steam's last great challenge, the Spoil Trains which ran from Magheramorne to Belfast between 1966 and 1970 – and the men who worked them. The March meeting was Michael McMahon's recounting the work which he, Jeremy Clements and Alan O'Rourke had done to produce the mighty book; Locomotives of the Great Southern and Western Railway.

The meetings resumed in October with Charles Friel's detailed review of Sion Mills (between Victoria Bridge and Strabane) on the Derry Road. Michael McMahon returned in November to tell us about the book; Rails around Ireland; which he and Charles Friel have compiled for Transport Treasury (but not yet published – keep an eye on our online shop). Ian Sinclair presented Belfast's Railways in the Blitz in December. This used many previously

unpublished pictures of damage done during four Luftwaffe raids and also included some of the work done to repair facilities or remove some of them to the safety of Ballymena.

The meetings had an average audience of 124 with a maximum of 150 for Peter Scott's Mogul talk. While most of the audience were from all corners of these islands (including several for whom travel to Belfast would have been challenging), we also have regular attenders from Canada and the USA.

To help clear the license costs, we instituted an online raffle for those who

subscribed at least £5; the winner having their choice of £20 worth of stock from our online shop. It should be mentioned that many prizewinners turned their winnings into donations. Thank you to all who gave us their support; it all helps in these difficult days. The meetings continue until March – details on the website under the Trains and Events heading.

Ian Sinclair is continuing to add specimens and interpretation to the signal box. We plan to add a period correct timber facing panel and station name in 2022 replacing the current temporary one.

VOLUNTEER PIECE

Rachael Harris

There is a certain kind of stigma which comes with being a woman in a male dominated environment, which I'm no stranger to. However, the RPSI is one place where I have never experienced this. When I first joined the RPSI I was a bit nervous, but I quickly learned that if you have a good attitude to work and a willingness to learn that you will always be welcome.

Growing up, I had always seen the steam trains on certain weekends whilst passing York Road, but it wasn't until I met Ryan Downey, my then boyfriend and now fiancé, that I got my first experience on a steam train. In September 2018 we were booked to travel on a Steam Enterprise and from that moment I was hooked. Shortly after that I was down for a Steam Saturday and a few weeks later I began volunteering. My first few tasks were cleaning No.85, and what better way to get to know an engine!

Slowly I began to gain experience steam raising and shunting, until I unfortunately had a major setback. I needed a second

knee surgery in January 2020, and it wasn't until restrictions began to lift in mid-late 2020 that I returned to Whitehead. I missed almost a full year of training and learning but soon got back into the swing of things. Alongside Lisa Adair, Rebecca Laverty, Alan McKnight, and Nathan Lawrence I was passed out as a shunter during a Shunter School led by Dermot Mackie back in July. This gave me a great experience within shunting, but the real learning came when helping to shunt a 7-carriage rake for the Halloween Trains! This was unlike anything I had ever done but having someone like Phillip Newell to learn from was invaluable. Of course, this had to be in the wind and pouring rain! On top of that, being involved in finding a solution to a train failure that day was something I never expected to gain experience of, but it did occur, and there were plenty of lessons learned.

In December I was then passed out as a steam raiser and during the Santa Specials, completed my first turn as a steam raiser and not as assistant. Here I took a new volunteer, Evelyn McLaughlin, through the

process of lighting No.131. Although the loco was rather stubborn at first, I remembered my training and we successfully had the engine to a decent pressure when the fireman and driver arrived! [A steam raiser said a good line on a TV programme just this week, 'You want it so you're waiting for the driver and fireman, not them waiting for you!' – Ed]

Now the hard work really begins! It's time for fireman training... I have had a few days on the footplate for fireman experience and they have been, by far, my favourite thing I have taken part in. Experiencing the raw power of a locomotive while you are the one shovelling the coal is something extraordinary.

I never in my wildest dreams thought I would be where I am, especially after two knee surgeries, but I am highly privileged to get to be taught by and work with numerous wonderful volunteers on multiple breathtaking engines. Working with operations for shunts, train rides and main line runs, in all capacities, have been some of the best experiences I have ever had.

To finish, my goal going forward is to become the first female steam and diesel driver in RPSI history. Keep an ear out as in a few years' time it may be me driving past, and I'll give you a toot on the whistle! And if anyone is reading this wondering if they should join train operations, why not give it a go? If I can do it, anyone can!



Rachael Harris is pleased to have just been assessed Competent to steam raise on 28th November, 3BG's needle being at a perfectly adequate 40psi for handover to the preparation crew.

(Photo: Editor)

I've been a member of the Society for most of my life, on and off since primary school as an ordinary member, from when I was too young to be anything but an enthusiastic passenger on many Santa trains out of Pearse or Connolly.

I first began my railway volunteering journey with the Stradbally Woodland Railway in 2016 after finishing university and, through this, I became friends with people involved in the RPSI other societies and volunteering with them whenever possible.

My first turn as an active volunteer with the Society came during the 2018 Dublin Santa season when I was a carriage steward. Incidentally, I was lucky enough

to combine these duties with my day job as a journalist by writing about the tours for the Irish Times. While I greatly enjoyed speaking with and helping passengers on the trains, I was keen to get involved with the locomotive side of things in Connolly.

I soon sorted out the paperwork and sat my PTS course in Inchicore in November 2019. I then helped out with two overnight light-ups for that year's Dublin Santas on No.85 under the learned guidance of Nicky Cox.

Several lockdowns later in 2021, I was fortunate enough to be invited up to Whitehead to take part in the Train Ride operations as a trainee fireman. Given how steam starved I'd been, I jumped at the



Glen Murphy with 3BG on 7th August.

(Photo: N Cox)

opportunity and soon found myself as a trainee on No.3BG after a couple of 5.30am starts driving up from Co Kildare.

The Whitehead train rides are an entirely different kettle of fish to working in Connolly but were immensely enjoyable and educational, in particular my most recent day which coincided with the launch of the restored Guinness grain van.

I'd greatly missed working on a public train service during the lockdowns and the two days spent in Whitehead ticked all the boxes. And 3BG was kind to the amateur on both occasions!

One of the main reasons I wanted to start working with the Society was to become a more well-rounded railwayman and branch into areas I hadn't previously had the chance to. Given that steam locos are

still my biggest love, the hands-on experience of the light-ups and firing turns have taught me more than sitting at home and reading a book ever could.

Those turns on No.85 and No.3BG are days I will not soon forget and were some of the most enjoyable times I've spent on a railway to date.

I feel that my experiences so far are just the tip of a very large iceberg and I look forward to getting back on duty in Connolly or Whitehead as soon as possible.

I'd like to thank everyone in the Society who has helped me in any way and given me new opportunities over the last few years and I look forward to working with and learning from you all in the years to come.

GOING WITH THE GRAIN

Robin Morton

Guinness Grain Van 504 has a great story to tell. The bogie van was built in 1911 by the Great Northern Railway (Ireland) in Dundalk to transport casks of Guinness Stout from the Dublin brewery to stations around the GNR system. Rebuilt in 1938 to instead carry grain from farms to the brewery, 504 and sister van 2518 were withdrawn by the UTA in 1965 and happily survived until 1969, when both were saved for preservation by the RPSI at Whitehead. In 1978, 504 came within a whisker of being engulfed in a malicious fire at Whitehead. The side panels and doors sadly suffered severe scorching, but the van survived. However, with peeling paintwork and charred woodwork, 504 looked a sorry sight.

Aware of the historic merit of both vehicles, the RPSI surveyed 504 and 2518 in 2015 and decided to restore 504, as it

had the better frames, and to salvage metalwork from the more dilapidated 2518 as part of the restoration. At that stage 2518 was de-accessioned and scrapped, once all useful parts had been stripped off.

In the past couple of years restoration work has been accelerated thanks to a grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund as part of the development of Whitehead Railway Museum. Making use of the original drawings, care was taken to precisely replicate the design adopted by the GNR(I) more than 100 years previously.

In autumn 2020 the vehicle was painted in its original grey livery, with the number 504 at both ends and the authentic lettering for "Guinness", "To Carry 20 Tons", "GNR" and "Dublin" being painted on the sides by a professional sign-writer.



Grain van 1989 at Kingsbridge, now Heuston, in 1957.

(Photo: D Coakham)

Guinness Grain Van 504 was the RPSI's entry in the annual Heritage Railways Association awards and won a runner-up prize. The vehicle is now the newest exhibit to go on display at Whitehead Railway Museum.

Externally, one side of the vehicle boasts the original double doors (which will allow access by museum visitors), while the other side has the external footholds from later days which allowed staff to gain access to the roof hatches for loading grain.

Among Guinness Grain Van 504's claims to fame is that it has a rare example of Samson Fox's pressed steel underframes and Fox's pressed steel frame pattern four-wheel bogies. In the Railway Engineer magazine in August 1891, the bogie was described as giving "a maximum of strength and elasticity" with a minimum of weight.

The fact that the van is a bogie vehicle makes it unusual among Irish goods

vehicles. Traditional Irish wagons were usually four-wheeled vehicles which could carry up to 10 tons and were often used for livestock. The Guinness vans were 27ft 3ins in length and could carry up to 20 tons.

The first iteration of Guinness vans took shape in 1903, when Dundalk built six large vans to cope with increasing output from the brewery at St James Gate in Dublin. Eight years later came a further batch of six of the vans, including 504 and 2518. In 1938, 504 was one of the first to be converted at Dundalk to carry grain in bulk. In total, six of the vans including 2518 were converted to carry grain. As part of the rebuild the vehicles were fitted with rooftop hatches to load the grain and floor level chutes to discharge it.

Once in the ownership of the RPSI the two vehicles were used for a variety of purposes, with 2518 housing a shop serving refreshments at an Open Day in 1970. On the same day 504 was used for a chip shop

and then a one-off evening disco, which must have been a first for this venerable vehicle. In later years 504 became a mobile store in between train ride operations, providing a safe haven for road signs, platform signs and seats.

But now 504's future is assured – and it is an eye-catching exhibit in WRM. It justifies its place not just for its solid historical pedigree and detailed rebuild, but also on account of its association with the world-famous Guinness brand.



The dilapidated and fire damaged 504 at Whitehead, 13th January 2012.

(Photo: Editor)

GUINNESS GRAIN VAN, THE NUTS & BOLTS Peter Scott

By the time restoration of 504 was proposed, the condition of the van had deteriorated seriously, with extensive rot in the timber bodywork and corrosion of the underframe. As the van was cleared out and dismantling progressed, it was discovered that the steel underframe was in even worse condition than had been envisaged. The main side solebars were

corroded into holes and unable to support the body.

To facilitate repairs, it was necessary to remove the body altogether. One feature that soon became apparent was that the screws and bolts holding the side sheeting to the uprights were often corroded to nothing, and the body timbers were

literally falling apart. A $\frac{3}{4}$ " diameter bolt ended up looking like a needle and steel screws were merely a hole in the timber filled with rust. This is probably a consequence of the use of oak for the timber frame, the acid from which is not kind to steel. To lift the body without it collapsing, additional cross members, bracing pieces and clamps were fitted. The body was carefully removed using the carriage lifting gantries, the underframe wheeled out, and the body lowered onto supports.

The frame was then lifted off the bogies and stripped of all attaching parts and blast cleaned. Most of the longitudinal side solebars were removed and replaced by new channel sections specially folded up. The underframe and bogie frames are "Fox's Patent", which made use of folded and pressed steel sections rather than flats and angles. Corrosion had done serious damage and the worst parts were repaired by setting in new sections. The original steelwork was retained where possible.

Corrosion and cracks in the bogie frames were likewise repaired. The bearing springs had suffered very badly, with corroded leaves and burst buckles. A set of springs was made up using the best of the leaves from 504 and its sister 2518. Fortunately, sufficient bearing brasses were available when the survivors from both vehicles were pooled. The wheelsets were blast cleaned and painted. The bogie side bearers (again a Fox's steel pressing) were unserviceable and were renewed. Upon completion, the underframe was primed and painted.

The brake gear was dismantled, blast cleaned and painted, and missing parts made or reinstated from the sister van. (These vans had hand brakes on one bogie only, applied by the normal lever on each side. They were not vacuum fitted).

The body was then lifted back into place.

It was aligned as well as possible, and a temporary steel angle framework was built inside, to hold it in position while the rotted side frame uprights and diagonals and also the lower sheeting planks were renewed. The fire-damaged side of the vehicle needed to be renewed. This included the cantrail, which supports the roof, uprights and diagonals, end posts, door hinge posts and solebars, as well as the entire sheeting.

The other side and the ends had suffered from rot and twisting – the worst of the uprights and diagonals were renewed, retaining as much of the original as possible. It should be appreciated that the van was built out of the best of timber – what looked seriously rotted was often found to be quite sound when lightly planed down. According to the vehicle specification, the frame members were originally oak – we have used sapele which is the most readily available hard wood, and which does not have an adverse effect on steel fasteners.

At the fire damaged side, the door hinges were reinstated and new double doors made. Fortunately, the vehicle diagram was very well drawn and gives much detail, almost as good as a set of working drawings. (But annoyingly silent on some detail where we could do with information – e.g. the door securing arrangement).

A feature of the original van was four long vents about knee height, with an interior sliding panel that could close these off. It was removed and the vent blocked up when converted for loose grain, but the marks on the side sheeting were still legible, and the information in the diagram is sufficient to make up something close to the original.

A piece of good fortune as regards the double doors was that the ironwork for the hinges was still in place, only the boss



*Unloading grain via iron chutes into a road vehicle at Omagh General goods yard, 29th April 1961.
(Photo: D. Coakham)*

for the hinge pin having been removed. The hinge bands on the doors were long gone and had to be re-made.

The double doors have been reinstated on one side only. The idea is to have one side of the van restored as the original keg van, the other side as the later grain van with no doors but with the grain outlets. The latter were corroded and unserviceable, they were rebuilt incorporating only the existing screw mechanism (which surprisingly freed up quite easily). The roof hatches were in similar condition and have been rebuilt, using only the old securing screws and hinges.

One aspect where information was scarce was exactly how the grain was discharged since various attachment points were provided but nothing of the removable equipment remained. However, a breakthrough came when a photograph was unearthed of a similar vehicle being

discharged at Omagh.

In the picture, the railway is clearly at a substantially higher level than the lorry into which the grain is being discharged, and removable chutes have been attached to guide the grain away from the side of the van. The personnel precariously mounted on the frame of the lorry are assisting the last of the cargo to discharge. 504 has brackets which could be for mounting a platform, on which the operators could stand more safely. The discharge hatches in the Omagh photo are operated by levers, not by a screw mechanism as on 504.

The plan is that, in order to illustrate both uses to which the van was put, by restoring one end of the interior as a keg van and the other end as a grain van. The observant will immediately protest that this is incompatible with the exterior of the vehicle, where one complete side is

keg van and the other side grain van. However, we did our best and you can judge the result!

The 2020 lockdown disrupted the restoration but when work resumed, repairs concentrated on the "Grain Van" side, which was not fire damaged but had suffered from rot, twisting and splitting of the framework. Most of the diagonals were deemed unserviceable and were renewed, together with two of the uprights. The corner posts were retained and the cantrail repaired with timber pieced in.

When converted to carrying bulk grain, the interior of the van was double sheeted with light vertical tongue and groove sheeting. This was of inferior quality compared with the substantial original bodywork and had been attacked by woodworm, which had left the original timber alone. The interior sheeting was reinstated for the "grain" end of the van.

The roof timbers were in reasonable condition except for the edge timbers

along the cantrail and local areas round the top filling hatches. These three hatches were badly deteriorated and have been re-built using only the original fittings, and the rotted timber round them replaced. The original canvas roof covering had been in turn covered by roofing felt, which had been secured by several hundred nails – the remains of which had to be carefully removed and which left their imprint in more than one person's knees.

I enquired from a friend formerly in the carriage body building trade as to the method of attaching the roof canvas to the timber goods vans. "Oh, you get all the old paint you can get your hands on and mix it up – colour doesn't matter. Spread it on the roof and then pull the canvas over it, smoothing it out and pulling it over the sides. It is secured by battens and then trimmed off with a sharp knife." So there you are! In the end, we used PVC sheet for the roof covering of 504, since it is more durable than canvas – and omitted the suggested paint



Many of those who made large contributions to the restoration of 504 were present at its launch on 25th September: Jim Adams, Peter Scott, Mervyn Fleming, Bob Skingle, Robert Edwards, Brian Griffith, Richard Kenny, Mark Kennedy, Tony Ragg.

(Photo: J Cassells)

concoction.

[During the restoration of brake van 81 "Ivan", it was intended to use vast quantities of glue for exactly this. Unfortunately, what arrived was umpteen pots of some sort of linseed cement. The hastily drawn-up alternative was a row of five volunteers inching backwards on their bottoms across the roof smoothing it with their socked feet while people on either side hauled, battened and pinned the canvas in place under the overhang. Underneath the centre portion of 81's canvas is actually a second one, which was ordered too small because the requirement to fold it under the overhang was not factored in. - Ed.]

Our efforts were focused by the setting of September 25 as the date for the "official launch" of the van. Rapid progress was made on the fitting of the roof covering, including the side battens and end arch rails. All remaining temporary bolts were replaced by permanent coach bolts. The discharge hatches were bolted

up and the timber solebars secured – these had been modified when the van was converted as a grain carrier and support knees had been added.

Finally, the vehicle was painted – white interior and normal wagon grey outside, with the floor stained brown. Ironwork is black. Our thanks are due to sign writer John Gray of "Airforce One" who has done much of the recent work for the RPSI. At least there is no doubt about the nature of the lettering, enough photos exist of both versions of the van.

So that is the story up to date so far – what remains is to further fit out the interior including the grain partitions, complete the door locking arrangement, and perhaps provide examples of the detachable chutes and platforms. (Several beer barrels are already installed!)

My thanks are due to all the volunteers who have toiled long and hard on 504, and to the Heritage Engineering Ireland staff who have had a small but essential input.



*The restored grain van 504 on display following its launch, 25th September.
(Photo: R Morton)*

How Railwaymen and Dockers Defied an Empire – The Irish Munitions Embargo of 1920 – by Peter Rigney

From May to November 1920, Irish railwaymen became embroiled in widespread industrial action against British authority in Ireland. This was known as the 'Munitions Strike' or Embargo, where rail workers refused to work trains carrying armed military personnel. Peter Rigney, in his new pamphlet, makes a substantial contribution to our understanding of this period which has been scarcely documented by historians. The author begins by highlighting how the strike was inspired by similar action in England, where railway workers refused to handle munitions destined for the Russo-Polish conflict. Rigney returns to this broader focus towards the end, by drawing comparisons to similar international events in Holland, France and Algeria.

The central focus of the pamphlet concerns how the railwaymen's action affected the mobility of British forces, prompting them into less favourable means of transportation. The nature of these refusals is accounted for, with some passing off without incident and others necessitating brute intimidation from soldiers. Furthermore, Rigney illuminates the chaotic consequences of the embargo for both individual railwaymen, and the Irish railway network. Services were brought to a standstill due to line closures as far south as Bantry, and as far north as Burtonport. By describing such impediments to the railway, the author casts light on the reliance of Irish communities on rail transport. Individual enginemen were also caught between opposing sides during the embargo.

Railway companies would often respond to refusals by dismissal, however those

who chose to work military trains were met with IRA intimidation, notably on the GNR. Indeed, readers will note how railwaymen possessed a degree of political consciousness, playing a non-violent role in the Irish independence struggle which was active in 1920. In sum, Peter Rigney has produced a detailed chronology of the Munitions Embargo, therefore enhancing our appreciation for the disruption that it precipitated. He has taken advantage of the wealth of primary material available through the Irish Railway Record Society archives, and witness statements from the Bureau of Military History. This excellent publication is strongly recommended to anyone interested in our railway history or the events of the Irish revolutionary period. Copies can be purchased via the 'Books' section of the RPSI's online shop.

**How Railwaymen
and Dockers defied
an Empire**

**The Irish Munitions
Embargo of 1920**



Peter Rigney

As a young steam train addict in the early 1950s, I can remember a number of occasions when I visited Clonmel station by travelling on a horse-drawn dray which was the property of Hearn's Hotel in the town. The journeys were enjoyed in the company of a friend of my own age called Edward Murphy, whose parents owned the hotel. The hotel is noteworthy for having been the original headquarters of Charles Bianconi's network of stagecoaches in the middle years of the 19th century.

I would imagine that only a minority of the guests who stayed in the hotel would have had private cars, and the dray was required to bring their luggage to the centre of town, Parnell Street, where the

hotel – and my parents' drapery shop – was located. Often the guests would be commercial travellers, and their cases of samples would be too much for any other local conveyance. Other parcels for my parents' shop also were also carried, and sometimes, too, the reels of film for one or other of the local cinemas. These would carry the dramatic labelling: USELESS IF DELAYED.

At the time I am talking about there would have only been three or four trains a day, so these connections were an important ingredient of local commercial activity.

The engines used back then were 4-4-0s and, for goods, 0-6-0s. Nothing as splendid as 'Merlin' or 'Sieve Gullion'.



Clonmel with D12 (or 305 class) No.305 with an IRRS special on 19th April 1954. Interestingly it seems to have a type 'N' boiler, the same as fitted to No.461.

(Photo: Kelland c/o CP Friel)

For Meeting of Authority

27th May, 1963

Proposal: To purchase five C.I.E. locomotives and to sell five U.T.A. locomotives at an estimated net cost of £2,000 chargeable to Revenue.

Object: To provide sufficient motive power for the Summer of 1963 and 1964, and to save at least £2,000 in locomotive maintenance in 1963/64.

1 Since 1958 the Authority has reduced its locomotive stock from 116 to 55 and during this period has run out the 61 locomotives and is running down boilers and fireboxes in the remaining locomotives, except the 18 Mogul tank class which are the newest and will be the last to be displaced. To avoid firebox replacements costing £3,000 each or boiler replacements costing £5,000 each the locomotive boilers and fireboxes have been welded and kept going. Our Insureres now have stopped two of our locomotives from operating until new fireboxes are provided and other locomotives will reach this stage before September 1964.

2 The cheapest method of obtaining sufficient motive power for the Summer of 1963 and 1964 would be to purchase the five locomotives offered by C.I.E. It was agreed at the Traffic Committee meeting on the 17th April, 1963 (Minute No T.C.864) and ratified at the Board Meeting on 29th April, 1963 (Minute No 4628) that negotiations should be entered into to hire the five locomotives if possible, and if not possible to negotiate a purchase price and to report back to the Board for authority to complete the purchase.

3 A tentative offer of £1,000 each was made by the U.T.A. for the five locomotives, subject to insurance inspection, and C.I.E. has confirmed that this offer is acceptable. The cost of the five locomotives would be £5,000 and the sale value of five locomotives which would be scrapped against them is in the region of £3,000, giving a net cost of £2,000.

4 The value of the unused mileage before overhaul of the five C.I.E. locomotives is estimated at £7,000 and this more than offsets the £2,000 net cost of the locomotives. In addition to the above, the fireboxes in three of the locomotives should not require renewal until after 1966.

5 It is recommended that authority be given to purchase the five locomotives at a cost of £5,000 and to sell five of our existing stock at an estimated sale value of £3,000, the purchase of the five locomotives to be subject to the satisfactory acceptance by the Insurance company of the boilers and fire boxes until September 1964.

J. COURTNEY.
CHIEF ENGINEER.

J.C. BAILIE.
OPERATING MANAGER.

W.H. DUNCAN.
CHIEF ACCOUNTANT.

J.A. CLARKE.
GENERAL MANAGER.

SEE ABOUT GETTING LOCOMOTIVES TO BELFAST

Editor's Notes –

Point 1 above ties in with 'NCC Saga' – RM Arnold – Year 1963 – 50 got a new firebox, the first NCC engine to get one since 1954. 10 then got one too, then 5 and then 3. In 1964, 51, 53 and 55 got new fireboxes.

Five locomotives was the intention of the UTA, and the particulars of five were sought and forwarded, but only four came. The table considering the value of each locomotive is next reproduced, followed by handwritten notes of what was scrapped to offset cost, and dates the chosen engines came north: clearing Customs as, having been sold cross-border, they are themselves now imported goods.

In the disposal note overleaf, No.41 is 5G2 class (GNR No.182), No.46 is in fact a UG class (GNR No.79), No.59 is incorrectly recorded as 'Class V': it is in fact Class VS No.59 (GNR No.210) 'Erne'.

Engine No.	Date Built	Date of Last H.R.	Mileage since H.R.	Boiler No.	Date Built	Date of Last H.R.	Mileage since H.R.	Useful Millage before H.R.	Boiler due Renewal	Firebox Due Renewal	Estimated Cost of Firebox Repairs Required	Estimated Value of Useful Life	Scrap Value of Engines	Scrap Value of Five Engines Replaced	Value to U.T.A.
85	1932	3-59	37,000	268	1947	3-59	37,000	51,000	1977	1962	£150	£1,530	£750	£600	£2,130
170	1939	6-59	34,000	277	1939	6-59	34,000	56,000	1969	1966	£25	£1,618	£600	£600	£2,193
								"							
171	1938	9-57	21,000	275	1938	9-57	21,000	69,000	1968	1970	£25	£1,993	£600	£600	£2,568
174	1938	2-57	86,000	276	1938	2-57	86,000	4,000	1968	1972	£50	£116	£600	£600	£666
207	1948	1-60	25,000	2	1948	1-60	25,000	65,000	1978	1963	-	£1,878	£750	£600	£2,628

NOTES. – C.I.E. state their standard is 100,000 miles between heavy repairs.

U.T.A. standard is 80,000 miles between heavy repairs.

For this statement I have taken the figure 90,000 miles.

Firebox life = 15 years, boiler life 30 years.

The average cost of a heavy repair on the U.T.A. is £2,600.

5 Overhauls will be saved + the scrap value of these engines replaced.

LOCOMOTIVES SOLD IN PLACE OF
O.I.B.

	£
CLASS RT NO 24	420
CLASS N° 41	530
CLASS N° 46	535
CLASS V N° 59	605
	<hr/> £ 20 90

ARRIVED PORTADOWN

No 170	21-6-63	CLEARING
No 171	20-6-63	CLEARING CUSTOMS
No 174	21-6-63	CLEARING
No 207	20-6-63	CLEARING CUSTOMS

It is highly interesting to note how the paths of Nos.171 and 85 diverge greatly at this point in 1963: one selected to go north for further service before direct handover to us, the other rejected and hauled off to Inchicore for scrap. Of course, this seemingly terminal decision for No.85 ends up setting her up for her somewhat convoluted route to preservation.

No.85 was not at all passed over in favour of No.207, as has been alluded to in print many times over, because it was not either / or. BOTH (or more precisely all five) locomotives were intended to be purchased, but No.85 will have turned out to have had a defect which failed her insurance inspection by the UTA, as in point 3 of the minutes, whereas the other four passed. So what may that have been? There's certainly a direction the evidence points -

The UTA's insurers are implied in point 1 to be unexpectedly failing engines for firebox defects, and, in the comparison table, No.85's firebox is both a year overdue for renewal and is going to cost more than the repairs required to the other locomotives put together to fix, No.207 being noted to need no firebox repairs. Of No.85 Peter Scott says 'When No.85 was being overhauled by H&W, they discovered extensive cracking in the outer

firebox door plate. Both corner sections were cut out and renewed.

H&W may have been warned about this defect, implying it was already known about.'





(Previous Page) – A withdrawn RT, albeit not No.24 in 1963 but No.25 on 9th February 1961, in Maysfields.

(Photo: c/o CP Friel)

(Above) – S-class No.5174 & 170 reverse into Portadown shed, past No.207 which arrived the previous day, on arrival from Dundalk at 5.40pm on 21st June 1963.

(Photo: CP Friel)

BILL SCOTT OBITUARY

Joe Cassells

Bill Scott – always “Scotty” to his many friends – was born in Coleraine. His father was a civil servant, and a promotion within the Department of Agriculture took the family to Belfast in Bill’s early life. His formative years were spent in the city, but the family roots stayed in the northwest and certainly explained his love for the LMSNCC. His grandfather was station master at Aghadowey and later at Downhill, and Sir Hervey Bruce’s carved seat from the private waiting room was a prized possession in his own house in Brerton Crescent. In schooldays the long summer holidays always featured a visit to his aunt’s at Whitecastle in Donegal. Among his earlier experiences as a schoolboy were footplate rides and box camera photographs on “The Swilly” and the County Donegal narrow gauge railways. The photograph I’ve chosen to illustrate this tribute shows him on the platform at Douglas, Isle of Man in July 1979, after we had enjoyed a run on a

market special from Castletown in the pair of ex-CDR railcars which found their way to the Isle of Man after the closure of their native system.

Bill’s interests lay in the sciences and engineering – his youthful ambition, never realised, was to be a Premium Apprentice at York Road – but after education at RBAI he completed a teaching diploma at Stranmillis College and taught successively at Ballygomartin Boys School and Holywood High School. In his mature years he completed external degrees at both Queens University and the Open University, where for some years he tutored summer courses in environmental sciences. He also made himself into something of an expert on Economics and military history. Outside his railway interests Bill was a member of the R.S.P.B. and a keen and very aggressive sportsman, excelling at school and College in Rugby, Cricket, Squash and Golf. In more placid



Bill Scott at Douglas with an ex-CDR railcar behind him, Isle of Man, in July 1979.

(Photo: J Cassells)

years he regularly entertained a small group of us to the famous "Golfer's Fry" at Knock Golf Club of a Friday night, before we all retired to Brerton Crescent for an evening of railway conversation, colour slides and general good crack.

In 1965 Scotty proposed to Ann Ross from Ballymoney, and throughout a long and very happy marriage she good-naturedly humoured him in his lifelong railway interest. Characteristically, on the day they drove to the Manse of Dunloy Presbyterian Church to obtain the Wedding Licence, the trip was timed to coincide with a photograph of a steam special at Ballyboylan crossing! He was proud of his children, Nigel and Kathryn, though sorry that his son never followed his dad's railway interest.

His railway interest encompassed train timing, photography, railway history and modelling, and I first met Scotty at one of

the late Drew Donaldson's famous track nights at 416 Lisburn Road in 1962. Our friendship was to remain lifelong. Drew's layout recreated the Cork Main Line and its branches in the latter days of steam, and it is fortunate that those superb models of engines and rolling stock can today be viewed in the Ulster Folk & Transport Museum at Cultra. As keen cyclists, Drew and Scotty travelled many hundreds of miles each summer to record the last days of CIE steam in the 1950s and 1960s. Scotty was himself an accomplished model engineer, and his O gauge models of NCC 0-6-0 No.54 and the compound 4-4-0 No.55 "Parkmount" were regular performers on Drew's line.

Train timing and photography began in Ireland and spread to Great Britain as he went on cricket tours with "Inst". When main line steam finished 'across the water' in 1968, a group of us developed an interest in the British industrial steam

scene and later in the return of preserved main line steam in the 1970s. We often filled a car and went off for a weekend of chasing and timing, always marvelling at his ability to maintain total concentration during long days (and sometimes nights) of driving. The Lake District became a favourite destination. A day chasing or timing the "Cumbrian Coast Express" or the "Cumbrian Mountain Express" would often finish with a meal at "The Maypole Inn" at Long Preston, followed by a quiet pint for Scotty in the tiny "Limeburners Arms" in Nether Kellet. Our regular base nearby was Mrs Williams's guest house at Town End Farm. Her husband Vic was the area PW. engineer at Carnforth, and his fund of railway stories often continued far into the night!

In later years Scotty became a regular customer of Derek Phillips' international "Steam and Safaris" tours, travelling to South Africa, and later as far afield as Cuba, Pakistan, Australia and New Zealand. Following retirement, deteriorating health began to narrow his frontiers, but he managed to cover preserved steam in almost every country on both sides of the former "Iron Curtain" in the 1980s and 1990s. His last continental tour – greatly enjoyed and often recounted – was to Spain and Portugal with Ian Wilson in 2003.

Scotty was the author of many articles on Irish railway subjects in "Railway World" and "Five Foot Three", and his magnum opus – based on a lifetime of research – was the magnificent "The Locomotives of the NCC" published by Colourpoint in 2008. Many of the insights it contained were based on his friendship with such railway professionals as Locomotive Inspectors Frank Dunlop and Billy Hanley: they deeply respected him as 'one of themselves'. He was a founder member of the RPSI, holding office for a time as Assistant Railtour Organiser and Treasurer. He was a regular attender at our winter Belfast Area meetings, revelling in the company both of fellow enthusiasts and retired footplatemen.

Scotty was in many ways a larger-than-life character. He had firm convictions, held with good humour and without rancour. He counted as friends many in the railway fraternity who would not always have shared his views. His pungency of expression often reduced us (and himself too!) to helpless laughter. Once met, he could never be forgotten, and enthusiasts throughout the British Isles and beyond will mourn his passing. The Society's sympathy goes out to Anne, Nigel, Kathryn and the whole family circle as they, and we, mourn his passing.

DEREK YOUNG OBITUARY

The death of Derek Young, on December 20th 2021 robs the RPSI of a founder member, an influential figure and someone who had contributed massively to the Society's development over the years. Derek was a keen railway modeller, an active photographer and the author of a definitive book on the Ulster Transport Authority.

Robin Morton

Derek John Alexander Young (75), who lived in Bangor, was an occasional speaker at railway meetings in Belfast and London and had created a major archive of photographs taken from the time when he first became a transport enthusiast in the late 1950s/early 1960s.

He was very much a driving force in the creation of the RPSI. In 1964, the railway

network faced a major contraction and countless locomotives and items of rolling stock were being scrapped. Derek was one of those involved in an informal meeting in the waiting room at York Road station in Belfast, at which plans for to set up a preservation society were discussed.

Derek, who had been educated at Methodist College in Belfast, and was a member of the NI Road and Rail Development Association, was instrumental in setting the wheels in motion. The outcome was the convening of the inaugural meeting of the RPSI which took place in September 1964.

Derek was appointed to the first RPSI committee and served as the Society's first Membership Secretary. He was subsequently appointed as publicity officer and acted as the Society's insurance advisor in a Post of Special Responsibility for some years. However, the world of work soon took over and Derek opted for a more back-seat and consultancy role.

After school, Derek Young had joined Royal Exchange to commence his career in insurance. He completed his studies and in 1968 became a member of the Chartered Insurance Institute. He spent most of his career with the Alliance and Leicester Building Society in Belfast where he was able to use his good offices to facilitate the use of the front desk for sales of Portrush Flyer tickets. Derek specialised in mortgages and rose to become a member of senior management with Alliance & Leicester.

Derek was widely respected in the business community in Belfast and knew how government worked. He put these skills to good effect as a member of lobby groups which successfully saw off two threats to the Northern Ireland railway network in the early 2000s.

For many years he was a board member of the Northern Ireland Historic Buildings Council. This led in turn to his appointment as one of the Irish judges in the National Railway Heritage Awards.

Derek was one of the instigators of the RPSI's proposal to develop a railway museum at Whitehead. He deployed his business acumen and was involved in the process of lobbying government, politicians and funding bodies. Eventually, the process bore fruit and Whitehead Railway Museum opened in 2017.

As someone with a close knowledge of governance, Derek was instrumental in developing a review of governance procedures within the RPSI. This culminated in the publication in 2017 of the Courtney Report which proposed a restructuring of board structures – and which foreshadowed the move to appoint full-time staff.

Behind the scenes Derek was closely involved in applications for honours for various RPSI luminaries. His knowledge of the public sector and the application process enabled him to know what buttons to push.

A modest man, he was a generous benefactor of the RPSI and was among those who supported the Charity Santa train run by the RPSI which enabled the Salvation Army and St Vincent de Paul charities to give tickets to needy families.

Having contributed photographs to many books and magazines over the years, Derek published a major book of his own in 2006 called *The Ulster Transport Authority in Colour* and it proved to be a best-seller. The album contained an array of Derek's colour photographs and they showed how broad his interests were – not just steam trains but also diesel units, buses and stations. He followed up the book with popular talks to the RPSI in

Belfast and to the IRRS in London.

Derek's interests spread beyond the RPSI to the Talyllyn Railway in Wales and the North Yorkshire Moors Railway, both of which he supported. He was an active railway modeller and most Friday evenings saw him attending Tony Ragg's track nights in Bangor, where he regaled colleagues with his views on everything from railway recollections to transport policy and politics. Derek, who was a regular attender at the Gauge O Guild's annual exhibition in Britain, was in the process of building an O gauge model railway layout of his own in a purpose-built garden room at home. The layout was based on his beloved Goathland on the NYMR, but sadly his illness intervened and the project was not completed.

After taking early retirement from A&L Derek set up a new business enterprise

called Blue Chip with his former colleague Gary Mills. The company helped firms with title insurance and this led to Derek working closely with the NI Law Society. Thanks to Derek's influence, Blue Chip regularly hired a carriage on the RPSI's Steam & Jazz special in order to entertain clients.

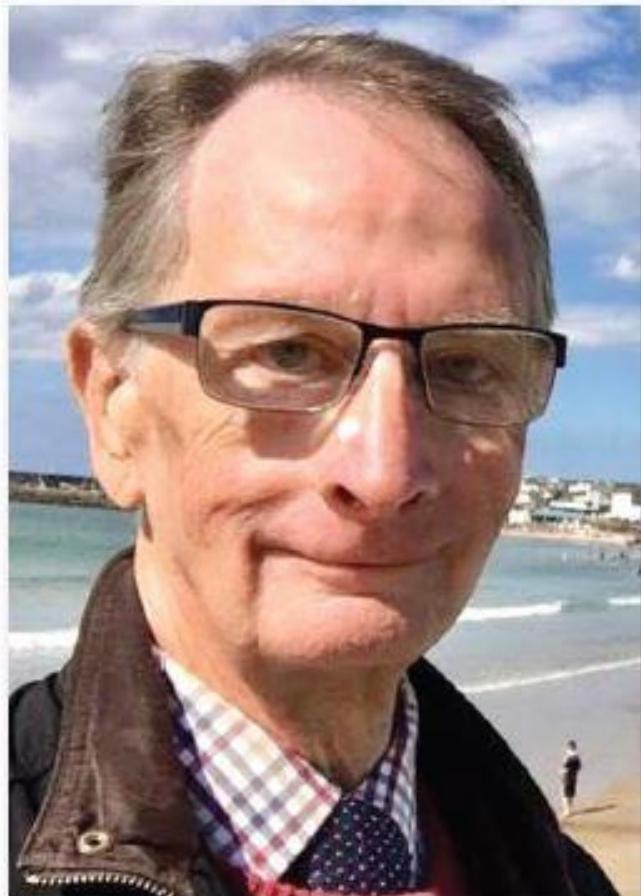
Derek married his wife Gillian in 1970 but tragically she died of cancer in 2011. He leaves their daughter Elizabeth, son-in-law Andrew and their four children, Helena, Genevieve, Susannah and Mariella.

In 2015 Derek was diagnosed with cancer and he fought a brave battle against pancreatic cancer for his remaining years. But even though he was unwell, he continued to offer guidance to the Society. He regularly attended meetings and remained involved in the RPSI's Belfast Management Committee and the Events & Marketing Committee.

The Society was well represented at a Service of Thanksgiving which was held for Derek at Knock Methodist Church on December 23rd. The reflection was delivered by Canon John McKegney, chairman of the RPSI and a close friend and confidant of Derek's.

In his address John McKegney paid tribute to the lifelong influence for good which Derek had exerted over the RPSI. He referred to Derek's integrity and generosity of spirit and said that the RPSI would not have been the success it is today had it not been for his "abiding interest and active support".

"The fact that Whitehead Railway Museum exists at all is due to the vision displayed by Derek and a small band of dedicated volunteers," he said. "As ever, his quiet strength and sense of purpose was clothed in a dignified and unaffected modesty. He was someone who made this world a better place."



*Derek Young in Portrush.
(Photo: Elizabeth Doust)*



INSIDE REAR: No.131 and CAF substitute train, 31st October. (Photo: N Lawrence).

REAR COVER: Mainline steam, 2021. White Harbour, 30th October. (Photo: J Cassells).

