

# THE HIGHLAND RAILWAY

## OPENING OF THE

# DORNOCH

## LIGHT RAILWAY

This NEW LINE, giving direct Railway Communication from THE MOUND Station, on the Highland Railway, to DORNOCH (far famed for its splendid Golf Links and Sea Bathing) will be Opened for Traffic

ON MONDAY, 2nd JUNE

The Train Service on the Day of Opening  
WILL BE AS FOLLOWS:-

	A.M.	A.M.	P.M.	P.M.		A.M.	A.M.	P.M.	P.M.	
Dornoch dep.	8.45	11.15	12.25	2.15	4.10	The Mound dep.	8.30	11.45	1.0	4.0
Kembo	8.53	11.23	12.33	2.23	4.18	Stafho	8.40	12.5	1.0	4.10
Stafho	8.7	11.31	12.41	2.31	4.26	Kembo	8.47	12.12	1.14	4.17
The Mound arr.	9.10	11.40	12.50	2.40	4.38	Dornoch	8.55	12.20	1.22	4.25

On and after TUESDAY, 3rd JUNE,  
THE TRAIN SERVICE WILL BE AS UNDER:-

On Tuesday					On Thursday				
	A.M.	A.M.	P.M.	P.M.		A.M.	A.M.	P.M.	P.M.
Dornoch	dep. 8.10	11.25	12.30	2.10	The Mound	dep. 8.20	11.55	2.0	5.0
Kembo	8.18	11.33	12.38	2.18	Stafho	8.27	12.4	2.0	5.11
Stafho	8.27	11.38	12.43	2.27	Kembo	8.34	12.9	1.14	5.19
The Mound	arr. 8.57	11.45	12.50	2.37	Dornoch	arr. 8.52	12.15	1.20	5.28

\* Trains will only stop where there are Passengers to be taken up or set down; in the latter case Passengers must inform Guard of Train at previous Station.

For Passenger Train Charges, Goods Train Rates, and other information, apply to Mr THOMAS M'EWEN, Traffic Manager, Inverness.

T. A. WILSON, General Manager.

RAILWAY OFFICES, INVERNESS, May, 1903.

Quindia, Inverness.

### Editorial

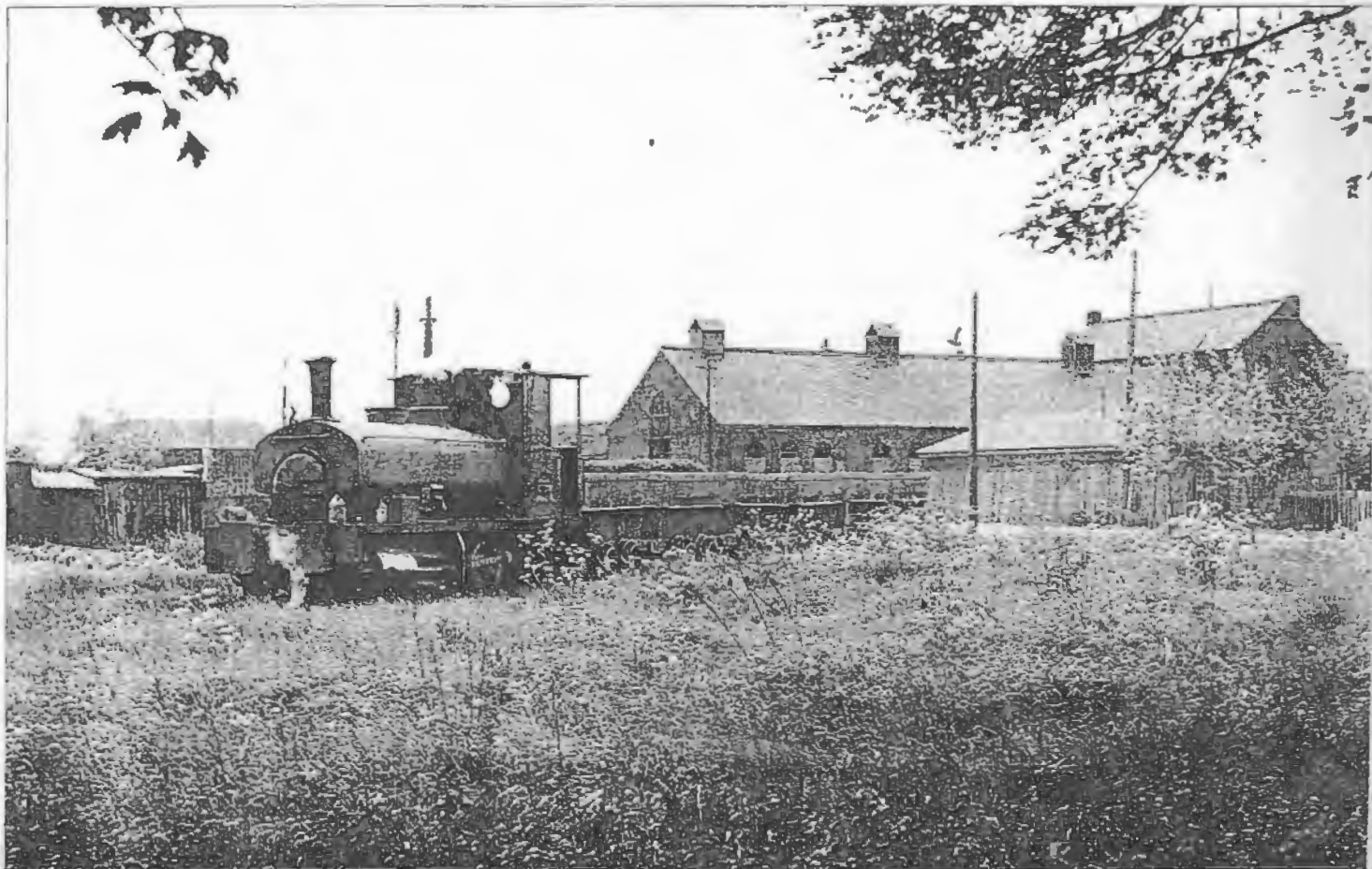
Welcome to the RAILWAY BYLINES SUMMER SPECIAL No.3. As regular readers of RAILWAY BYLINES magazine will know, we always try very hard to find the best possible photographs - preferably, ones which haven't already been flogged to death in other magazines and books. But when it comes to this SUMMER SPECIAL, we must smugly admit to being rather pleased with ourselves - to the best of our knowledge, the greater proportion of the 110 photographs we have used are previously unpublished. In fact, when it came to having the prints made, some of the negatives, although forty or more years old, were being placed in an enlarger for the very first time! Photographs don't come much fresher than that!

We hope you enjoy what's on offer in this year's SUMMER SPECIAL. If you happen to be stumbling across us for the first time, remember that you can treat yourself to a regular helping of this sort of fare - branch and secondary lines, industrial railways, narrow gauge, Irish railways and the like. The regular helping comes in the form of a 56-page magazine, RAILWAY BYLINES, which is published monthly, and will cost you a measly £3.20.

Now - if you fancy getting twelve issues of RAILWAY BYLINES magazine free, gratis and for absolutely nothing, you can enter our 'spot the station' competition. Somewhere on this or the facing page is a picture of a 'mystery station'. Another 'mystery station' is pictured on the back cover. Tell us which two stations we are looking at, and you could win a year's subscription to RAILWAY BYLINES magazine. Send your entry to MARTIN SMITH, RAILWAY BYLINES, PO BOX 1957, RADSTOCK, BATH BA3 5YJ to reach us by 26 October 2000 (for those of you with poor memories for dates, 26 October is, of course, Punkie Night at Hinton St. George in Somerset). All correct entries will be placed in the editor's red and white bobble hat, and the first one to be drawn will win the prize.

Even if you don't wish to enter our competition, you are most welcome to write, phone, fax or e-mail us. If you have any comments about this SUMMER SPECIAL, please get in touch - we will try to include a selection of readers' letters and comments in a forthcoming issue of RAILWAY BYLINES magazine.

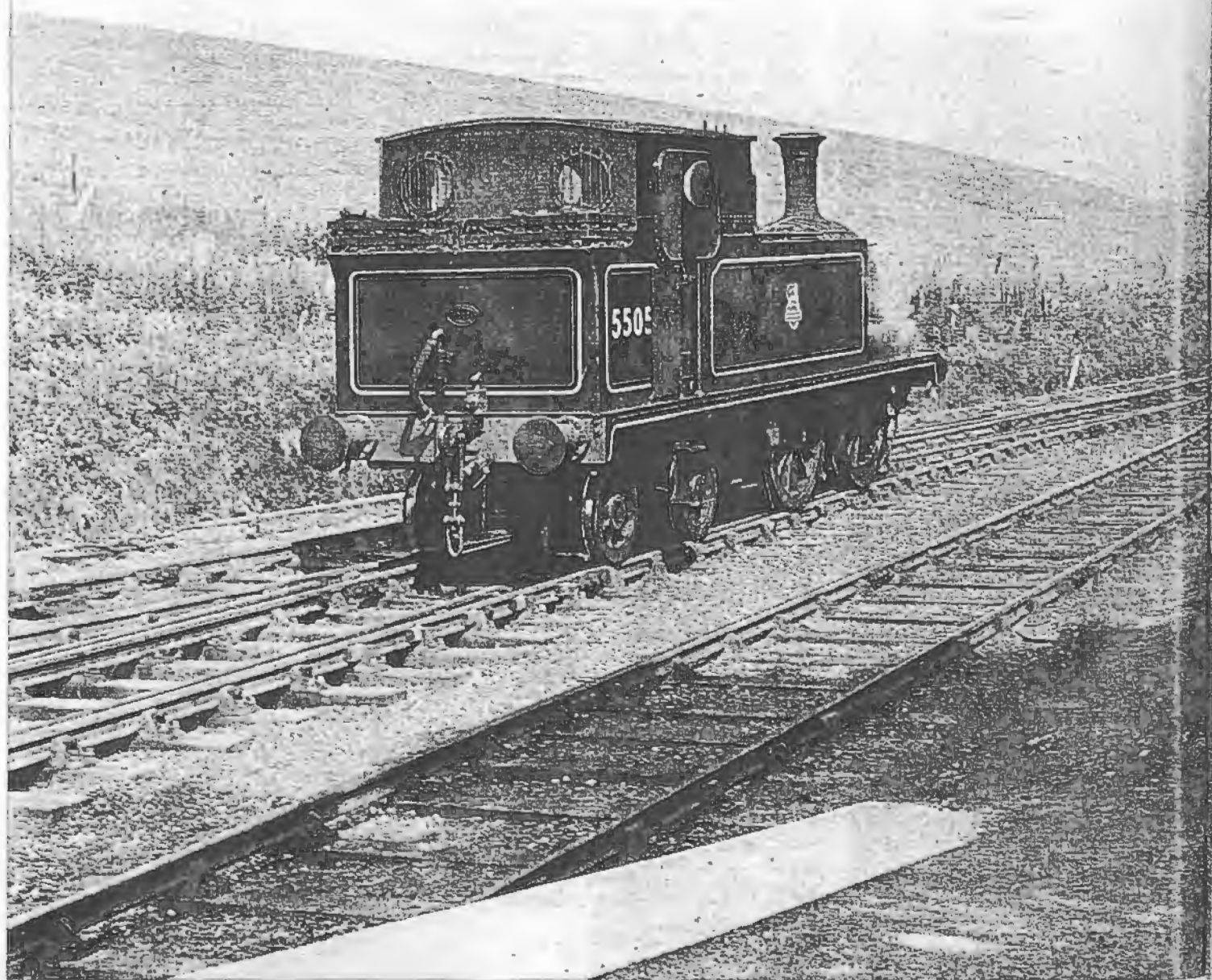
Left. Opening day at Dornoch - see page 78. (Courtesy The Scottish Record Office).



DUNHILL 2004. 350

# PANNIERS BESIDE LOCH FLEET

## A brief history of the Dornoch Light Railway.





'...No. 15053 works the Dornoch Light Railway; it was observed, neatly shedded, in the evening, and on the 9.10am train the next morning. According to the engine crew, this little machine has its boiler washed out once a fortnight, and goes to Inverness about every four months'.

The attractive seaside town of Dornoch, the county town of Sutherland in the north of Scotland, is famed for its tiny cathedral and impressive golf courses, and is effortlessly reached by the A9 road which crosses the Dornoch Firth and enters the town from the south. The town is some six miles from the nearest railway, the former Highland Railway Inverness-Wick main line though, at one time, there was a branch which left the main line at The Mound and entered Dornoch from the north.

Unfortunately, this stretch of main line is where the Highland had to make a major diversion inland to Lairg, followed by nearly twenty miles of unremunerative line before Golspie was reached. It might seem more logical for Dornoch's railway to have branched from the main line somewhere around Tain and to have struck northwards across the Dornoch Firth - not noted for its maritime traffic - thereby cutting thirty-six miles or so from the journey between Dornoch and Inverness. However, the problem with such a line would have been the crossing of the Dornoch Firth - as the firth was 1½ miles wide, a railway bridge would have been extremely costly, probably prohibitively so. Thus, Dornoch's rail connection between the years 1902 and

1960 took the form of a branch line from The Mound; to outward appearances this was a fairly conventional branch line but, legally, it was a light railway. The Light Railways Act of 1896 was intended to aid and simplify the construction of lines to remote areas, and Treasury grants were available to lines which, in the opinion of the Board of Agriculture or Board of Trade, would '...benefit agriculture in any district' or where '...a necessary means of communication would be established between a fishing harbour or fishing village and a market, or that such a railway is necessary for the development of or maintenance of some definite industry'. The Act was well-intentioned, but it was open to exploitation and there were many instances of 'main line' companies setting up nominal subsidiaries for the promotion and construction of light railways with, of course, the aid of Government grants. In the case of the Dornoch Light

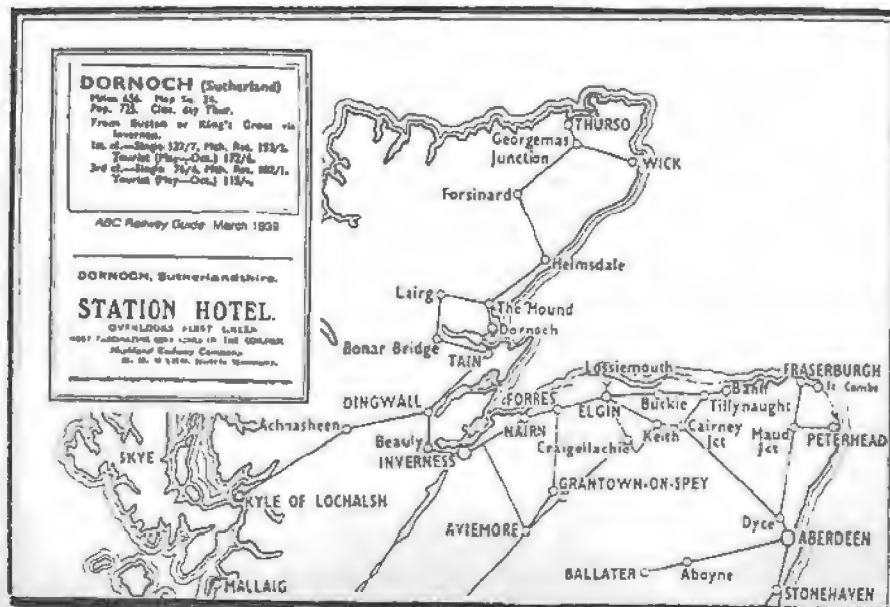
by  
**A.J. Mullay and  
I.C. Coleford**

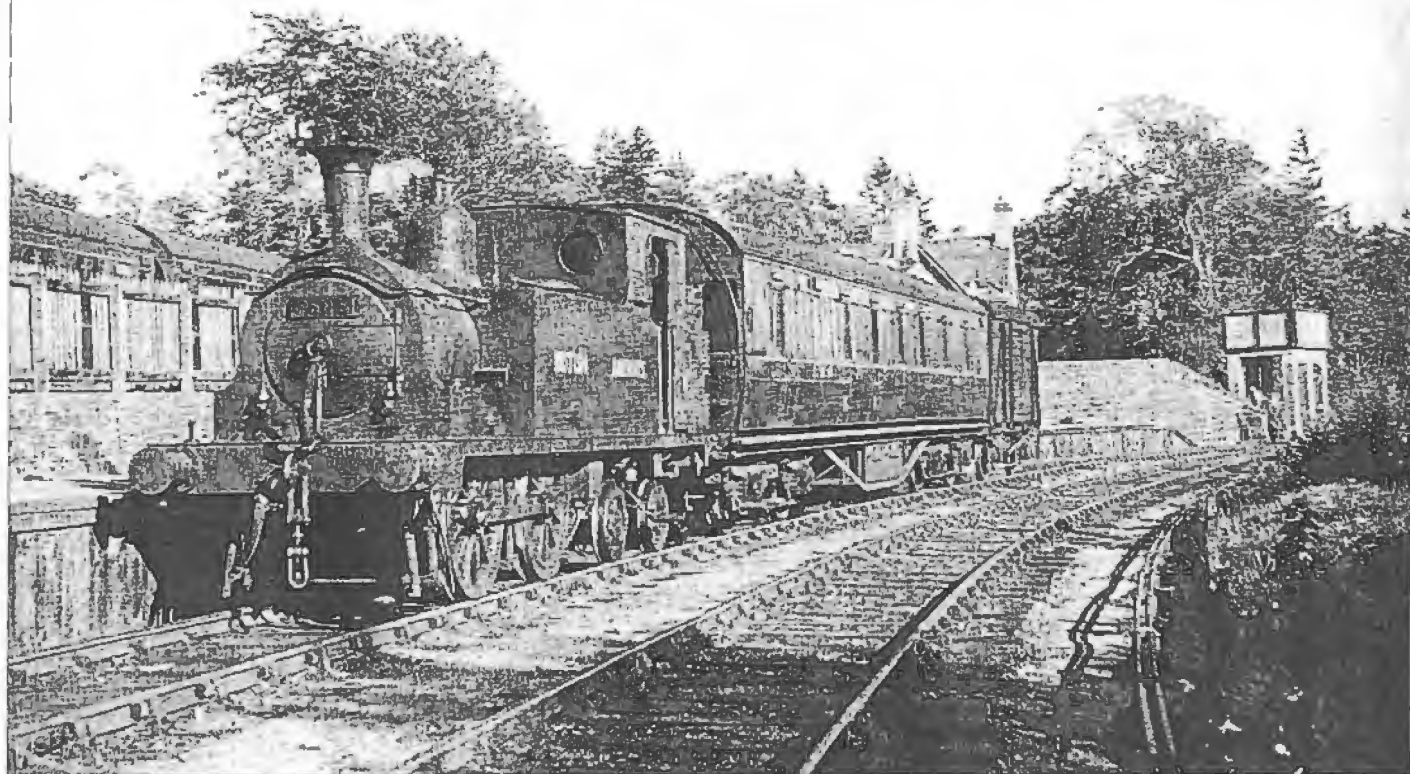
Railway, the company was completely independent although, as we shall see later, it had a close corporate relationship with the Highland Railway.

The Dornoch Light Railway Company was formed in 1898 to take advantage of the Act, and the venue of its first recorded board meeting - the office of the Sutherland estates - shows that the local aristocrat, the Duke of Sutherland, was very supportive of the venture. He took no fewer than 5,000 shares in the company, many times more than either Dornoch Town Council or Sutherland County Council. All felt that the town, irrespective of its modest population of around 1,000, should have a rail connection, as befitted a county capital.

Capitalised at £22,000, the Dornoch Light Railway (DLR) obtained its Light Railway Order on 13 August 1898, authorising the construction of a 7¼-mile line from the Highland Railway's Far North main-line at The Mound, with which Dornoch was then connected by a mail gig service. (The Mound itself is a 1,000-yard-long embankment - intended partly for use as a road and partly to reclaim some land for agricultural use - which had been engineered by Thomas

As related later in the text, in July 1955 No.55053 was treated to a very smart fully lined livery during its repair at St.Rollox Works. This proved to be rather fitting, as the engine soon claimed the distinction of being the very last ex-Highland locomotive in ordinary BR service. It was photographed at Dornoch on 10 August 1956. Note the ground frame at the neck of the station yard. PHOTOGRAPH: N.SWIFT; THE TRANSPORT TREASURY





One of the two surviving ex-Highland Railway 0-4-4Ts, No.56051, waits at the branch platform at The Mound on 27 May 1949. Although the locomotive has received its post-Nationalisation lettering and a smokebox number-plate, the days of smokebox shed plates are still a year or so into the future. The coach, which is lettered 'LMS', is one of the 'Diagram 1755' 57ft vehicles which had been built at Wolverton in 1926/27; attached to the rear is an ex-Southern Railway parcels van. Note the water tower at the far end of the branch platform. The main line platform of the Inverness-Wick line is on a slightly higher level behind. A train stands at the up main platform; note the use of the singular 'platform' - there was only one main line platform at The Mound. Although there was a passing loop, this was only for goods trains - it was not authorised for passenger trains. PHOTOGRAPH: J.W.ARMSTRONG TRUST

Telford and completed in 1817). The Order specified that the rails needed to be only 56lbs per yard, and no 'shelters or conveniences' needed to be constructed at any of three intermediate stations, at Cambusavie\*, Skelbo, and Embo. Fares were not to exceed 3d per mile for first class passengers, 2d for second class, and 1d for third class. The light railway company's minute books for October 1901 refer to the possible construction of an additional passenger platform at Littleferry, but this came to naught. (\* *The timetable for the day the line opened - 2 June 1902 -*

*lists only Skelbo and Embo, but the timetable for the very next day also lists Cambusavie; one assumes that Cambusavie - with its minimalist facilities - was probably ready for 2 June, but no trains actually stopped there on that day). With a junction with the Highland's 'Far North' line at The Mound, it was always envisaged that the Highland Railway would work the line, and an unusual 25-year lease of locomotives and rolling-stock was negotiated by the infant company, one which had to be revised so that the DLR could pay off the £2,500 capital*

sum and interest in annual payments, with depreciation being allowed for - this was something the Highland had failed to include. All operational staff were employed by the Highland, the Dornoch company's sole employee being the Secretary. But despite the strong Highland influence, the light railway company was to maintain its independence until Grouping in 1923.

A Treasury grant of £14,000 was received, but with the original contractor going bankrupt, the DLR had to request an additional £1,445 after opening; of that extra sum, £945 was received by December 1903. The cost of building the line was actually £30,000, with the Highland being asked to step in urgently in 1900 to secure a road bridge at The Mound, the contractor having left work unfinished. Most unusually for a light railway, the Board of Trade had insisted that the line should have fencing for its entire length and gates at all level crossings. The construction of five crossings - Dornoch Plantation, Embo, Skelbo Castle, Cambusavie and at the south end of The Mound - complete with crossing keeper's cottages, had been costed at £1,113.3.0d and had been authorised at a meeting of the light railway company's directors on 8 March 1901. The gates at each of the crossings, incidentally, were protected by hand-operated signals. The total cost of signalling and interlocking throughout the line was £1,039.14.11d.

At one time no fewer than 98 men were working on this short line on which the only major earthwork was the Fleet Via-

#### DORNOCH LIGHT.

##### DIRECTORS:

Geo. R. Kennedy, Esq., J.P., Links House, Dornoch.  
W. S. Fraser, Esq., J.P., Merchant, Dornoch.

Alick Grant, Esq., Evolex, Dornoch.  
Councillor Alexander Campbell, Dornoch.  
W. Sutherland, Esq., J.P., Merchant, Dornoch.

OFFICERS.—Sec., H. M. Mackay, Solicitor, Dornoch; Gen. Man., Robert Park; Eng., A. Newlands, Inverness.

Offices—Dornoch.

Incorporated in 1899. Authorised capital, \$1,000l., including loans. Capital issued, 13,072l. in 1l. shares fully paid. The Treasury has made a free grant of 14,945l. in aid of construction, and the Highland Railway contributed 1,000l. Debenture stock for 1,752l. and 1,700l. in shares was issued in 1903 and subscribed by the directors. Capital expenditure, 31st August, 1912, 30,754l.

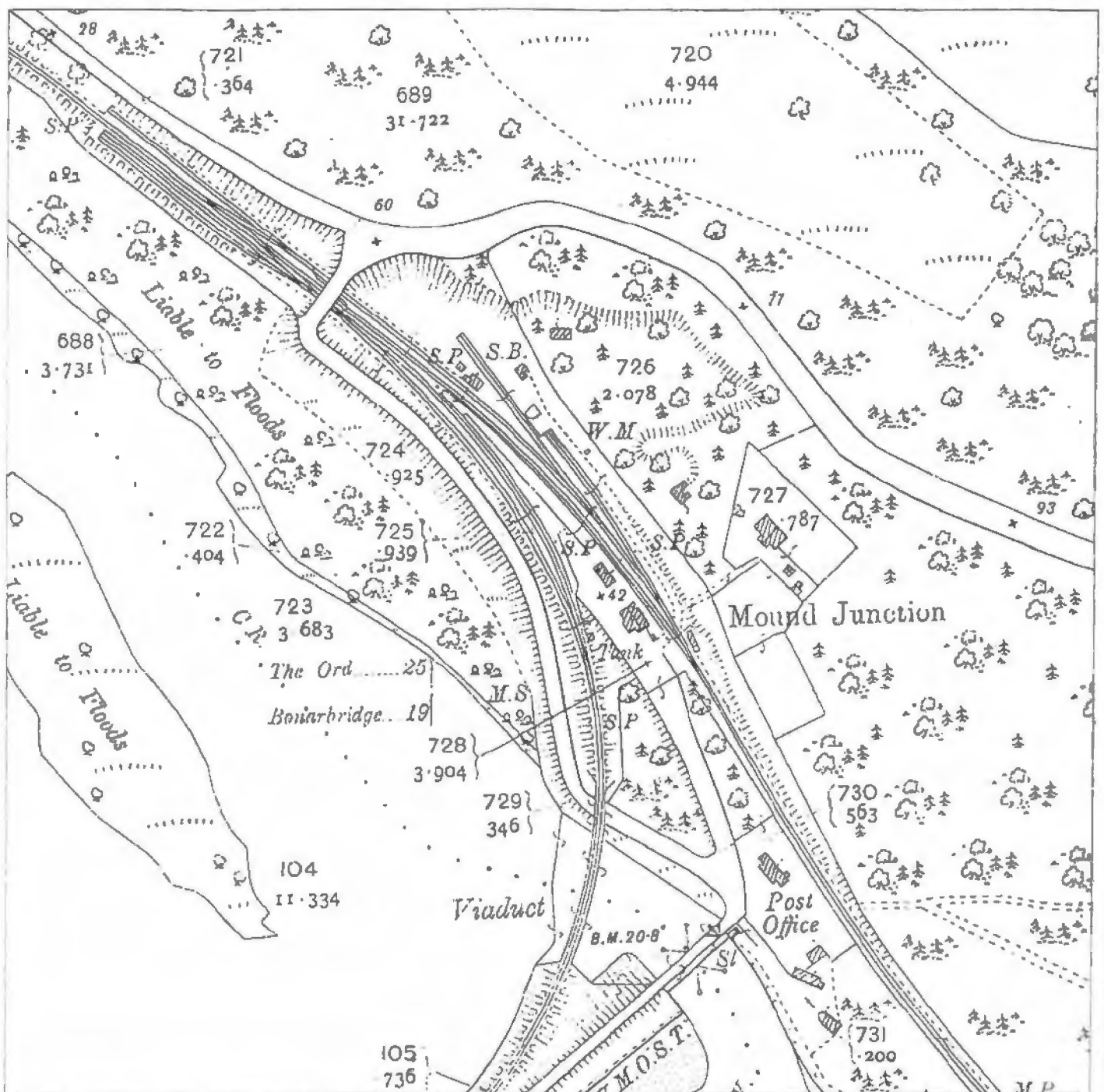
The line, which is 7½ miles in length, joins the Highland main line at The Mound (Dornoch being the terminus), and was opened for traffic 2nd June, 1902. It was originally worked by the Highland railway at actual cost, but it was agreed to pay the working company as from 31st August, 1908, the sum of 153l. per annum in lieu of actual cost of certain items of expenditure.

Dornoch Station Hotel, opened 1st July, 1904.

The accounts for the year ended 31st December, 1913, showed that the interest unpaid and accrued on the 4 per cent. debenture stock had been paid off. A dividend of 1 per cent. was paid on the ordinary shares and 203l. carried forward.

Accounts are made up annually to 31st December, and meeting held in February.

The Dornoch Light Railway, as listed in the 1915 edition of *Bradshaw's Shareholders' Guide*.



25-inch Ordnance Survey map, 1906. The Mound station opened with the Bonar Bridge-Golspie section of the 'Far North' line in April 1868. This map clearly shows that the station was in the middle of nowhere; it served only as a point of exchange for Dornoch - prior to the opening of the Dornoch branch in 1902 it had been the point where mail coaches to and from Dornoch had met the 'main line' trains, thus explaining the existence of a Post Office in such an isolated spot. Note that, although The Mound station had a passing loop, it had only one main line platform - the passing loop was authorized only for goods trains, and so passenger trains could not cross here. CROWN COPYRIGHT

duct, a steel girder structure with trough flooring, and having four arches each of 50 feet span; the principal gradient on the railway was the 1 in 45 from the north end of viaduct up to The Mound station. From the south end of the viaduct the line ran beside Loch Fleet - now a National Nature Reserve - before traversing an area of sand dunes, skirting the Royal Dornoch Golf Course and terminating within a stone's throw of Dornoch's 13<sup>th</sup> century cathedral. As per the original proposal, the three intermediate stations were Cambusavie (1¼ miles from The Mound), Skelbo (3¾ miles) and Embo (5½ miles).

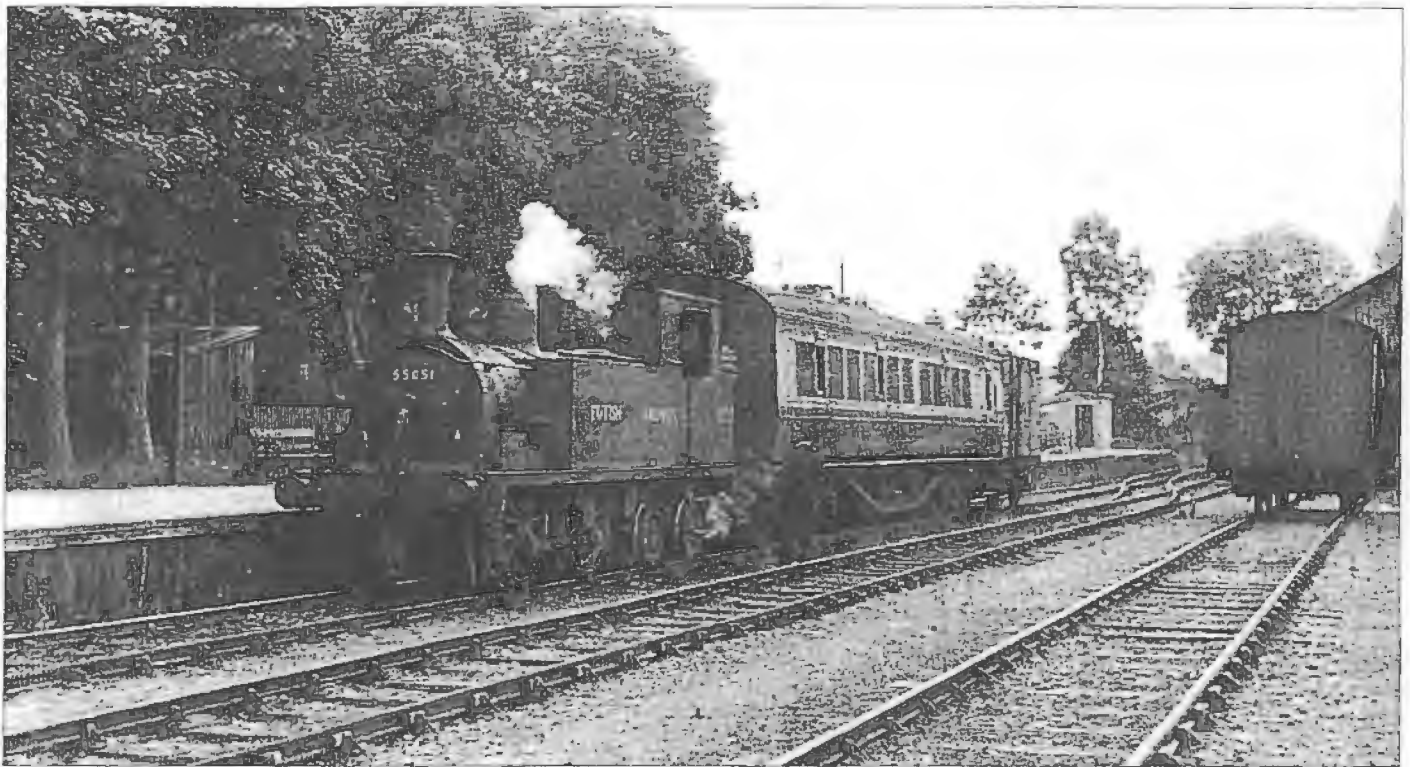
The line opened to public passenger traffic on 2 June 1902. The engine in charge, not only on opening day, but also for the first three years of the line's existence, was Highland Railway 0-6-0T

No.56, formerly named BALNAIN, but renamed DORNOCH for its new sphere of duties. It was one of three similar locomotives which had been built at the Highland's Lochgorm Works in Inverness between 1869 and 1874. These little engines had a maximum axleweight of only 10 tons, which made them ideal for lightly-constructed lines such as the Dornoch branch. They were designed by William Stroudley who left the Highland Railway for the London, Brighton & South Coast Railway in 1870; within a few months of taking up his new post at Brighton, Stroudley made slight alterations to the design for a new type of tank engine for the LB&SCR. These were the famous 'Terriers' - the rest, as they say, is history.

During the first three months of operation, the Dornoch branch generated gross receipts of £561.19.9d, against

£379.19.5d in expenses. It carried nearly 45,000 people in its first year, rising to 47,419 in its second. Train mileage was 15,972 in the second year, with expenses per train mile stated to be "26.33" - this was presumably old pence. There were three trains each way daily in the first timetable, with an additional one on Tuesdays. Local historian Barry Turner has suggested that the extra train on that day was to serve those Sutherland citizens attending court in their county town, but one wonders if Sutherland was so full of miscreants as to justify such a service! The extra train was certainly not likely to have been intended to carry market traffic, as the Highland Railway timetable omitted Dornoch from the list of market towns it served.

By the following autumn, train times had changed slightly. Although the Tues-



The branch terminus at Dornoch was a modeller's delight - a single dead-end platform, a modest goods yard, and a small engine shed (unfortunately out of view here). On 30 July 1952 No.55051 is undertaking some shunting - goods wagons will be attached behind the carriage and parcels van, and the train will run 'mixed' to The Mound. The carriage, the first of a batch of twenty-five brake corridor composites which had been built for the LMSR in 1927, is numbered SC6659M and is in BR carmine and cream livery; photographer Tim Shuttleworth noted that the brass door hinges were stamped 'LNWR' - presumably, the North Western had kept a good stock of door hinges! The parcels van (an 8-ton meat van, in fact) is numbered M172609 and is painted brown. PHOTOGRAPH: F.W.SHUTTLEWORTH

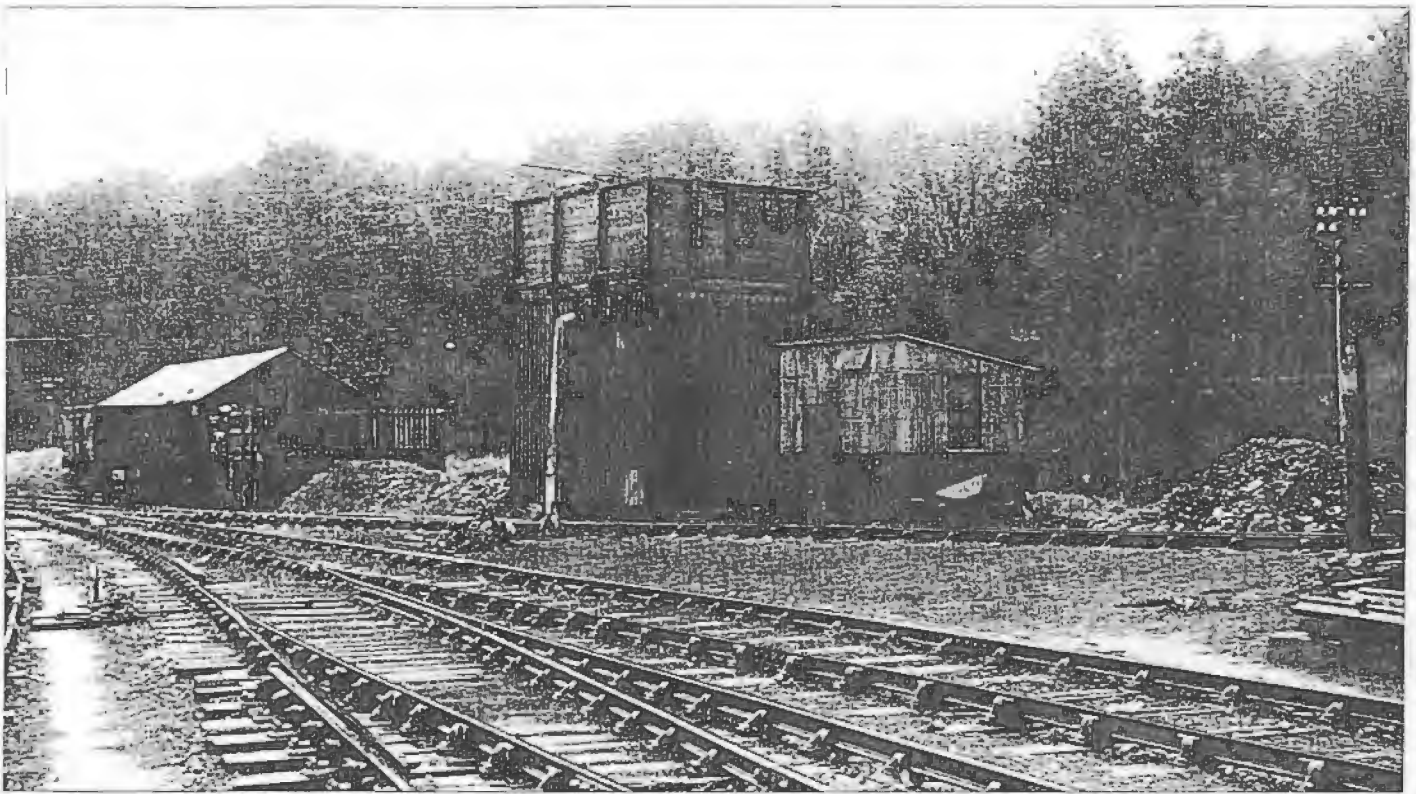
#### DORNOCH BRANCH LIGHT RAILWAY

**Skelbo Level Crossing**—After up trains have passed over the level crossing they must be brought to a stand and not proceed until the porter has opened the gates for the roadway and joined the train. Down trains must stop short of the level crossing to permit of the guard opening the gates for the passage of the train.

Left. Extract from the LMSR Northern Division WTT Appendix for 1937



No.55051 positions the goods vans and wagons which it brought in from The Mound as part of a mixed train; the brake van on the left was part of the mixed train. The date is 30 July 1952. The Railway Clearing House *Handbook of Stations* stated that Dornoch station could deal with 'Goods, Passenger, Parcels and Miscellaneous Traffic, Furniture Vans, Carriages, Motor Cars, Portable Engines and Machines on Wheels, Livestock, Horse Boxes and Prize Cattle Vans, and Carriages and Motor Cars by Passenger or Parcels Train', and had a 30-cwt crane. Track plans of the late 1950s indicate that, whereas most of the station yard had, by then, been relaid with 75lb or 80lb rails, flat-bottomed rails were still *in situ* for most of the length of the goods shed road. PHOTOGRAPH: F.W.SHUTTLEWORTH



The primitive-looking 4,000 gallon water tank was on the 'headshunt' of the engine shed at Dornoch. To the left of the tower, a wagon stands at the timber coal stage. The single-storey building beyond the stage is a storage hut for a private trader's coal. On the extreme right of the picture is the wall of the engine shed. The building cost £225.14.0d to construct. It has been suggested elsewhere that the shed was built on the site of the well-known local historical monument, St. Michael's Well, but that is not true... As explained in Bentinck's history of Dornoch, published in 1926, the well was actually sited just to the south of where the passenger station was built (its position is clearly marked on the accompanying Ordnance Survey map). However, in the early 1830s the parliamentary boundary of the burgh was defined,

with St. Michael's Well being designated its north-easterly limit. The Act defining this boundary stipulated that owners of properties more than seven miles outside the boundary should have no vote in the burgh's affairs, but one prominent local citizen lived a hundred yards or so beyond the 'seven-mile limit' and was thereby deprived of his vote. This gentleman issued instructions for a stone structure bearing the inscription 'St. Michael's Well' to be erected some 200 yards north of the actual site (where the engine shed was to be built in 1902). Taking this marker as the boundary of Dornoch, the gentleman's residence came within the 'seven-mile limit' and he thereby retained his vote! Thus, the 'well' on the site of the engine shed was merely a marker, not the well itself. PHOTOGRAPH: P.J.GARLAND

day special had vanished altogether, there were now four trains each weekday – two passenger and two mixed. The 7½ miles between The Mound and Dornoch were covered in 25-30 minutes by the passenger trains, with the mixed trains taking an average of eight minutes longer. Cambusavie was a request stop throughout the life of the branch.

In 1902 the Highland Railway's Locomotive Superintendent, Peter Drummond, proposed the construction of new lightweight tank locomotives specifically for working, not only the Dornoch branch, but also the soon-to-be-opened Lybster branch which was also built to Light Railway specifications. Although the HR board initially agreed to the con-

struction of two such locomotives, Drummond came up with two alternative proposals, the first for a petrol-engined railbus and the second for a steam railmotor. Neither of those alternatives was considered acceptable, and so thoughts reverted to small tank engines. Four were constructed between March 1905 and February 1906. They were smart

little 0-4-4Ts with 4ft 6in driving wheels and a very modest maximum axleweight of 11¼ tons. Two of the quartet (HR Nos.45 and 46) were frequently used on the Dornoch branch, the other two (Nos.25 and 40) appearing less frequently; it seems that they initially shared the work with the Stroudley 0-6-0T, No.56, and occasionally (in later years, at least) Jones 0-4-4T No.53.

The branch engine was kept in a small timber-built shed at Dornoch. The shed was nominally an outstation of Inverness, but it seems that routine maintenance of the Dornoch branch engines was undertaken at Helmsdale, another of Inverness' sub-sheds. According to Cormack & Stevenson's ex-

### WORKING OF BRANCH LINES.

The following Branch Lines are worked with Lock and Key, and not more than one Engine in steam must be allowed on the respective Sections or Branches at one and the same time, viz. :-

**Wick and Lybster Light Railway.  
Dornoch and The Mound Light Railway.  
Muir of Ord and Fortrose (Black Isle Branch).  
Gollanfield and Fort-George.  
Orbliston and Fochabers Town**

All connecting Points at Intermediate Stations, as well as those at Lybster, Dornoch, and Fort-George Terminals, are secured by a Lock, the Key of which is under the charge of the Engine Driver.

When Shunting has to be performed at any of these Stations, the Driver will hand the Key to the Stationmaster or Guard of the Train, who will relieve the Levers and when operations have been completed, will again return it to the Driver, who must not proceed on his journey without its being in his possession.

No Engine must at any time enter upon the Main Line of these Branches until the Driver of such Engine has first received into his possession the Key in use on the Section.

When, under any circumstances, there is a change of Engine Drivers, the Stationmaster or person in charge at the Station where the change is made will accept of the Key from the one Driver and pass it to the other, giving and obtaining a written acknowledgment.

The Staff Key for Working Branch Lines must on completion of each day's work be handed over by Engine Driver to the Stationmaster or person in charge at Terminal Station.

The Key must be kept in a place of security over night, and handed to Engine Driver each morning before despatch of first Train.

Extract from the Highland Railway WTT Appendix for 1910

cellent *Highland Railway Locomotives* (RCTS, 1988), on one morning each week during the winter and three mornings during the summer, the branch train was advertised to run through to Brora and return, with the 0-4-4T or, occasionally, the old Stroudley 0-6-0T, working it throughout.

Apart from the introduction of the Drummond 0-4-4Ts in 1905, the short-lived working through to Brora, and the laying circa 1918 of a private timber siding near the Dornoch end of the line, little else changed on the branch over the years. Nevertheless, the light railway brought an unforeseen bonus to the town of Dornoch – this took the form of a luxury hotel which had been opened within two years of the railway's arrival. The hotel was appropriately named the Station

Hotel; after the demise of the railway it was renamed the Dornoch Hotel, and is still going strong, with visitors enjoying their golf by the North Sea. During World War I, incidentally, the hotel had been taken over for military use, first by the Gordon Highlanders and, later, by the Canadian Forestry Corps. As will be seen from the accompanying extracts from official documents, the line was worked on the 'one engine in steam' principle.

The line remained profitable until 1920, its first annual loss coming in 1921 when the deficit was £744.4.6d; fortuitously, the directors were able to cover this from a £800 reserve fund which had been prudently built up during the good years. The following year the loss increased to £826.18.0d.

**LMSR days**

The 1923 Grouping saw both the Dornoch Light Railway Company and the Highland Railway become part of the London Midland & Scottish Railway, but this had little effect on services. However, the Grouping brought about some change in the boardroom as, when the light railway company was wound up, the princely sum of £6.3.6d in unpaid dividends passed to the LMSR which, in turn, paid £350 towards winding-up costs. As the Company Secretary was the only employee by then, and was about to be made redundant, £300 of this was paid to him. More serious, however, was the loss of local control, for the light railway company's board minutes show a high level of management expertise, and above all, of concern for the well-being of the line. That could never be replicated by the LMSR which proved to be a highly-centralised company with its head office 656¼ (!) rail miles away at Euston.

At the time of the Grouping, the branch was served by three passenger trains each way on weekdays:

**From Dornoch:** 10.55am; 1.05pm; 4.40pm

**From The Mound:** 11.40am; 2.00pm; 6.43pm

These services were timed to connect with main line trains at The Mound – they were not aimed at purley local travellers as there was not really anywhere 'purley local' to go. The connections were:

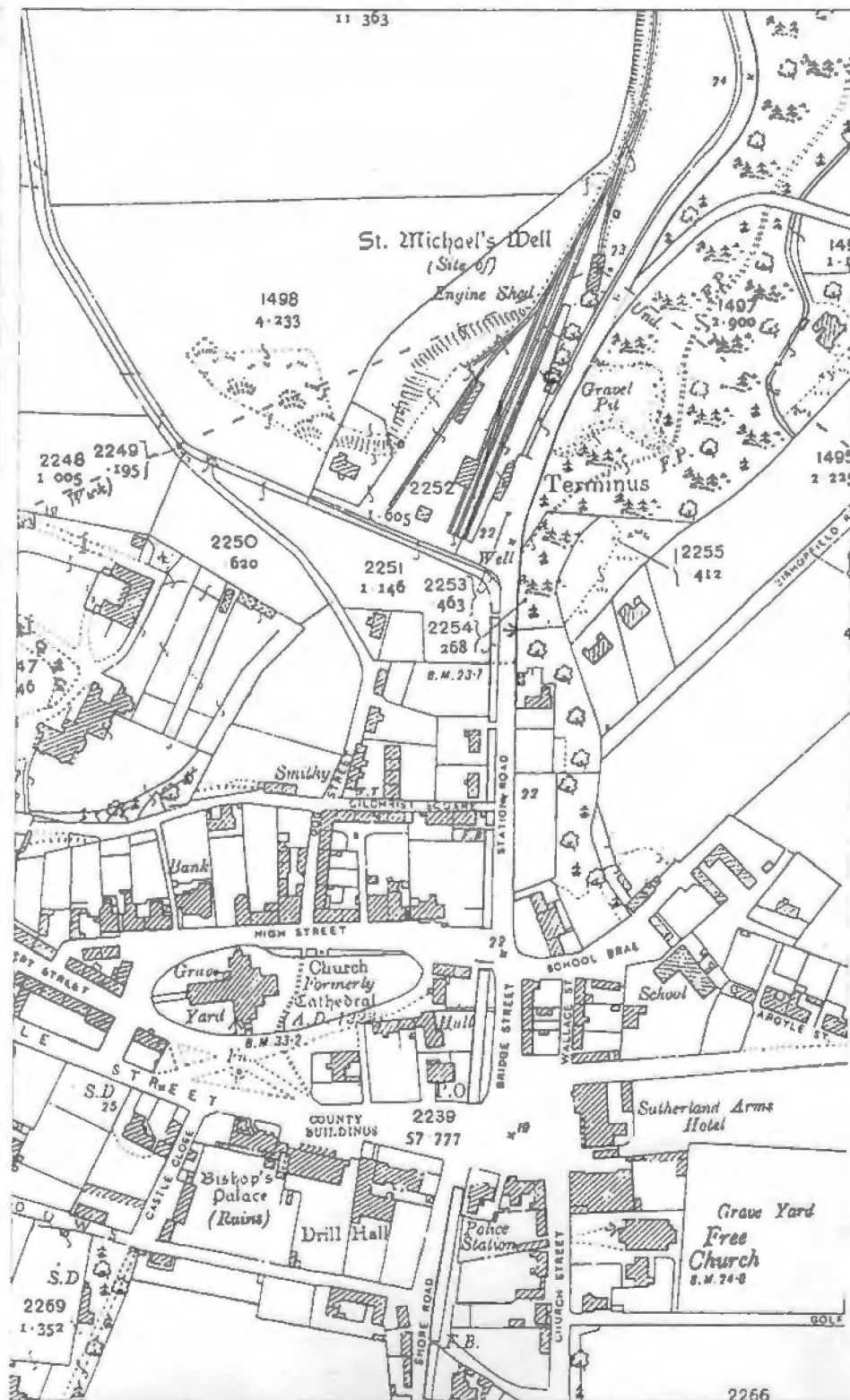
- The 10.55am ex-Dornoch and 11.40am ex-The Mound connected with the 8.00am Wick-Inverness
- The 1.05pm ex-Dornoch and 2.00pm ex-The Mound connected with the 10.30am Inverness-Wick
- The 4.40pm ex-Dornoch connected with the 2.00pm Wick-Inverness
- The 6.43pm ex-The Mound connected with the 2.35pm Inverness-Helmsdale.

The locomotives most closely connected with the Dornoch branch duly received LMSR numbers:

- Drummond 0-4-4T No.20, 40, 45 and 46 became LMSR No.15051, 15052, 15053 and 15054 respectively.
- Stroudley 0-6-0T No.56 became LMSR No.16118 (by the mid-1920s, this engine was no longer seen on the Dornoch branch).
- Jones 0-4-4T No.53A (its duplicate number had been applied in 1917), became LMSR No.15050.

By the mid-1920s the veteran No.16118 was no longer seen on the Dornoch branch (it was withdrawn in 1928), and Jones 0-4-4T No.15050 was withdrawn in December 1929. By the early 1930s the usual pairing on the

This is a reduction from the 25-inch Ordnance Survey map of 1905. The little station settles on the north side of the small town. The building at the north end of the station on the east of the line is the engine shed. The station layout seems to have been little altered throughout its 55-year working life. Note the Station Hotel in its own grounds on the east of the town. The 'Site of St. Michael's Well' is marked – the, shall we say, historical inaccuracy of this 'site' has been referred to in one of our earlier photo captions, but it seems that the Dornoch Light Railway Company knew not of the inaccuracy – the company minutes for October 1901 noted that a platform (within the shed?) should be 're-erected' (this suggests an existing structure being dismantled and transferred to the Dornoch line) '...as near to the ancient site as possible... the site to be such that the edifice will not interfere with the laying of rails'. CROWN COPYRIGHT





DORNOCH AND THE MOUND														
Miles	WEEK DAYS						Miles	WEEK DAYS						
		1	2	3	4	5			1	2	3	4	5	
0	DORNOCH .. ♀ .. dep.	a.m.					0	THE MOUND .. ♀ .. dep.	a.m.					
2½	Embo ..	10 40	..	1 10	..	1	Cambusvie Platform ..	11 30	..	2 0	..			
4	Skelbo ..	10 47	..	1 17	..	3½	Embo ..	12 3	..	2 13	..			
6½	Cambusvie Platform ..	10 59	..	1 24	..	5½	Embo ..	12 9	..	2 19	..			
7½	THE MOUND .. ♀ .. arr.	11 11	..	1 31	..	7½	DORNOCH .. ♀ .. arr.	12 18	..	2 28	..			

No.15052 had been withdrawn as long ago as December 1930, while No.15054 had been retired in October 1945.

However, it had long since become clear that the arrival of the railway some forty years earlier had not arrested the depopulation of the area. The population of the entire parish, according to the 1891 census, had been 2,404, but by the late 1930s it had dropped to around 2,000. The population of the town of Dornoch itself in 1939 was a mere 725.

LMSR working timetable, Summer 1947.

Dornoch branch were Drummond 0-4-4Ts Nos.15051 and 15053. A visitor to the line in the summer of 1937 reported in the *Railway Observer* that '...No.15053 works the Dornoch Light Railway; it was observed, neatly shedded, in the evening, and on the 9.10am train the next morning. According to the engine crew, this little machine has its boiler washed out once a fortnight, and goes to Inverness about every four months'.

It has been stated elsewhere that, at some time during the LMSR period, a through sleeper was introduced between Dornoch and London, but was taken off after only a short period due to lack of patronage. Unfortunately, we have been unable to confirm or refute that unlikely sounding episode in the Dornoch branch's life. (If any reader has information about the 'Dornoch Sleeper', we would be very interested to hear - Ed.)

The public timetables for March 1940 listed three trains each way (weekdays only), but by November 1946 there were only two each way:

From Dornoch: 10.40am; 1.10pm  
From The Mound: 11.50am; 2.00pm

The connections were:

- The 10.40am ex-Dornoch and 11.50am ex-The Mound connected with the 8.25am Wick-Inverness
- The 1.10pm ex-Dornoch and the 2.00pm ex-The Mound connected with the 10.40am Inverness-Wick.

The journey times of the branch trains were still in the region of 25-30 minutes, and it was still the usual practice to run mixed trains; the mainstays of the freight traffic were fish and livestock (outwards) and coal (inwards). By this time (1946), the two regular branch engines, Nos.15051 and 15053, were the only two survivors of their class; of the other two,

**British Railways**

In January 1948, the Dornoch branch duly became part of the Scottish Region of British Railways. The little engine shed at Dornoch formally became a sub-shed of Helmsdale which was given 'parent' status and subsequently coded 60C.

A visitor to the Dornoch branch on 15 May of that year reported that No.15051 - stated to be '...in filthy condition' - was in action on the line; it was also reported that, as the 10.40am ex-Inverness was running very late, the 2.00pm from The Mound had to held for some 90 minutes. On the same day, the other 0-4-4T, No.15053, was observed dead at Helmsdale shed. A return visit in October reported: '...the situation at Dornoch is most critical as, during September, No.15053 had dropped her grate whilst on a train, and was laid off in the mid-road in Dornoch station, where she was still to be



The exterior of Dornoch station, 30 July 1952. When the station opened in 1902 it had a bookshop run by a Mr.Gillespie. The station building was described as having a 'piend' roof - this is an old Scottish word for hipped. The building itself is now preserved. PHOTOGRAPH: F.W.SHUTTLEWORTH

## A visit to Dornoch

The following is the late George Robin's account of a trip on the Dornoch branch in early part of July 1950. This account was part of a lengthy article which appeared in the Highland Railway Journal (the magazine of the Highland Railway Society); this extract is reproduced by kind permission of Mr. Keith Fenwick, the editor of the Journal.

George Robin's day started at Inverness where he joined the 7.00am train to Wick; it comprised nine corridors, a restaurant car and a vestibule for 'overflow', and was hauled by Black Five No.44961. He recalls that: '...on arrival at The Mound, it was to give the impression that the old Sutherland Railway (Bonar Bridge to Golspie) had been as sparing as possible with its limited capital. To my surprise, this station had one long and narrow platform on the right-hand side of the track, fairly straight at the southern end, but curving sharply away towards the water at the northern extremity. The station house was fairly substantial, much more so than at Rogart, while opposite the platform was a passing loop, off which led the scanty siding accommodation.

I noticed that the Light Railway came up on a 1 in 45 grade off the embankment, while the platform was on a lower level than the main line one. The junction was at the south end of the layout. Thus I was now half way to Wick, having travelled 80 miles from Inverness, and once the platform work was completed 44961 drew her train right forward, and as the right-hand curve mentioned above immediately becomes reverse and round a rock cutting, the driver must have had his mark for stopping before shunting the diner and vestibule carriage into a siding beside one of yon stinking gas tanks. The train left here 1½ minutes late for the barren wastes, while I had about 90 minutes to see around. I asked to have my case kept in the station office, and the station master just said "Put it down here and nobody will touch it". He told me that he came from Hamilton, and had got this isolated job easily. He appeared to me to be only about thirty years of age.

I was feeling a bit peckish now and felt the desire for a cup of coffee. I asked him where to go, but was told quite politely that there was no place within miles. However, he did give me permission to walk down the branch as far as the Mound embankment, situated just beyond the points, to get a photo of the train on it. That was OK in itself, but the line curved sharply and on the inside of the curve was a fine telegraph pole which would come right to the centre of the best exposure. Try as I might, I could not get in the arches across the road and the river (or perhaps a narrow neck of Loch Fleet) without an upright of some kind blotting out something more interesting. Then on the top of that there was a perfect plague of very large flies - may have been bluebottles - buzzing around and I could not shake them off either. I was dead scared that one would fly past the lens at the crucial moment because every now and then they were all that I could see through the view-finder. So after getting a good site and wandering around a little I at last saw the exhaust steam of the wee train meandering along the shore across Loch Fleet. Slowly but surely it approached, and I was soon able to see that it was mixed. At last it stopped at Cambusavie Halt, and I heard it leave and saw it appear in full view on the embankment. I am glad to say that my photo came out OK after all as I snapped the wee Highland 0-4-4 tank, looking as Highland as possible, as she came off the earthwork with her Stanier brake third composite and seven assorted goods vehicles and brake van. 55051 was the number today, and I understand that she and 55053 run alternate weeks on this run, the spare engine being kept at Helmsdale.

The early morning train from Wick and Thurso provided the next excitement as she arrived and departed behind 5P 44789. The wee tankie, 55051, now had the job of coupling on to the diners and attaching them to the rear of the up main line train. More photos. I also managed quite a few of 55051 and the station and the branch platform. As the branch grade is 1 in 250 at the platform, the Dornoch end is very much lower down than the main line one which rises in the same direction; consequently, steps down are required, while a dilapidated fence keeps passengers from breaking their necks. At one time I went back to the stationhouse for another spool for my camera, but on finding nobody there I just went in, and at the same time noticed that the safe was lying wide open!

55051 had disposed of her four covered and three open wagons, and the 11.50 branch train to Dornoch consisted only of the one coach with a few passengers, many churns of milk and the wee Highland tank.

Now this was a light railway, and I was to find out that the driver knew that. We went quite merrily down the 1 in 45 and crossed the bridges on to the embankment. Here the main road to Dornoch ran along parallel to us, though we fell to a lower level and, by means of a level crossing on the curve, we crossed the road and took to the shores of the Loch. Only 1¼ miles from the Junction we passed Cambusavie platform; it had the two Highland stop signals and the one for our direction was off. The tides, I expect, would be stopped by the embankment, and we were now on a sandy shore, as we ran along a lightly constructed track near what I took to be a disused road. However, I think it was once the main road, but I saw signs later of a better construction, and I think that this old one must have been left... *continued opposite...*

seen on 9<sup>th</sup> October, very rusty - this condition was painfully obvious to any passenger or passer-by. No.15051 was therefore carrying on single-handed, with the condition of one of the driving axleboxes causing grave doubts as it was running warm and shedding white metal'.

No.15053 was later taken to St.Rollox for repair; it emerged in January 1949, not only in good mechanical health, but also sporting BRITISH RAILWAYS lettering on its tanks and its new BR number, 55053. The other Dornoch regular, No.15051, was dispatched to St.Rollox soon after, and emerged in April as BR No.55051.

It remained the standard practice for one of the two 0-4-4Ts to be in use and the other kept as a spare, usually at Helmsdale. However, on 6 October 1952 No.55051 was noted at Inverness, working as the carriage and wagon shunter; apparently it had been sent down from Helmsdale for a routine boiler examination, and was merely earning its keep at Inverness before being sent back to Helmsdale the following day. A visitor to the area on 1 July 1953 reported that No.55053 was on the Dornoch branch and No.55051 was on shed at Helmsdale. A return visit on 6 October of that year revealed that No.55053 was once again the branch engine, but on this occasion No.55051 was undertaking a little light shunting at Helmsdale.

In the early 1950s there was a change in the mode of working the Dornoch branch, the opening and closing of the six sets of level crossing gates along the route now being undertaken by the guard of the train. This, of course, all took time, and the journey times were consequently increased to 43 minutes (down) and 46 minutes (up) for the 7¼ miles. However, there were only two trains each way to be affected; the timetables for the summer of 1954 list:

From Dornoch: 10.25am; 1.00pm  
From The Mound: 11.55am; 2.05pm

The connections were:

- The 10.25am ex-Dornoch and the 11.55am ex-The Mound connected with the 8.35am Wick-Inverness
- The 1.00pm ex-Dornoch and the 2.05pm ex-The Mound connected with 10.40am Inverness-Wick.

Of those main line connections, the 8.35am from Wick was advertised in the public timetables as having a restaurant car from The Mound to Inverness. The car had arrived at The Mound on the 6.40am ex-Inverness (scheduled arrival at The Mound at 9.52am) and was taken off at there and placed in a siding to await attachment to the southbound train from Wick to Inverness; this was due at The Mound at 11.31am. This transfer of the restaurant car at The Mound was a long-standing practice.

In the early 1950s the platform face at Dornoch was renewed and the station buildings repainted, the platforms at Skelbo and Embo rebuilt, and the branch itself relaid with 60ft rails. It was considered in some circles that the laying of new rails would pave the way for the regular use of ex-Caledonian 2P 0-4-4Ts on the line. However, that was not to happen -

continued from previous page...

...to serve intermediate points. Shortly, larger boulders and very large patches of seaweed almost blotted out the sand on the shore and, after seeing some old stone piers, or jetties, on the loch side, we drew up at Skelbo platform, 3¼ miles on our journey. The platform just held our coach with enough room left for a four-wheeled van. It was placed on the right hand or landward side of the line and one passenger got out. Why, I don't know, as all that I could see was isolation. Onwards we struck grades of 1 in 50, and the countryside became more gorse covered now, while the art of driving on a light railway seemed to be that of keeping a steady 15mph up and down the ever changing steep grades of the switchback. Soon we came upon a long straight stretch, mostly at 1 in 50 up, and what a miserable preamble it was.

At the top here was Embo (5¼ miles) and this was quite a large place, but also with a single platform, though on the left side this time, while there was quite a big yard at the Dornoch end. Three folk got in here. Shortly after leaving, a golf course appeared on the inland side, while the seashore sported a fine long, though narrow, stretch of lovely golden sand. We were now on a long straight descent, but right at the foot and just round a very sharp bend was a level crossing with gates, a keeper and the usual signal in each direction for protecting such existences. Immediately, a very sharp reverse curve (to the right) took us into the station area of the terminus. The large wooden faced platform was on the left side, and was of remarkable length. There was no signal box and no turntable, but there was a fair sized yard with a covered-in goods shed and a small engine shed, while provision was made for watering engines. We arrived about seven minutes late and I noticed that the station platform was quite a "market", people having free access to the shop or two on it. I took a photo here. I do not know how to account for my excitement here, but both this exposure and one that I took before leaving were "double-exposed" with ones at the Mound. Although I was able to duplicate the Mound ones later on, I did not have the chance to do the same with the photos at Dornoch. Still, I cannot be lucky every time, though I should be more careful.

I had only one hour at Dornoch and thought it fitting to get the inner man filled again as I had had nothing since my 6.15am breakfast at Inverness, and I had no idea where I would get my tea. I chanced upon the burnt-out ruins of the "Sutherland Arms Hotel" upon following some signposts, but they had an annexe which served up a very fine lunch. As a matter of fact, it was quite the meal of this outing, and not having any time to explore the town (what a real pity) I made for the station once again. Dornoch station was situated on a fringe, but as far as I could see the track could not really have economically been brought nearer to the town centre. I had a chat with the driver who told me that he and his mate were the only crew this summer. Last summer (1949) an afternoon trip was run and this necessitated a crew being brought up from Inverness to live in digs and did not pay. The driver was definitely of the opinion that as things were worked at present that the branch was paying. It may or it may not, but it was good hearing.

The trip back to the main line was uneventful. A lot of sundries were picked up at Embo and another single passenger got out at Skelbo; while as we passed Cambusavie Halt, I noticed that the signals had not been altered since we passed earlier, and that the one which was "off" was the arm for the Dornoch direction. It is interesting to note that the signals at this halt were of the Upper Quadrant type, while The Mound also had been re-signalled with this modern tone. So once more I could say that I had travelled over another interesting byway, and once more could I say that I had travelled behind an engine of the old Highland Railway.

At The Mound, there was little for me to do except hang around for the Wick train to come along in about half an hours time. However, I made the unfortunate discovery that I had been careless with my camera, and had made a double exposure of both the snaps at Dornoch station. By good luck, I was now able to repeat the misses at The Mound. The day was still dullish with low cloud, but as the sun was casting no shadow it made photographing all the easier, as I could choose either side of the locomotives. The main line train was late in arriving behind yet another 5P 4-6-0, 44798, and consisted of mail van, diner, four corridors for Wick and three for Thurso, and so tared at a little short of 300 tons. I managed an empty seat in the Thurso section, but must say that the train was well filled....

5.00am. While No.55053 was away from Helmsdale, the Dornoch branch was worked by No.55051 or, occasionally, Helmsdale's spare engine, Caley 0-4-4T No.55162. As for No.55051, it was reported in July 1955 that it was due to be sent to St.Rollox for repair, but the state of its boiler was so bad that a one-way trip to Kilmarnock seemed to be a realistic alternative. Later in July 1955 No.55053 went to St.Rollox for repair and, when it emerged, it sported a fully-lined BR livery. It was the only ex-Highland engine ever to receive the full BR passenger livery.

At this time, the Dornoch branch train comprised a corridor brake composite together with a van for parcels. It appears that the passenger coach was changed fairly frequently - in other words, there was not a designated branch coach. One of the two daily trains in each direction was mixed, and usually had a handful of vans attached behind the coach.

In April 1956 No.55051 was finally laid up. It was formally withdrawn three months later. This left No.55053 to soldier on alone on the Dornoch branch, with 2P No.55236 being available as cover, if and when required. As a result of the re-laying of the Dornoch branch a few years earlier, in June 1956 the line's axle-weight limit was officially increased to 14 tons. This permitted the use of BR or ex-LMSR 'Class 2' 2-6-0s on the branch; at least, that was the theory - in practice, no Class 2s were allocated to the Far North, the nearest shed with a representation being Keith, which was no less than 150 miles away.

The quest for alternative forms of motive power on the branch suddenly took on considerable urgency on 16 November 1956. While on a routine branch working - one corridor coach and a couple of fish vans - the locomotive's leading coupled axle broke. One wheel parted company from the axle and ran along the ballast but, fortunately, the engine and train remained on the rails and nobody was hurt. No.55053 was taken to Lochgorm Works to await a decision as to its future. Given that its classmate, No.55051, had been cut up with indecent haste sixteen months earlier, there was no source of spare parts and so the only option for No.55053 was withdrawal. This was formally effected during the week ending 12 January 1957. No.55053 had claimed the distinction of being the last ex-Highland engine in BR service; it had considerably outlived the actuarial estimate of 25 years!

To temporarily fill the void on the Dornoch branch, Standard Class 2 2-6-0 No.78052 was hastily transferred to In-

verness, with 2P 0-4-4T No.55236 retained as cover. However, a permanent replacement for No.55053 was soon identified, and it came in a very unexpected guise. It was Western Region 16XX class 0-6-0PT No.1646, which left its home at Croes Newydd on 7 February 1957 (being incorporated into a goods train) and arrived at Helmsdale four days later. No.1646 proved to be very well

at least, not permanently - and so Nos.55051 and 55053 soldiered on.

A visitor to Inverness on the evening of Wednesday 6 July 1955 observed

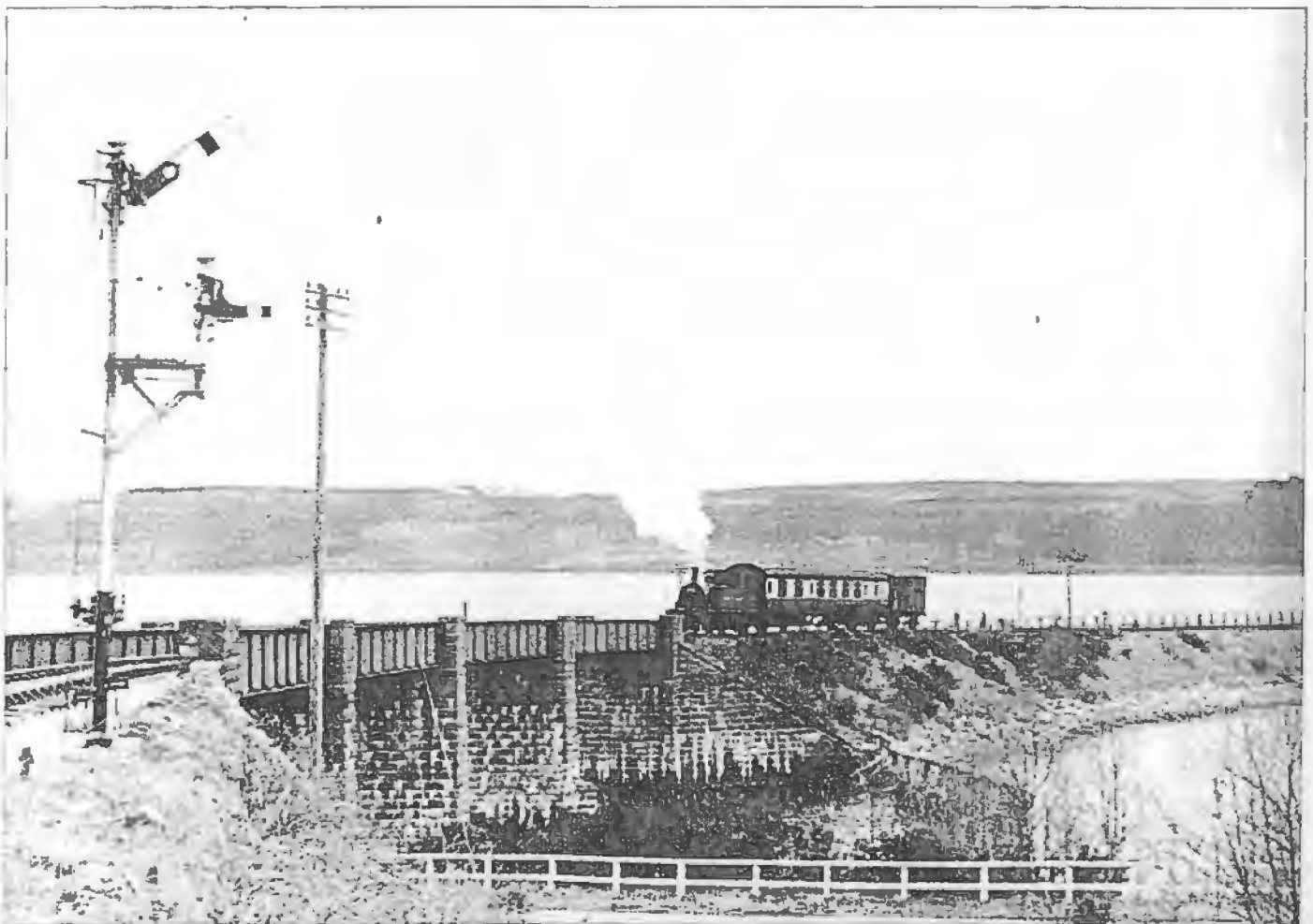
No.55053 arriving at the shed for its routine wash-out. It was apparently due to return to Helmsdale on Friday 8<sup>th</sup>, departing light engine from Inverness at

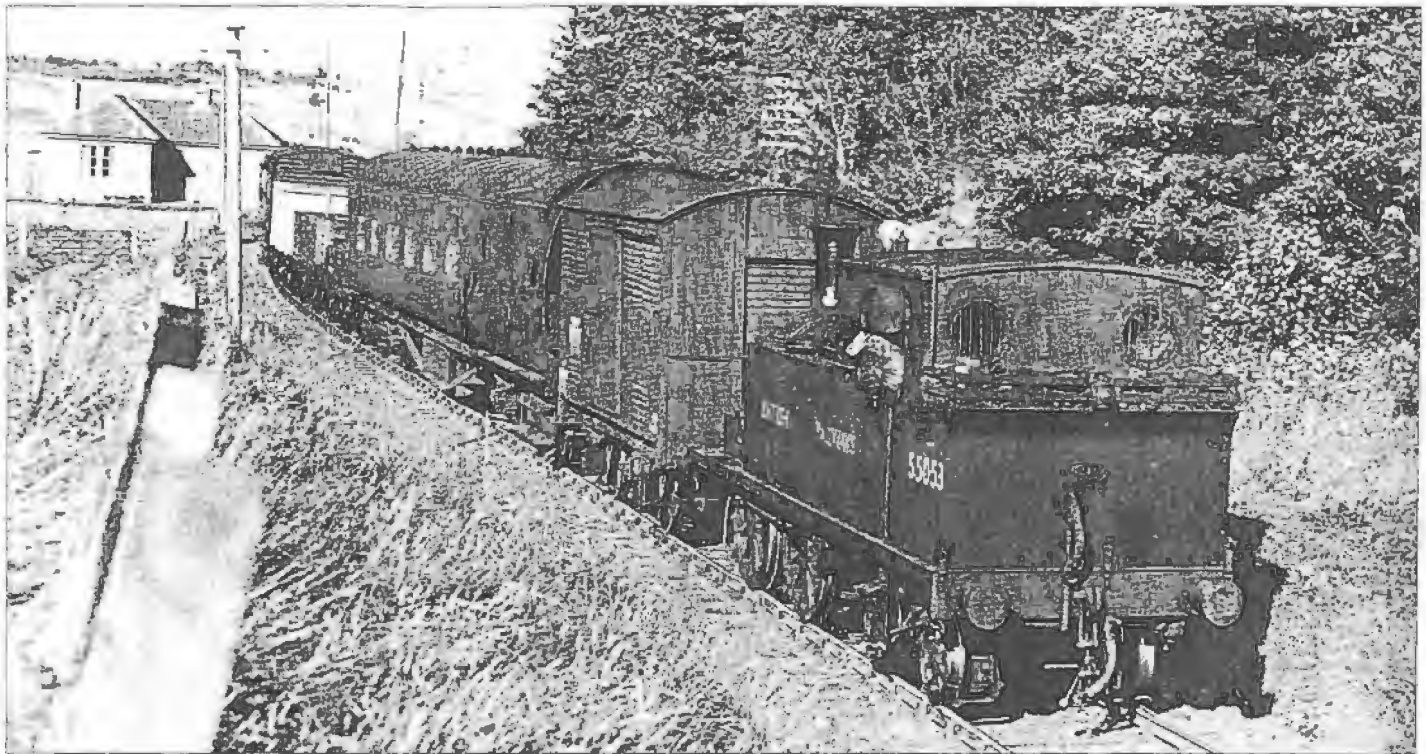
WEEKDAYS ONLY											
Mls			a.m.		a.m.				a.m.		p.m.
117	Inverness	lev.	6 40		10 40			Dornoch	lev.	10 25	1 0
	The Mound							Embo		10 33	1 8
	Cambusavie Platform		11 55		2 p 5			Skelbo		10 45	1 20
	Skelbo		12 16		2 14			Cambusavie Platform		11 00	1 35
	Embo		12 17		2 27			The Mound		11 11	1 46
	Embo		12 26		2 35			117 Inverness	arr.	2 40	
	Dornoch	arr.	12 38		2 43						



Having left The Mound station, No.55051 crosses The Mound itself - this is the causeway over the River Fleet - with a mixed train for Dornoch on 30 July 1952. Photographer Tim Shuttleworth recalls that he and his brother were the only passengers to board the train at The Mound; the train was not required to stop at Cambusavie as no passengers wished to board or alight there, but two or three passengers joined at Skelbo and Embo. After arrival at Dornoch the engine undertook a little shunting then returned to the platform as if to depart with the passenger coach; however, there were no more trains that day, so Messrs. Shuttleworth & Shuttleworth had to return to The Mound by bus. PHOTOGRAPH: F.W.SHUTTLEWORTH

The Dornoch branch train, with No.55051 in charge, approaches The Mound on 23 April 1952 - that year seemed to be a popular one with photographers! PHOTOGRAPH: H.C.CASSERLEY





No.55053 and its mixed train (the 2.05pm from The Mound) approach Dornoch on 1 October 1953. The train has just negotiated the level crossing 20 chains ( $\frac{1}{4}$  mile) short of the terminus. The coach is a flush-sided ex-LMSR 62ft vehicle; it appears to be one of those which had been built at Wolverton between 1935 and 1938. There seemed to be no preference as to which way round the coaches faced on the branch - in some photographs the brake end is nearest the terminus while, in others, it is nearest The Mound. PHOTOGRAPH: A.B.FLETCHER

sued to the Dornoch branch and so, in July 1958, another of the class, No.1649, was also dispatched to Helmsdale. It had previously been allocated to St.Philip's Marsh shed in Bristol. The use of these two 16XXs in the Far North prompted the suggestion that, with others of the class allocated to sheds in Cornwall, this dispersal of a class was almost certainly a peacetime record.

The pannier tanks had only a short time to become accustomed to their new surroundings. By the early part of 1960, proposals to close twenty of the intermediate stations between Inverness and

Wick looked like becoming reality. One of the stations earmarked for closure was The Mound, and this would, of course, render the Dornoch branch trains redundant. The closure of The Mound and the Dornoch branch was effected on Monday 13 June 1960 but, in the absence of Sunday services, the last public passenger trains ran on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup>. The branch engine on the 'last day' was No.1649. The morning return trip consisted of the customary single coach plus a handful of freight vans, but for the second (and final) trip three corridor coaches were provided. After the final arrival at Dornoch,

No.1649 had to clear the goods vans from the station yard as well as returning the empty coaching stock.

The closures of the Dornoch branch had not been confirmed until fairly late in the day; clearly, it had not been confirmed when the Scottish Region had printed its public timetables for the summer of 1960, as the branch services (all two of them!) were listed in the timetable which came into force on 13 June of that year. The two Pannier Tanks remained in the area until their withdrawal in December 1962. Their work included station piloting at Dingwall.



The three intermediate stations on the Dornoch branch were seldom photographed, and so this picture of Embo is something of a rarity. It was taken on 8 June 1960 and looks south towards Dornoch. As noted in the text, the station platform was rebuilt in the early 1950s. PHOTOGRAPH: LYNDON W. ROWE



Returning to Dornoch, this view of the station shows the goods shed in the spacious yard. No.55051 waits with the 1.15pm to Dornoch on 23 April 1952. PHOTOGRAPH: R.M.CASSERLEY

ing booklet exclusively describing the line was written and published by Barry C. Turner in 1987 (ISBN 09513358 04). Some of the locomotive information was gleaned from *Highland Railway Locomotives* (Cormack & Stevenson - RCTS, 1988), while other information was taken from contemporary railway magazines, notably the *Railway Observer*.

Thanks are also due to Mr. Keith Fenwick, the editor of *The Highland Railway Journal* (the magazine of the Highland Railway Society), for granting permission to use extracts from George Roblin's articles which appeared in the *Journal*. For details of membership of the Highland Railway Society, contact Mr. Don Massey, 17 Wellyards Close, Weston, Staf-

ford ST18 0JWE (we imagine an s.a.e. would be regarded as a common courtesy).

Thanks also to Messrs. Tim Shuttleworth and John Edgington for information about the coaching stock, to Mr. Bryan L. Wilson for information about *The Mound* signal box, and to Mr. Lyndon W. Rowe for details of his visit to the line in June 1960.



No.55051 shunts at the north-west end of The Mound station on 30 July 1952. The photographer is standing on the end of the branch platform - we are looking along the main line in the direction of Rogart (or Inverness, if you prefer) - and the engine appears to have picked up wagons from the dead-end sidings adjacent to the main line. The mixed train now complete, it is being hauled back to the branch platform ready for the return trip to Dornoch. A gas tank wagon stands on the siding to the right of the main line. The bridge under which the train is passing carries the Dornoch-Golspie main road (part of which is now incorporated in the A9) near its junction with the road from Lairg. The bridge was built in 1939 to replace an older structure: the abutments of the old bridge can be seen in front of those of the new one. PHOTOGRAPH: F.W.SHUTTLEWORTH



Clearly, the station at The Mound did not serve a bustling centre of population. On 23 April 1952 No.55051 waits to depart from the somewhat isolated station with the 11.55am to Dornoch. The coach is brake corridor compo SC6755M, one of a batch of twenty-five 60ft coaches built at Wolverton in 1930. It was not originally flush-sided - rebuilding took place circa 1940 when it received 'Period III' panels and deep window ventilators. PHOTOGRAPH: H.C.CASSERLEY

The line was lifted in 1962. Many of the level crossing cottages are still in use as private dwellings, but the site of the junction at The Mound is now overgrown, with no reason for trains to stop there. The A9 trunk road has nowadays cut the distance between, say, Tain and Dornoch to 9 miles - it was five times as long by rail! Much anger was created in Scotland

in the early 1990s by the Government's refusal to allow a diverted Highland main line to cross Dornoch Firth with the road on the new bridge. Any researcher wishing to examine the official SRO file on the controversy will find that it is closed to 2016; so we must wait until then to grasp the Transport Minister's reason for refusing to allow the Far North line to gain

a new lease of life, and for trains to once again run into the pleasant town of Dornoch.

*Research note: Papers relating to the Dornoch Light (BR/DLR/1/1) and Highland Railways have been researched at the Scottish Record Office, whose staff are thanked for their helpfulness. An interest-*

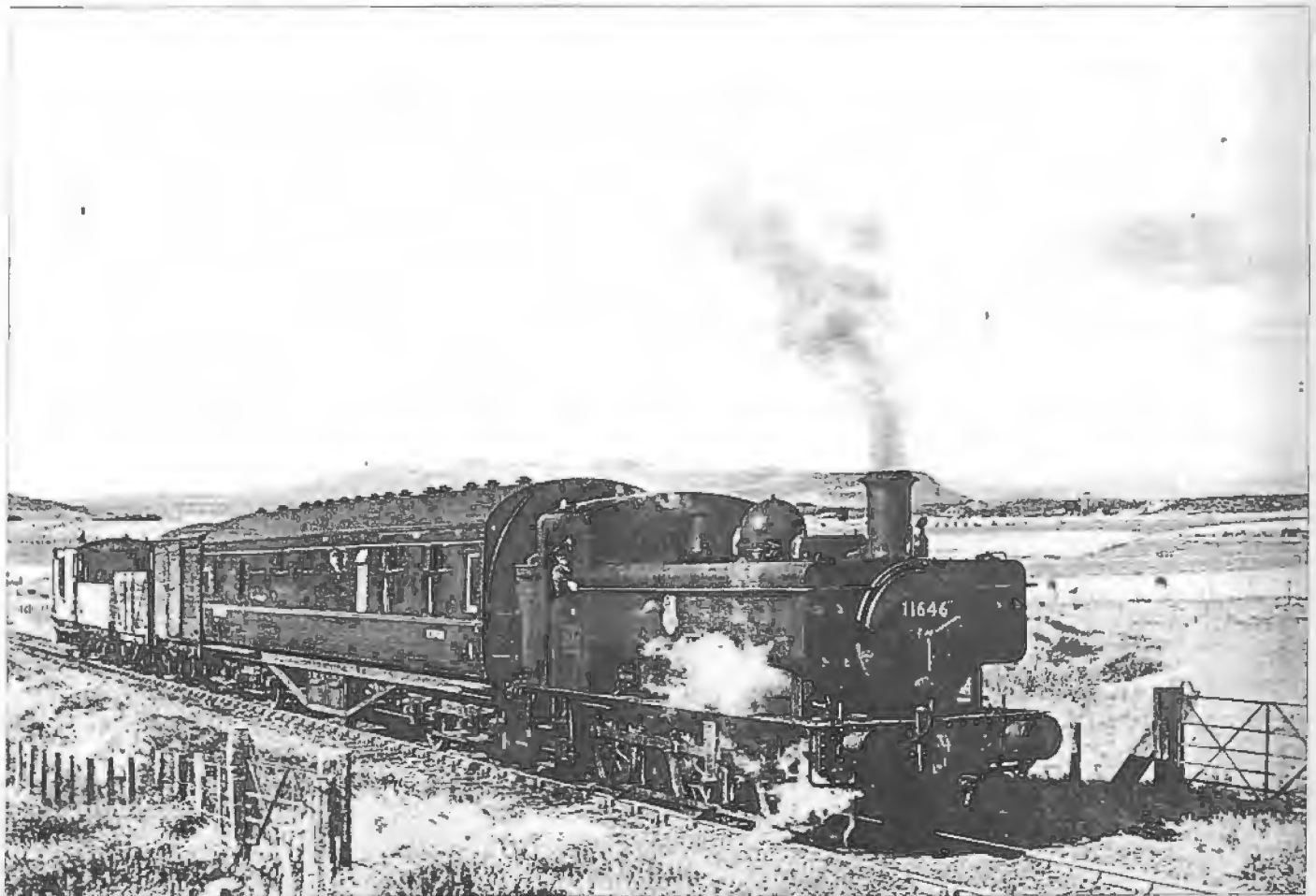


This splendid view of the branch platform at The Mound includes a nice array of wicker hampers, milk churns and a hand cart, and could easily be a period piece from the 1920s or 1930s. It was, however, taken on 30 July 1952. The main line platform is behind the railings on the left. PHOTOGRAPH: F.W.SHUTTLEWORTH

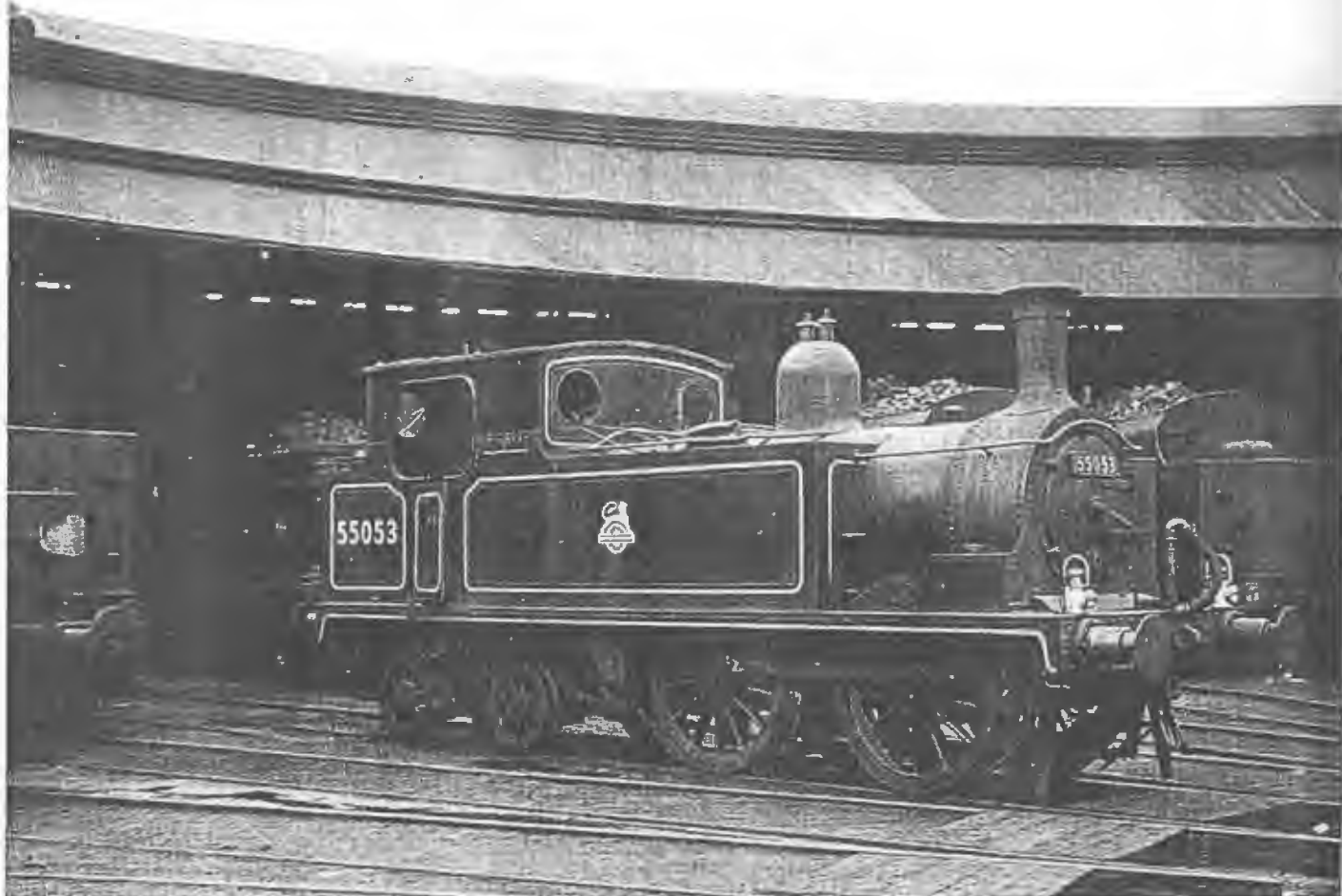


The unexpected replacements for the Highland 0-4-4Ts were Western Region 0-6-0PTs. The second of the WR pair to arrive in the Far North was No.1649, which was photographed at Dornoch on Wednesday 8 June 1960 (the last week of services) preparing to depart with the 1.00pm to The Mound. The tower in the background is that of Dornoch Cathedral. PHOTOGRAPH: LYNDON W. ROWE

The first of the WR 16XXs to reach Scotland was No.1646. It was photographed sometime shortly after its arrival in February 1957 hauling a mixed train from Dornoch towards The Mound. The coach is SC6742M, another of the Wolverton-built 60ft coaches of 1930 which had been rebuilt with flush sides circa 1940. PHOTOGRAPH: C. LAWSON KERR

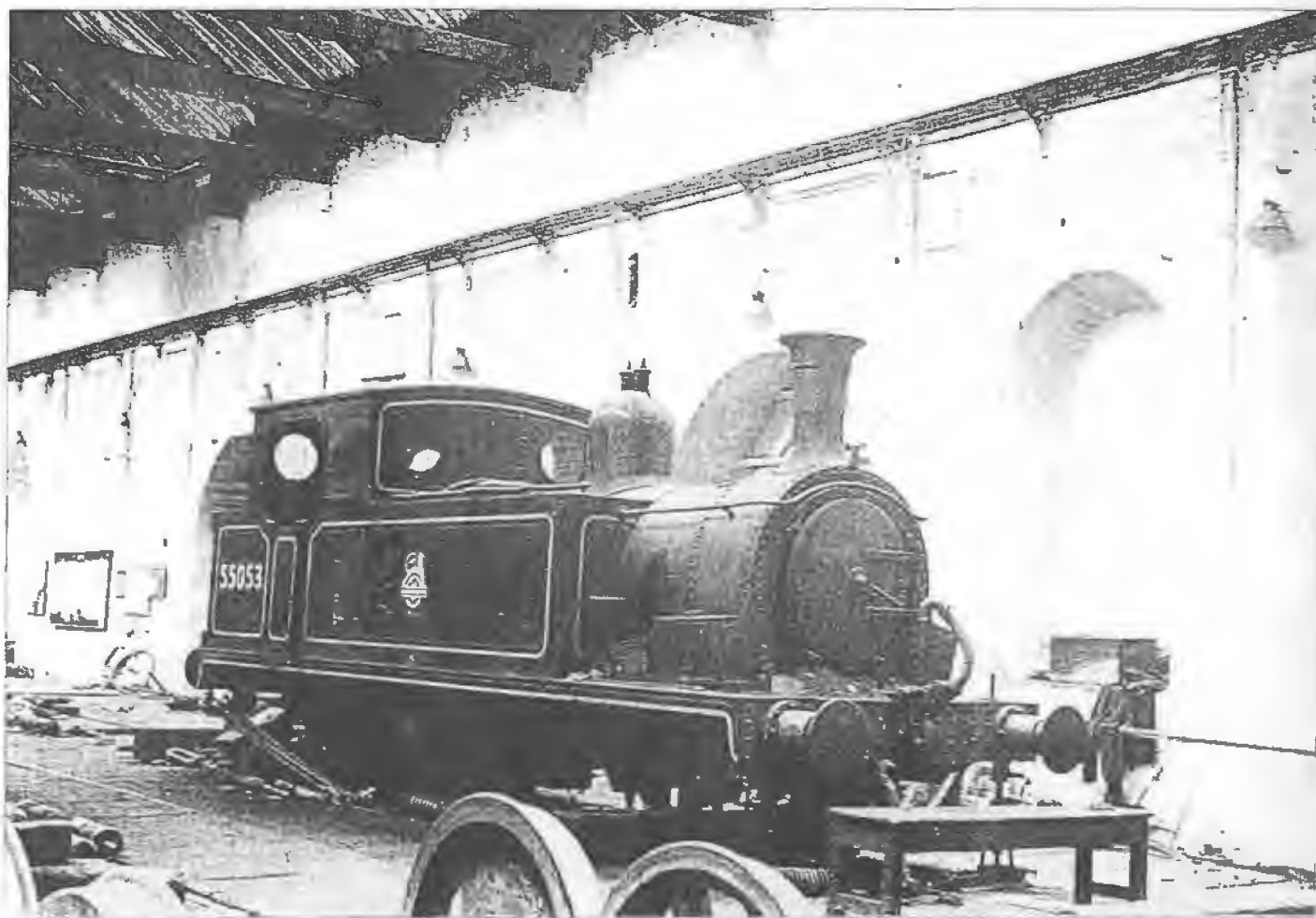






A very fine portrait of the smartly lined No.55053 at Inverness shed in 1956. PHOTOGRAPH: THE TRANSPORT TREASURY

After breaking an axle and losing a wheel while in service, No.55053 was dispatched to Lochgorm Works at Inverness pending a decision as to its fate. The decision - the somewhat inevitable one - was withdrawal. It was photographed at Lochgorm on 24 June 1957 awaiting removal to Kilmarnock for scrap. PHOTOGRAPH: THE TRANSPORT TREASURY

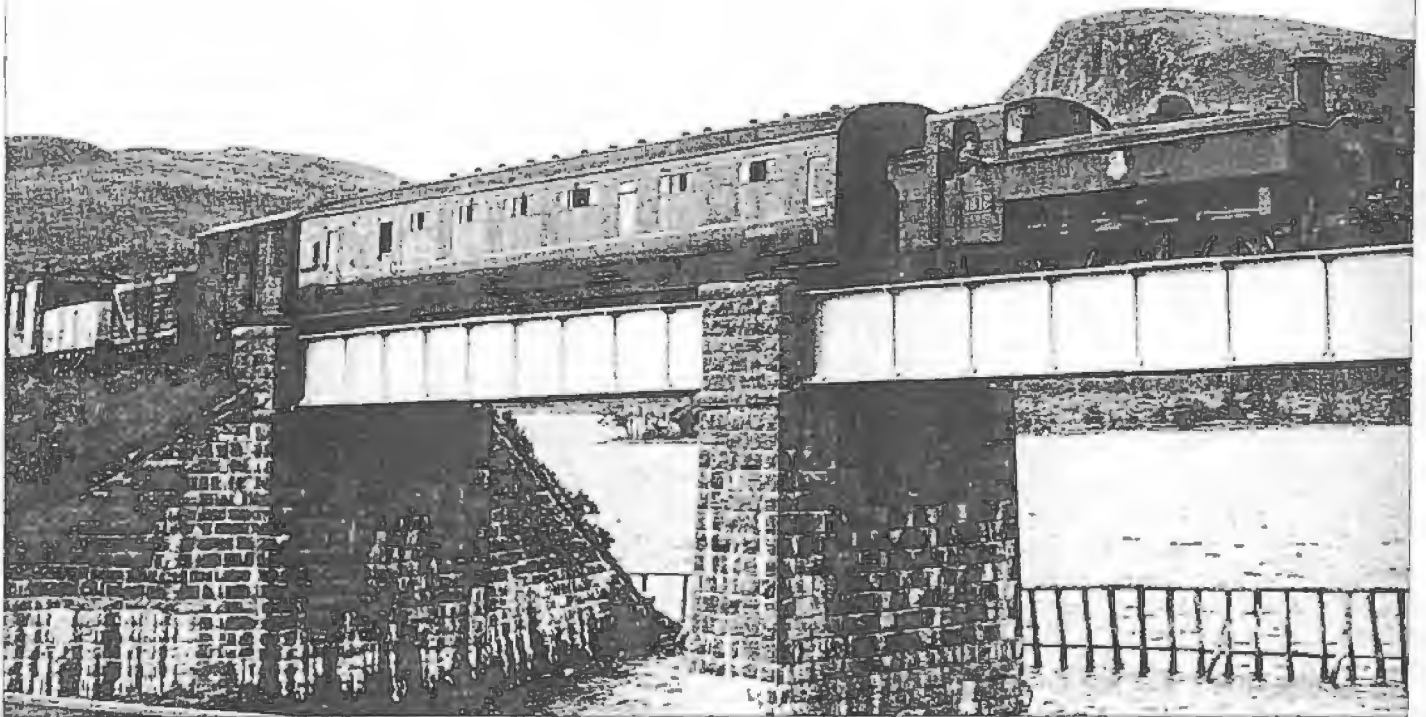




Having run round the train, No.1649 rejoins the platform road and is about to couple up again. The structure on the right is the water tank. PHOTOGRAPH: LYNDON W. ROWE

Both of the Dornoch pannier tanks, Nos.1646 and 1649, simmer at The Mound on 8 June 1960 - this was three days before the cessation of services. Photographer Lyndon Rowe informs us that he had travelled that morning from Helmsdale to The Mound on the 8.35am from Wick, and both pannier tanks were there on his arrival. No.1649 took him to Dornoch on the 11.55am and returned with the 1.00pm to The Mound. By this time No.1646 had vanished from the scene, possibly back to Helmsdale shed. The reason for the two panniers having been at The Mound in the morning is a bit of a mystery; the photographs shows a distinct difference in the level of coal in their bunkers, and this could be taken to suggest that the branch engine was being changed. However, as far as we are aware, engine changes were undertaken at weekends. Hmmm... Putting this matter to one side, this picture also gives a good view of the other end of the signal box - the 'panelled' brick base, slate roof and plain bargeboards are typical of Highland 'boxes of the 1900s, though the roof has lost the finials which once adorned it. The high outcrop in the distance is part of Mound Rock. PHOTOGRAPH: LYNDON W. ROWE





No.1646 crosses the viaduct over the River Fleet some time in February 1957. PHOTOGRAPH: C.LAWSON KERR

No.1649 runs round the branch train at The Mound on 8 June 1960. On the opposite side of the main line is the handsome signal box - this was typical of Highland 'boxes of 1900 onwards, having a brick base but retaining the old Highland-style timber batten end gable. PHOTOGRAPH: LYNDON W. ROWE

