

# MASSEREENE



# BROCHURE



NCC A Class 4.4.0 No 68 running in to York Road on a Larne train in the early twenties. The engine was later named Slieve Gullion.  
Photo - Lens of Sutton

COVER PHOTO - NCC Mogul No 101 "lord Massereene" leaves York Road with the The Festival Train on 20th June 1951  
Photo - H M Rea

GNR(I) S Class 4.4.0 No 171 "Slieve Gullion" passes Central Junction with the 3 pm Derry on 12th July 1964. The Third Line is visible in the foreground.  
Photo - A S Ragg



## MASSEREENE RAILTOUR - 12th MAY 1973

Although today's Railtour covers oft-travelled ground, there are many new features to hold your attention and the notes which follow are designed to make the trip really worthwhile.

Almost from the very start there are new sights to be seen, or more accurately, the old familiar sights are gone forever. York Road station has been the subject of much alteration work, both official and unofficial. The station concourse lost its roof recently in a bomb explosion but perhaps the saddest loss here was the large scale, cut-away working model of GNR Big D No.202 (later GNR 41 and UTA 35) built by the apprentices at Dundalk Works and reported to have cost almost as much as the original!

Beyond the ticket barriers, Platform One has gone to make way for the new works, the ten roads of which are accessible from a traverser itself accessible by a turntable. On the other side of the line the steam shed, the coaling plant, the ash road and much more have been razed to make way for the new god of modern living, the multi-lane 'highway' - an unrecognizable wilderness of tarmac and kerbstones.

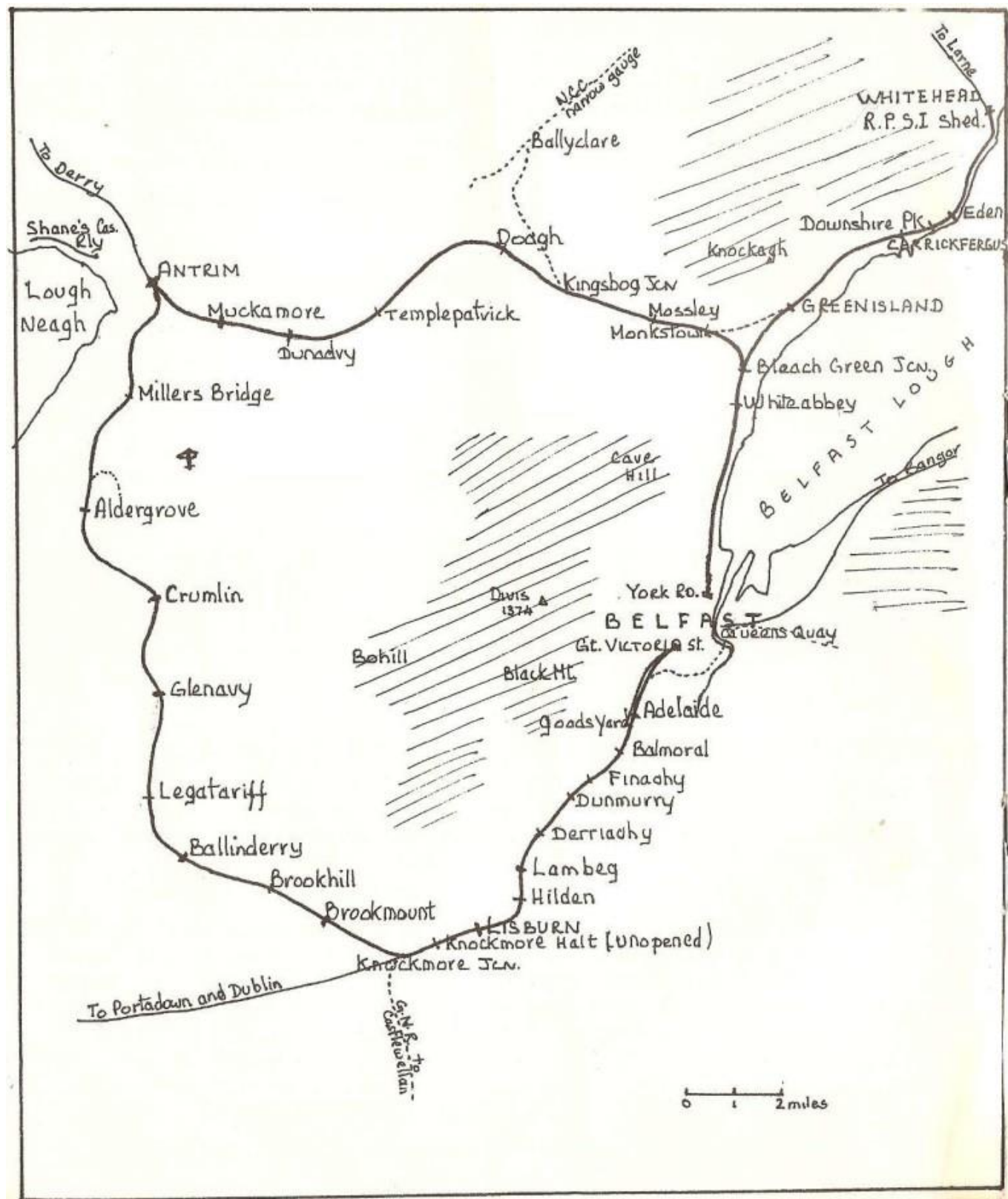
It is well to remember that York Road shops turned out some twenty nine engines including compounds for both the broad and narrow gauges. The shed here probably saw the greatest variety of "foreign" engines - from the Northern, County Down, Sligo Leitrim and even the Great Southern and Guinness Brewery not to mention the Courtaulds engines which were shopped here.

Once beyond Milepost One (these are on the Down, i.e. left-hand side leaving Belfast) the vast earthworks for the motorway keep us company to milepost 2½ - all the spoil used for this filling came from Magheramorne in the stone trains which gave the Jeeps a new lease of life.

At Bleach Green, site of the only flying junction in Ireland, we cross the Larne line on the largest concrete viaduct in Ireland built with government assistance and opened in 1934 thus obviating the need for trains to run to Greenisland and reverse direction over the back line to Mossley.

In building the Loop the Larne Line was altered from Whiteabbey forward to allow for the work. New earthworks were constructed between Bleach Green and Monkstown and while the new down line was being built between Monkstown and Mossley where the new level met the old there was single line working over the old up line. The old down line was then moved to join the new at Monkstown and the new up line built between there and Mossley - this involved cutting into the embankment of the original down line, part of which can still be seen. The Loop begins at 1 in 75 and continues thus to just beyond Mossley where the grade eases a little before the summit at Kingsbog Junction. During the last war the Moguls were known to take fifteen bogie 'military leave' trains up here.





At Milepost 10 $\frac{3}{4}$  we pass the site of Ballyclare Junction, once hopefully named Ballynure Road, despite the fact that Ballynure was six miles away on the narrow gauge Ballyclare branch. The actual junction was at Kingsbog and the branch trains ran to and from Belfast. In more recent years, of course, the stub of the branch was used for stabling pilot engines which had helped heavy trains up the Loop.

The rail away from Kingsbog Junction was for long a real racing ground

but perhaps surprisingly the runs up from Antrim were often as exciting as the runs downhill. Perhaps the most famous of the former was that of our own No.4 with five bogies starting away from Antrim and, in spite of a signal check at the advanced starter, actually accelerated to 69 mph and held 67 mph to Kingsbog.

At Antrim, where we reverse direction onto the former Great Northern branch, there is a new signal cabin at the gates at the north end of the station replacing the one near the junction and the track diagram here has been altered to allow direct access into the branch by ex-Derry trains which had previously to reverse to the down platform. In pre-war days through coaches from Dublin were attached here to the Golfers Express. The former goods yard here is now used to store condemned coaching stock and railcars and the former turntable pit has been filled in, hence our having to run tender first over half of our route.

We have mentioned in the prospectus for this tour that the Antrim - Lisburn line is being upgraded for handling ex-Derry trains en route to the proposed new central station in Belfast. During recent months the branch has been relaid with 60 foot rails on concrete sleepers and much work has been done to many of the stations to undo the years of neglect although the stations suffered little vandalism in comparison to some others we could mention (some still in daily use!).

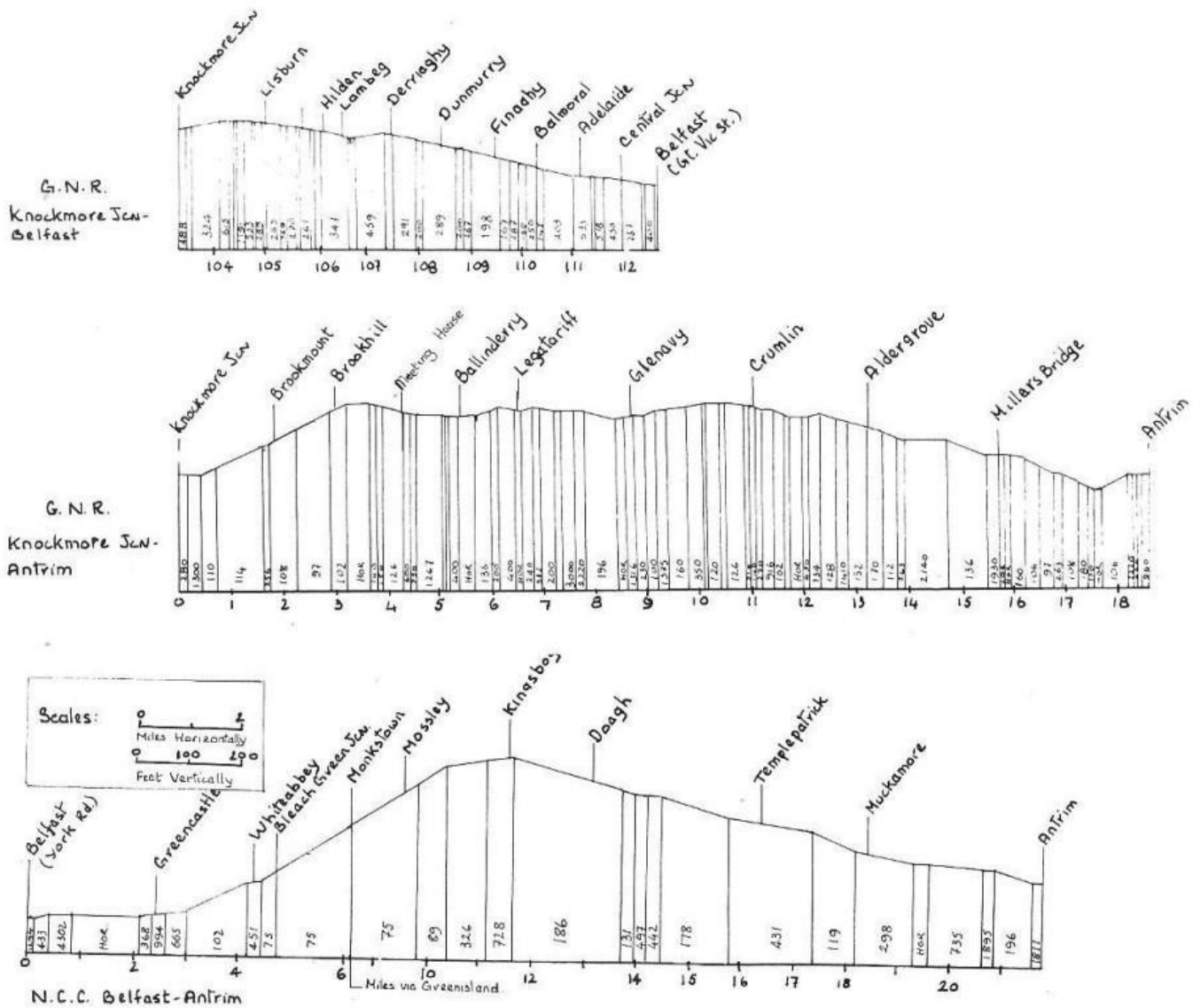
At Millar's Bridge the road overbridge is being rebuilt. The halt here was marked by two concrete posts to warn drivers and was one of four opened between the wars; the others were at Legatariff, Meeting House and Brookhill.

Near milepost 12 two large concrete posts mark the site of the Gortnagallon branch - a 2¼ mile branch built to serve a wartime air base. There were up to three 'material trains' on the branch each day as well as a workmen's train consisting of resurrected but not reconditioned six wheelers which operated from Belfast.

In the fifties the 5pm Antrim to Aldergrove and return was composed of an NCC engine and coaches. When Aldergrove lost its cabin this train banked the 5:15pm diesel - at Aldergrove the two trains went their separate ways. Just before the withdrawal of passenger services this working was extended to Crumlin.

Both Crumlin and Ballinderry have their loops reinstated, almost exactly on the trackbed of the previous loops. There are many tales of heavy traffic on the branch during the War when, for instance, an Up goods train could take three days to make its way along the length of the line, including an entire day at Ballinderry waiting for the heavy military leave trains to pass.

It is certainly difficult to imagine now that Brookmount once had sidings, two ground frames - and a weighbridge!



At Knockmore we pass onto the Great Northern main line, passing the supposed last relic of an Ulster Railway cabin. From here to Lisburn we have a grandstand view of perhaps the biggest civil engineering job on the Great Northern for many years and certainly one of the most unusual. As a result of diverting the Derry traffic to the central station at Belfast a new third line is to be laid between the Junction and Lisburn. One of the effects of this will be the disappearance of the junction and its cabin (the gates are to be replaced by an overbridge). The earthworks for the new line are well advanced and the new formation is clearly visible. At the first overbridge, at Ballinderry Road, look out for the single platform and as yet unopened Knockmore Halt on the up (i.e. non milepost side). At the next overbridge however the new line will rise about ten feet above the existing line and pass through a previously unused eye in the bridge. This unusual measure is because there is not enough land available behind the line to enable a safe bank to be excavated all the way down to line level. It is worth remembering that both bridges between Lisburn and the junction were built with four eyes in optimistic anticipation of traffic which never really materialised. At one time, of course, the double track out to the junction handled all the Banbridge and Antrim branch trains as well as a considerably heavier main line traffic than nowadays which consisted of Derry Road, Irish North and Point line trains as well as Dublin traffic.

At Lisburn the former goods yard is now used as a permanent way depot; the next halt, at Hilden, formerly had a switch cabin, goods store and siding while Dunmurry, formerly the only stopping place between Belfast and Lisburn, was served in the fifties by a Laundry train which was propelled back to Grosvenor Road yard, there to be attached to the 8:50pm Derry goods. Goods trains were regularly banked to here. Finaghy, where the platforms are presently being extended, formerly had a cabin (the base of which can still be seen) on the down side and a two road wartime yard.

Balmoral, where the line was raised substantially, formerly had a three road yard and headshunt on the up side for the showgrounds livestock traffic.

Adelaide goods yard is built on the site of the former engine shed and marshalling yard which were built in 1912 when the original Belfast shed (behind the North Cabin) was closed. The site of this shed is now used partially by the omnipotent bus and partly as carriage sidings.

The "Third Line" between Adelaide and Central Junction at Milepost 112 together with the Central Line itself had the unusual feature of Permissive Working. The only passenger train to use the Third Line was an empty carriage working from Balmoral about 1939. The former Grosvenor Road goods yard was closed when Adelaide opened in mid-1972 and has since been lifted.

Great Victoria Street formerly had five platforms. No.5 was used by up and down Enterprise trains but was sacrificed to the buses. As a partial recompense the Motor Platform (No.1) was extended. In the thirties the GNR saved engines and manpower by combining Warrenpoint, Cavan or Derry portions with mainline trains. This produced trains which were too long for No.3 platform, so the front three bogies were left in No.2 until the last minute when the train engine would add them to the train proper. Trains such as these often loaded to thirteen bogies although an unassisted S could, from time to time, be asked to handle as many as twelve bogies.

This Brochure has been produced by the Magazine Sub-Committee who would like to thank the various photographers who supplied prints.





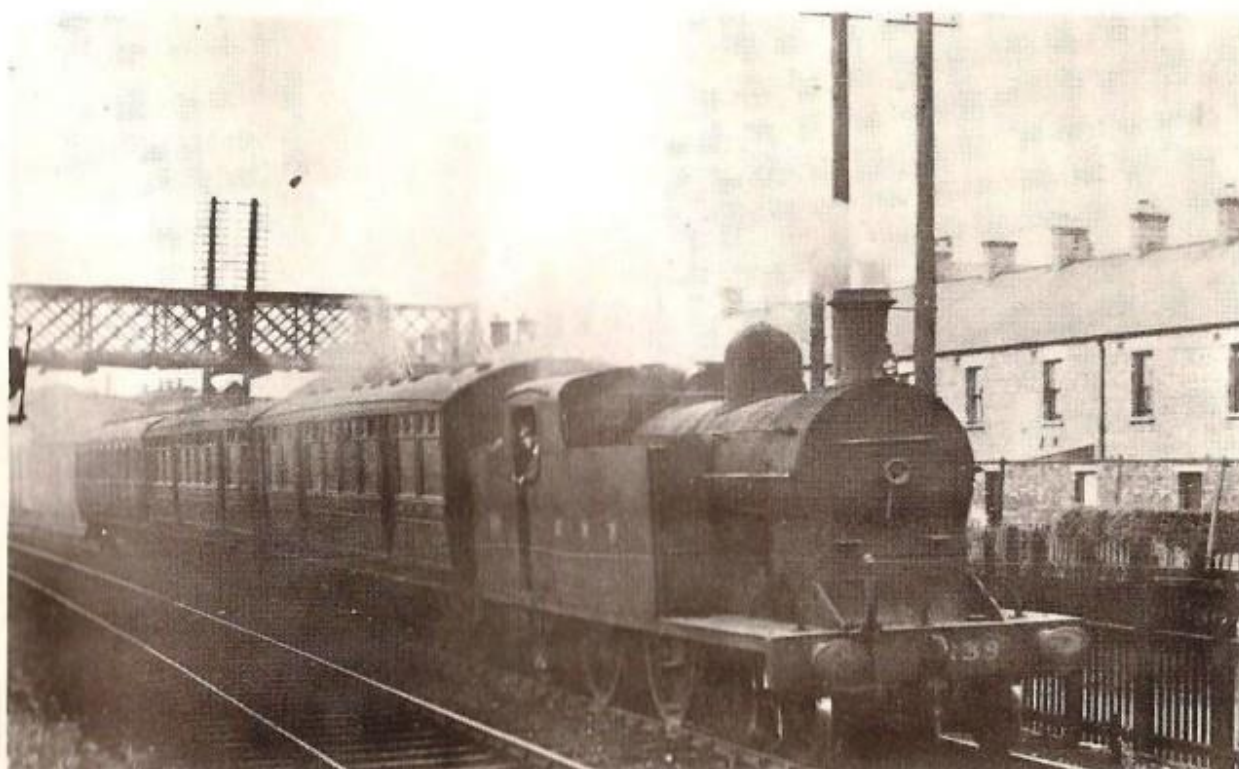
GNR(I) U class 4.4.0 No 197 "Lough Neagh" passes Lambeg on a Newcastle train on 23rd June 1951

Photo - H M Rea

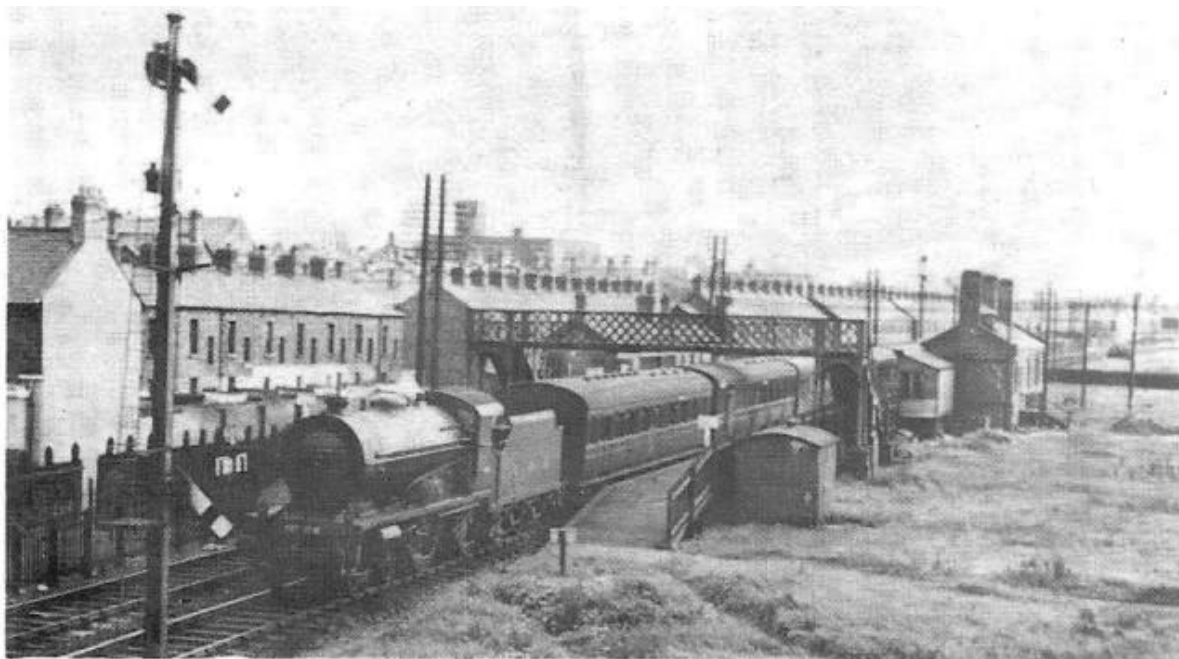
#### GREAT NORTHERN TRAFFIC

GNR(i) T2 class 4.4.2T No 139 approaches Adelaide with a Lisburn local on June 13th 1950.

Photo - H M Rea







NCC Mogul No 97 "Earl of Ulster" at Antrim on a down train shortly after delivery. Note small tender and spotless condition. Photo- Real Photographs Co Ltd

### THE HALCYON THIRTIES

GNR(I) Compound No 86 "Peregrine" runs in past Adelaide with a down train on 25th June, 1937. Note the round-topped boiler. The present goods yard is to the right of the station. Photo - H C Casserley

