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BRANCH LINE FEASIBILITY STUDY - Copy for circulation to Council Members in preparation for Special Council Meeting, 8<sup>th</sup> October 1980.

This copy includes the main body of the report and certain of the Appendices. The plans and remaining appendices have been omitted to assist in ease of preparation and circulation.

**CONFIDENTIAL**

**RAILWAY PRESERVATION SOCIETY OF IRELAND**

**BRANCH LINE**

**FEASIBILITY STUDY REPORT**

## BRANCH LINE FEASIBILITY STUDY

### SUMMARY

The Feasibility Study was set up by the Council of the RPSI in June, 1979. P Scott and D Grimshaw were asked to form a sub-committee to investigate the feasibility of the Society re-opening and operating a closed rail-connected branch line within Northern Ireland.

The sub-committee investigated all areas where difficulties could be expected with such a project, for example, engineering problems, legal requirements, cost and finance.

The finding of the sub-committee are as follows:

1. The only line which could be considered for a preservation project is the former brunch of the GNR(I) from Scarva to Banbridge.
2. It would be feasible for the Society to re-open and operate this line provided legislation, finance by way of grant aid, District Council backing and suitable volunteers are all forthcoming.
3. A firm decision by the Society on whether or not to proceed with the project is required as a matter of urgency.

Definite answers to the four points mentioned in 2. above will only be forthcoming if the Society decides to further the project.

It is the wish of the members of the sub-committee that this Report carry with it a recommendation that the Society should undertake the re-opening of the Scarva - Banbridge railway, subject to the above provisos.

*P Scott*

*D Grimshaw*

October 1880

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The Branch Line Feasibility Study was set up by the Council of the RPSI at its meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> June 1979. The following resolution was passed:

“The RPSI Council, having been asked by the Association of Railway Preservation Societies (Irish Branch), should set up a sub-committee to look into the feasibility, from the engineering, cost and local authority approval points of view, of re-opening a closed rail-connected branch line in Northern Ireland, and to make a report and recommendation to the Council accordingly. The RPSI Council should then decide which scheme, if any, to recommend as being the most feasible to the ARPS(IB).”

P Scott (Locomotive Maintenance Officer) and D Grimshaw (Operations Officer) were appointed by the Council to form the sub-committee, together with such other people as were required.

The following Society members assisted with the work of the sub-committee: J Glendinning, D Trotter, J Lockett, C McAteer, R Edwards, K Pullin, B Hill, P Kelly, D Young.

The first meeting was held on 27<sup>th</sup> June, 1979, and P Scott was appointed chairman and secretary. In all, eleven minuted meetings were held.

Since the object of the study was to establish feasibility rather than to produce detailed plans and requirements for a branch line project, it was decided that the procedure should be to pinpoint as many areas of anticipated difficulty as could be foreseen, and to investigate these sufficiently to establish whether or not the difficulties could be overcome. Areas which did not appear to lead to problems were not investigated in depth, other than to obtain an estimate of cost.

Upon considering the terms of reference as laid down by the Council, it became clear that the feasibility of re-opening a branch line depends upon several more basic considerations than those specifically mentioned; for example legal restraints, availability of land, and finance. The sub-committee considered that, to produce a meaningful report upon which the Society could make a decision, it would have to investigate all such matters and that it would not be acting outside its brief to do so.

The Council resolution states that the sub-committee should make a “report and recommendation” to the Council. By this, the sub-committee understands that it is to recommend:

1. Whether or not re-opening a branch line is feasible;
2. Which lines should be considered;
3. Whether or not, in the opinion of the sub-committee, the Society should undertake to re-open a branch line.

The RPSI Council can then decide to accept or reject the findings of the sub-committee, after considering the feasibility report and all other relevant factors affecting the future of the Society; for example, likelihood of continued operation on NIR and CIÉ main lines, desirability of preserving railway works and installations as well as trains, and desirability of giving volunteers the opportunity to operate the trains which they maintain.

## **2. AREAS OF DETAILED STUDY**

### **2.1 Legal**

In order to operate a branch line of the length envisaged, Parliamentary authority will be required. Such authority confers certain rights and privileges protecting the railway, but also imposes obligations, for example the upkeep of lineside fencing.

Discussions have taken place with the Department of the Environment for Northern Ireland and the Railway Inspectorate, who have confirmed in particular that legislation is necessary for the line to cross public roads either on the level or by means of bridges.

Most of the preserved railways in Great Britain operate under a “Light Railway Order”, this being, the most convenient way of conferring parliamentary authority without the expense and delay of a special Act. The original railway powers are simply transferred from the British Railways Board to the new Company.

In Northern Ireland, there are two problems, namely:

1. There are no suitable disused lines where legal powers are still in existence; that is to say, any closed railway which could be considered has been subject to an “Abandonment Order”. The establishment of legal powers will therefore have to start from scratch.
2. The Light Railways Acts, which apply in Great Britain, do not extend to Ireland.

Following research into the legal situation, in particular regarding light railways, it has been established that “The Tramways (Ireland) Act” is still in existence, and in theory an application for an Order in Council under this act could be made. However, there are a number of problems associated with this legislation, mainly a restriction in axle loading to 8 tons. This would be quite inadmissible for the Society’s locomotives, only one of which comes within this limit.

In addition, the DoE(NI) has advised that any application made under this Act would be opposed, mainly on the grounds that the legislation was not designed for tourist railways (See Appendix 8).

The DoE(NI) have advised that the only way to proceed is to promote private legislation, in which case the Department will endeavour to assist.

In discussion with the Railway Inspectorate, the indication is that the legislation should be drafted in such a way as to parallel the Light Railways Act operative in Great Britain. The Inspectorate will be able to offer advice concerning the drafting of the Act, in an unofficial capacity.

The cost of a Private Act of Parliament has been estimated at somewhere in the region of £3,000, but this could be considerably reduced if local council carried out much of the background work as a voluntary exercise.

The legal process could take anything up to two years.

### **2.2 Protection Of RPSI Rolling Stock**

Legislation would specify the constitution of the Company to operate the railway. The RPSI could lease locomotives and coaching stock to this company, so that the assets of the RPSI would be protected in the event of failure of the Railway Company.

Alternately, the stock could be held by a Holding Company, or by Trustees.

See Appendix 7 - letter from C McAteer.

### **2.3 Consideration Of Possible Branch Lines**

Since there are no suitable lines in Northern Ireland where railway powers are still in existence, the survey is considering lines which have been closed for a number of years. In all cases, trackwork, road underbridges and station installations have been removed, and redevelopment of the track bed has taken place.

The Society laid down the condition that any line considered should be rail-connected. In addition, the sub-committee decided that the following criteria should apply:

1. The length should be between 5 and 10 miles. anything shorter than 5 would tend to be too trivial, whereas a line longer than 10 miles would be too expensive to maintain and operate, and would only duplicate features. The most satisfactory of the preserved lines in Great Britain come within these limits.
2. Any line considered should be interesting and challenging to operate. A dead level line without features such as bridges and level crossings, although easy to maintain, should be avoided since much of the interest of the steam railway would be lost thereby. In particular, a line with a gradient of over 1 in 90 for a distance of not less than 1 mile should be chosen, so that interesting locomotive working would result.
3. The line should be scenically attractive, and should include as many typical railway features as possible, i.e. intermediate stations, level crossings, bridges, signal boxes, tunnels.
4. The line should be within 30 miles of Belfast, from where the majority of both volunteers and visitors can be expected to come.
5. The line would be worked entirely in the first instance by volunteer staff.
6. Civil engineering works, and installations involving high maintenance costs, should be avoided; especially bridges and level crossings. This requirement of course clashes with Nos. 2 and 3 above.
7. The line should be in an area not associated with the present civil unrest in Northern Ireland.
8. Close proximity to residential areas should be avoided because of the likelihood of objections from residents.
9. It is assumed that the present RPSI locomotives and rolling stock which are maintained to operate railtours will be available to work the line, and that additional stock will not be required.

Of the closed lines within reasonable distance of Belfast, Knockmore Junction - Banbridge, Portadown - Armagh and Portadown - Dungannon were ruled out immediately because of extensive redevelopment precluding reinstatement of the junction with the main line. The former BCDR main line from Ballymacarrett Junction to Comber is in the same category.

Goragewood - Newry and Goragewood - Markethill were not considered because of the location in South Armagh, and the association the area has with terrorism, in particular the hijacking of trains. It was felt that: 1) Preserved locomotives and rolling stock would be at risk and 2) Tourist traffic would be severely limited while the present emergency continues.

The following lines were considered in more detail, and surveyed:

### Cookstown Junction - Randalstown (2 miles) - Toome (11¼ miles)

This line was part of the LMS(NCC) Cookstown line. It diverged from the main line at Cookstown Junction station, where there were locomotive facilities and a loop platform. Randalstown had a passing loop and goods facilities. At Randalstown, the line crossed the River Maine by a masonry viaduct. Between Randalstown and Toome, the line crossed 21 roads and lanes by bridges and level crossings. This line was ruled out because:

1. There is recent residential development including a new road at Randalstown. The station house is occupied and there is further residential development in the station area.
2. The L122 motorway crosses the line shortly after Randalstown.
3. Of 7 public road bridges, 6 have been removed.
4. There is very extensive redevelopment of the line between Randalstown and Toome for agricultural use.
5. The station and locomotive installations at Cookstown Junction have been removed, with the exception of the water tower, and the main line realigned so that reinstatement of the junction would be very difficult.
6. The line has few outstanding features with the one major exception of the viaduct at Randalstown. It is virtually level with a ruling gradient of 1 in 132.

### Kingsbog Junction - Ballyclare (3¾ miles)

This branch of the LMS(NCC) was discounted because:

1. Extensive redevelopment has taken place for agricultural use and road improvements.
2. The line is too short to be the basis of a worthwhile preservation scheme.

### Scarva - Banbridge (6¾ miles)

This branch of the former GNR(I) appears to be the only line which could be seriously considered as a preservation project.

For a description of the line, see Appendix 1.

In relation to the criteria decided upon, the line has the following advantages:

1. It is of suitable length.
2. It has all the features which are considered desirable for the line to be interesting to operate, e.g. two intermediate stations (Lawrencetown and Lenaderg), and 2 miles at a ruling gradient of 1 in 73.
3. Scenically the line is outstandingly attractive. From the junction at Scarva, the line crossed the Newry Canal by the "Wash" bridge, and then climbs through a rock cutting and past the small lakes at Drummiller and Drumaran. Between Lawrencetown and Banbridge, the line follows the River Bann, which it crossed by four girder bridges.
4. Banbridge is 25 miles from Belfast on the main Dublin road, and is also 21 miles from the holiday resort of Newcastle.
5. The Banbridge - Scarva area is not associated with civil unrest, and vandalism is negligible.
6. The line is not close to any housing development.

7. The line is suitable for development in two stages.

It has the following disadvantages:

1. In order to reinstate the line, one completely new bridge would be required to cross the realigned Gilford road at Scarva. The steelwork together with some masonry would be required for the "Wash" bridge over the canal, and the four Bann river bridges. Although most of the track bed is intact or easily reinstated, some earthworks would be required. Acquisition of property or deviation of the line would be required at Hazelbank where the former level crossing house has been extended.
2. There are 3 public road level crossings, all involving unclassified roads. In addition, there are two lanes where the status of the road is to be clarified, and one additional level crossing which may be required for Drummiller Lane if the former bridge is considered unsuitable for present day traffic. Public road level crossings will affect maintenance, insurance and manpower required.

From here the Feasibility Study is concerned specifically with the Scarva - Banbridge line as the only option.

## **2.4 Attitude Of Local Authority**

Banbridge District Council were approached, and have formally considered the suggestion that the Scarva - Banbridge line be reinstated as a tourist amenity.

There is considerable support for the scheme, and a resolution has been passed by the District Council approving an application for grant aid. A sub-committee has been formed to liaise with the Society.

The District Council has stated formally that the Council itself is unable to finance the scheme, and that in the event of a 75% grant being forthcoming, the Society would have to find the remaining 25%. However, during informal discussion the indication is that some finance may be forthcoming from the District Council.

A short section of the line at Scarva comes within the area of Armagh District Council. On the advice of Banbridge District Council, no approach to Armagh Council has been made since the two bodies are understood to work closely together in matters of this nature.

## **2.5 Availability Of Land**

The owners of the former railway land between Scarva and Banbridge have all been approached, and a view sought regarding the reinstatement of the railway. Of the 26 land owners interviewed, 23 are in favour of the scheme and 3 are against.

No attempt was made to persuade land owners to accept the scheme, and the value of land was not directly discussed.

The attitude of land owners is summarised in Appendix 2 (report from D Trotter), and the land requirements are detailed in the 1:2500 plan (Figure 2).

Land values have been estimated, and a figure of £200,000 arrived at for outright purchase. If some of the land can be leased instead of purchased, this figure comes down to £90,000.

It is felt that the attitude of the 3 dissenting land owners may change if the scheme is approved by the Society; only then can suitable pressure be brought to bear upon the parties in question.



## **2.6 Crossing Of Public Roads**

The reinstated line would cross public roads at the following locations:

### **Between Scarva and Lawrencetown**

Gilford Road (Route B3)	Bridge under - new bridge required
Drummiller Lane (unclassified)	Bridge under - may require level crossing
Kernan Road (unclassified)	Bridge over - bridge existing
Drumhorc Road (unclassified)	Level crossing

### **Between Lawrencetown and Banbridge**

Lawrencetown (unclassified)	Bridge over - bridge existing
Point Road (unclassified)	Level crossing
Hazelbank (unclassified)	Level crossing (status unclear)
Lenaderg (unclassified)	Level crossing
Millmount (unclassified)	Level crossing (status unclear)

The DOE(NI) Roads Service at Craigavon was formally approached regarding their attitude to the reinstatement of the railway at these locations, and any plans which might exist for road improvements effecting the former railway land. The Forward Planning Department advised that no improvements are envisaged in the near future which would affect the existing bridges at Kernan and Lawrencetown. The only serious objection raised concerned the proposal to reinstate a bridge over the Gilford road at Scarva, and this was resolved by agreement on the sighting clearance to be provided. Detailed examination of requirements for the level crossings between Lawrencetown and Banbridge have still to be made, but no objections have been raised to the reinstatement of the railway at Drummiller Lane or Drumhorc.

The type of level crossing to be employed would be decided after consideration by the Roads Service and the Railway Inspectorate; i.e. whether gates, barriers or an ungated crossing with warning signs or lights would be appropriate.

## **2.7 River Crossings**

The line crossed the River Bann at 4 locations between Lawrencetown and Banbridge. The Department of Agriculture was consulted, and advised that agreement of the Department is necessary for any development which could affect the flow of a river. No objections in principle were raised to the proposal to reinstate the former railway bridges. The Department would require to consider detailed proposals.

The Department also advised that it is not its policy to remove redundant bridge masonry unless it is causing obstruction to the flow.

## **2.8 Junction With NIR At Scarva (See Appendix 4)**

Northern Ireland Railways Co Ltd was formally approached, and have agreed in principle to a trailing junction onto the Up line at Scarva, subject to suitable arrangements being made for the safe working of trains. The installation of the junction would be at the RPSI's expense.

## **2.9 Operating Requirements**

The operation of the line would be subject to the Railway Inspectorate, and would be based on the Ministry of Transport's publication "Railway Construction and Operation Requirements for Passenger Lines and Recommendations for Goods Lines" - the "Blue Book". After examination of this publication, no difficulties are foreseen. Initial informal contact has been made with the Railway Inspectorate.

It should be noted that the “Blue Book” permits very considerable relaxation of requirements and hence reduction in costs and manpower, where light railways or “lines of local interest” are concerned.

See Appendix 10 for minimum operating requirements.

## **2.10 Civil Engineering Works** (See Appendix 4 And Figure 2)

The track materials and bridge steelwork was removed after abandonment of the line in the early 1960s. Subsequently, some of the formation has been redeveloped for agriculture, and certain bridge masonry has been removed.

Of the 6¾ miles of line, 6 miles of formation is either intact or easily reinstated. The remainder requires the replacement of certain earthworks, bridges, etc.

The major civil engineering works required are the rebuilding of bridges as follows:

- |           |   |
|-----------|---|
| Br. No.2  | (‘Wash’ Bridge over Newry Canal at Scarva)<br>Replacement of steelwork, raising of embankments. |
| Br. No.2A | (Gilford Road at Scarva)<br>New bridge over realigned road, raising of embankments.             |
| Br. No.14 | (Lawrencetown Bridge over River Bann)<br>Replacement of steelwork and centre pier.              |
| Br. No.17 | (Lenaderg Bridge over River Bann)<br>Replacement of steelwork.                                  |
| Br. No.18 | (Mayes’ Bridge over River Bann)<br>Replacement of steelwork and one abutment.                   |
| Br. No.21 | (Cowdy’s Bridge over River Bann)<br>Replacement of steelwork and centre pier.                   |

Simple and economic methods of replacing the bridges have been investigated, using second-hand materials where appropriate. The only entirely new structure required is the Gilford Road bridge at Scarva, and for this new steelwork is proposed. Consultants Kirk, McClure and Morton have drawn up a design for this bridge, and have estimated costs.

Minor civil engineering works have been investigated only so far as to obtain cost estimates.

Appendix 4 lists the Civil Engineering works required together with the estimates, and Figure 2 shows a 1:2500 plan of the line giving the location of works.

The letter S against an item in Appendix 4 indicates that the work is assumed to be done by RPSI volunteers, and in this case a nil estimate has been entered. The letter C indicates work done by a contractor; however, it is assumed that direct labour can be used in many instances and the cost considerably reduced thereby.

The civil engineering costs can be summarised as follows:

### Scarva - Lawrencetown

Works, buildings	£164,200
Track, drainage, fencing	<u>£104,000</u>
	£268,200

## Lawrencetown - Banbridge

Works, Buildings	£130,800
Track, drainage, fencing	<u>£65,490</u>
	<u>£196,290</u>
	£464,490

### **2.11 Availability Of Second-Hand Materials** (See Appendix 9)

It is assumed that to keep costs reasonable and to preserve period installations, most track, signalling, crossings and some bridge materials should be provided as second-hand materials salvaged from the existing main line railways.

Northern Ireland Railways Co Ltd was approached formally regarding the availability of track and signalling equipment suitable for the branch. NIR advise that suitable track will be available from now on as re-laying progresses. Semaphore signalling equipment is not at present generally available, but the position should change in about 5 years' time.

Suitable steelwork for the canal bridge and Bann river bridges is in existence on the disused railway between Omagh and Strabane. These bridges have been surveyed to obtain an assessment of both suitability and requirements regarding dismantling and removal. Ownership is being traced and negotiations regarding acquisition have been initiated; agreement in principle has been established with the owner of Bridge No.125 near Omagh for purchase of the structure.

### **2.12 Insurance**

Messrs Bowring Martin have advised that there is no basic difference from the Insurer's point of view between the Society's present operation and the operation of a branch line. The premium would depend upon the degree of risk associated with such aspects as track maintenance, fencing and level crossings (see Appendix 5).

D Young (Insurance adviser) has estimated that the premium would be in the region of £3,000 p.a.

### **2.13 Viability**

The likely commercial viability of the operation was investigated, with the following results:

#### **1. Costs**

##### **a) Marginal costs (proportional to number of days operation)**

Coal	£150
Oil	£10
Spares	<u>£40</u>
	£200

##### **b) Allocated costs (annual costs allocated to each day's operations)**

Insurance	£3,000
Locomotive & Coach Maintenance	£1,000
Track, Building	£2,000
Advertising, Administration	<u>£1,000</u>
	£7,000

Equivalent to £230 per day assuming 30 days of operation.

## 2. Revenue

Assuming return fares of £1 adult and 50p child and a 1:1 ratio, the average fare would be 75p per passenger.

With 5 return trains per day and “peak” loading occurring during mid-afternoon, the following passenger numbers would be required for revenue to match costs:

<u>Train Time</u>	<u>Passenger Nos Required</u>	
	<u>Marginal</u> <u>Costing</u>	<u>Total</u> <u>Costing</u>
11:00	15	30
13:00	65	140
14:00	100	200
15:00	75	160
17:00	15	40
	<hr/> 270	<hr/> 570

270 at 75p = £200 (Marginal costing)

570 at 75p = £430 (Total costing)

Using total costing figures, the maximum of 200 passengers could easily be accommodated on a 5 coach train.

The above assumes the line operated by volunteers, with no labour charge.

The required traffic would be somewhere between 270 and 570 passengers per day, depending upon the proportion of fixed costs charged against the branch line.

In order to assess likely traffic, a survey was carried out during the operation of the Train Rides at Whitehead. The results of this are given in Appendix 6. The considerable attraction of the preserved railway can be gauged by the following results:

- Passenger figures are 200 - 300 per day, even with limited advertising and the restricted nature of the train ride.
- 30% of visitors are prepared to come further than 20 miles, and 32% from 15 to 20 miles.
- 68% came out purely for the train ride.
- 85% were of the opinion that the train ride is too short.

Given the added attraction of the branch line and suitable advertising, it is felt that there would be sufficient numbers of visitors to make day to day operation viable.

### 2.14 Volunteers

An accurate assessment of the likely numbers of volunteers forthcoming for the operation and maintenance of a branch line would be very difficult, since there is no comparable activity in Northern Ireland at the moment.

Volunteers will be required:

- To design and organise the reconstruction of the line, and to carry out certain of the practical work, e.g. clearance, fencing and track laying, and some bridge reconstruction.

2. To administer, maintain and operate the line for traffic.

The following points should be noted:

1. The branch line will greatly widen the scope for practical participation by railway enthusiasts in the actual running of trains, an aspect which is almost totally denied in the present RPSI set up.
2. Three of the most active members of the sub-committee until recently took only a minor part in practical Society activities.
3. The Society and in particular the branch line proposal have the active support of professional people in appropriate walks of life, in particular railway engineering and legal.
4. In the section in operating requirements, it was established that 8 staff would be required to work the line. Even if only the present Society Operating Staff is taken into account, the railway could operate on 30 days if each member were prepared to work one day in four.
5. Of the 481 tourist railways and museums in Great Britain, 40 come into the category of steam operated tourist lines ranging from 1 mile to 20 miles in length. On a proportional population basis, Northern Ireland should be able to support one major scheme.
6. The Scarva - Banbridge line has 6 level crossings and 6 major bridges. The maintenance of these will require volunteers in greater numbers than an equivalent line without such features. The fact that bridges and level crossings greatly add to the interest of the line should not be ignored.
7. The project is very suitable for participation by youth groups and Enterprise Ulster, which would greatly alleviate the volunteer requirements.

It is recognised that the success of the scheme in attracting new volunteers cannot be assessed, and can only appear in practice.

## 2.15 Summary Of Costs

Legal (New Company, Act of Parliament)	£5,000
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### Scarva - Lawrencetown

Works, Buildings	£164,000
Track	£104,000
Land	<u>£130,000</u>
	£398.000

### Lawrencetown - Banbridge

Works, buildings	£130,000
Track	£65,000
Land	<u>£70,000</u>
	£265,000
Total	<u>£668.000</u>

## 2.16 Finance

### ***Introduction***

Capital Funding for the above project must be regarded as one of the main corner stones of the entire proposal. Without the reasonable prospect of raising very considerable sums of money the entire project can only remain at the planning stage.

At the time of writing this report (September 1980) there is unfortunately a very deep recession gripping western economies. Coupled with this our Government is forced to cut public spending at all levels. This is repeated down to District Councils with the result that there is no likelihood of any consideration being given for Grant Aid ex Government Departments or District Councils for some time to come. This also applies to both business and private sectors from which one could, in happier financial times, expect some interest in the project.

However, the nature of the product is such that capital will not be required, in quantity, for at least 12 to 19 months. Therefore, there is a chance that during this time there may be an improvement in the economic performance of the country as a whole. This in turn might enable one to foresee a time when financial commitments could be entered into.

The final point in the introduction is that the entire funding of this project would be phased over say five to seven years, thus reducing the 'lump sum' financial burden to more realistic figures for fundraising purposes. This would envisage sums of around £100,000 being spent annually for the above period.

### ***Possible Areas For Funding The Project (Government Involvement)***

The above project, if it were to come about, would be a major tourist attraction for the Province. With this in mind approaches have been made to the N.I. Tourist Board to sound their initial reaction. Initial N.I.T.B. reaction is favourable but comments are veiled by the current economic position of the country. Their approval is given in principal to the re-opening of the Scarva - Banbridge Railway. This is subject to satisfactory negotiations with the District Councils in question. Also, more importantly, subject to financial appraisal indicating that the scheme is good value for money and always subject to the necessary funds being available from the Dept of Commerce.

If the above financial appraisal indicates that the project is good value for money this could open the way for detailed negotiations with the N.I.T.B. and Dept of Commerce for a 75% Grant for the project.

Then, there would be the question of the remaining 25%. This would involve detailed negotiations with the relevant District Councils and the Railway Preservation Society of Ireland to see what portion, if any, either party might be in a position to put forward.

The District Council is empowered under existing legislation, if it thinks fit, to provide tourist amenities in its area. However, it should be pointed out that the District Councils are under no obligation to fund any project even if the Dept of Commerce is willing to fund 75% of such a venture. However, such a venture might attract local interest and could form an amenity which could be considered beneficial to the district and be viewed favourably.

To date contacts have been made with Banbridge District Council and they have received the proposal of the Railway with interest.

### ***Possible Areas For Funding The Project (Society And Business And Private Area)***

It is essential that the Society is able to raise large sums of money on its own account especially for the above project, over and above its normal fund-raising activities.

This is necessary as it would be unwise to suggest that the District Councils will be able to support the scheme to the tune of 25%. However, even if the financial state of the country could enable the Councils to do so, there are still areas where the Society would have to fund. This could involve either special capital expense or legal and consultants fees, etc.

What the above boils down to is that if the Society is able to put down sizeable sums of money for the project, then the prospect of Government involvement becomes a greater reality. This may then hasten the day for other bodies to become financially involved and hopefully, this in turn would see the commencement of the project.

### ***Funding-Raising By The Society***

This section lists some of the main methods which would be employed to raise funds.

As already mentioned we would envisage spending approximately £100,000 annually. Therefore, with the 75%/25% Grant operating, we would be faced with producing something in the order of £25,000 annually. This figure could be reduced if the District Councils were to find themselves in a position to become involved. By society standards in Britain £25,000 should not be an impossible target to meet.

### ***Covenanting***

A group of persons could be invited to covenant regular sums of money from say a few at £100- £200 annually to larger numbers of varying smaller amounts. The Society would then get the benefit of the tax relief, etc., from the scheme.

See table at end of this section.

### ***Issue Of Shares*** (e.g. £5 shares)

The issue of shares might interest a section of the members or public. However, this method would tend to raise capital on a once-off basis.

It would be unlikely for the project to pay dividends in cash but possible dividends in the form of free trips, etc., could be made available from time to time. Share certificates of appropriate design would be issued, etc., and could be deemed to be a collector's item if suitably produced.

### ***Appeals***

Appeals for either general funds or specific projects could be made to Society members, members of the public or industry. In this area, donations of capital equipment large or small would be gratefully received. Also one could envisage services being rendered free-of-charge for various projects.

### ***Specific Fund-Raising Sales***

Fund-raising sales over and above existing Commercial operations would be involved, and staffed by e.g. local interested members. This aspect would become more noteworthy as the scheme became more widely known.

### ***Private Donations***

This area is over and above appeals and would possibly interest individual people who wished to give money in larger quantities than would normally be expected.

### ***Social Events***

The above heading could cover dances, local events, outings, dinners, film shows, etc., at which funds could be raised from time to time.

### ***Conclusions***

From our general discussions and in particular, those with the NITB assuming a general economic recovery takes place in the country, there is an excellent chance of us obtaining finance to start the project.

There is no doubt that if the Dept of Commerce and NITB are involved and developments start on the ground this will attract financial support from other interested parties. Railway mania is a curious thing in that it can attract money from many and various sources. This can only be proved by the state of things on the Mainland where many successful operations are taking place. There are also some which are at the same stage as our own project. This shows faith in such projects by more societies than our own.

### ***Foot Notes***

At the time of writing the NITB is submitting our project as a possible scheme which could be developed in light of recent announcements of EEC Grant Aid to schemes in the NI and Republic of Ireland border areas. Such schemes would not receive grants direct from EEC funds but such funds would be paid to the Dept of Commerce. However, release of Dept of Commerce funds could be made easier if such a scheme as ours was approved.

### ***Draft Museums (NI) Order 1980***

Under forthcoming legislation it may be possible for existing museums vis Ulster Folk and Transport and Ulster Museums to become interested in our project. But mainly local District Councils will be empowered, if they wish, to fund regional museums under the guidance of regulations set out by the Dept of Education.

The Society works closely with the Ulster Folk Museum and is currently overseeing the restoration to eventual working order of one of the Railway Locomotive exhibits belonging to the Museum.

Other ventures may become possible in the future via the Act if it becomes law as expected on 31<sup>st</sup> December 1980. For example, the erection on the line of a Museum as an additional tourist attraction.



## ***Enterprise Ulster***

Construction services may be rendered by EU in connection with this project. Initial reaction is “interested” and contact will be maintained in this area.

### ***Covenanting Fund Raising Table (Specimen)***

5	Persons giving	£200	£1,000
15	ditto	£100	£1,500
20	ditto	£50	£1,000
20	ditto	£20	£400
50	ditto	£10	£500
100	ditto	£5	<u>£500</u>
210			£4,900
Tax Relief assuming standard rate of 30%			<u>£1,470</u>
			<u>£6,370</u>

## **2.17 Effect Of Other Preservation Schemes**

Other existing and proposed railway preservation schemes could affect the Scarva - Banbridge line in three ways, namely grant aid, availability of materials and viability.

### ***Grant Aid***

The Tourist Board has indicated that grant aid is likely for one scheme only, and that a fragmented approach will not be looked upon favourably. It would therefore be in the Society's interest to persuade the advocates of other schemes to join with that of the Society.

### ***Materials***

Materials such as point and crossing work, good quality sleepers and signalling equipment could be in short supply. Any duplication of preservation schemes could lead to a shortage of essential equipment. Again, it would be in the Society's interest to have one centralised project.

### ***Viability***

It is felt that schemes remote from each other will not materially affect traffic or volunteers; and could in fact complement each other by widening public awareness and interest. The existing Shane's Castle Railway at Antrim being well established and essentially of a different character, should not be affected or itself affect development at Banbridge. However, the proposals of the Belfast and County Down Museum Trust to set up a preserved line at Saintfield should be viewed with concern, since such a venture could be expected to draw upon the same pool of traffic and volunteers.

## **2.18 Vesting Of Land**

Land availability investigations have established that there are three land owners who may oppose the scheme. In order for the scheme to proceed, it would then be necessary to acquire the land by compulsory purchase.

During discussions with the DoE(NI), the Northern Ireland Tourist Board and the Banbridge District Council, it has become clear that vesting of land is a highly sensitive subject, and powers to vest are only used with extreme reluctance.

In theory, there are 2 ways by which land could be vested:

1. The District Council has powers to vest land for recreational purposes. Banbridge Council has used such powers in the past.
2. The private act of Parliament could give vesting authority. However, it is clear that the act would stand a very much greater chance of becoming law if such powers were not sought.

It is felt that the scheme will stand a very much greater chance of success both as regards commitment from the District Council and the passing of legislation if arrangements can be made with all the land owners without vesting.

However, in the event of say one objector only, it is not unreasonable to assume that the District Council would use its compulsory powers, so long as the scheme is seen to have widespread support in the district and in official circles.

### **3. CONCLUSION**

1. It is feasible for the RPSI to reopen and operate a branch line, provided:
  - a) The necessary legislation is forthcoming;
  - b) Finance by way of Grant Aid is available;
  - c) The District Council back the scheme, possibly to the extent of vesting land;
  - d) Society members and other enthusiasts are forthcoming in sufficient numbers to maintain and operate the line.
2. The only branch line which can be considered as a preservation project is the former branch of the GNR(I) from Scarva to Banbridge.
3. A firm decision is necessary by the Society as a matter of urgency.
4. It is the wishes of the members of the sub-committee that this report carry with it a recommendation that the Society undertake the preservation of the Scarva - Banbridge line.

## **APPENDIX 1 - Description of Scarva - Banbridge Line**

(Note: For condition of formation, position of private level crossings, minor bridges and culverts, refer to Figure 3.)

The principle features of the line are as follows:

### **MP 0 - MP ¼ (Scarva Station)**

The branch terminated in a bay formed by the back face of the Up main line platform. There was a run round loop, headshunt and short goods siding with a loading bank. A crossover made a trailing connection with the Up main line at the Banbridge end of the platform. All trackwork apart from the Up and Down main lines has been removed, together with the signal box, footbridge, station house, and platform shelters.

### **MP ¼ - MP 2**

The line rises on a ruling gradient of 1:72 as far as Kernan Bridge.

### **MP ½ Bridge No.2 (Wash Bridge)**

This was one of the notable features of the line. The Newry Canal was crossed by a 47ft plate girder bridge on masonry abutments. The masonry continued northwards as retaining walls, and the Gilford Road was crossed by a stone-faced circular brickwork arch. The steelwork of the canal bridge has been removed, the road bridge demolished and the road realigned to remove a sharp bend. The bridging of the realigned road is the major civil engineering work required on the line.

### **MP ¾ (Drummiller Lane)**

Drummiller line (public road) formerly deviated and passed under the line by "Potters Bridge", but now crosses the formation on the level. A new level crossing may be required here if the former bridge is considered unsuitable for agricultural machinery. A self-feeding silo and cubicle house has been constructed on the formation, and will have to be re-sited or else the line deviated.

### **MP 1¼ Martin's Bridge**

This was a private under bridge. Because of restricted headroom, it would probably require to be replaced by a level crossing.

### **MP 1¼ - MP 1½**

The line passes through a deep rock cutting.

### **MP 1½ - MP 1¾**

The line follows the margin of Drummiller Lough.

### **MP 1¾ - MP 2**

A cutting has been filled in to enable the adjacent field to be extended, and will require to be reinstated.

### **MP 2.40 (Kernan Bridge, formerly Monaghan's Bridge)**

The Gilford - Loughbrickland road crosses the formation by a circular brick arch, stone faced. From here the line falls at 1:98 to Drumhorc Level Crossing.

#### MP 2¼ - MP 2½

The line overlooks Drumaran Lake, which is on the Down side. A short length of embankment will require to be reinstated.

#### MP 3¼.10 (Drumhorc Level Crossing, Public Road)

The crossing house is occupied but in poor repair.

#### MP 4 (Lawrencetown Station)

There was a single short platform on the Up side, with a shelter. The adjacent station house is existing but derelict. Latterly, there was only one siding at Lawrencetown, which was on the Down side and served a loading bank and goods shed, now demolished. There is room for a loop, second platform, and locomotive shed. At the Banbridge end of the platform, a public road crosses the formation by a circular stone faced brick arch bridge. At the Scarva end of the station the formation is of considerable width and the area could be used for sidings.

#### MP 4.14 Bridge No.14 (Lawrencetown Bridge, River Bann)

The line crossed the river Bann by a 3-span plate girder bridge on masonry abutments and piers. The steelwork and one pier has been removed. From here to Banbridge, the line follows the river Bann.

#### MP 4.16 (Chapel Row Level Crossing, Public Road)

The crossing is immediately after Lawrencetown Bridge. The crossing house is occupied. The line continues on a retaining wall embankment with two masonry bridges over minor streams.

#### MP 4¼.16 (Hazelbank Level Crossing)

The status of this crossing as a public or private road is to be clarified. The crossing house has been extended partly onto the formation, so that acquisition of the property or deviation of the line will be required.

#### MP 4¼.10 Bridge No.17 (Lenaderq Bridge, River Bann)

The river was crossed by a 2-span plate girder bridge on masonry abutments and centre pier. The steelwork has been removed but the masonry is intact.

#### MP 5.9 (Lenaderq Station and Level Crossing)

There is a short stone platform on the Down side. The Milltown Road (public road) crosses the formation immediately on the Banbridge side of the station. Banbridge Iron Foundry siding was on the Down side immediately after the crossing.

#### MP 5¼.10 - 5½.6

The Milltown Road has been realigned and occupies a short length of the formation, so that a deviation would be required.

#### MP 6.2 Bridge No.18 (Hayes' Bridge, River Bann)

The bridge crossed the river by a single span lattice girder bridge on masonry abutments. The steelwork and northern abutment have been removed.

#### MP 6¼ (Millmount Level Crossing)

The status of this crossing is to be clarified. Normally used by foot traffic only. The crossing house is occupied.

#### MP 6¼.4 Bridge No.20 (Bryson's Bridge)

A short embankment and private bridge would require to be reinstated. A siding for Cowdy's Bleach Works was on the Down side.

#### MP 6¼.9 Bridge No.21 (Cowdy's Bridge, River Bann)

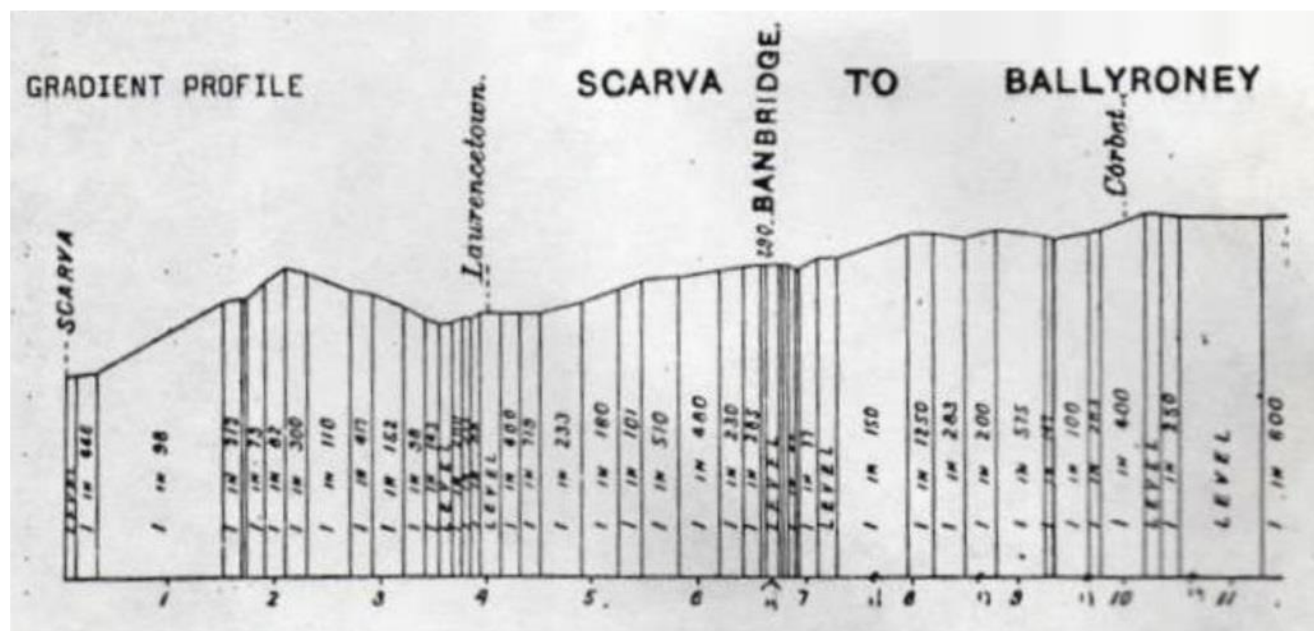
The river was crossed by a 2-span plate girder bridge on stone abutments and centre pier. The steelwork and centre pier have been removed.

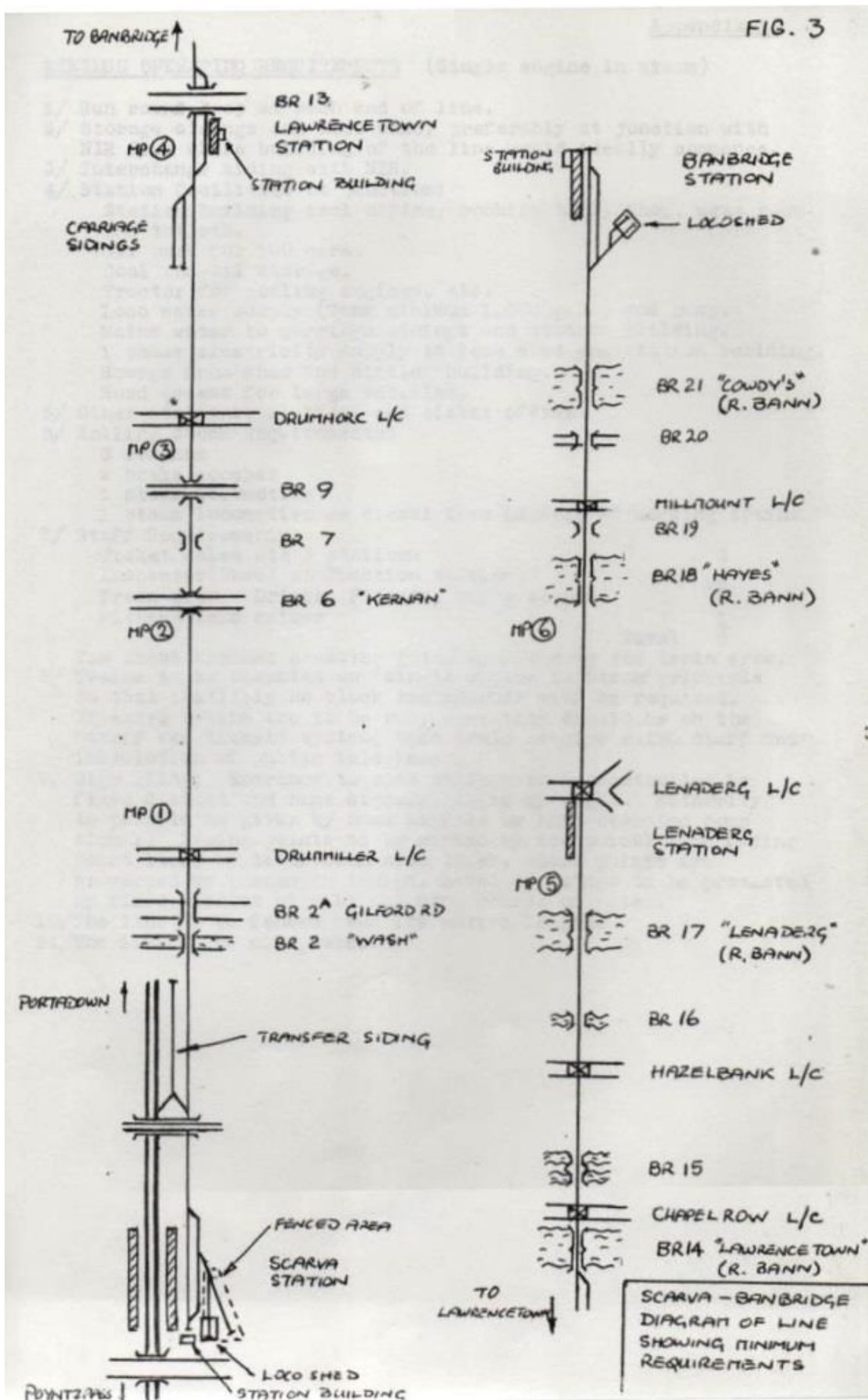
#### MP 6¼.10 - 6½.6

A pedestrian path has been built on the formation as part of the Bann Riverside Walk.

#### MP 6¼.6 - 6¾ (Banbridge Station)

The station building and platform have been removed, and the site is now occupied by a single storey office block and maintenance yard of the DoE (NI) Water Service. The 2-road engine shed and water tower are in existence, and in use as a workshop.





## **APPENDIX 10 - Operating Requirements**

### **MINIMUM OPERATING REQUIREMENTS** (Single engine in steam)

1. Run round loop at each end of line.
  2. Storage sidings and locomotive shed, preferably at junction with NIR from where building of the line would ideally commence.
  3. Interchange siding with NIR.
  4. Station facilities at junction:
    - Station Building, including office, booking hall, shop, mess room and toilets.
    - Car park for 100 cars.
    - Coal and oil storage.
    - Tractor for coaling engines, etc.
    - Locomotive water supply (tank minimum 1,000 gallons) and pump.
    - Mains water to carriage sidings and station building.
    - 1-phase electricity supply to locomotive shed and station building.
    - Sewage from shed and station building.
    - Road access for large vehicles.
  5. Other stations: Platform and ticket office.
  6. Rolling stock Requirements:
    - 3 coaches
    - 2 brake coaches
    - 1 steam locomotive
    - 1 steam locomotive or diesel locomotive capable of working trains
  7. Staff Requirements:

Ticket sales at 3 stations	3
Inspector (based at Junction Station)	1
Train crew - Driver, Fireman, Guard/shunter	3
Fitter/steam raiser	<u>1</u>
Total	8
- The above assumes crossing gates operated by the train crew.
8. Trains to be operated on “single engine in steam” principle so that initially no block instruments will be required. If extra trains are to be run, operation should be on the “staff and ticket” system; this would require extra staff and installation of public telephones.

9. Signalling: Entrance to each station to be controlled by fixed distant and home signals, light by night. Authority to pass to be given by hand signals or hand-operated home signal. Facing points to be worked by economical type facing point lock, by levers alongside track, where points are traversed by passenger trains. Level crossings to be protected by fixed distant signals and stop boards on gates.
10. The line to be fenced over its entire length.
11. The line to be mileposted.