

BEN BULBEN RAILTOUR



Souvenir Brochure

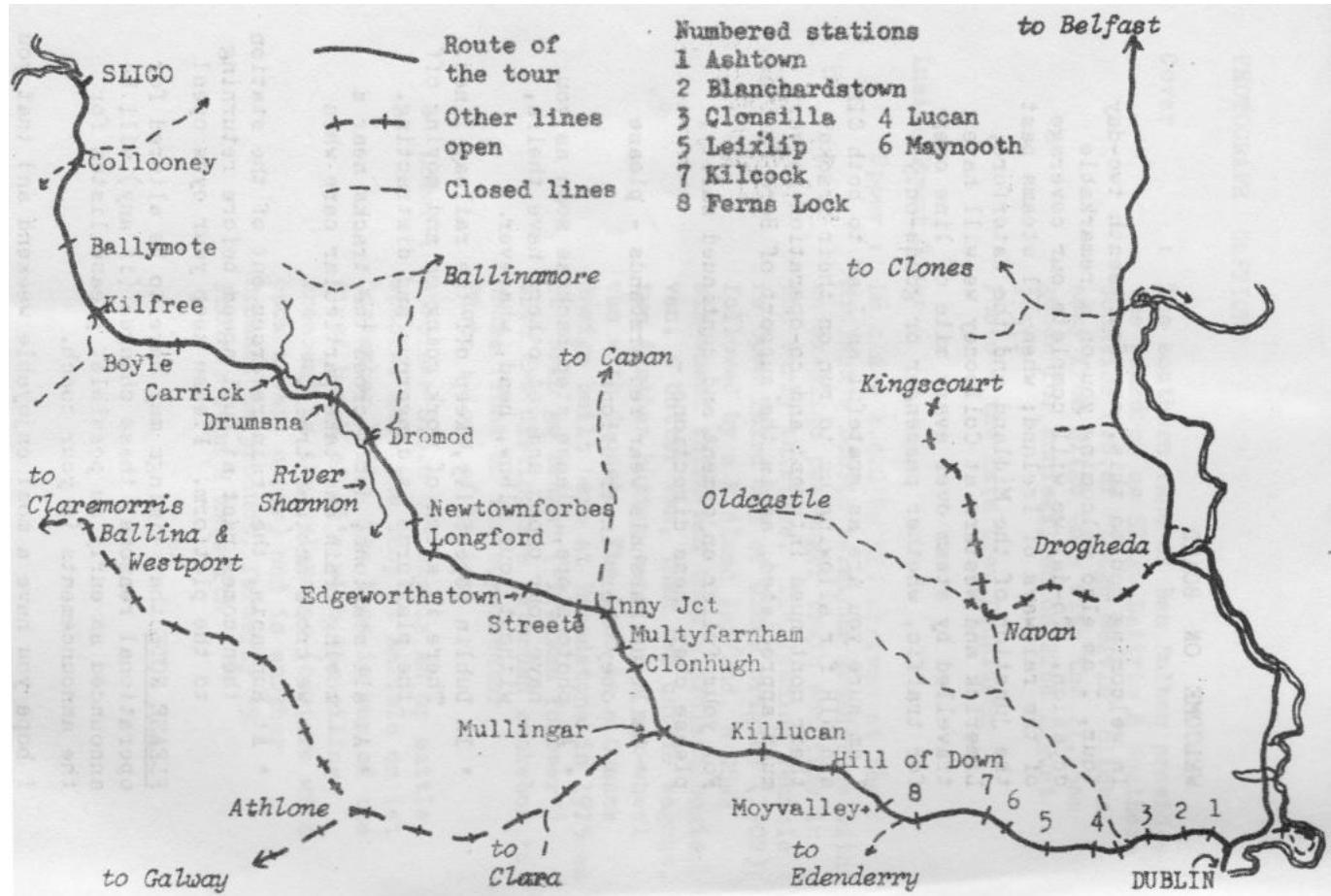
RAILWAY PRESERVATION SOCIETY OF IRELAND

BEN BULBEN RAILTOUR

DUBLIN (Connolly) - MULLINGAR - SLIGO and return

Saturday and Sunday, 26th & 27th September 1981

SOUVENIR BROCHURE



PRICE 50p. Free to railtour ticket holders.

Acknowledgements: To our authors, Barry Carse and Charles Friel, for the description of the line, and to Denis Grimshaw for the timetables, to Wally Gamble for his map of Sligo town and again to Charles Friel who supplied the illustrations from his collection, wrote the captions, drew the route map and gradient profile and prepared the masters. Not forgetting the back room boys who collated the material and to the Ulster Cancer Foundation for provision of much help and assistance. Thank you to one and all, Robin Morton.

Cover Photograph: The southern face of Ben Bulben provides the backdrop as Sligo, Leitrim & Northern Counties 0-6-4T "Lough Melvin" climbs away from Sligo Quay with the 11:15am goods for Enniskillen on 22nd August 1957. (Drew Donaldson)

WELCOME ON BOARD

In welcoming you to this, our fourteenth two-day tour, I am also welcoming you on a remarkable occasion. Today we will complete our coverage of the railways of Ireland; when No.171 steams past the junction of the Midland and the Waterford, Limerick and Western at Collooney we will have travelled by steam over every mile of line open for traffic, whether passenger or goods-only.

I am sure you are as grateful as I am to both CIÉ for allowing us to run on their tracks; their continued interest and co-operation is very much appreciated, as is the support of Bord Fáilte.

For your fuller enjoyment and continued safety, please obey these directions:

- * Railtour Marshals wear red armbands - please obey their instructions.
- * At photo stops, please step back as soon as you have your photo and let others have theirs, without your elbow, head, whatever.
- * At all stations, don't cross the tracks near a moving train and take particular care when we cross another train.
- * At runpasts, the train reverses out of the station then comes past at full speed before returning to the platform. Please keep your eyes open!

PLEASE NOTE: Timings may have to be altered for operational reasons; these changes (if any) will be announced as early as possible, please listen for the announcements in your coach.

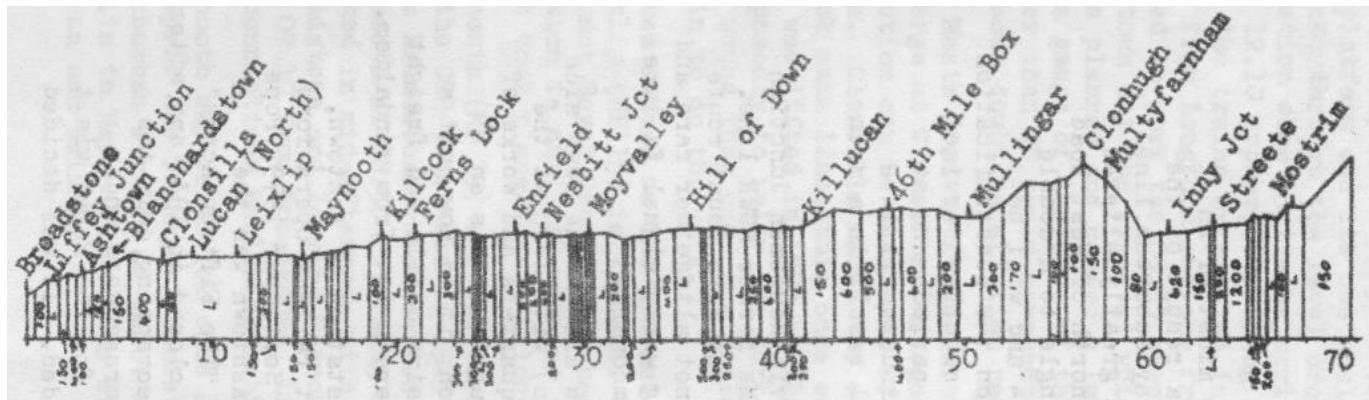
I hope you have a most enjoyable weekend and that you will be back next year.

DENIS GRIMSHAW

THE ROAD TO BEN BULBEN

Dublin Connolly station is in the midst of an enormous rebuilding programme as a result of the electrification of the Howth - Bray suburban line. Platform 7, for instance, has been greatly altered while Ossory Road Junction (just north of West Road Cabin) is being altered from a single to a double junction - including double slip - and will be reversed in direction. The work on the electrification has led to much suspension of the suburban service, particularly during non rush-hour periods and at weekends. It is expected to continue until late 1982 and, among other things, will result in a much remodelled Connolly.

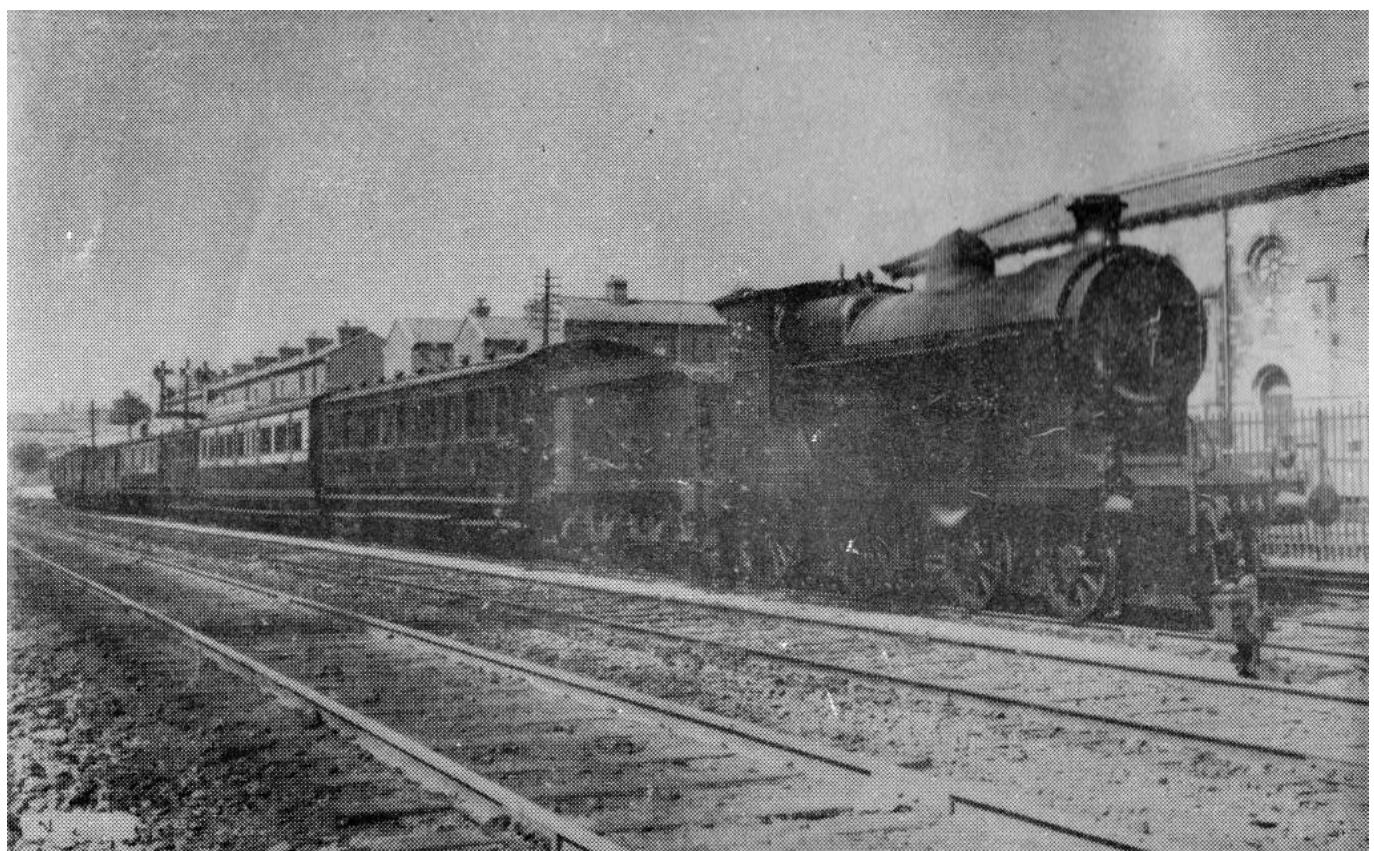
Our train is scheduled to travel via Newcomen Junction and on to Glasnevin Junction on the former MGWR line. The use of this line, rather than the more usual route via West Road and Drumcondra, is not altogether rare and usually happens during engineering work, signal failure or flood on the GS&WR line via Drumcondra.



From Liffey Junction the mileposts are on the Down side, i.e. left-hand side facing the loco, with zero at the Broadstone, former terminus, headquarters and works of the Midland Great Western. Although there is an extensive layout at Liffey Junction, it is now just a block post and gone are the extensive cattle and freight traffics. Nowadays the area suffers a lot from vandalism.

At Milepost 3 we pass the closed station of Ashtown, scene of one of the most important railway operations ever mounted in this country. In September 1979, Pope John Paul II visited Ireland and Ashtown was the railhead for his open-air Mass at "The Fifteen Acres" in the Phoenix Park. The station closed in 1934 and, after being a store for locos awaiting scrapping, only the platforms remained in 1979. Two crossovers and a temporary signal cabin were added for the Papal visit while the Down platform was extended. It was decided to use only the Down platform since it is wider than the Up platform and its use would avoid the complication of access through the level crossing gates. On the day in question some 53 trains arrived at Ashtown between 03:10 and 12:10 approximately, conveying about 50,000 to the Park. All the trains originated in the suburban area except for one from Longford and one from Mullingar. It had been hoped to work the 06:35 special from Belfast through to Ashtown but the speed at which trains unloaded was slower than planned and caused a long queue of trains to develop.

As a gauge of the size of the operation, there were no fewer than 88 train movements through Liffey Junction - without doubt an all-time record.



D6 class 4-4-0 No.544 arrives at the Midland's Dublin terminus Broadstone with an ex-Sligo passenger train some time in the early thirties. The leading vehicle Is Open Third 843 of GS&WR origins (1902) followed by a Midland 1st/2nd, a GS&WR six-wheel third and then a Midland bogie van, a butter van, then two cattle wagons, two further butter vans and a six-wheel van with ducket. The loco is a Cusack design built here at Broadstone in 1915 as 11 "Erin go Bragh" ("Ireland forever") with the distinctive extended smokebox to house front of the superheater. (Lens of Sutton)

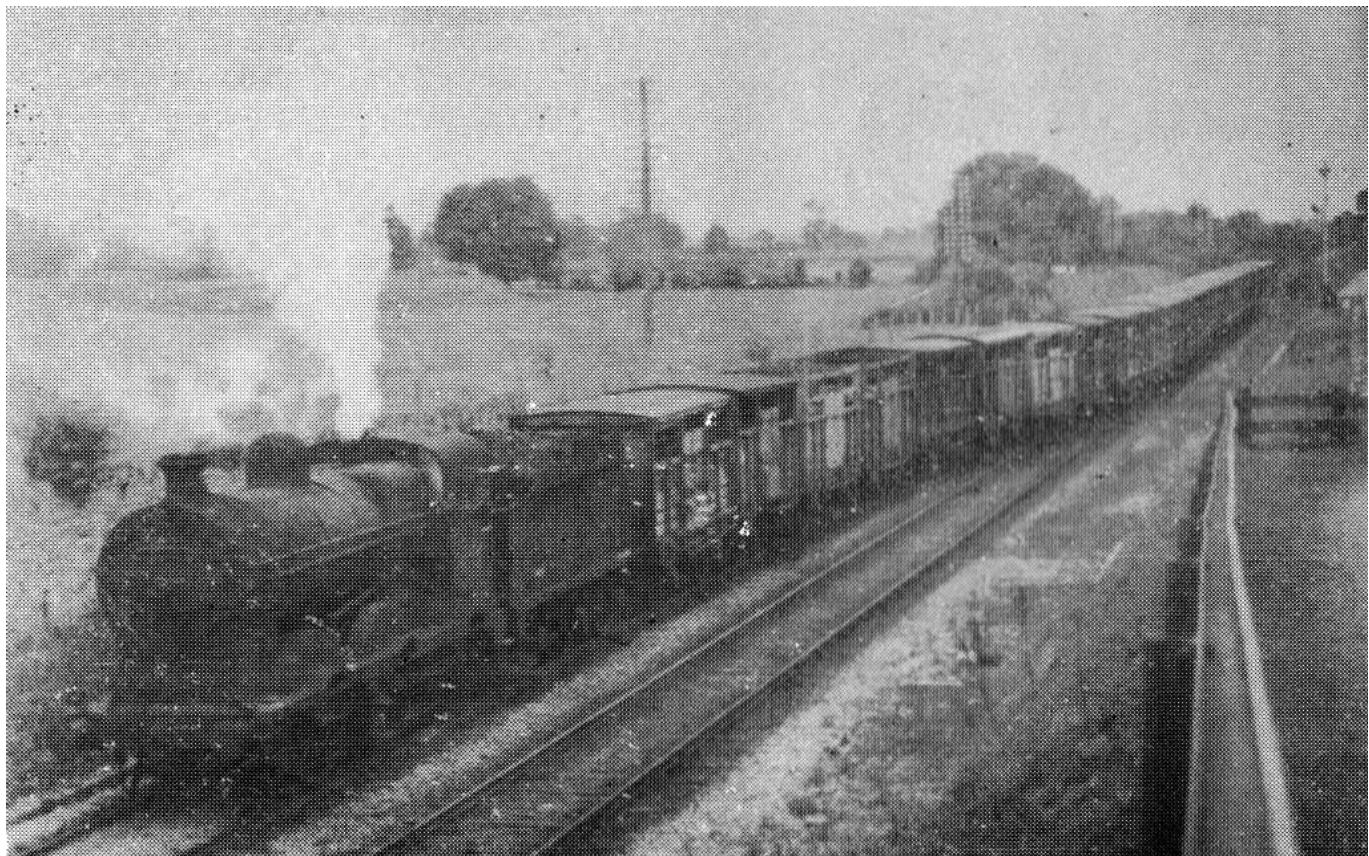
The Meath Road to Kingscourt via Navan Junction used to diverge at Clonsilla (Milepost 7). The site of the junction can be seen west of the cabin on the right-hand side. Clonsilla marks the western limit of the double-track main line; this once extended right to Ballinasloe but was lifted in 1929 by the recently formed GSR, supposedly to relay the Cork main line. To rub salt in the wound they used the Midland's Bretland Tracklayer train to do the work.

Curves abound on the Midland line to Mullingar and Leixlip (MP11 $\frac{1}{4}$) is typical. Running alongside the defunct Royal Canal, the speed limit through the closed station is still 40mph and this despite the realignment that took place when the loop was lifted.

Maynooth (MP15) was the terminus of a suburban working. In the GSR timetable of 1925 there was a train at 07:45 from Broadstone which served all stations and arrived in Maynooth at 08:30 returning at 08:50. A similar train worked in mid-afternoon with a 14:45 departure

from Broadstone and leaving Maynooth at 16:00. In those days the 07:10 from Broadstone, Limited Mail, had a myriad of connections including Achill and Clifden.

Maynooth may be in for some sort of suburban renaissance. In April the Transport Minister announced the running of a suburban service of about seven trains each way from Dublin to Maynooth serving Blanchardstown, Clonsilla, Lucan and Leixlip.



J5 class 0-6-0 633 wheels an Up cattle special into the loop at Enfield on 1st September 1955. The loco is one of the first batch of J5s with the oiling crescent in the valancing (compare with the J5 at Sligo Quay below) and is another Broadstone product, formerly 39.
(John H. Meredith)

Enfield at post 26½ is now the only station before Mullingar with any traffic. Formerly it was the junction station for the Edenderry branch, even though the actual junction was over a mile to the west at Nesbitt Junction. Not so long ago Enfield's busy time of day was from 20:30 onwards when the 19:40 liner train to Galway arrived and shunted to leave the loop clear for the Down Night Mail which ran through non-stop and crossed the up Sligo passenger - there is a standing order not to halt Mail trains if at all possible following a spate of robberies. This went on, night after night, for many years even when it required shunting the 19:30 non-fitted goods to Sligo, predecessor of the Galway Liner. Nowadays, the Galway and Claremorris liner trains travel outwards via Portarlington but return via the Midland. In recent beet campaigns, up to 5,000 tons have been loaded at Enfield for the Tuam factory.

The Edenderry branch closed to passenger traffic in 1931 and to goods in 1932 but retained a weekly cattle special until 1959. "Down" is part of many place-names in Meath and Westmeath and Hill of Down (MP35 $\frac{1}{4}$) probably means the Hill of the Fort. The 46th Mile Box, which once broke the long section between Killucan and Mullingar, is also known as the Downs. There is no longer a loop here, just a gate crossing.

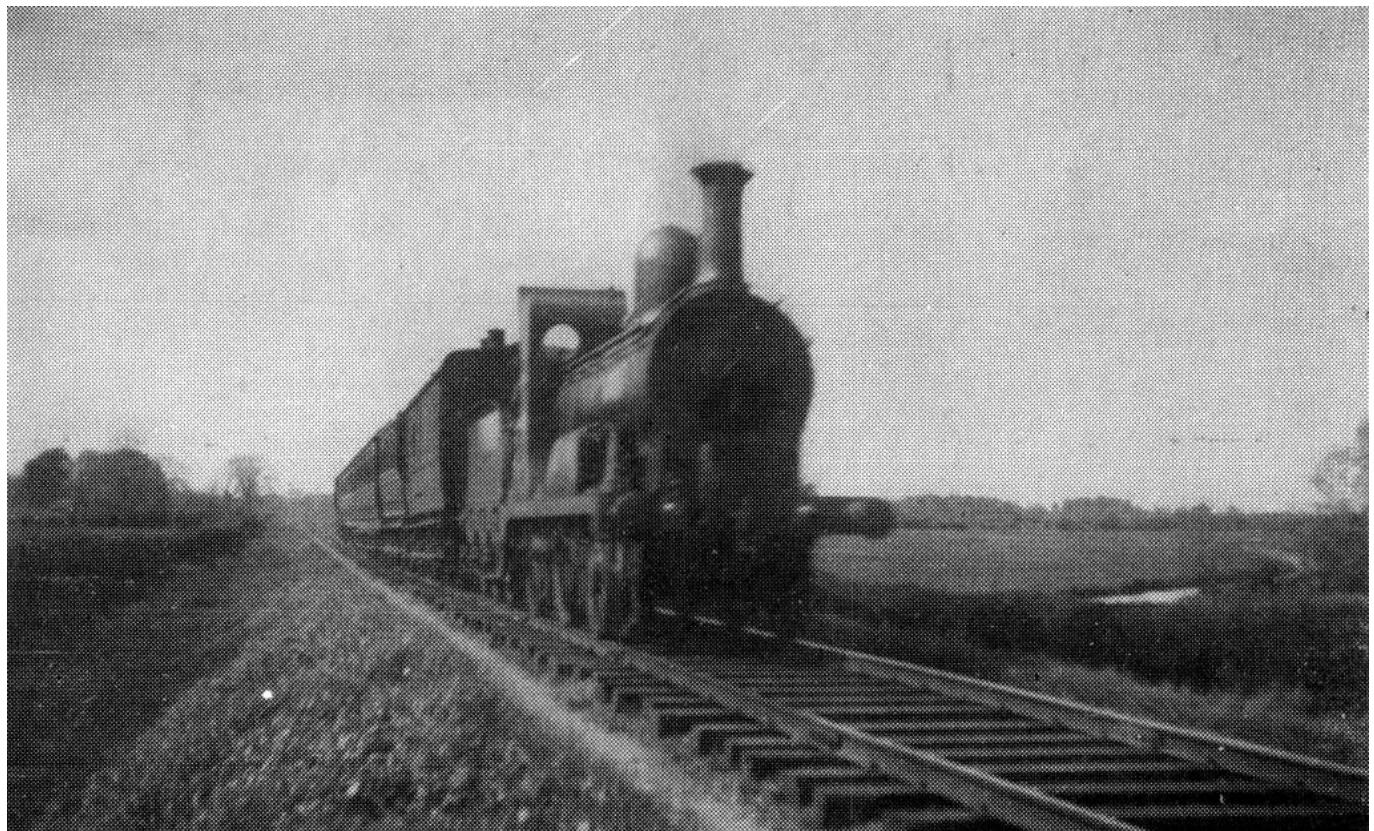


MGWR Ks class 2-4-0 No.34 "Aurora" pulls away from Mullingar with a Dublin to Cavan passenger train in 1926. The train, composed of two six-wheel and one bogie coach together with three assorted vans will leave the Sligo line at Inny Junction. Built at the Broadstone in 1898 the loco later became GSR class G2 658; she has already lost the "flyaway" cab. (Locomotive & General, 22490)

Mullingar is probably best known for its almost triangular layout and marks the divergence of the main line to Galway via Athlone and the long branch to Sligo, though nowadays, with much traffic to Galway travelling via Portarlington, the line to Athlone is the branch. The 07:10 Limited Mail used to reach Mullingar in 76 minutes from Broadstone. Today the Super Express running time from Connolly is 65 minutes while the Standard Passenger (No.3) running time is 72 minutes. Mullingar's main signal cabin is on the platform, in the 'Y', and beside it there used to be a refreshment room, the Newbrook Buffet, which featured a fine collection of pictures of notable racehorses.

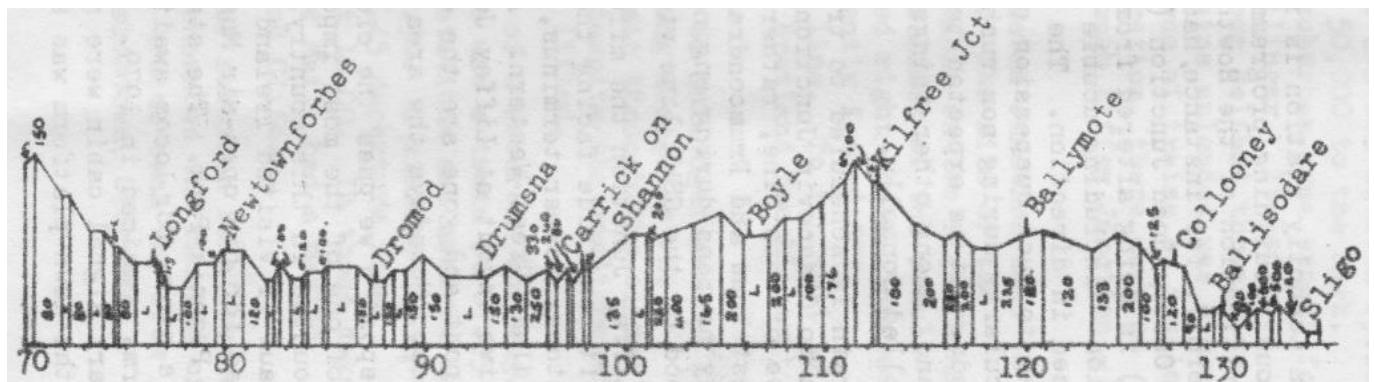
Mullingar's chief claim to fame today is probably the loco shed on the Down side of the Galway line beyond the platforms. Here the Society has its southern base and housed here are GS&WR 184, in use today, and

DSER 15, better known as 461, one of very few inside-cylindered 2-6-0 locos preserved. The shed is also host to four Great northern tenders, a sleeping coach, a Waterford, Limerick & Western bogie saloon awaiting restoration, along with various goods vehicles. Mullingar is one of the main sites for scrapping wagons and some interesting examples usually occupy the sidings alongside the shed.



Sister to 34, here 24 "Sprite" approached Dromod with the 3:05pm Sligo to Mullingar on 17th May 1924. Note the flat-bottom rail and typical undulating road. A year older than 34, this engine became 665 after the Amalgamation. (Ken Nunn Collection, 3910)

Most passenger trains through Mullingar now are bound for Sligo. Passenger accommodation has been withdrawn from the day Mails to and from Galway on account of the rolling stock shortage but passenger coaches are still provided on the Night Mails and they now provide the only passenger service between Mullingar, Moate and Athlone.

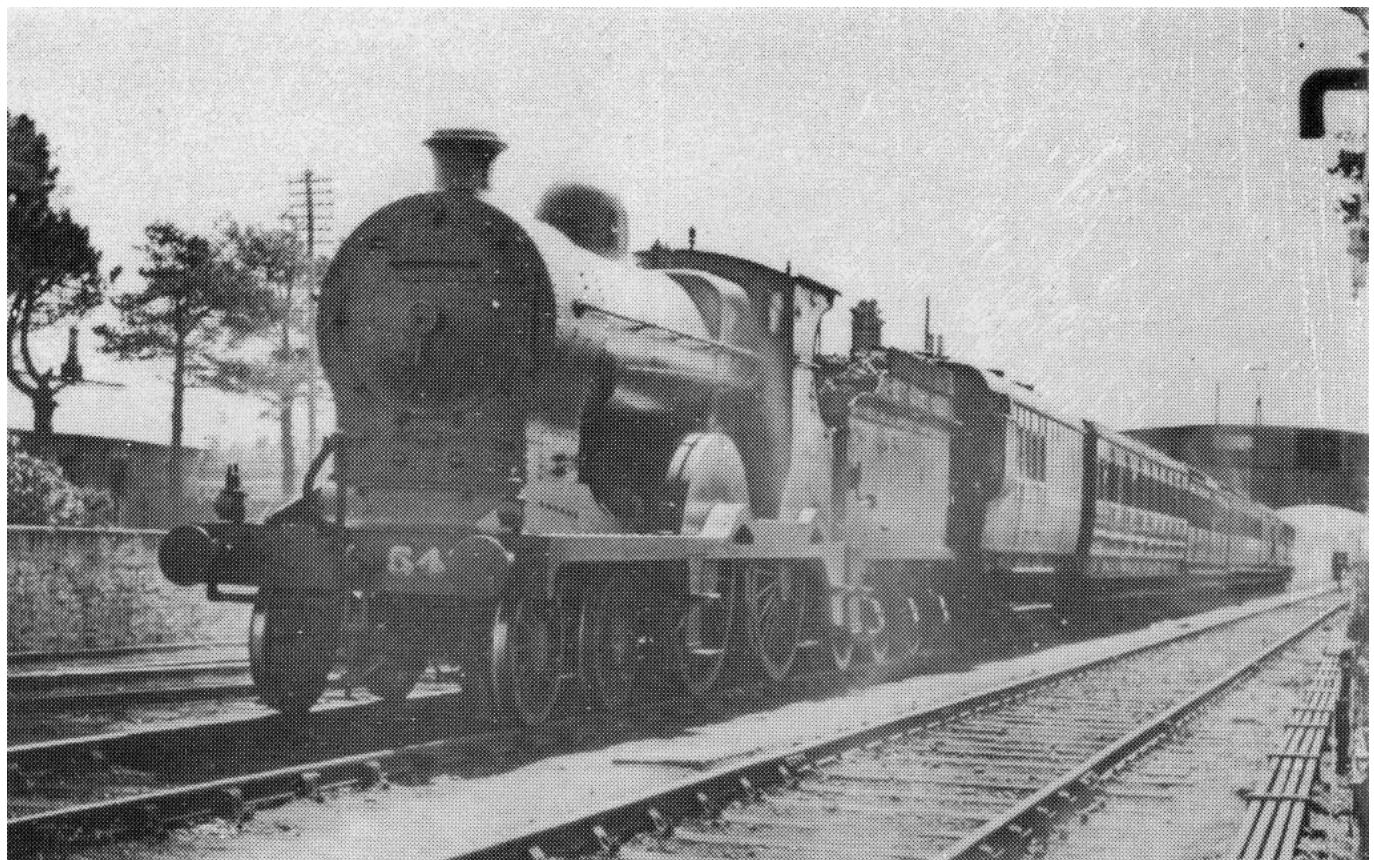


On the Sligo line, the first station is at Clonhugh (post 56 $\frac{1}{4}$, still using Broadstone as zero). The station was built for the Chairman of

the MGWR and the front of the building bears the station name. The station had two platforms when the line was double.

The Sligo line used to have two double line sections: from Mullingar to Longford until 1925 when the line was double only as far as Edgeworthstown but was totally singled in 1929. The other section was from Carrignagat Junction to Sligo, of which more later.

Multyfarnham, with its level crossing at the Sligo end, is a block-post but no longer open for traffic, being closed in 1963. Three miles further on, at milepost 60 $\frac{3}{4}$, we come to Inny Junction, an isolated place where passengers changed for the branch to Cavan. There it met the Great Northern but not before giving another short branch of its own, to Killeshandra. The remains of the platform are just visible on the Up side. Mostrim (also known as Edgeworthstown) is open for passenger traffic but not for goods; it stands at post 67 $\frac{1}{2}$.



D6 class 4-4-0 No.542 pauses at Dromod with a Sligo-bound passenger train in 1949. Note the tablet snatcher on the side of the tender. Another Broadstone product, this engine was No.9 "Kylemore" before 1925. Part of the Cavan & Leitrim's terminus can be seen on the left. (Locomotive & General, 19118)

Longford (76 $\frac{1}{4}$) was one of the first stations to have major reconstruction work carried out under the Rail Development Plan, announced in 1974. Behind the Down platform, it was necessary to demolish the locomotive shed and offices and to remove the turntable, cattle bank and sidings to make way for the present set-up. Like many other locations around the country, the Plan includes provision of a cement store and a large area for stacking the bags of fertiliser. In

1979 this station received 16,900 tons of fertiliser and came a close second to Ballina as regards this traffic in the Midland area. About 80% of this arrived from Arklow with the rest coming from Cork.



Cavan & Leitrim No.1 "Isabel" waits to leave Dromod for Ballinamore with a mixed in 1931. The station building still survives here; on the Up side of the standard gauge station visible on the right.
(Locomotive & General, 6876)

On leaving Longford we pass the Longford Branch of the Royal Canal which was once the site of a swing bridge. Near here the line swings right and crosses the public road by means of a bridge. In 1974 this underbridge was struck by a large container mounted on a lorry. The incident was reported but the wrong bridge was inspected with the result that the 07:45 ex Sligo passenger became derailed with the loco A36r finishing up on its side at the bottom of the embankment and considerable damage was done to the leading coaches.

Newtownforbes (MP80) was closed to all traffic in 1963.

At Dromod (87½), the Cavan and Leitrim departed for Ballinamore and Belturbet and the coal mines of Arigna. The station buildings, in fine red brick, and water tank of the narrow-gauge line can be seen on the Up side, across the car park. The Cavan and Leitrim closed in 1959.

We are now in County Leitrim, a long county running out to the Atlantic at Tullaghan, and the River Shannon is very close on the left-hand side. It should be possible to see Lough Bofin and Lough Boderg. Just about post 92 we cross the Shannon and a mile later pass the picturesque station of Drumsna, closed in 1963.

Carrick-on-Shannon (post 97½) now has the footbridge from Multyfarnham. Boyle, at post 106½, had the distinction of being the first location selected for the new Sundries system, using 10ft containers fitted with wheeled caged pallets. This system was introduced in June 1976, the containers being packed at the Midland store in North Wall, to be placed on the flat wagons. A week after its introduction, the system was extended to Mullingar and in August of the same year Longford was added. Sligo joined the scheme early in 1977 when new schedules saw the withdrawal of loose-coupled working on the Sligo line.



J18 class 0-6-0 No.592 waits at Ballaghaderreen with a mixed for the Junction in the late 1950s. The loco was built by Kitsons in 1895 as MGWR 138 "Nephin". (Photographer unknown)

The current timetable shows the Sundries liner leaving North Wall at 18:50 serving Mullingar and Longford on the outward run and Boyle and Mullingar on the return trip. The system is such that traffic from, say, Longford to Dublin would be collected on the outward trip and worked via Sligo to arrive in Dublin at 08:30. The Sligo line is one of the few routes to have a Sundries train to itself; other routes such as that to Ballina and Westport have one train to carry both Sundries and unit load traffic. The latest McKinsey Report, in December last, recommended the abandonment of this traffic but CIÉ rejected their conclusions, along with much of the other proposals.

Our route now circles the Curlew Mountains and at Kilfree Junction (112½) are the remains of the branch to Ballaghaderreen, closed in 1963 and last home of the Midland 2-4-0s.

Ballymote, at post 120½, is still a busy station but Collooney must once have been one of Ireland's busiest country junctions. The Midland station, still open but for passenger business only, is at post 127¾ and now has only one platform in use.



Kilfree Junction looking towards Boyle about 1933. The main line is on the left and the branch, with its turntable, is on the right.
(Real Photographs, X6711)

A quarter mile further on our train will complete a very significant landmark. Beginning back in September 1965, the Society's programme of steam tours has gradually covered all of the lines still open in Ireland. Some lines such as the Great Northern main line have been covered several times but at Collooney Junction we finally complete our trek.

Collooney Junction was the site of the junction with the Waterford, Limerick and Western line from Claremorris. This line was closed in 1975 but remains virtually intact except for the actual junction which was removed.

An underbridge between the Midland station and the junction allowed a line to connect the GS&WR station with the Sligo Leitrim station and the trackbed of the SL&NCR can be discerned on the right-hand side as we travel north from the Junction. The SL&NCR formerly joined the Midland at post 128¾ but later this junction was taken out and the lines continued separately to Ballisodare, a mile further on.

Ballisodare was closed in 1963 and was once the southern end of another section of double track; the line from here to Sligo was

double until 1958, a year after the closure of the SL&NCR. A siding on the Down side used to serve Pollexfen's mill.



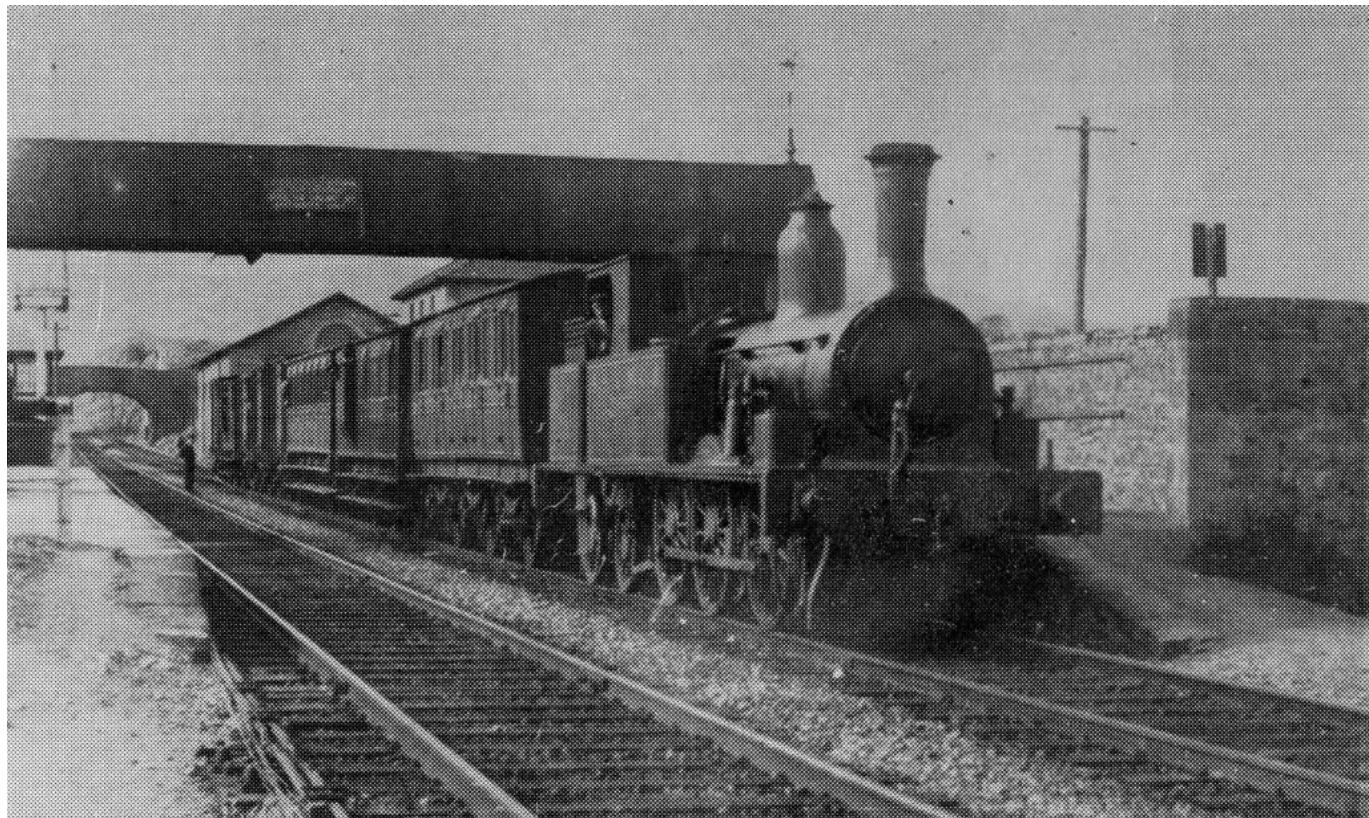
Another D6 class 4-4-0, No.541, enters Collooney (MGW) with the Up Mail (7:25pm ex Sligo) on 18th April 1955. The loco, built at the Broadstone in 1913, was Midland No.8 "St Patrick". (H.C. Casserley, 87498)

At Sligo (134½) the branch to the Quay and goods yard goes off on the Down side before the signal cabin. The passenger station was built by the Midland but served the trains of the SL&NCR and WL&WR as well. The arrival platform used to end with a set of hydraulic buffers but these have recently given way to a set of friction buffers. The main buildings, on the Up side, have a complete set of bilingual notices. The station once had an overall roof but this was destroyed in the Civil War and the present airy structure dates from 1923. The loco shed, turntable, etc., are on the Up side beyond the signal cabin.

The branch to the goods yard descends at 1 in 70, necessitating a banker for many trains in steam days, and continues through the yard to the Quay, alongside the Garavogue River. Although not used much nowadays for other than storing spare vehicles, there is an important meat processing plant at the far end of the Quay.

This end of the Quay marked the messy end of act of sabotage during the Civil War. In April 1923 raiders took all five locos from the shed and, coupling them together, sent them careering down the bank to the Quays. The unusual cavalcade passed out onto the Tramway and at the far end pushed its leader onto the sand flats beyond. This leading engine was the Sligo Leitrim's "Glencar" (formerly GNR J class 4-4-0 119 "Thistle"). Lest someone launches an appeal to recover "Glencar", it should be mentioned that she worked for another five years before

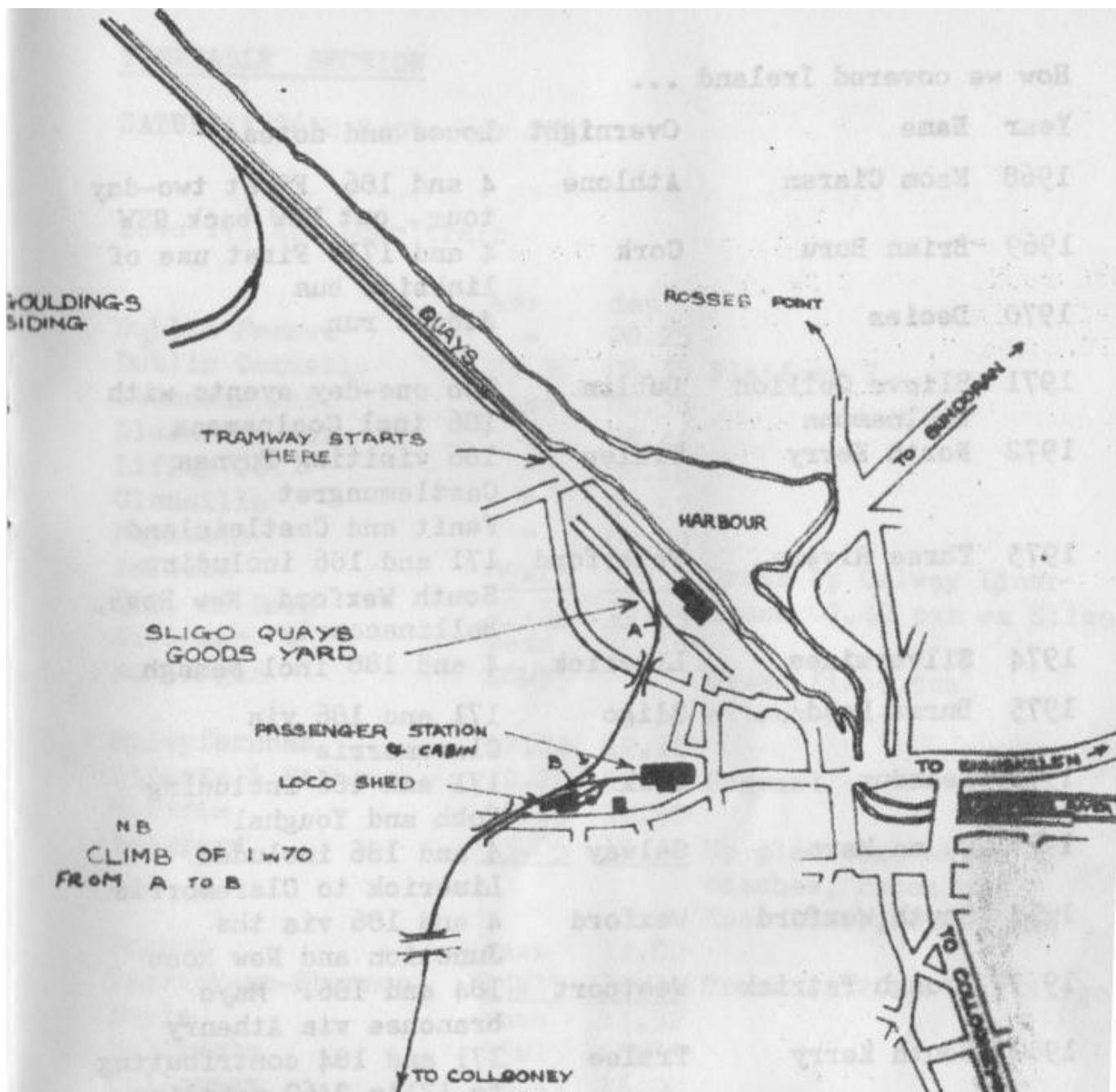
her boiler was put in "Blacklion's" frames before the "new" engine was scrapped in 1931.



Sligo, Leitrim & Northern Counties 0-6-4T "Lissadell" at Ballisodare with a mixed of three six-wheelers and an assortment of goods vans. Immediately behind the guard is the crossover connecting the two single lines towards Collooney - Lissadell has just travelled in on the left-hand road, has now joined the double-track section onwards to Sligo. (Lens of Sutton)

IT MUST BE THE DINER FOR THE INNER MAN (and WOMAN) !

During the tour the Diner will be in action, with its renowned draught Guinness and famous burgers. There's lots of alternatives, by way of tea, coffee and chocolate and a range of confectionery and other eats. Ask at the Bar for today's range of provisions. Sláinte!



How We Covered Ireland

Year	Name	Overnight	Locos and notes
1968	Naomh Ciaran	Athlone	4 and 186. First two-day tour, out MGW, back GS&W.
1969	Brian Boru	Cork	4 and 171. First use of lineside bus.
1970	Decies		Didn't run.
1971	Slieve Gullion	Dublin	Two one-day events with 186, including Coolnamona.
1972	North Kerry	Tralee	186 visiting Foynes, Castlemungret, Fenit and Castleisland.
1973	Three Rivers	Waterford	171 and 186. Including South Wexford, New Ross and Ballinacourty.
1974	Silvermines	Limerick	4 and 186. Including Nenagh.
1975	Burma Road	Sligo	171 and 186. Via Claremorris.
1976	Seandún	Cork	171 and 186. Including Cobh and Youghal.
1977	Cú na Mara	Galway	4 and 186. Included Limerick to Claremorris.
1978	South Wexford	Wexford	4 and 186. Via the Junction and New Ross.
1979	Croagh Patrick	Westport	184 and 186. Mayo branches via Athenry.
1980	South Kerry	Tralee	171 and 184. Contributing to 171's 2,460 mainline miles in 1980.
1981	Ben Bulben	Sligo	171 and 184 complete the loop at Collooney.
1982	Here we go again!		

TIMETABLE SECTION

SATURDAY 26th September 1981

No.171 and tour train

	arr	dep	
Dublin Pearse		08:25	
Dublin Connolly	08:30	08:35	Platform 7.
Newcomen Junction	pass	08:38	
Glasnevin Junction	pass	08:44	
Liffey Junction	pass	08:46	
Clonsilla	pass	08:57	
Maynooth	pass	09:09	
Enfield	09:25	09:35	Water stop. Cross Up Galway liner.
Hill of Down	09:52	10:04	Cross 07:40 passenger ex Sligo.
Killucan	pass	10:16	
Mullingar	10:35		Clean fire, coal.
Mullingar		11:50	Attach 184.
Multyfarnham	12:04	12:11	
Street & Rathowen	12:20	12:35	Runpast.
Mostrim	12:43	12:50	
Longford	13:05	13:43	Detach 184. Water coaches. Cross up Esso Liner.
Dromod	pass	14:00	
Carrick-on-Shannon	14:15	14:35	Cross 13:20 passenger ex Sligo.
Boyle	pass	14:52	
Ballymote	15:15	15:30	Water stop.
Collooney	15:43	16:00	
Sligo	16:20		

No.184 Light Engine

Longford		14:02	
Dromod	14:25	14:35	Cross 13:20 passenger ex Sligo.
Carrick-on-Shannon	14:57	15:15	
Boyle	pass	15:35	
Ballymote	16:05	16:52	Shunt for 13:30 Down passenger.
Sligo	17:25		

PLEASE NOTE: While every effort will be made to maintain the schedules, please remember that some alterations may have to be made. Appropriate announcements will be made in good time. Thanks for your co-operation.

SUNDAY 27th September 1981

No.184 + No.171 and 7 RPSI coaches

	arr	dep	
Sligo		09:00	
Sligo Quay	09:10	09:25	171 run round in goods yard. Propel to quay.
Sligo		09:35	

Lineside bus leaves at 09:45 for Knockadalteen, two miles north of Ballymote - train due past at 10:27. Bus connects into train at Ballymote.

No.184 + No.171 and tour train

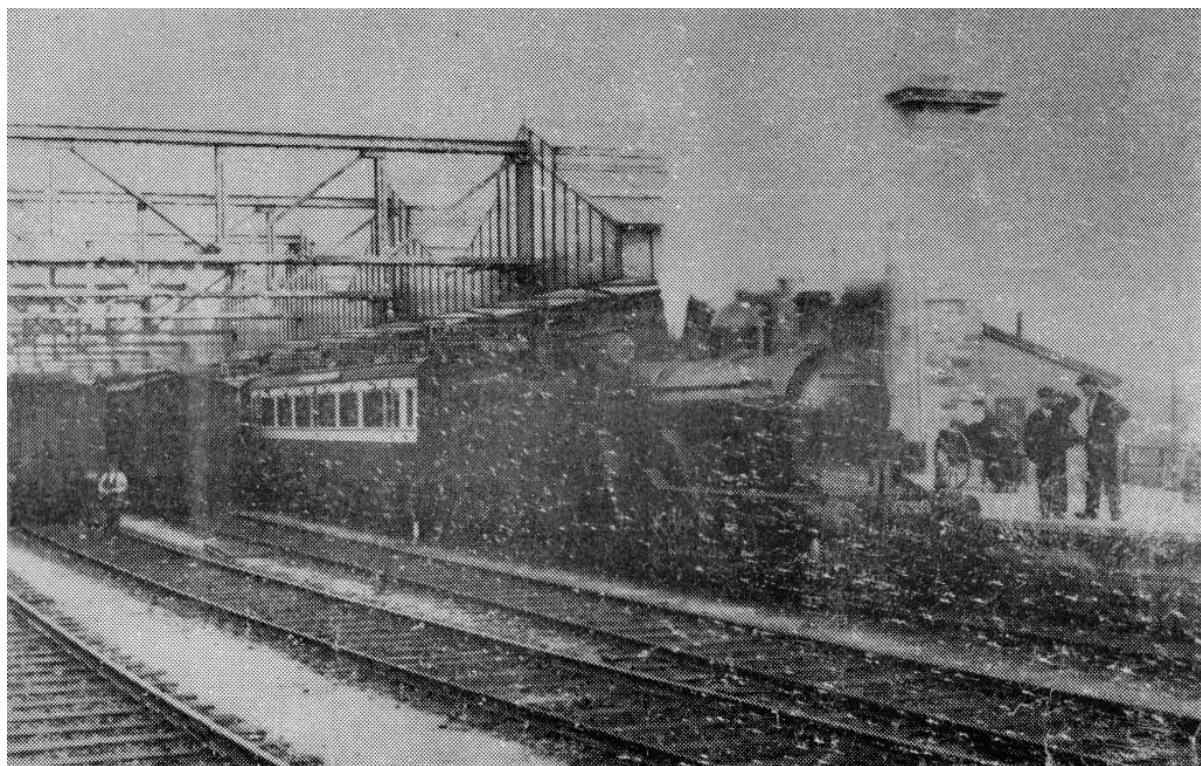
Sligo		09:50	
Collooney	10:02	10:17	Runpast.
Ballymote	10:32	10:45	Water stop.
Boyle	11:10	11:17	
Carrick-on-Shannon	11:35	11:45	Water stop. Detach 184. Cross 09:25 ex Dublin.
Dromod	12:12	12:20	
Longford	12:40	13:15	Water coaches.
Mostrim	pass	13:29	
Multyfarnham	pass	13:45	
Mullingar	14:05	15:00	Coal, water, clean fire.
Killucan	pass	15:14	
Hill of Down	pass	15:23	
Enfield	15:38	15:50	Water stop.
Maynooth	pass	16:08	
Clonsilla	pass	16:20	
Liffey Junction	pass	16:30	
Glasnevin Junction	pass	16:32	
North Strand Junction	pass	16:34	
Dublin Connolly	16:45		Water coaches. Shunted to terminal platforms.

SUNDAY 27th September 1981 (continued)

	arr	dep
Dublin Connolly		18:15
Howth Junction	pass	18:23
Malahide	pass	16:28
Donabate	pass	18:30
Rush & Lusk	pass	18:34
Skerries	pass	18:40
Balbriggan	pass	18:44
Gormanston	pass	18:46
Mosney	pass	18:48
Laytown	pass	18:49
Drogheda	18:57	19:10 Dublin and Liverpool passengers leave. Safe home!
Dunleer	pass	19:27
Dundalk	19:42	19:50
Poyntzpass	pass	20:25
Portadown	20:40	20:46
Lurgan	pass	20:54
Moira	pass	21:02
Lisburn	21:11	21:12 Calls as required to Botanic.
Botanic	21:36	21:37
Belfast Central	21:40	21:45 Empty train.
Central Service Depot	21:50	

MONDAY 28th September 1981

	arr	dep
Central Service Depot		11:15
Belfast Central	11:20	11:30
Lisburn	11:46	11:51
Ballinderry	pass	12:05
Crumlin	pass	12:41
Antrim	12:26	12:40
Bleach Green Junction	pass	13:35
Belfast York Road	13:45	14:25 Detach coach 50.
Greenisland	pass	14:39
Carrickfergus	pass	14:44
Whitehead NIR	pass	14:57
Whitehead RPSI	15:00	



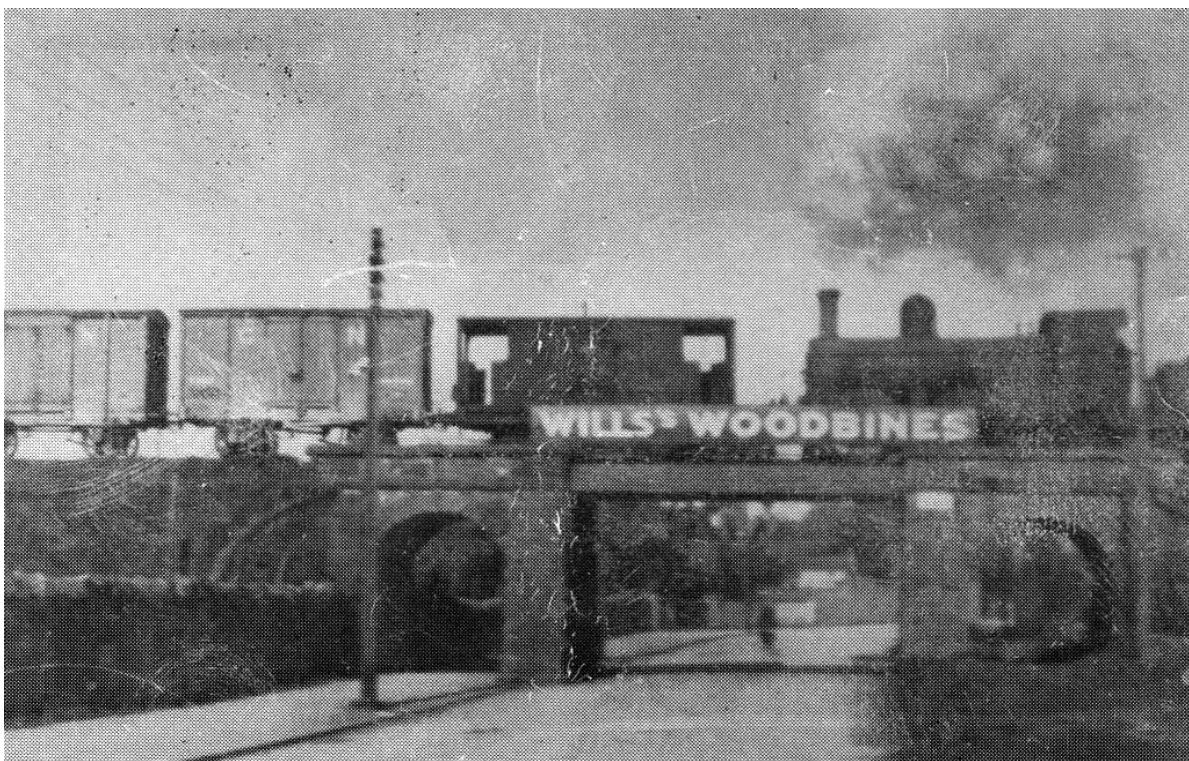
D7 class 4-4-0 No.536 waits with safety valves lifting before leaving Sligo for Dublin in 1950. Built in Broadstone in 1913 as Midland No.12 "Shamrock". The coaches visible are of the three companies that worked into Sligo; extreme left is a SL&NCR compo bogie, a Waterford, Limerick and Western six-wheeler and a Midland corridor first (probably 15). (Lens of Sutton)



SL&NCR 0-6-4T "Lissadell" at the departure platform with a passenger train for Enniskillen in 1938. The train is probably the 10:30am, booked to reach Enniskillen in just two hours and regarded as a sort of "mail" as it provided for onward connection to the cross-channel steamers. (Locomotive & General, 18404)



One of the 1935 batch of J5 class 0-6-0s (without the oiling crescent in the valancing) climbs away from Sligo Quay with a goods for Dublin North Wall. The date is 1935 and the banking engine is just visible on the tail. (Locomotive Publishing Company, 87328)



An unidentified J19 class 0-6-0 banks a Sligo Leitrim goods up the 1 in 70 away from the yard at Sligo Quay and doing its job if the slack couplings are to be believed. The last two vans in the train are standard Great Northern 7-tonners while the SL&NCR brake van (No.6) also weighed 7 tons - a lightweight. The plans are that you should be able to photograph a passenger version of this on Sunday morning as 184 banks up the hill.