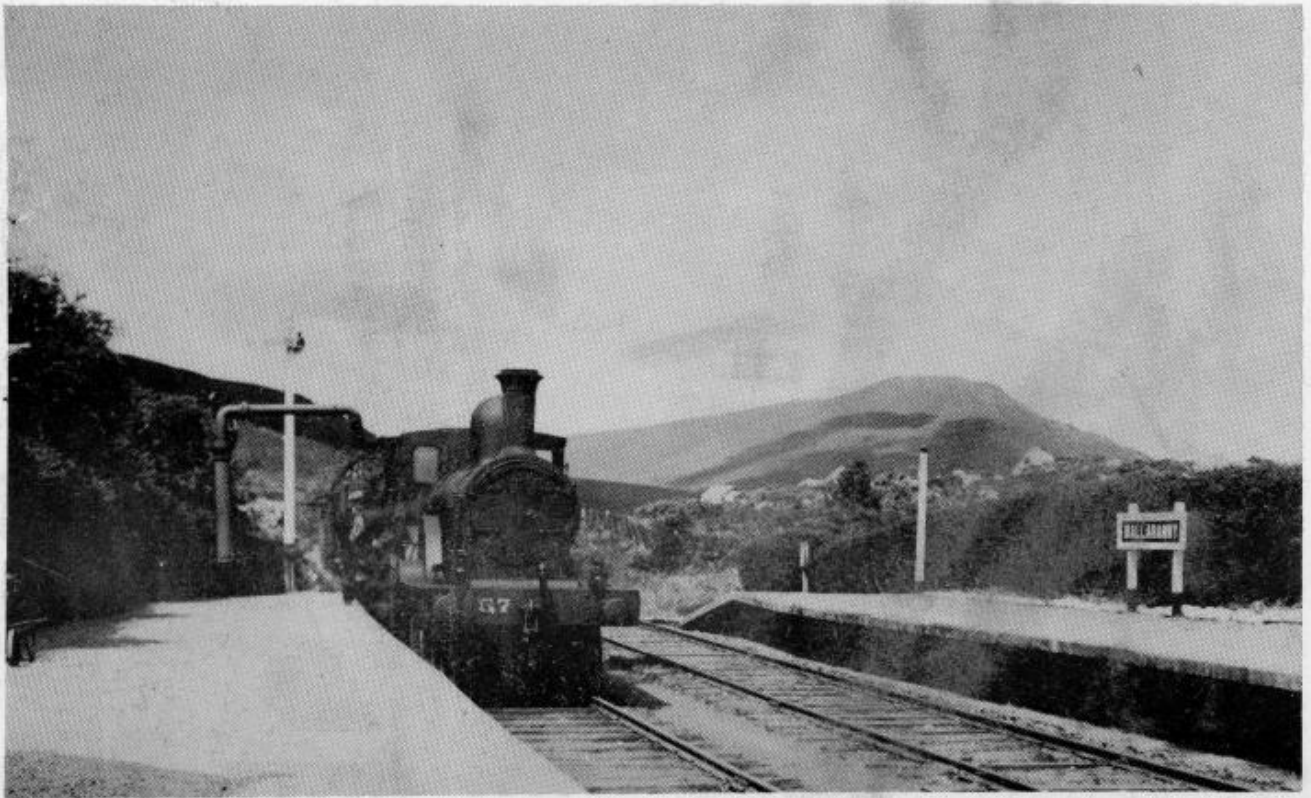
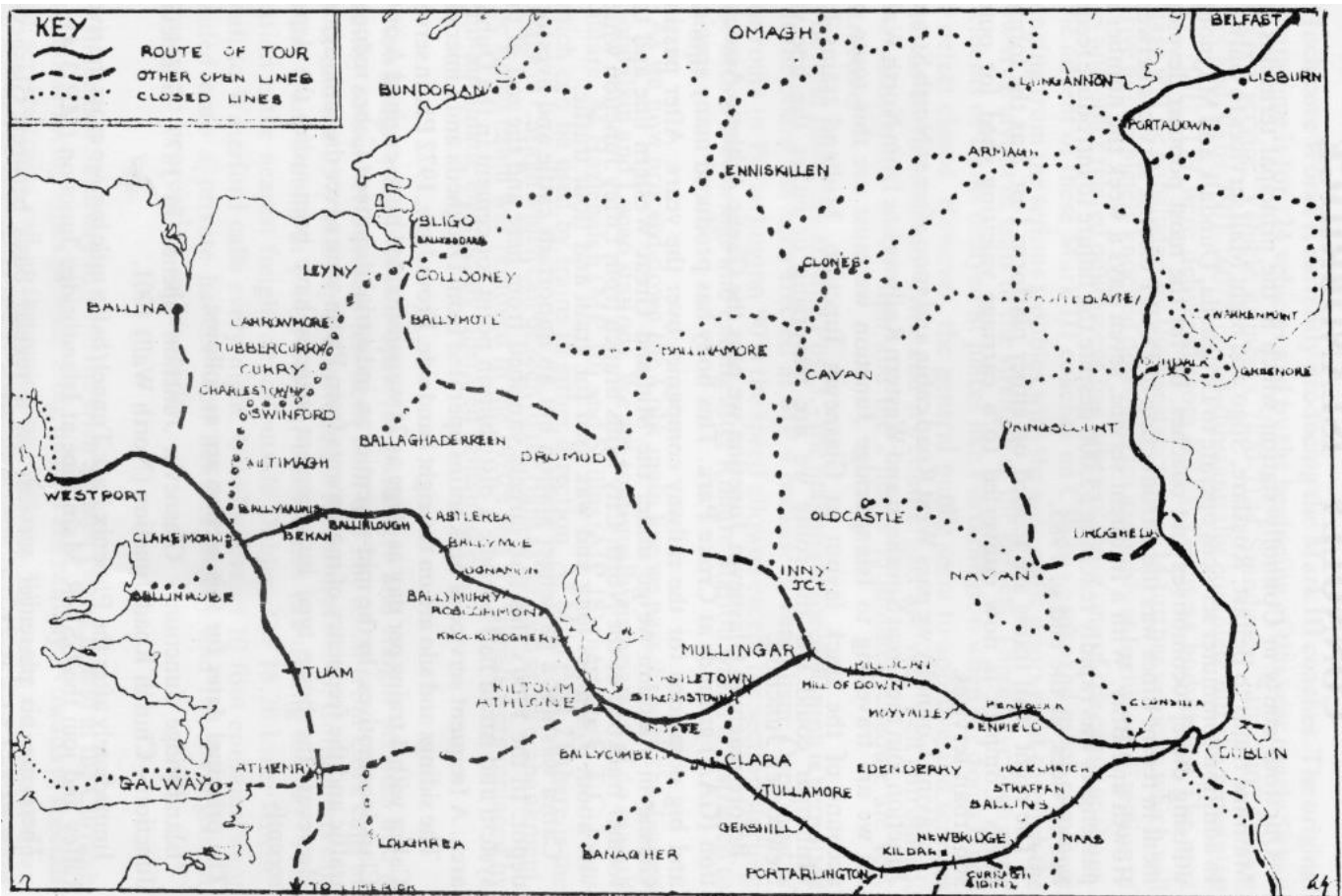


Clew Bay Railtour



Souvenir Brochure



Front Cover: Achill - Dublin train at Mallaranny on 18th July 1934. Locomotive No.57 - Great Southern Railways 4-4-0 Class D17 and built at Inchicore in 1888. (H. C. Casserley)

This brochure has been written by Barry Carse who would like to thank all who have helped, in particular Charles Friel, H.C. Casserley, J.P. O'Dea, Norman McAdams and David Carse. Gavin Martin has kindly supplied the notes on our tour train.

RAILWAY PRESERVATION SOCIETY OF IRELAND

CLEW BAY RAILTOUR

Saturday 10th May 1986

DUBLIN - CLAREMORRIS - WESTPORT

Sunday 11th May 1986

WESTPORT - TUAM - DUBLIN AND BELFAST

Monday 12th May 1986

**BELFAST CENTRAL - LISBURN - ANTRIM - BELFAST YORK ROAD - LARNE
HARBOUR - WHITEHEAD RPSI**

Welcome to the Clew Bay Railtour. Having won a Certificate of Merit presented by the British Tourist Authority for our activities last year, it is fitting that once again we have all seats occupied, many by visitors to Ireland from the continent of Europe and Great Britain. We extend a special welcome to Herr Rudiger Reich and a party of 26 from the Berliner Eisenbahnfreunde. For some of the party it is a return visit, having sampled RPSI hospitality on the Galway Bay Railtour in 1984.

Welcome also to parties from the Bluebell, SRPS, K&WVR, the Stephenson Locomotive Society and the Manchester Locomotive Society. It is particularly pleasing to welcome so many newcomers this year. We trust you will spread the news when you go back home and return with more support next year.

Thank you to our two native railway companies, Córas Iompair Éireann and Northern Ireland Railways Co. for their continuing co-operation in permitting steam haulage over their systems. We trust that when we pass by they might feel just a little proud of their heritage which we all enjoy so much.

To the regulars who return each year for the feast of steam we say a big thank you. This year we will all miss Tommy Dorrian our Bar Steward who passed away in January. We look forward to carrying on his style of open friendliness and what better ways to pay tribute to Tommy.

CÉAD MÍLE Fáilte

HERTZLICH WILKOMMEN

Ernie Gilmore
Operations Officer

THE ROUTE CONNOLLY - ISLANDBRIDGE

Our tour starts in Connolly station which is the principal terminus for mainline trains to Belfast, Rosslare, Sligo and night Mail services to Galway. In addition commuter services operate to Drogheda, Dundalk and Maynooth utilising diesel locomotives and coaches. By far the most popular development in recent times was the introduction of DART electric services between Howth and Bray. With a frequent service, seven days a week the number of passengers was rapidly reaching 55,000 despite the failure to introduce feeder bus services, at the end of 1985.

The night mail trains are loaded on either platform 1 or 2 as the former Mails Complex is now converted to a carriage valeting shed for outer suburban services.

Leaving Connolly we pass West Road cabin and soon after at North Strand Junction join the Great Southern and Western Railway line from North Wall. As we are travelling to Islandbridge Junction we must use this route on account of the track layout at Glasnevin Junction. Midland trains for Mullingar could either use the route we are traversing or the line via Newcomen Junction.

Before reaching Glasnevin Junction we pass the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) grounds at Croke Park. This body has produced many specials and big occasions for the railway companies over the years. After passing Glasnevin Junction we go under the Midland Great Western line and the former trackbed of the North City Mills branch from Liffey Junction which was about $\frac{3}{4}$ mile long and was used for grain and flour traffic.

Cabra was not a passenger station but an important cattle and livestock depot. In the 1960s this had largely vanished from here and the rest of the system and instead had become a distribution point for cement in the Dublin area. A frequent service of bulk trains operated from Drogheda and Limerick.

The sidings and silo are on the right-hand side. From June 1972 Platin served Cabra with 4 trains per day as large as 24 wagons hauled by re-engined A or C Class locomotives. In the mid-seventies an industrial dispute at Cabra reduced traffic and the frequency of movements from Platin was never the same again. However, the bogie type bulk cement wagons have been using the depot recently.

The principal dates for this section are as follows:

Islandbridge Junction - Glasnevin Junction opened in 1877, Glasnevin Junction - Church Road Junction (North Wall) 1901.

Immediately after the Phoenix Park Tunnel (half a mile long) we cross the river Liffey and join the GS&WR Main Line at Islandbridge Junction (MP $\frac{3}{4}$).

There are no passenger services on a regular basis between Glasnevin Junction and Islandbridge Junction. The Night Mail to Cork has no passenger accommodation.

CORK LINE

Inchicore Works is currently producing the Mark III coaches. The original programme is for 124 vehicles and by the beginning of this year nearly 58 had entered service. Vehicle numbers 7120-7144 Standards, 7401-7407 Dining Cars and Vans 7601-7607 arrived substantially complete but

the remaining 19, 7101-7119, were delivered from BREL Derby as body shells. The next phase will be concluded by the construction of 14 further vehicles which will arrive as completely knocked down kits for assembly at Inchicore. Erection of jigs and other related equipment has taken place in one of the carriage shops. The advent of these Mark III coaches on CIÉ has provoked much comment ranging from the serious troubles with the automatic doors right through to the new style layout of seats to the strength of the carpets. There have been many incidents of trains delayed at places like Portarlinton when the doors failed to detect closed. However, the general public seem to approve and services like the 17:30 Heuston/Cork and its counterpart are very well patronised. The smooth ride at 90mph and the 2 hour 35 minute schedule are very attractive.



402 (Class B2 4-6-0) at the head of a special from Kingsbridge to Cobh on 11th July 1938. The occasion was the taking over of the Cork Harbour Defences. (J.P. O'Dea)

Beyond Inchicore at Mile Post 3, the maximum speed 90mph is permitted but the board has been erected at MP4 because of vandalism. Over most of our route to Portarlinton 90 is the speed allowed except the section starting just before Newbridge and ending after Kildare Station which is restricted to 70mph.

As we now proceed down the Cork main line we pass through the disused Clondalkin and Lucan stations. We are continually rising and will do so until Kildare. At Hazelhatch (MP10) and Sallins (MP18) there are CTC loops which can be used by trains in either direction. At Mile Post 21 there is the village of Caragh which can be seen to the right as we pass on an embankment. The signal cabin was removed in the 1920s and its signals were replaced by semi-automatic electrically operated semaphores.

Newbridge station is still open for passenger and freight services and a healthy commuter business has been built up. The 05:20 from Cork calls at 08:11 and the 25½ mile trip is concluded in Heuston at 08:40. Commuters can return from Dublin at 17:45. Several other trains call during the day. This station is the nearest freight depot outside Dublin. The 18:20 Liner from North Wall to Waterford calls every night. Usually several 10 foot containers are loaded onto a private hacker who delivers locally and the arrangement appears to be working satisfactorily.

On the last Saturday in June the Irish Sweeps Derby is held at the Curragh and horse racing types provide a big day for the railway. Nowadays specials and service trains call at the main line platform. When the siding was open one recalls the passenger trains either side of the platform and an NIR BUT railcar set was a regular visitor.

Passing Kildare, another thriving passenger station, we descend mostly at 1:180 right down to Monasterevan. Here, we cross the River Barrow on a fine seven-span girder viaduct. Nearby on the Down side there is the road “drawbridge” over the Grand Canal which itself crosses the Barrow by an aqueduct.



Great Northern 4-4-0 No.170 on an Up trial train returning to Inchicore passing Straffan. The date is 17th July 1961. Errigal was built by Beyer Peacock in 1913 and is from the same class as Slieve Gullion (J.P. O'Dea).

Portarlinton (MP41¾) is the junction for the Athlone branch and the derelict cabin at the junction points was Ireland's highest. This station was opened in 1847 and in 1854 the line to Tullamore was opened. With the introduction of CTC in 1976 the layout here was rationalised and the third line between the Up and Down platforms was removed.

ATHLONE BRANCH

At one time nearly every station in the country had beet traffic but only one remains at present - Wellington Bridge in South Wexford. Portarlinton and Tullamore had its last season in 1984 whilst Geashill finished at the end of the 1983 campaign. This beet all went to Tuam and at one time Tullamore was so busy that a pilot engine was constantly provided.

Approaching Tullamore we can see the site of the old terminus on the right hand side about 1 mile from the current station which dates from 1859. This station has been modernised in recent times with the addition of a second platform on the Down side together with the construction of a bulk cement silo and a bagged cement store. The beet was moved from that site to the Up side at the Clara end.



The Up Banagher goods at Ferbane with ex MGWR 0-6-0 No.613 (built Broadstone 1893), 30/4/1959. (J.P. O'Dea.)

Beyond Clara trains used to diverge at Banagher Junction and travel through Ferbane and Belmont to reach Banagher itself. A fire destroyed the signal box at Banagher Junction on 18th December 1922 and it was never rebuilt. Some years later a system of remote-control by hand-generated electric current was installed here following the introduction of a similar method at Charleville Junction. It was operated from Clara signal box. Passenger services ceased on 25th January 1947 after which the branch was classed as a Goods Line only. An Educational Tour from the branch ran to Belfast in 1960. The late Dr. C.S. Andrews announced the closure in 1962, along with 22 other branches, and at 15:40 on 31st December 1962 the last train left Banagher. From the opening in 1884 the line, like most GS&WR branches was worked by 0-4-4 tank engines of class E3, including Nos. 75, 77 and 80, and possibly by a 2-4-2T occasionally. Other

engines which worked the line were: WL&WR 4-4-2T No.274 in 1926, No.279 of class E1 and 428, an Ex D&SER 2-4-2T.

For about 6 or 7 years after 1945 4-4-0 No.2 was on the line whilst towards the end of steam working Nos. 599, 613 and 588 did duty during the beet season. In 1957 a Deutz Diesel G603 replaced steam. It usually ran at about 25mph consuming about 7 miles to the gallon of fuel.

Clara was also the junction station for the Streamstown branch which linked up with the Athlone Mullingar line. The MGWR owned this line and the remains of their loco shed and turntable can be viewed as we approach Clara. The branch was closed to regular service in 1947.

An interchange platform at Clara still exists at the point where the Midland and Southern met. Beyond this towards the Southern station a short branch used to diverge serving the Ranks Flour Mills and at the far end a siding used to be provided at a lower level to the running line, which was for Messrs. Goodbody.



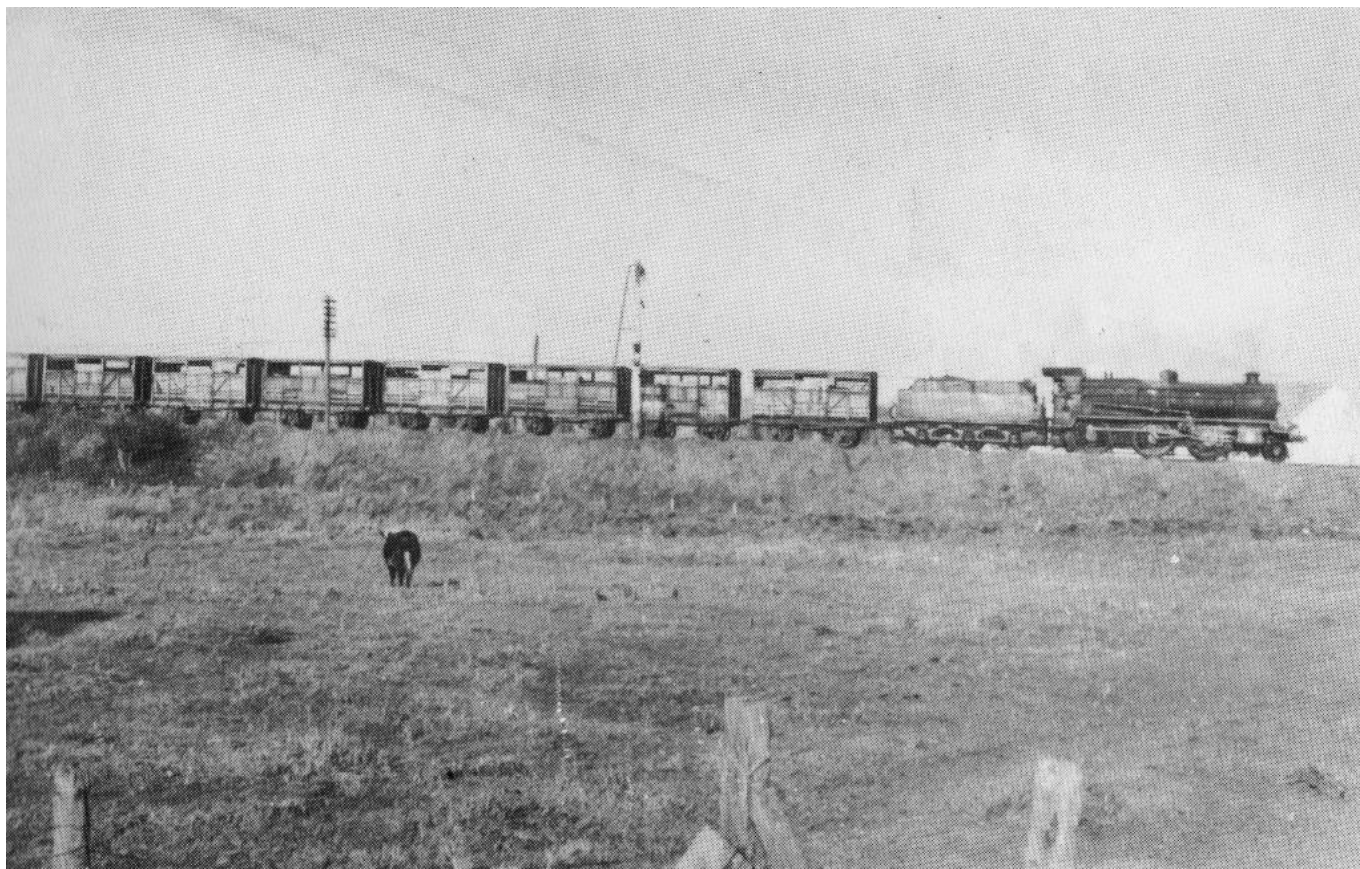
A Down goods arrives in the loop at Athlone on 24th August 1961. The line to the right is for the Southern yard and Portarlinton branch. (J.P. O'Dea.)

Clara has still only one platform and if there is a crossing one train obviously does not serve the station. For example the 08:00 Heuston/Galway does not call when it crosses the 08:00 Up from Galway which is Mark III rostered.

A passing loop at Clonnydonnin was installed in 1974. The small signal cabin houses the emergency control panel.

Athlone was a military town and artillery loading bays were provided at the GS&WR station. There was a well-proportioned building of cut limestone with a single platform on a loop, an extensive goods yard and a locomotive shed. The line reached here in 1859 and a few months later the tracks of the two companies at Athlone were joined. Passenger trains usually terminated at the GS&WR station, but would go over to the Midland if necessary as each company was responsible for getting its through passengers to the other station. In 1925 the GS&WR station was closed to passengers and the MGWR station became the sole passenger station in Athlone. Fifty years later this was reversed and the former GS&WR station was heavily modernised and reopened.

An interesting situation arose then with trains calling at Athlone and running via Mullingar. The Night Mails which include passenger accommodation run between Connolly and Galway via Mullingar. From the opening date in January, 1985 a pilot was provided on the trains between the “Midland” and “Southern” stations. On Sundays until 12th January 1986 there was a 15:40 Ballina/Connolly train which ran via Mullingar and this also required the use of a pilot. From the new timetable, however, this train was diverted to Heuston. On Bank Holiday Mondays there was a service from Ballina at 13:15 which was extended through to Connolly and sometimes it was scheduled not to call at Athlone and therefore, run direct from Knockcroghery to Moate.



A typical Midland scene in 1951 with a cattle special hauled by a Woolwich locomotive. It is approaching Athlone from the Roscommon direction. (S.J. Carse)

ATHLONE - WESTPORT

We now cross the River Shannon and hopefully the weather will not result in massive flooding which occurred in this area during 1985. As already explained the Midland station is disused and after passing the remains we take the “Mayo Road” passing Hudson’s Bay level crossing and Kiltoom station which was closed in 1963. There are remains of a short platform at Nine Mile

Bridge which was used by pilgrims going to Saint John's Well. Ballast trains operate from Lecarrow Quarry and coverage of the CIÉ system is shared with the other Quarry at Lisduff. New arrangements became effective for trains to and from Lecarrow in 1985. They must now operate through Knockcroghery. A special key, effectively a staff, is obtainable there provided that the track circuits in the Knockcroghery - Athlone section are clear, that no train is routed into the section and that no train is in possession of a second key either at Lecarrow or between there and Knockcroghery. A train may be 'locked' into Lecarrow sidings and normal working resumed once the key released ground frame has been normalised, and the special key placed in what is effectively a subsidiary ETS instrument.

C class Diesels and later CR re-engined locos were regular motive power on the ballast from Lecarrow. I can recall joining C213 in the 1960s at Claremorris and travelling over the "Burma Road" as it was called to the Sligo line at Ballymote.

The B201 class have been withdrawn from service by CIÉ from early September 1985 but NIR have purchased 6 for use on ballast trains, etc.



The Lecarrow Ballast at Castlerea heading for Sligo with No.610, 2/3/1960. (J.P. O'Dea)

There was much signalling alteration at Knockcroghery for the introduction of CTC on 17th March 1985. It is now a fringe box and since we passed Inchicore our progress has been monitored on computer driven colour graphic screens which are housed in the CTC building at Connolly. The other fringe boxes in the Midlands are at Ballinasloe and Moate. As regards radio communication additional masts have been erected at Clara, Clonnydonnin and Athlone to facilitate its extension to Mile Post 84 on the Galway line, MP 85 on the Mayo line and MP 74 between Athlone and Moate.

However, to return to the “Mayo Road”, we are now near Ballymurray which has automatic half-barriers. Roscommon (MP 94¼) is open for both passenger and freight. When the line was being built sufficient land was taken for a double road and the bridges were constructed sufficiently wide for two tracks. The Athlone - Roscommon section, doubled in 1879, was reduced to single again by GSR in 1930/31.

After Ballymurray the line runs by a large state forest, on the Down side. One of the features of the Branch was the number of great estates crossed; many of these were owned by absentee landlords, and occupied by thousands of peasant farmers as tenants, but the huge population was almost wiped out in the Famine of the 1840s when tens of thousands of the people died of starvation or emigrated. The system of land occupancy by large landlords was finally broken in the latter part of the 19th century; many of the great estates did, however, survive into the 20th century, but with new economic circumstances have been divided among the farming community. One of these large estates, Moate Park, formerly the seat of Lord Crofton, is near this part of the line; it was the scene of the great march of starving tenants during the Famine.

Our No.186, currently stored in Whitehead, whilst operating light from Mullingar to Claremorris for the Burma Road Railtour in 1975 was shunted to a siding at Ballymoe to allow two service trains to cross. This once picturesque wayside station was closed to passengers in 1963 and closed to livestock in 1973. It is no longer even a block post and the block section between Roscommon and Castlerea is 16½ miles long. In Castlerea there was a one-locomotive engine shed and turntable which was originally provided to house the locomotive for the early morning service in the Westport direction. The duties of loco-men here included working to Achill. Another interesting building at Castlerea is the large house at the back of the goods bank on the Up side; this was built in 1909 by the MGWR for the District Inspector.

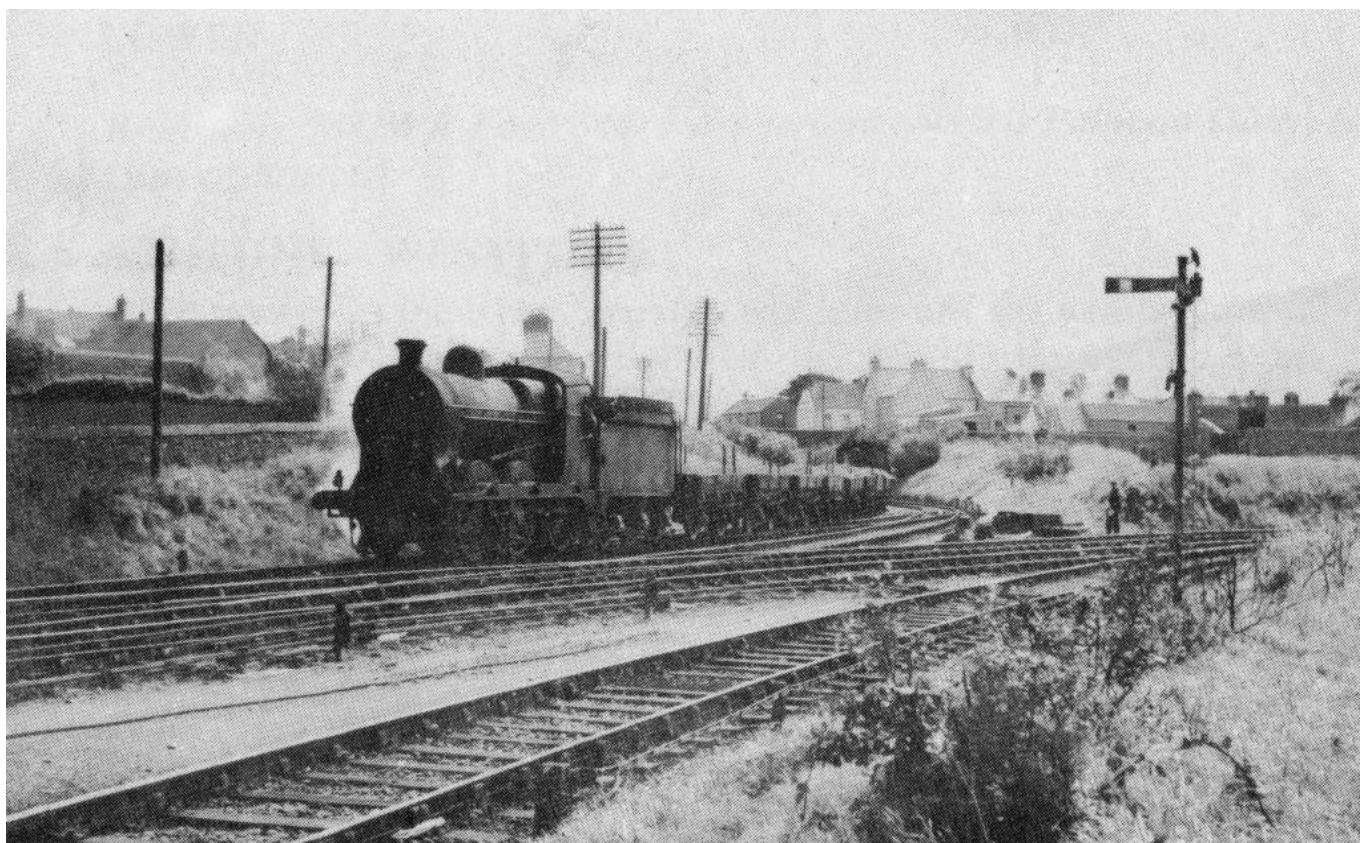
Leaving Castlerea the line crosses the River Suck and commences the climb up Arm Bank. The scenery now starts to improve with distant views of mountain peaks whilst the line runs along the side of Lake O’Flynn. At MP 122 the summit of Ballyhaunis bank is reached and it is the highest on the line. From here on the prevailing gradient falls towards Westport.

At Ballyhaunis evidence of the decline in funds available for buildings can be noted although CIÉ have improved matters in recent times. In 1934 the loop was extended which was probably motivated by the use of Ballyhaunis as the railhead for pilgrimage traffic to Knock. This was transferred to Claremorris in 1936.

Bekan (128¾), which is now closed, was opened on 1st January 1909. It had one platform on the Up side and many trains called here only on request. This stretch of line is fast before reaching Claremorris at Mile Post 135.

Claremorris is the most important station on the Mayo Road, not only for the commercial significance of the town, but mainly for the pilgrimage traffic to Knock some 10 miles away, and because Claremorris became the railway crossroads of North Connacht. For the first 30 years it was just like any other station on the line but this altered when other railway lines reached the town. On 1st January 1892 the 12¾ branch to Ballinrobe was opened and 2 years later the “Athenry and Tuam Extension to Claremorris Light Railway” reached a station known as Claremorris South. A short time elapsed before it was connected to the Mayo Road. In 1895 also the extension along the “Burma Road”, as it was referred to, was opened to Collooney. This line ran through Kiltimagh, Swinford, Charlestown and Tubbercurry.

In the 1936 season there were 14 specials to Claremorris and this had risen to 38 for the year 1940. This traffic ceased until 1948 and from then on the number of specials gradually increased until 1954 when 232 trains carrying 102,899 passengers operated.



J5 No.641 on No.3 Ballast for Ballina Branch at Claremorris 26th August 1957.
(A. Donaldson)

The season referred to would be from mid-April until mid-October. It should be pointed out, though, that there were special celebrations in Knock that year. In that year on 19th September the Pioneer Total Abstinence Association produced 22 special, half were steam and the other half were diesel railcars. However, 9th May was a good day for steam fans in that only 1 of the 13 specials was a diesel railcar set. Of 116 steam specials arriving from Athlone in 1954, 74 were worked by Woolwich engines and these included Nos. 372, 373, 377, 378, 379, 381, 386, 391 and 396. There were only four other single-headed trains worked by Nos. 313, 624, 627 and 642. On this route there were 21 diesel trains. As regards specials from the Southern the maximum axle-load then was 14½ tons between Ennis and Claremorris and this resulted in 101 class 0-6-0 locomotives in very common use. Overall, in the year 1954, on this route there were 72 steam specials and 13 diesel trains.

Even though Knock is still a popular pilgrimage location the rail traffic in the 1980s has dwindled to a very occasional movement. There is now an airport, adjacent to Knock which has been promoted by the local Parish Priest and already large aircraft have brought pilgrims from Mayo to Rome.

We now leave Claremorris and as the line turns to the left there are very pleasant views, and in the distance can be seen Croagh Patrick. Balla (142½ was closed to passenger traffic in 1963. In the 1970s it still continued to handle livestock and wagon load traffic. The signal cabin here controls the electrically operated points for the Ballina branch, at Manulla Junction, some 3½ miles away. This arrangement applies since June 1964 when Manulla Junction closed as a block

post. It was a very elaborate place at one time necessitated by the nature of the service on the Ballina branch. Prior to the opening of the extension from Westport to Achill in 1894 the Ballina line was considered to be the main route and the Westport line the branch.



Class J18 GSR No.590 on goods at Claremorris, 29th June 1938. (H.C. Casserley, 41115)

Then, with the tourist traffic in mind, the through services from Dublin operated to Westport, with through coaches for Achill; the Ballina passenger service became for the most part confined to the branch, the passengers transferring to and from Westport trains. This involved run-around and turning facilities for the branch engines. In modern times the trains from Dublin still continue to operate through to Westport and a major reason for this is the important town of Castlebar.

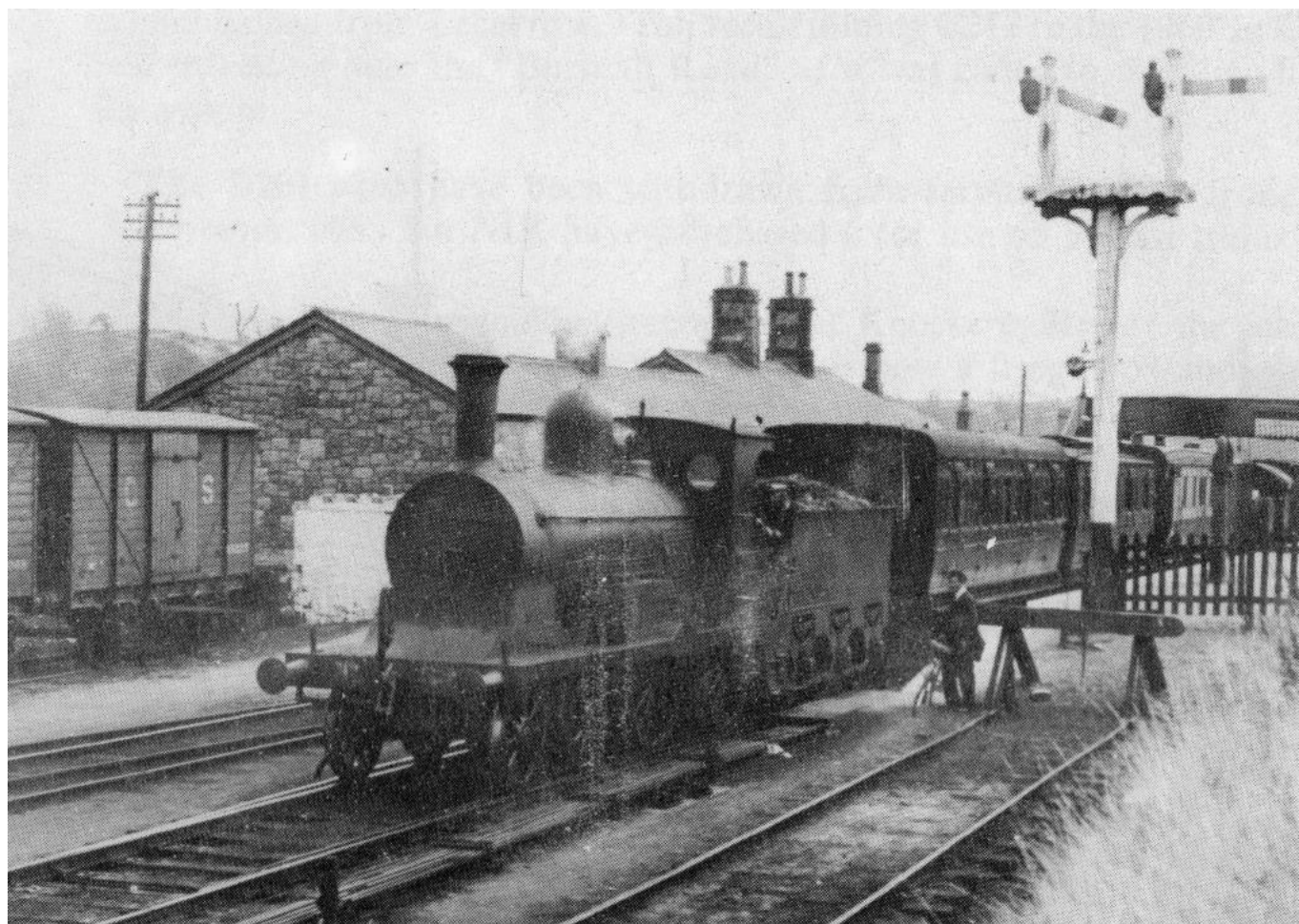
Castlebar (150) station is sited on an S-bend and as we approach the station a small airport is on the Up side whilst at the far end can be seen the County Hospital. Bagged cement specials from Limerick operate to Castlebar and/or Ballina and Westport. Published statistics indicate that in 1979 5,000 tons were delivered to Castlebar which is in excess of Claremorris (4,400) and Westport (3,700) but below Ballina which received 8,000 tons from Limerick or Platin (Drogheda). Currently general sundries and Guinness traffic, etc., is brought to Castlebar and Westport by a liner train from Claremorris which originates at North Wall and is divided between Ballina and Westport lines.

We are now approaching Westport which is on Westport Bay. Beyond this and out past the vast number of islands is Clew Bay. To the left is the road to Louisburgh and this passes Croagh Patrick. Northwards from Westport was once the line to Newport which then went west and followed Clew Bay in the direction of Achill. The station at Westport was not always a terminus as the line continued to Westport Quay station until relatively recently and of course to Achill.

From the station the Quay line descended rapidly to sea level. At Westport Quay there was a passenger platform and also a store for Messrs. Rank. In earlier times the Quay line crossed the public road and branched into two lines. The right hand one led to a coal bank which was lengthened about 1928; the other line was a tramway along the Quay to Messrs Hall's stores.

ETS working between Westport and the Quay was withdrawn on 27th July 1931 and after that was worked on the "one engine in steam" system.

The Achill branch left Westport over the stone-arched viaduct. It was opened in 1895 and closed in 1934. Owing to the failure of the potato crop and to aid the fishing industry the Government in 1890 decided to construct several railway lines in the West of Ireland including the Achill branch. The Treasury provided the capital, free of interest, to build the lines as light railways, and the Midland supplied the extra cost of making them as standard gauge lines. A glance at the June 1927 Working Timetable shows basically 2 trains each way on weekdays with an additional train on Thursdays. One could leave Broadstone at 7:10 and the connection at Westport would be 12:55 arriving in Achill at 14:40. There were 15 minute stops at both Newport and Mallaranny. Mallaranny is featured on the front cover of this brochure. The Achill branch must have been wonderful to travel on affording great views of Clew Bay.

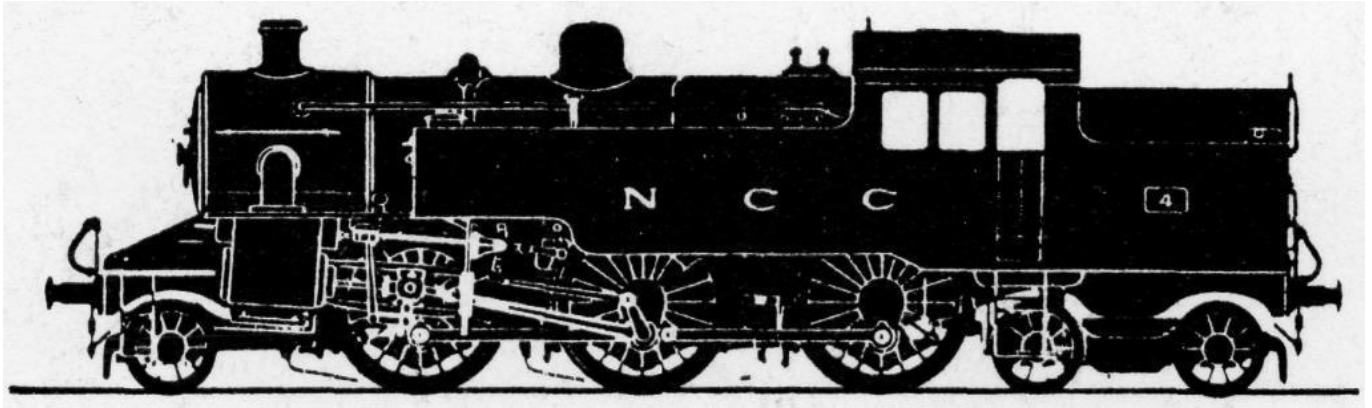


Class D16 on mixed train at Westport. (Lens of Sutton)

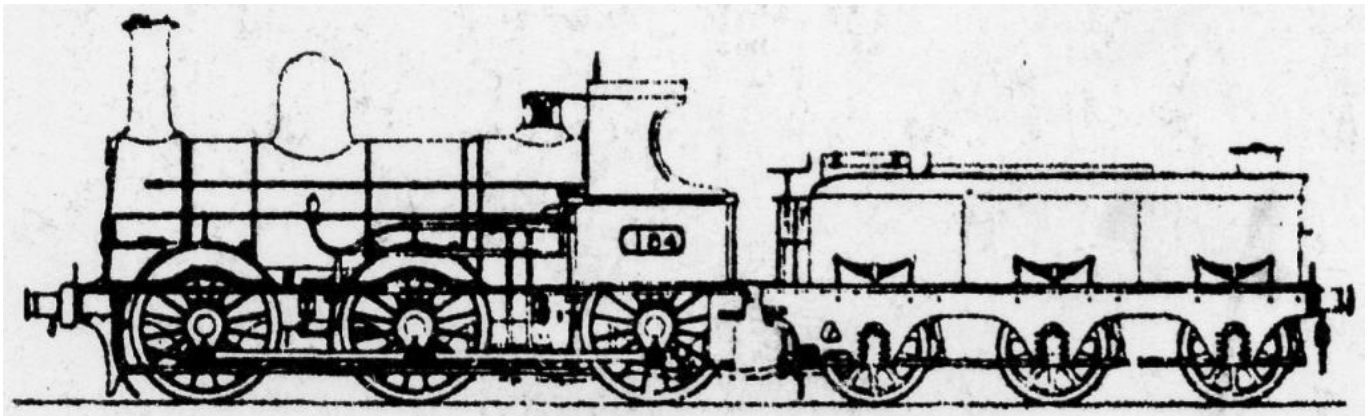
OUR TOUR TRAINS

The Railway Preservation Society of Ireland is almost unique in the 99 per cent of our railtours take place using our own rolling stock, which is an extensive collection featuring 9 steam locomotives, 2 diesel shunters and over forty other vehicles.

Our locomotives are:



No.4, an ex-London, Midland & Scottish Railway (Northern Counties Committee) WT class 2-6-4T was built in Derby works in 1947, and worked on the NCC system until 1951, when it became part of the Ulster Transport Authority's administration, after which time the "Jeeps" saw service further afield. Her last revenue earning service was with Northern Ireland Railways hauling wagons of spoil from Magheramorne to the foreshore of Belfast Lough to lay the foundations of the M2 Motorway which runs north-west from Belfast city centre. The tank engine's purchase was funded by private subscription to the "Jeep Appeal" by members. After a major mechanical overhaul carried out at Whitehead (entirely by volunteer labour) No.4 is once again an active part of the Irish railway scene.



No.184, ex-Great Southern and Western Railway 0-6-0 of class J15, was built in 1880 at that Company's Inchicore works for general goods traffic. These robust little engines were more than capable of handling any traffic thrown at them. This was admirably shown in later years under the control of the Great Southern Railway and its successor the Córas Iompair Éireann (Irish Transport Company) when they were employed for passenger trains. Normally based at Mullingar, 184's appearances on tours year in and year out are surely a fitting tribute to those who turn up at Mullingar every weekend in order to keep a 106-year old locomotive in running order.

1986 marks a new departure for the RPSI's railtour operations in that two trains will be used instead of the previous habit of working one train only. The 1930s vintage train is based at Whitehead, and represents the kind of travelling environment one might have seen between 1936 and 1948, whilst the Mullingar based rake of coaches comprises vehicles built by CIÉ in the 1950s. The establishment of a Mullingar based train has been a long-overdue development, however. Once the nucleus of running coaches has been established the restoration of historic vehicles can commence in earnest at both our locations.



MGWR No.548 at Broadstone. Note second coach is Pullman Diner. (Lens of Sutton)

This Whitehead based train is marshalled in this order:

No.91 (Third Class and Brake) built in 1935 by the LMS (NCC) as one of five used for the crack “North Atlantic” express running between Belfast and Portrush. The “North Atlantic” ran during the summer months to enable businessmen living for the summer in the seaside resort of Portrush to commute to work in Belfast, yet still be back by evening to enjoy the holiday atmosphere with the rest of the family.

No. 1142 (All first). This vehicle dates from 1911, and was built by the Great Southern and Western railway for express passenger use over long distances. The vehicle was completely refurbished during 1980-82. However, time and the elements have not been kind to the exterior finish which is now due for major attention.

No.1335 (All third). This is one of a series of coaches built in the mid-1930s by Great Southern Railways for their Dublin suburban services. Constructed to a design by Bredin, originally without through gangways but subsequently converted, this coach is a direct ancestor of the 1950s stock in the Mullingar based rake, with more than a passing resemblance to the British Rail Mk 1 design of a few years later. No.1335 was refurbished by unemployed teenagers on the Youth Training Scheme run at Whitehead.

No.1327 is a sister coach of No.1335. The Society possesses a third of this type, No.1328 undergoing restoration at Mullingar on a stand-by basis, and No.1333 which is an open third.

No.87 is a dining/bar car built at Dunmurry Bus Works in 1951 by the Ulster Transport Authority. To be strictly correct the vehicle should bear the dark green livery of the UTA.

However, the Crimson Lake of the LMS (NCC) was chosen because it is more in keeping with the rest of the train.

No.68 (1st/2nd/3rd composite) was originally built for the LMS in England, but was shipped to the Northern Counties Committee of that concern in the early 1940s as one of a batch of vehicles sent to replace those lost in the “Blitz” on Belfast. The only modification was the fitting of 5’3” gauge bogies as opposed to those of 4’8½”. This coach’s celebrated oddities are the two half-compartments for which three explanations are put forward:

1. Cynics put forward the theory that these were used for the conveyance of convicts and their escorts without causing offence to other passengers.
2. Another possibility is that they were used for small parties who wished to have the privacy of a private compartment, but not the expense of booking a full six or eight seats.
3. The most romantic notion of all follows on from number two, but adds the possibility of newly-weds travelling to their honeymoon resorts being booked into the “Honeymoon Compartments” in order that the privacy of the happy couple can be ensured. (The coach was originally fitted with window blinds.)



Mullingar Shed, which is now the Society’s base in the South, pictured in 1933 complete with signal cabin. No.540, originally MGWR No.7, was built at Broadstone in 1909 and named Connemara. (Locomotive & General, 7228)

No.114 (Third class open brake) was built by the Great Northern Railway (Ireland) for use between Belfast and Dublin. The coach is now used as a support vehicle on railtours with the

train service crew occupying the passenger compartment, and the large luggage van, originally used for mail traffic, converted into a travelling workshop and tool store to provide facilities lacking since the demise of steam sheds in Ireland. After steam working ceased on the Belfast-Dublin main line of the GNR(I) No.114 was converted to work as a brake coach in the BUT railcar sets until they too succumbed to “progress”.

Mullingar Based Set

The numbers of the set are 1445, 1463, 1469, 1483 and 1915. 1445 was built at Inchicore in 1958 by CIÉ and, like the Park Royals a few years earlier, is 10' 2" wide. It seats 52 and has a length of 61'6".

1463, 1469 and 1483 are similar in appearance to 145 but the interior layout is different, seating 64. They were built in 1958 to 1960. 1915 was converted from Suburban Composite 2165 which would have worked on such an interesting line as the Harcourt Street - Bray section. They were also 10'2" wide with a centre corridor and seated 40 first and 36 standard class. Later it was renumbered 1602 with all standard class before a further conversion in 1970 to a Brake/Standard. All the above coaches have Commonwealth bogies.

Some examples of the above coaches are still in use on CIÉ. They can be seen on the suburban chiefly, and on main line trains during busy periods. To distinguish our coaches from the CIÉ fleet they have a temporary livery of green and black.



MGWR No. 8 at Broadstone. (Locomotive & General, 21742)



GSR 4-4-0 No. 45 at Tuam, 30th June 1938. (H.C. Casserley, 41126)