

Lough Gill Railtour



**SOUVENIR
BROCHURE**

RAILWAY PRESERVATION SOCIETY OF IRELAND

LOUGH GILL RAILTOUR



9th, 10th and 11th May 1987

DUBLIN - SLIGO - MULLINGAR - MOATE - DUBLIN

DUNDALK - COLERAINE - BELFAST - WHITEHEAD



SOUVENIR BROCHURE

Dear Ferroequinologists,

The Iron Horse is rampant! Enjoy this unique feast of 580 miles of steam train travel behind 3 locomotives spanning 60 years of development from slide valves through compounding to the rocking grate. Each locomotive so different in outline and detail design, each reflecting the "State of the Art" in 1880, 1932 and 1946 respectively and each proudly representing her class to the full of her original ability.

Savour also the ambience of the restored carriages spanning over 40 years and enjoy traditional RPSI hospitality in the Dining Car.

We extend a special welcome to those joining our international railtour for the first time. We trust you will wish to repeat the experience next year.

Welcome back to those "regulars", individuals and parties who cement our resolve to operate a weekend such as this.

A special welcome also to our friends from Berliner Eisenbahnfreunde and travellers from as far afield as Australia, America and Canada.

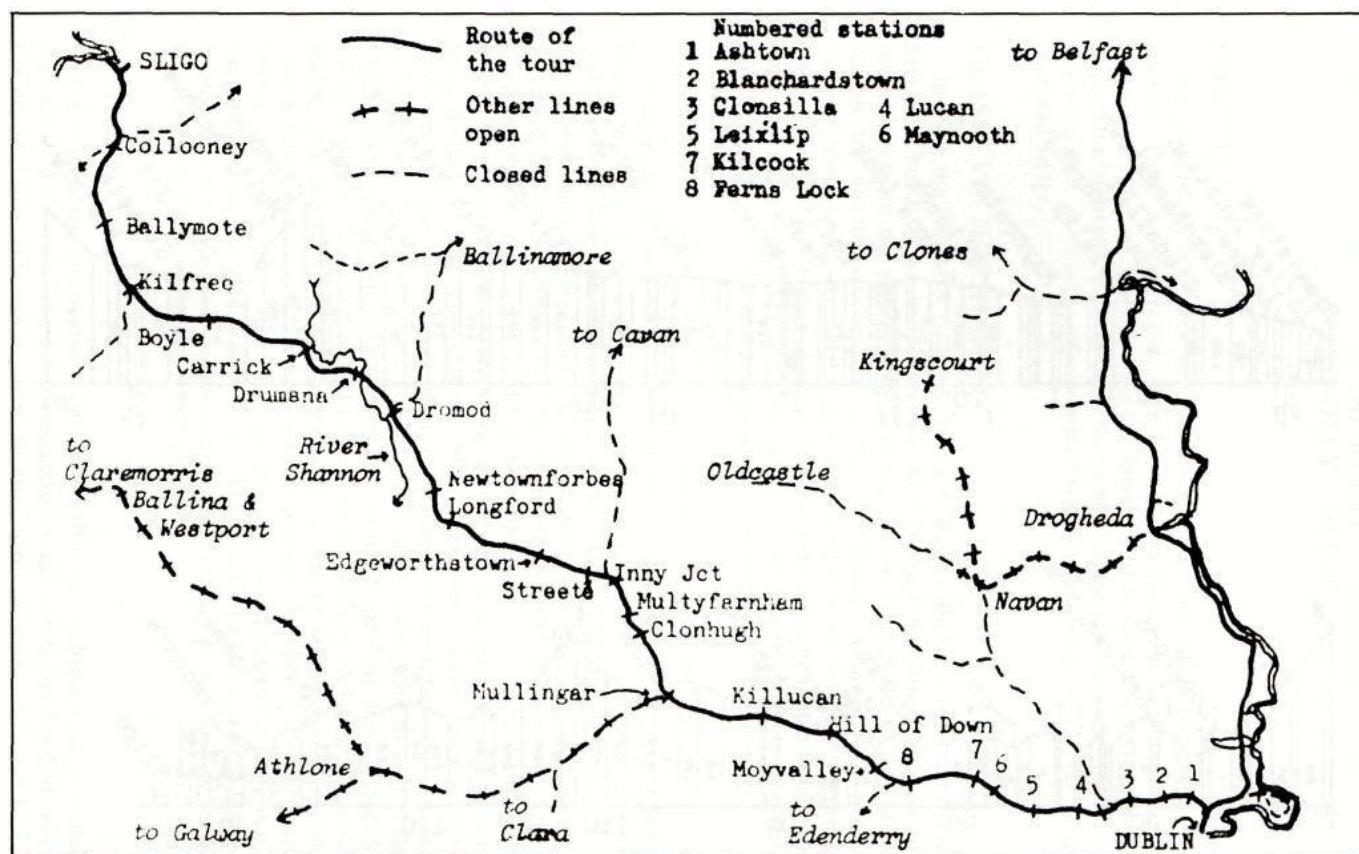
We wish to thank Bord Fáilte Éireann (Irish Tourist Board) and the Northern Ireland Tourist Board for continued moral and tangible support.

Last but most important our thanks are due to the management and staff of Northern Ireland Railways Co. Ltd and Iarnród Éireann (Irish Rail) who make it possible for us to witness the 5'3" gauge steam train in all its glory in its natural habitat, the beautiful countryside of Ireland.

CEAD MILE FÁILTE

HERTZLICH WILKOMMEN

Ernest H. Gilmore
Hon. Operations Officer



Front Cover: Sligo Leitrim and Northern Counties Railway "Lough Gill" 0-6-4T. Introduced 1917. Pictured at Sligo in May 1924. (Real Photographs Co. Ltd)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This brochure has been edited by Barry Carse and he would like to thank all who have helped. In particular I must mention Bob Clements for his invaluable assistance.

THE ROUTE

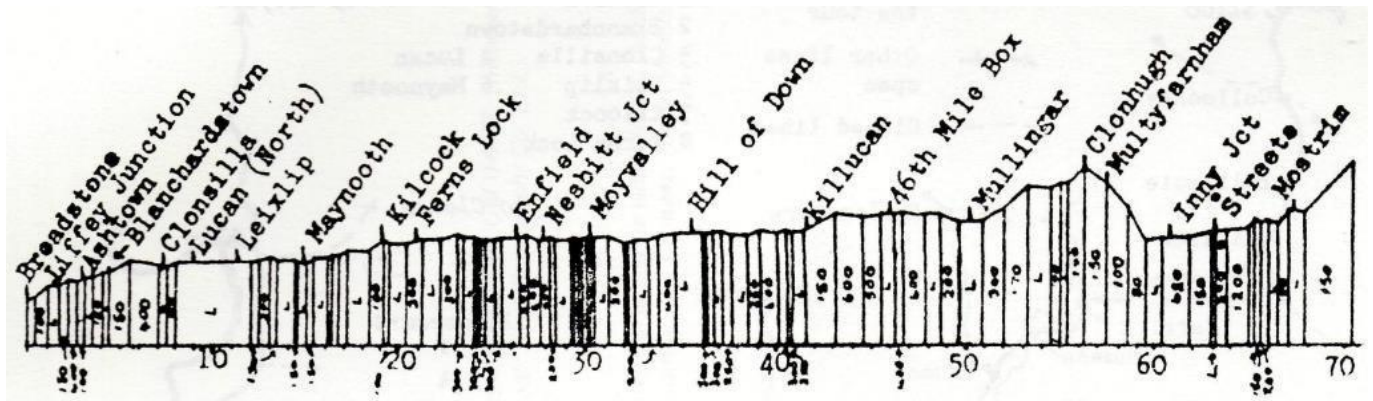
CONNOLLY- SLIGO

CONNOLLY

As in previous Railtours our journey starts at one of Dublin's principal stations. There are two routes from Connolly to Glasnevin Junction, one via Newcomen Junction and following the Royal Canal or the other through North Strand Junction and passing the remains of Drumcondra station. Until 1910 Glasnevin had an island platform which was reached from street level by an overhead bridge.

GLASNEVIN JUNCTION

In 1901 the GS&WR (Great Southern & Western Railway) built a line from here to Church Road in North Wall. At this stage the Junction faced the opposite way to the present layout. It was altered in 1929/30 as part of the scheme for diverting Midland trains from Broadstone to Amiens Street (now named Connolly) and Westland Row (now named Pearse). Trackwork renewals were carried out in October 1969 and it is interesting to note that Southern line passenger trains which normally used Connolly on Sundays at that time were diverted to Heuston one weekend to facilitate the renewal.



LIFFEY JUNCTION (Mile Post 1½ measured from Broadstone)

A large signal cabin here controls its own station area but does not operate Glasnevin Junction. Broadstone Station was closed in 1937 and until then the main line to Galway joined our present route at Liffey Junction. Although there are platforms and loading banks, etc., this station is not open to either passenger or freight traffic. In March 1977 the last remnants of the Broadstone - Liffey Junction section were removed. It had been singled after the closure of Broadstone loco depot and all tracks in the yard lifted. One spur line remained to bring in fuel oil and remove waste. When movements ceased the vegetation took over and part of the track was lifted by local residents, the remainder had to be recovered by road tractors. When work was finished on this section the official lifting gang turned their attention to the North City Mills siding. At Liffey Junction there have been alterations in recent years. A trailing crossover leading into the Canal siding was taken out of use in September 1980 whilst later a facing crossover at the west end was removed. In 1986 further rationalisation took place when the Down line loop points and the facing turnout off the Up line into the yard were removed. The East Cattle Bank and the Middle Sidings are no longer cabin-worked except for one set of points. Reilly's Bridge was the site of Cabra station from 1847 to 1848.

ASHTOWN (3)

This station was resurrected in September 1979 for the Papal Visit, providing the railway with one of the most spectacular big days on 29th September when the nearby Liffey Junction recorded 88 movements between 03:13 and 12:15.

Ashtown was later opened permanently as part of the Maynooth suburban services. Between Ashtown and Clonsilla two stations are listed in the Working Timetable used by CIÉ staff. The stations involved are Granard Bridge and Coolmines but they have not been built yet as the Government have yet to provide the finance. Granard Bridge is close to Blanchardstown (4½) and Coolmines is currently a level crossing (5¾).

CLONSILLA (7)

Suburban traffic is dealt with at this block post. This was the junction for the Navan and Kingscourt line which was opened to Navan in 1862 and closed in 1963. A number of signalling alterations were carried out in 1982 to facilitate the suburban service. Mechanical staff exchanging was provided here like most other stations en route to Mullingar but the practice ceased entirely in 1982.

LUCAN NORTH (9)

The station buildings, now closed, can be seen on the left-hand side. You will notice that the Royal Canal is following us very closely. Lucan was closed in 1941.

LEIXLIP (11¼)

The road bridge (Louisa) at the Mullingar end was renewed in 1972. Leixlip cabin ceased to be used in 1975 and was closed completely on 27th March 1977. The loop and signals were removed and a year later work started on track realignment utilising the space freed. However, the speed limit is still 40 mph. This attractive little station was opened again in 1981 for the suburban services and the Down platform was moved out to line up with the track. At this stage a new booking office was built together with a car park.

MAYNOOTH (15)

Originally the MGWR (Midland Great Western Railway) had suburban services and a turntable was provided at the Down side. This station was re-opened in 1981 and is the terminus for local services from Connolly. A limited service is provided which basically caters for commuters travelling to the city in the morning and returning in the evening. Initially, push pull trains were provided but these have now been replaced by locos and ordinary coaches. In the morning time there are four trains from Maynooth. The 07:15 departure is the set of coaches for the 08:25 Connolly/Sligo whilst the 08:25 ex Maynooth forms the 09:35 Connolly/Rosslare. A suburban set is used for the other trains at 08:07 and 09:50 ex Maynooth. Sligo trains now call at Maynooth every day. Recently (January 1987) a Fastrack Service on mainline services from Maynooth was introduced on a trial basis. Fastrack is a parcels delivery system.

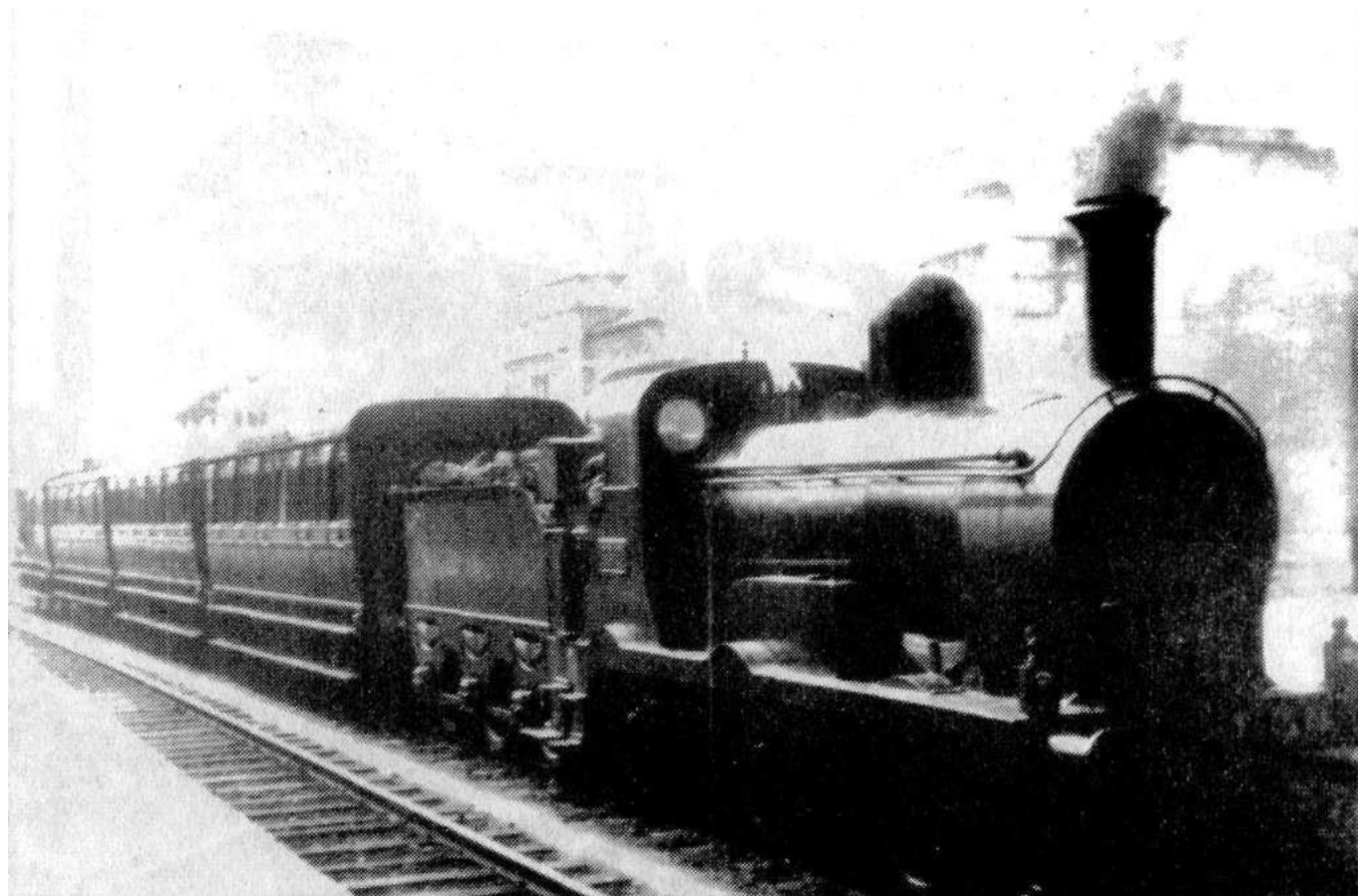
KILCOCK (19)

The block post was closed at the same time as Leixlip (27/3/1977). Up to then the sections were Clonsilla - Kilcock (12 miles) and Kilcock - Enfield (7¼ miles) but from 27th March, 1977 Maynooth was brought back into use and the block sections were Clonsilla - Maynooth (7¾) and

Maynooth - Enfield (11½ miles). Originally the station was at MP18½ but was closed in 1848 because of difficulty in lifting trains on the 1/100.

FERNS LOCK (21)

This one time station is now a level crossing with automatic half-barriers which were provided in 1975.



Maynooth: No.650 2-4-0 Class G2. Built in Broadstone 1893. The train is the 16:15 to Broadstone on 7th May 1927. (R.N. Clements)

ENFIELD (26¼)

In recent years beet was handled here and this has now ceased, leaving the station as a block post only. The line from Broadstone reached here in 1847. In 1877 Enfield became the junction station for the 9½ mile Edenderry Branch. The actual junction was at Nesbitt Junction (27¾) which in double line days had a signal cabin but when the GSR singled the main line the branch ran alongside to Enfield. At Enfield it is also apparent that restoration work has been carried out on the Royal Canal under youth training schemes.

MOY VALLEY (30¼)

Two miles later the railway crosses the River Boyne and the Leinster Aqueduct carrying the Royal Canal across the river is visible.

HILL OF DOWN (35¾)

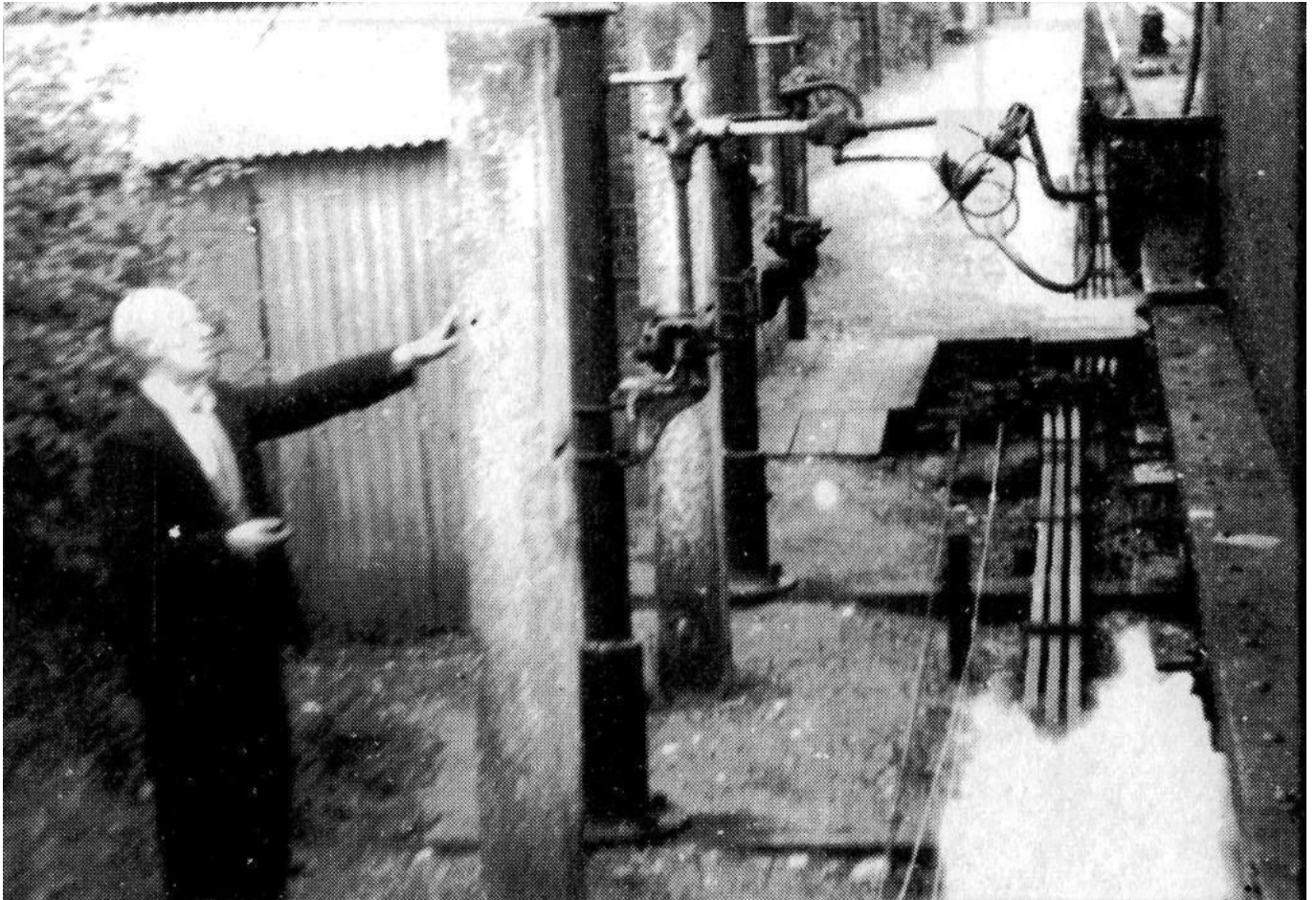
This station was closed in 1963 except for livestock traffic. On our last tour to Sligo we crossed the Up morning Sligo passenger train and a liner train (freight). The block post was closed on 15th September 1985 and very little remains of the station buildings.

KILLUCAN (41¾)

A block post, crossing loop and sidings remain here. The signal cabin, which has a 24-lever frame, is at the Sligo end of the Down platform.

46th MILE BOX

This was also known as “The Downs” and was until 1977 a block post which was switched in as required.



Hill of Down: Staff snatcher in action on the 12:25 ex Westland Row (now Pearse Station) on 6th May 1951. (R.N. Clements)

HOT BOX DETECTOR (47)

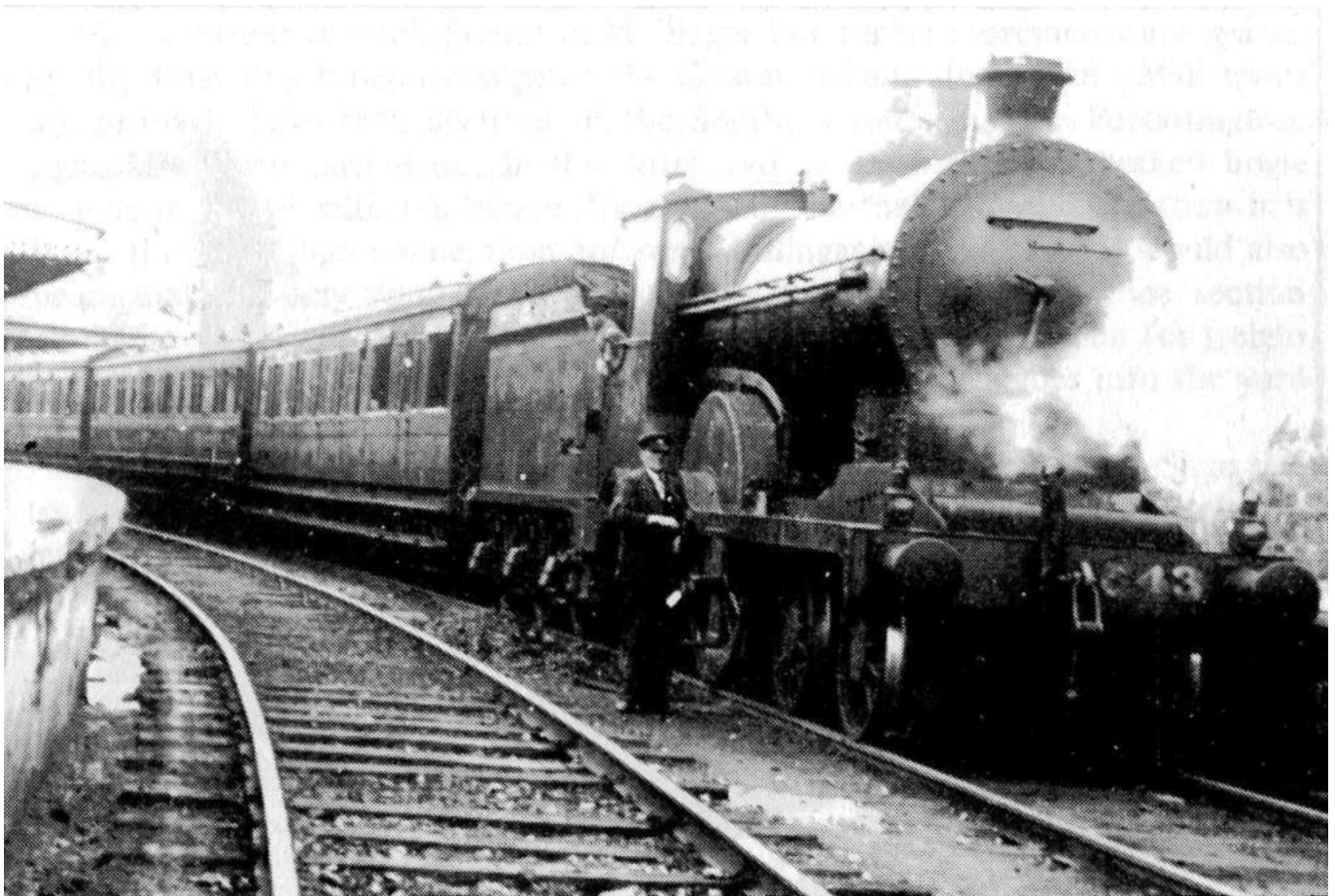
The readings which show the temperature of axles and bearings of passing trains are transmitted into the equipment provided in the signal cabin at Mullingar.

MULLINGAR (50¼)

The Hill-of-Down to Mullingar section was opened in 1848 and this town became a junction in 1855 when the line was opened to Longford on the Sligo branch. Since the middle 1970s the Society has its southern base here when J15 locomotive No.186 was moved from Sallins. It was actually en route to Dundalk and at the last moment the plan was altered to Mullingar and this explains how it arrived in Mullingar crewed by Dundalk men with a Connolly No.2 locomotive driver as a conductor. The loco shed is at the Galway end of the station and access is gained by using the former Down line to the now disused No.2 signal cabin. There is still an extensive track layout in Mullingar but traffic movements are sparse. By the time this brochure appears the

Galway Up and Down Night Mail trains will probably have been diverted via the Southern route through Portarlinton. Tests have been carried out in the latter half of 1986 using air-braked bogie wagons mounted with containers for carrying the mails. In this situation it is likely that the Sligo connections to/from Mullingar would cease. It would also mean that the only regular movements over the Mullingar - Athlone section would be the Asahi freight liner for Ballina. Mullingar is still open for freight traffic and the nightly liner train in each direction usually goes into the yard on the right-hand side without any shunting.

In Midland days Mullingar had a coal bank and a turntable on the Sligo side to avoid Sligo engines having to go to shed, so our coaling arrangements is a return to tradition.



Mullingar: No.543 D6 Class 4-4-0. Built Broadstone 1910. 09:10 ex Westland Row on 4th September 1948. (R.N. Clements)

CANAL CROSSING BOX (50¾)

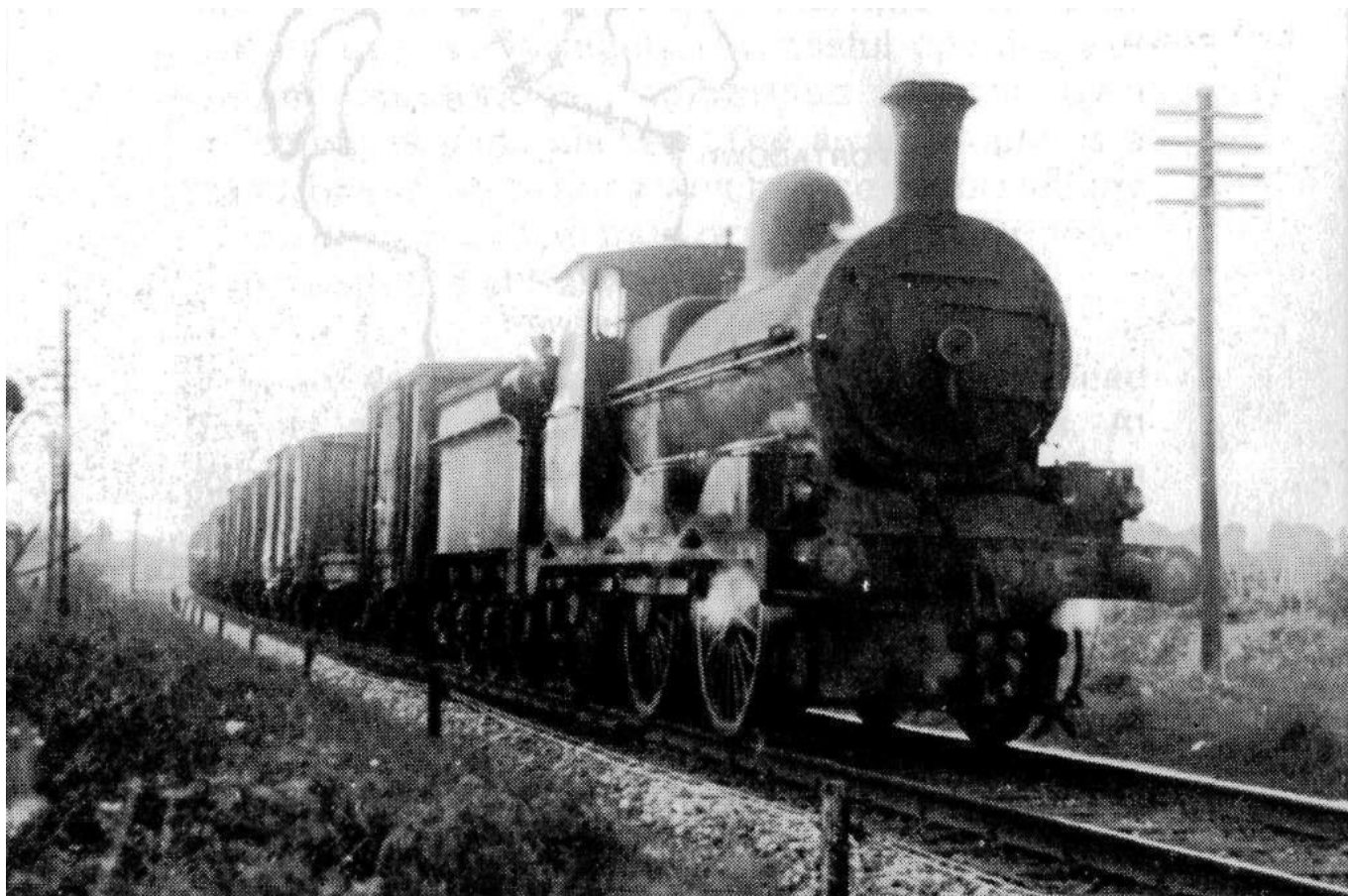
Block cabin was here in double line days, ground frame after for access to sidings.

LEVINGTON (52½)

Until 1963 there was a block post and crossing loop. Shortly after this we run alongside Lough Owel. Lough Ennell is to the South of Mullingar whilst Lough Derravaragh is close to Inny Junction. After passing under the main road bridge we come to Clonhugh (56½). Lord Greville had the right to stop any passenger train but was never on the MGWR Board. There was no cabin, only a double arm signal on platform for C.R. stops. It was closed in 1941. A similar but not identical position arose at Moyvalley and Hill of Down. Both would have been closed only for some right to the provision of train service, so a C.R. stop had to be made by one train each way till 1963.

MULTYFARNHAM (57½)

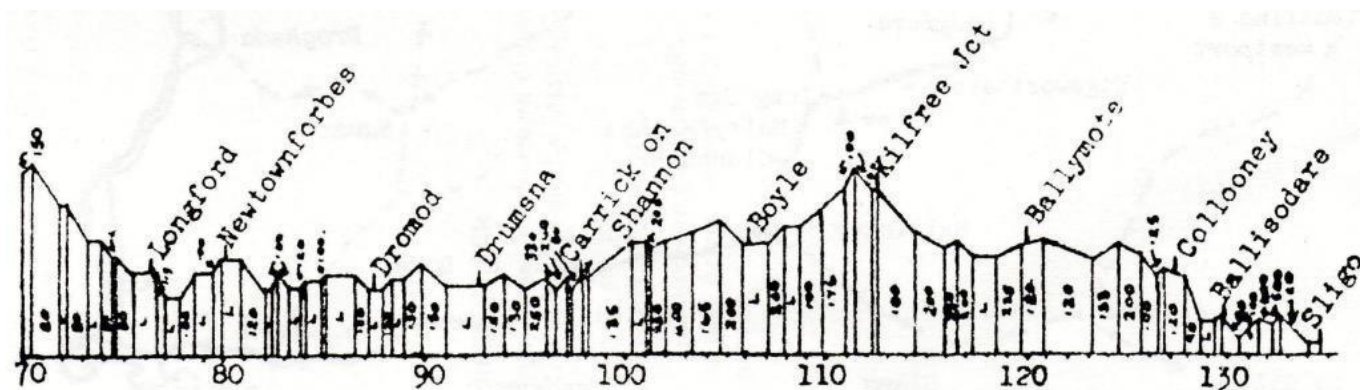
This station was closed to all traffic in 1963. The remains of the goods store can be observed on the right-hand side and the signal cabin which was in use up to 17th November 1985 is on the other side at the Sligo end.



Multyfarnham: The Up Cavan Goods hauled by No.576 on 22nd May 1954. (R.N. Clements)

INNY JUNCTION (60¾)

Very little remains of this remote location which when in use had no road access. The platform was in the middle between the Sligo line and the Cavan Branch. In this area there is the bridge over the River Inny.



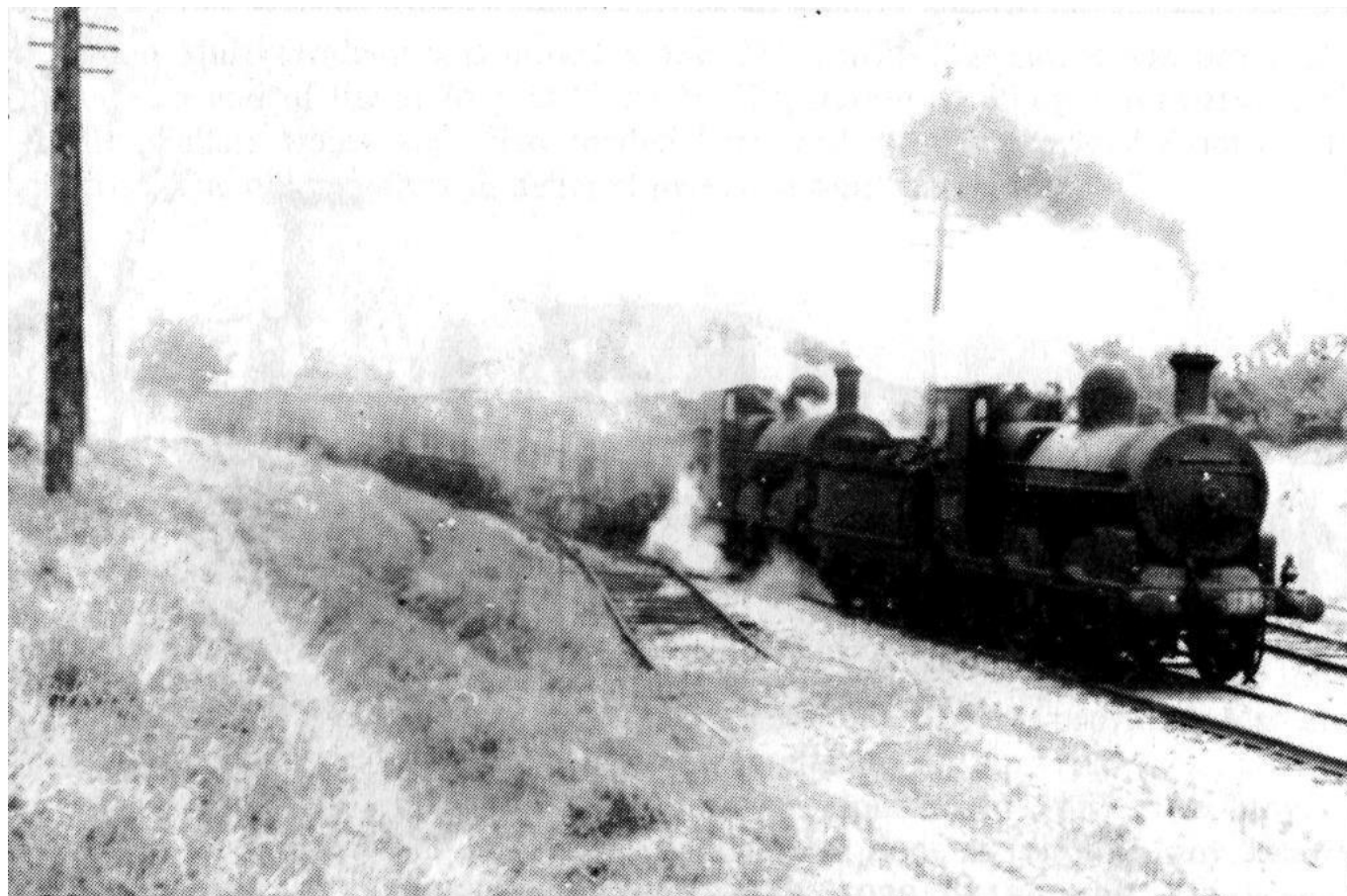
STREET AND RATHOWEN (63¼)

We are on a very straight section of line now and we pass this former station which had two platforms and a building on the right-hand side. Like so many other stations throughout the

country this also closed in 1963. There are small towns called Street which is near the station on the right-hand side of the line and Rathowen which is positioned on the main Sligo road.

MOSTRIM (EDGEWORTHSTOWN) (67¾)

When Multyfarnham was closed a new 365 yard refuge siding was provided at the east end of the Up loop in Mostrim. This station is still open for passenger traffic. Ballast trains are often loaded here with stones provided from local quarries. The old nameboards differed here, one omitting the middle "E".



Inny Junction: No.610 and No.604, both J19 Class 0-6-0. Fair Special ex Edgeworthstown on 17th September 1958. (R.N. Clements)

LONGFORD (76¼)

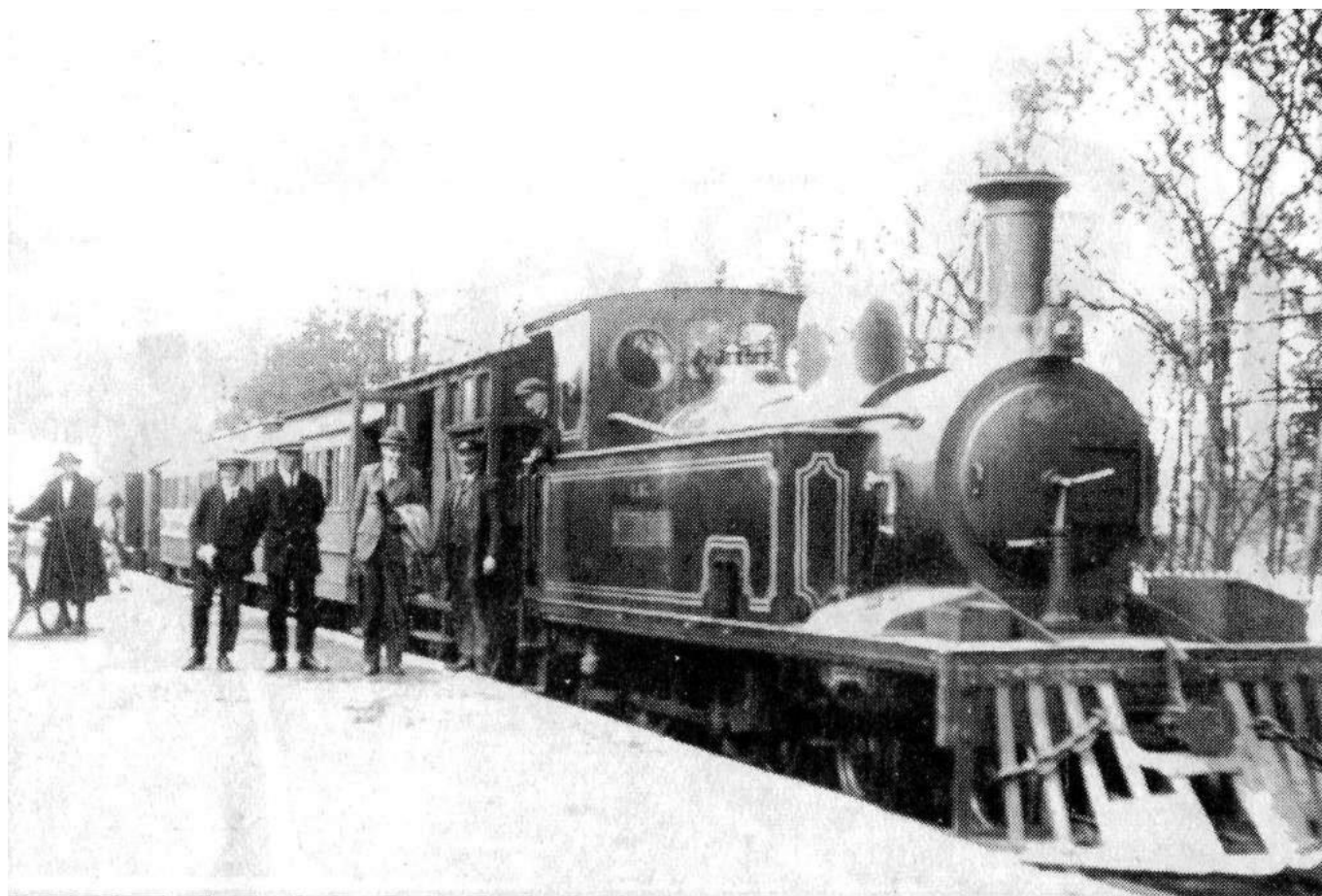
This is probably the most important intermediate station on the line with very good passenger and freight business. Major development of the facilities for handling freight took place in 1974 when the sidings, buildings, loco shed and turntable were cleared on the left-hand side. When the new yard was completed liner trains were able to enter at the Mostrim end, do their work in the yard and proceed out the far end to Boyle and Sligo. A cement store was built, a 30 ton Leibherr gantry crane was installed and a new access road was provided. Also at this stage the Down side (left) platform was extended.

The Mullingar - Inny Junction section was doubled in 1857. The Inny - Longford was doubled in 1877. The singling was done as follows: Inny Junction - Longford 1921 and Mullingar Inny Junction 1929. In 1862 the line was extended from Longford to Sligo.

At the Sligo end of the station the line crossed the former Longford branch of the Royal Canal by a swing bridge which has been removed. Also at this end was the scene of a spectacular derailment on 27th February 1974 when a lorry with a container struck a bridge before the 07:45 passenger from Sligo passed over it. The Lorry driver reported the matter to the police but the wrong bridge was inspected. Locomotive A36R (now 036) went down the embankment finishing on its side at the bottom whilst a four wheel heating van (3106) disintegrated around the wheels of the loco. The next vehicle, brake standard 1907, was broken up on the spot. Retrieving A36R was not very easy and was deferred until about 2 months afterwards.

NEWTOWNFORBES (80)

Closed to all traffic since 1963. Lough Forbes on the River Shannon is visible close by and we are also near the town of Roosky.



*Dromod: Cavan & Leitrim train hauled by No.8 on the 12:45 from Belturbet on 17th May 1924.
(Ken Nunn Collection)*

DROMOD (87¼)

From 1887 until 1959 this was where the Cavan and Leitrim Railway connected with the Midland. The C&LR had its own station, loco shed, water tank, etc., and some of these buildings still remain. This narrow gauge system (3 ft) extended to Belturbet with a branch from Ballinamore to the coalfields at Arigna. Coal was a very extensive commodity which the railway brought to Dromod. Demand reached a peak in 1926 during the British General Strike which resulted in much of the coal going north via Belturbet. After the Second World War the main customers were the Irish Sugar Company and the Drogheda Cement Factory right up to the line's closure in 1959. At Dromod there was a coal transfer siding adjacent to that provided by MGWR.

Both sidings were on the same level which must have resulted in a very labour intensive transfer of coal from the narrow gauge wagons. They were shovelled upwards into the high broad-gauge wagons. On the site of this interchange there is currently a 15 ton gantry crane although this station is not now open for freight traffic. Four locomotives from the Tralee and Dingle did duty on the C&LR and consideration was given to using West Clare and Schull & Skibbereen engines but this did not materialise. After the closure of the Cork, Blackrock and Passage Railway in 1932 the four locomotives were repaired and sent to the Cavan & Leitrim.

RIVER SHANNON BRIDGE (92)

There is no longer provided at Dromod signal cabin the facilities for opening the bridge at this location. Between here and Drumsna this section of line has suffered some flooding in recent years.

DRUMSNA (93)

This was a former block post with all the usual buildings. The signal cabin is still standing on the right-hand side.



River Shannon flooding line at MP 95 on 15th December 1954. No.667 (G2 Class 2-4-0) is working the Up empty turkey train. (R.N. Clements)

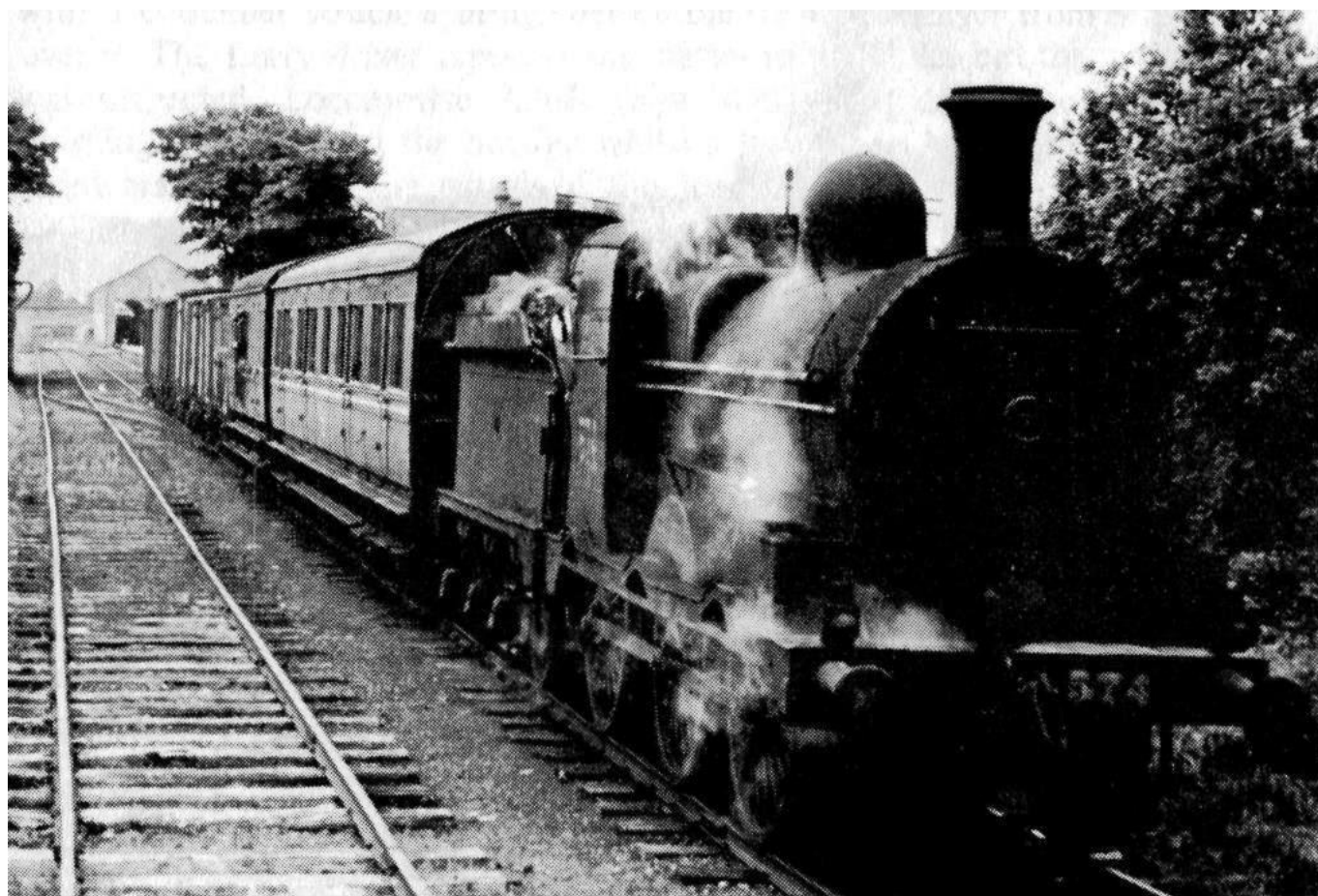
CARRICK-ON-SHANNON (97¾)

Passenger traffic is only dealt with here. In Summer 1978 CIÉ advertised an excursion using regular trains on Fridays to this station, together with a visit to Lough Key Forest Park and a cruise on the Shannon which is the longest river in Ireland or Britain. It rises in Derrylahon, Co. Cavan and flows 210 miles southwards through Limerick to the Atlantic. Carrick is a big centre

for hiring pleasure craft and the Shannon provides 160 miles of navigable waters from Lough Key (near Boyle) and below Lough Allen to the most southern point of Lough Derg. Back at the station there has been track alterations in recent years and gone is the siding which crossed a road into the Electricity Supply Board power station.

BOYLE (106½)

The Sligo line was the first to be developed in the mid-1970s for the new methods of freight handling and in particular for Sundries traffic. In 1976 work started at Boyle on the adaptation of the goods store for Sundries traffic. At around this time the experiment using 60 foot Sundries vans was abandoned and replaced by 10 foot square containers within which are wheeled caged pallets. In June 1976 a special train started from the Midland Store with these containers leaving at 19:00 each evening ahead of the traditional loose-coupled goods train. At first it served Boyle only and later it called at Mullingar and then Longford. In October of that year Sligo was included. For distribution of Sundries from the railheads a fleet of Bedford lorries with tail lifts are used; Sligo was provided with 6, Longford 5 and Boyle and Mullingar had 2 each.



Ballaghaderreen: No.574 Class J18 0-6-0. Built at Broadstone 1891. Photo taken on 31st July 1963. (E.M. Patterson)

KILFREE JUNCTION (112½)

Leaving Boyle we go around the side of the Curlew Mountains and enter a very picturesque section of the route. Participants on the last Sligo railtour will remember this section when 184 performed very well with a train of no less than 7 bogies. At Kilfree Junction the Ballaghaderreen Branch trailed away on the left-hand side. The 9½ mile branch was built in 1874 and closed in 1963 at which stage Kilfree Junction was also closed.

BALLYMOTE (120½)

This is still a block post and is open for passenger traffic. The last loose-coupled goods train served this station on 30th October 1975. At the north end there is a disused goods store, a loading bank and the site of sidings. Behind the buildings there is a long loading bank which continues the entire length of the station.

COLLOONEY (127¾)

In June 1977 the only remaining siding was taken out of use and the station is now only open for passenger traffic. After leaving the station we cross over the former trackbed of the connecting link between Collooney GS&WR and the SL&NCR stations (Sligo, Leitrim and Northern Counties Railway). In other words the line from Claremorris via Tubbercurry came in on the left and the SL&NCR line from Enniskillen and Manorhamilton had its station on the right.

COLLOONEY JUNCTION (128)

This is the site of the trailing junction (left-hand side) from the GS&WR station. The line to Claremorris was known as the “Burma Road” on account of the hills and hollows, which saw its last day of revenue earning operation on 30th October 1975. Most of the track is believed to be still in existence to Claremorris. Up to the mid-1920s there was a signal cabin here to operate the junction but the GSR installed electric points operated from Ballysodare cabin.



SL&NCR Railbus A at Enniskillen on 28th July 1957. (S.J. Carse)

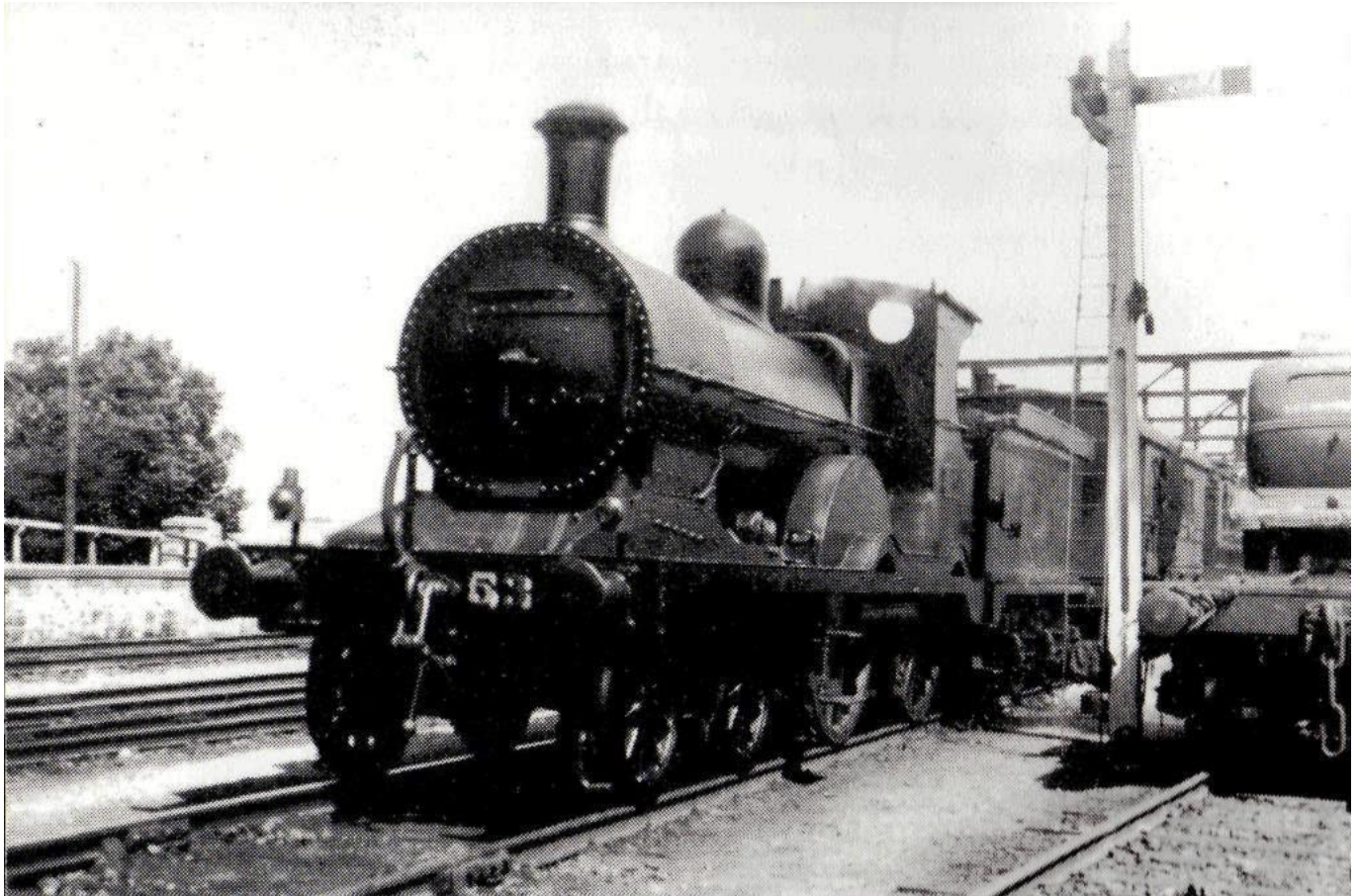
CARRIGNAGAT JUNCTION (128¾)

A former block post, the line from Enniskillen trailed in on the right-hand side. Until 1923 there was a signal cabin and junction and the line was double road to Sligo. From 1923, however, the

junction was removed and there was two single lines to Ballysodare. The SL&NCR closed in 1957 and CIÉ lifted the line between Ballysodare and Carrignagat Junction and singled the line from Ballysodare to Sligo.

BALLYSODARE (129¾)

Ballysodare was closed to passengers in 1963. It lost its cabin in August 1976 making the block section Sligo - Ballymote. There was also a trailing siding to serve the mills of Messrs Pollexfen.



Sligo: No.536. Class D7 4-4-0. Built Broadstone 1913. (J.M. Robbins)

SLIGO (134¾)

After passing through Ballysodare and as we come near Sligo, Lough Gill is on our right-hand side. This delightful lake, which is 5 miles long and 1½ miles wide, lies in a basin surrounded on three sides by wooded mountain slopes. Sligo, the most important town in north-west Ireland, is situated on a wooded plain between Lough Gill and the sea. To the north of Sligo is Benbulbin which features in most railway pictures at Sligo, particularly those taken of trains ascending the 1 in 70 from the goods yard and Sligo Quay line. On our last tour to Sligo it was noticed that the coaches for the “Early Bird” were stored in the Goods Yard. The “Early Bird” is a passenger service to Dublin on Mondays only leaving Sligo at 05:15. It comes down from Connolly on Fridays at 17:00. At the time of writing the two regular sets of coaching stock on the Sligo line are still Cravens, etc., but air-conditioned Mark II coaches are to be transferred from the Heuston - Cork/Tralee links when sufficient Mark III coaches become available. In Sligo goods yard a number of cement silos were built in 1979 and bulk trains were reported as operating from Drogheda the following year. A storage area for ESSO is also provided and they started to have their own train 3 times per week from May 1978, with usually 18 oil tanks per train. By 1980

there was an interesting special on Friday nights from Sligo to Waterford. The commodity was fish in Bell containers which usually originated from Burtonport in County Donegal and would be exported from Waterford by the Bell line.



Sligo: No.607 Class J19 0-6-0. Built Broadstone 1889. The train is Clayton Car working the 10:50 ex Mullingar in September 1930. (R.N. Clements)

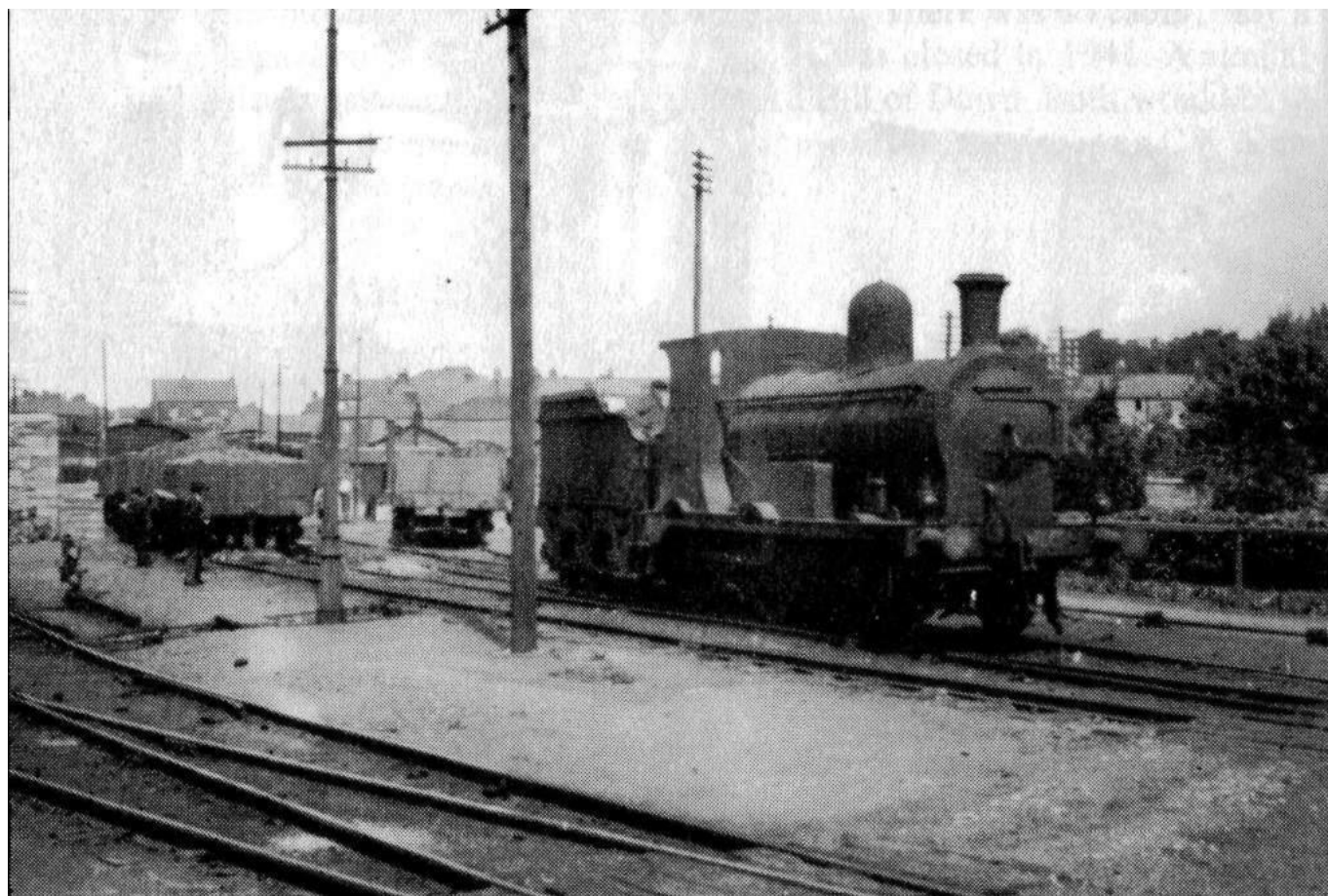
LOCOMOTIVES ON THE SLIGO ROAD

R. N. CLEMENTS

The Sligo road was the hardest of the three principal Midland lines; fortunately the trains were lighter than on the Galway road, but they were also booked faster. If I am right in thinking the conversion, in 1854-5 of five 2-2-2 engines to 2-4-0, was for the opening of the Longford and Cavan branches, no single wheeler was ever asked to tackle the short, but sharply curved 1/60 from Mullingar to the Canal Crossing.

After 1872 we have a good idea of the engines used. During the 1870s all 8 of Grendons 2-4-0s of 1856-61 were on the Sligo road. None of Atock's D class 2-4-0s of 1873-76 are recorded there before 1880, after which they, and the improved version of 1880, took over. The first of Atock's larger 2-4-0s, the 13-24 (later K class) went new to the Sligo Limited Mail for a time but it was to be a long time then before this class were regular Sligo road engines.

In 1900-01 six of the D class were rebuilt with bogies and larger boilers. Reputed to be the speediest engines on the MGWR and latterly known as the "Achill bogies" they were, in fact, intended for the Sligo Road, where five of them went new, joined later by the other. Probably they were helped out by the D class 2-4-0s, now rebuilding with Belpaire boilers.



Mullingar Loco 656 G2 Class 2-4-0. Built Broadstone 1898. The photo is taken in what is now known as Wallace's Yard. (R.N. Clements)

Now there is an unfortunate gap in our records. We know that Cusack's C class 4-4-0 of 1909-13 were intended, inter alia, for the Sligo road and that they were tried there, and it seems to have been about 1911-12 that the D bogies were transferred to the Mayo road. But we know no more except that No.10 - the oil burner - was there in 1912-13. These engines were a complete failure on the Sligo road; excessively rough, continually breaking bogie springs and not steaming. So the

K class now arrived in force, helped out till 1914-15 by some Belpaire D class. Then the superheater C class, No.11 was tried, but in spite of being the most economical engine of all in trials on the main road, her coal consumption was very high on the Sligo road, so back she went.

Then in 1918 the first superheated, K class, 24, arrived and was found to burn 19% less coal than 16 with a new saturated boiler. She is reputed to have needed under 2 cwt. of coal from Mullingar to Sligo, i.e. about 26 lb per mile.

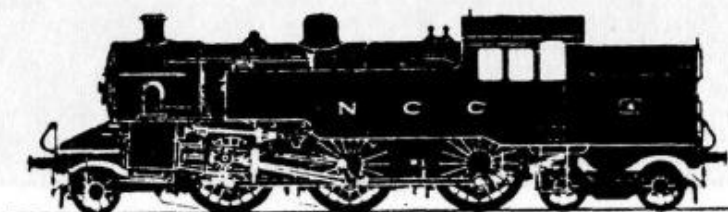
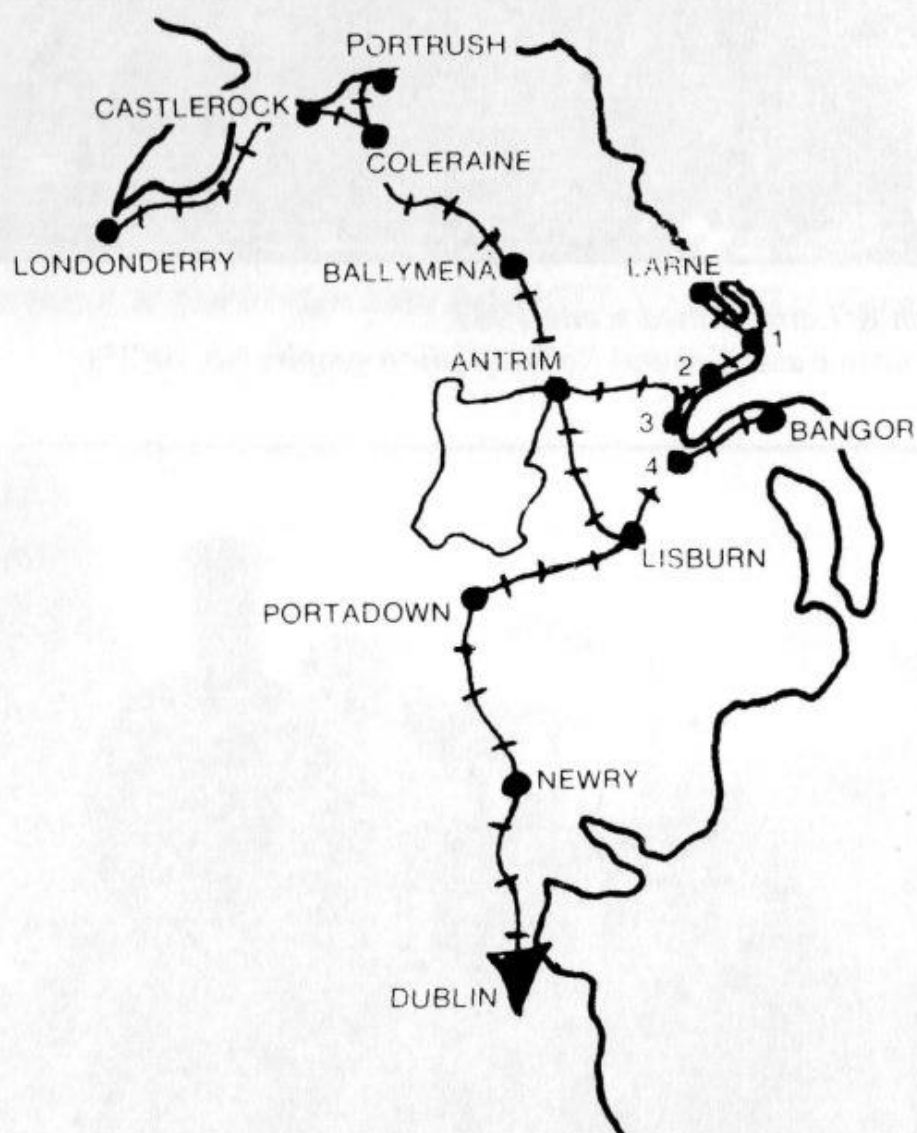
The lesson was clear, but was not appreciated. In 1921, in connection with the F class mixed traffic engines, a document says of the K class: "They were designed over 20 years ago and are now much too small for this duty, the only reason they are kept on this work is that none of the other classes seem suitable for the conditions in force on this section." The F class were to do better in acceleration and uphill and so not need to exceed about 50 mph. What happened was just the opposite, for they tended if steaming to run faster downhill than the small engines. They were not much used as branch engines but were usually on the through workings from Broadstone which operated in 1926-27. Meanwhile the C class had been superheated from 1924 and returned to the branch, better engines than before but were still not steaming well enough.

Using the G.S. classification saw the 540 class - large-boilered rebuild of the 566 (C) class - not needed on the main line since arrival of Woolwiches, replaced the 536 class from about 1930 though some of the latter returned from 1938 after getting 540 class boilers. Both of these were quite satisfactory, but there had always been occasional workings by 650 class and about 1936 it was realised (at last) that they were at least as good as the bigger engines and far more economical so they now got most of the work. In 1935 the Newspaper train began with Broadstone engines which returned on an extra passenger train - usually a 623 class; it also sometimes brought a 545 class 4-4-0, not previously seen in Sligo unless on excursions from Dublin, these (after 1943) might bring an occasional Woolwich.

The 650 class retained their jobs until the Sligo train was separated from the Galway through from Dublin; then 333 and 342 Class were sent to Broadstone for it, or a Woolwich was used. The through train continued after the war, but with Midland engines again 545, 540 or 536 though for a short time a 60 class engine was borrowed from Inchicore. The Mullingar jobs remained normally with the 650 class, occasionally a mixed traffic and sometimes a 593 or 610 class standard goods which (as spare engines) had often been used in Midland day; but not since. The last steam passenger trains were the Night Mails of 15th September 1956 when 554 went out in a blazing glory by knocking 11 minutes off the diesel running to Mullingar. Finally 654 was the last 2-4-0 to work a train in Europe - the Ballaghaderreen branch on 25th September 1962; one Spanish 2-4-0 outlived her, but only on pilot jobs and last of all were some narrow gauge examples in the East Indies.

RAILWAYS OF NORTHERN IRELAND

- 1 — Whitehead
- 2 — Carrickfergus
- 3 — Belfast York Road
- 4 — Belfast Central



CLASS WT L.M.S.N.C.C

The Society

Thanks to the efforts of volunteer members of the Railway Preservation Society of Ireland (RPSI), it is once more possible to enjoy the delights of travelling in a mainline steam train. The Society is dedicated to the preservation of railway steam locomotives. However, Society members are not content to allow such items to be displayed in museums, but are actively engaged in their restoration for use on excursion trains.

To date, the Society's collection comprises nine steam locomotives, two diesels, around thirty coaches and a number of goods wagons. Most of these are kept at the Society's base, Whitehead Excursion Station.

The RPSI was formed in 1964, and is registered as a charity.



Dromod: Cavan & Leitrim shed scene 1931. (Locomotive and General Railway, 6875)

In 1984, the Society received the Annual Award of the Association of Railway Preservation Societies for "its continuing highly successful operation of steam excursions, comprised of its own locomotives and coaches". The award trophy is a handsome coat-of-arms which once decorated the locomotive of a royal train of the London, Brighton and South Coast Railway.

You are very welcome to come to our Whitehead Events and travel on our Excursion Trains. At Whitehead, you can get a close up view of a steam locomotive in action, browse through the souvenir-shop and enjoy refreshments in the dining car.

Our Excursion Trains give you the chance to experience what rail travel was like in the era 1920 - 1950, when steam was supreme and carriages had polished wood interiors. The trains include a

buffet car and are operated in conjunction with Northern Ireland Railways and Córas Iompair Éireann, to whom the Society is grateful for support and cooperation.



Lambeg: 18:15 ex Belfast with No.54 on 21st June 1963. (S.J. Carse)



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