

THE

# **IRISH RAILFANS' NEWS**

Volume 1

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## Managing Committee:

L. Hyland (Editor)  
B. MacAongusa  
D. Kelly  
D. Seymour

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## EDITORIAL

You are, no doubt, at the moment wondering what all this is about. Briefly, this quarterly magazine is the effort of a few Dublin railway enthusiasts to keep you informed of the developments which are taking place from day to day on the railways of Ireland. We feel that, while the history of the 'Iron Road' in this country is being catered for in the various railway magazines and Societies' Journals, present day happenings are being, to some extent, allowed to slip by unnoticed. This publication is an effort to fill the gap.

In the following pages we hope you will find something to interest you, or that concerns your area, but, as we are based in Dublin, we find that inevitably some small, but often interesting, events have escaped our notice. Here is where you can help - not only the committee, but every other reader too - by keeping your eyes open and noticing unusual or interesting happenings. It is the work of a moment to put your jottings on a sheet of paper, or postcard, and send them to us. While we do not undertake to include all the notes we receive, we will do our best within the space available. As much of our material comes from correspondents we cannot accept responsibility for its complete accuracy, but nevertheless no effort will be spared to check all information as far as is in our power. If any errors occur we will deem it a favour if you let us know, so that the point can be corrected.

In addition to our news items, we will include a short feature article in each issue, dealing with a particular line or aspect of railway work. Lastly, trusting that you will find this first issue of interest, we hope we will have the pleasure of sending you "The Irish Railfans' News" for the remainder of this year. The subscription for the four 1955 issues is 2/- and this amount should be sent before 28<sup>th</sup> February to L. Hyland, accompanied by the application form on the back page of this issue. Receipt will be sent to you, with the second issue, at the beginning of April.

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## News Section

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### CIÉ DUBLIN AREA NEWS REPORT

#### Dublin Suburban Section

The gradual disappearance of six-wheel stock from the Dublin Suburban lines has been noticed in recent months. A number of pre-war corridor coaches have been running as replacements for the time being. Some of the familiar tank engines have also been replaced by 4-4-0 and 0-6-0 tender locos. These changes have been made as the rolling stock and locomotives are displaced from provincial services by diesel railcars. In reply to a Dáil question, the Minister of Industry and Commerce announced that CIÉ hoped to have a fleet of new coaches in operation on the Dublin Suburban Section

by next summer.

### **Grand Canal Street Running Shed**

On 27<sup>th</sup> March 1954 the last steam locomotive left the above shed and the suburban locomotives formerly shedded there were transferred to Broadstone. Since then Grand Canal Street has been completely reconditioned, cleaned and painted in readiness for the diesel cars which have been using it since 1<sup>st</sup> November.

### **Bridge At Ballyfermot**

A new road bridge has been erected over the Dublin - Cork line near MP 2½. It is wide enough to take a third track on the down side.

### **Lansdowne Road**

In connection with the new stand for the IRFU ground at Lansdowne Road, CIÉ are installing four double tunnels under their Westland Row - Bray line. These are being laid on the cut and cover principle, and this involves breaking the line on several occasions. Preliminary work for the first tunnel was carried out on Sundays 10<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> October 1954, but the boat trains were not affected. On Thursday 21<sup>st</sup>, a defect was noticed in one of the walls of the railway embankment, and single line working was instituted on the up road, between Westland Row and Lansdowne Road, from 11:00 on Thursday to 11:00 on Friday. The first tunnel was erected on Sunday 24<sup>th</sup>, when the Broadstone and Inchicore steam cranes were employed unloading the tunnel units from two trains. The line was broken from 09:30 to about 04:00 on the Monday morning. Arrangements were made to allow the morning boat-train to pass, but an alternative road service was provided in lieu of the evening down boat-train. A lorry and four buses ran from Westland Row to Dun Laoghaire Pier, where the level crossing was opened for the first time. The second double tunnel was installed on November 28<sup>th</sup>, the preliminary work having been done on the two proceeding Sundays. On this date an alternative road service, similar to that on 24<sup>th</sup> October, was provided.

### **Winter Timetable**

An innovation this winter was the introduction of an extra non-stop train to leave Cork at 08:45, and return from Dublin at 14:15. The journey time is 3½ hours in each direction. Since 6<sup>th</sup> December a stop has been made at Limerick Junction by the down train only, and this gives a bus connection to Limerick and rail connections southward to Mallow.

## **CIÉ PROVINCIAL NEWS REPORTS**

### **Waterford & Tramore Section**

On Monday 8<sup>th</sup> November the diesel cars for this isolated line were delivered to Manor terminus, Waterford, having been conveyed by road through the city. On Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> November, as the assembly of the cars was being completed, the 14:10 train from Tramore developed locomotive trouble en route and limped into Waterford. Buses were substituted for the trains, between this hour and about 17:30 on the same day, when the line was reopened by the new two-coach diesel train, which worked the line until 24<sup>th</sup> November. Then due to mechanical trouble the diesel had to be withdrawn and traffic again had to be handled by buses for a period. The diesel is now back in service.

### **Mountmellick Branch**

On 6<sup>th</sup> October CIÉ made application to the Transport Tribunal for an Exemption Order for the 7½ mile line from Portlaoise to Mountmellick. This is the twelfth CIÉ branch line for which an Exemption Order has been sought since the Tribunal was established in 1951.

## **Collision at Boher**

In the early morning of Friday 24<sup>th</sup> September a head-on collision occurred between the Limerick - Dublin and Waterford - Limerick goods trains at Boher station, Co. Limerick. So powerful was the force of the crash that wreckage was piled 30 feet high. Only the fireman of the Waterford goods was injured as he jumped clear. On account of this crash the line from Killonan to Limerick Junction was blocked until early on Saturday morning. Traffic was dealt with by alternative road services. The locomotives involved were both of class J15 0-6-0.

## **Cork, Bandon & South Coast**

News is contained in the special article dealing with this area.

## **Cavan & Leitrim Section**

The composite coach and bogie van ex Tralee & Dingle stock, which were transferred via the West Clare, and arrived in July 1954, made a trial run from Ballinamore to Arigna and Belturbet on Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> November on completion of renovation. The coach has not been put into service yet, possibly since it is not yet equipped with either light or heating. The new coach, 7L, built for the section at Inchicore in 1953, from two bus bodies, is in a rather poor condition as it has been left to the mercy of the elements every night since it was delivered at Ballinamore.

## **West Clare Section**

There have recently been two level crossing accidents on this line, but fortunately, neither of them caused any injury. The first occurred on 8<sup>th</sup> September as the 08:25 was about halfway from Kilrush to Moyasta. A gate blown by the gale struck the front of the railcar. The second was on 24<sup>th</sup> November, when a similar mishap befell the 16:20 Ennis - Kilkee railcar just after it left Moyasta. Both railcar radiators were damaged. Walker Bros. of Wigan have just completed the order for three diesel mechanical locomotives for this section, and they are expected very shortly. They are of duo-directional, double bogie design and will be capable of hauling, unaided, goods trains up to 170 tons.

## **Locomotive And Rolling Stock News**

Owing to the exceptionally large amount of other news this item has been held over to our next issue.

## **December Flooding**

The flooding of 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> December affected the CIÉ system as follows:

*Southern Section:* The main line was flooded at Hazelhatch from the afternoon of the 8<sup>th</sup> to about 10:00 on the 9<sup>th</sup>. All the Wednesday evening trains from Kingsbridge were cancelled, and buses took the passengers between Dublin and Kildare where they transferred to trains. On the Thursday the first down train left Kingsbridge at 11:15 for Limerick and was followed by trains for Cork, Waterford via Portlaoise, Waterford via Carlow, and thence as per timetable. Up services left rather late but by the afternoon all services were back to normal. The Rosslare Harbour - Waterford line was not opened until 11:00 and the morning express to Cork left five hours late.

*Midland Section:* The line between Dublin and Mullingar was blocked at several points from the afternoon of the 8<sup>th</sup> to about 08:00 on the 10<sup>th</sup>, and this was aggravated by the disruption of the telephone facilities. The 18:00 for Sligo and the 18:50 for Galway and Mayo left Westland Row but returned at 20:37 and 20:45 respectively, after finding that the line was impassable. The 20:05 night mail was cancelled. No alternative service could be provided as all the roads to the West were flooded, so the passengers had to stay the night in Dublin. In the up direction the first casualty was the 10:00 Westport - Dublin diesel, which failed to arrive and for several hours its exact whereabouts was unknown. It eventually arrived in Westland Row at 20:23 hauled by Loco 602. The 14:25 from Sligo ran to Enfield only and had to return to Mullingar. The 15:30 from Galway also ran to Enfield, but

returned to Athlone and was brought, double-headed by Locos 541 and 668, to Kildare. A pilgrimage train from Claremorris likewise was diverted at Athlone and hauled thence by lighter engines to Kildare.

On the 9<sup>th</sup>, down services recommenced with the 14:30 to Westport which, with subsequent trains, ran via Portarlington. As the Mullingar line was still blocked, no trains ran to or from Sligo on this day. Three buses ran in the afternoon. Services in the West, including the Galway - Tuam, Sligo - Limerick, and Loughrea branch, were delayed by snow and flooding.

*Eastern Section:* As might be expected, this line was the first victim of the weather. On the morning of the 8<sup>th</sup> local business trains arrived in Dublin, despite the fact that mountainous seas were crashing over the line, and all the automatic signals were at danger. Blackrock station was flooded at about 10:00, and remained so until the tide receded at about 13:00, making the line impassable between these hours. An alternative bus service operated between Westland Row and Dun Laoghaire. A tree fell across the Harcourt Street line between Ranelagh and Milltown at about 08:30, but it was soon cleared and few trains were affected. The main line was blocked all day at Ballygannon, between Greystones and Kilcoole. Buses operated between Dublin and Wicklow, and trains between Wicklow and Rosslare only. The latter section became affected in the evening and passengers who had entrained at Wicklow had to be transferred to buses at Camolin. On the 9<sup>th</sup> the first down train left Dublin at 12:15 and the first up train left Rosslare at 10:00. Normal operation was then resumed.

### **Delivery Of The Last Railcars**

On Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> November the last two railcars of the CIÉ order arrived by boat at North Wall, Dublin, from Birkenhead.

## **GNR GENERAL NEWS REPORT**

### **Annual Report**

On 11<sup>th</sup> November 1954 the Ministers of both Northern and Southern Governments met to hear the first report of the newly formed Great Northern Railway Board. Included in the report were plans for the integration of the Ulster Transport Authority and the GNR in Northern Ireland. One proposal was that branch lines, which prove to be uneconomical be closed and replaced by alternative road services. Already the possible closure to passenger traffic or, in some cases, to all traffic, is said to be in consideration in respect of the following lines: Knockmore Junction - Newcastle; Banbridge - Scarva; Portadown - Clones; Dungannon - Cookstown; Omagh - Bundoran Junction. The report also told of a prospective diesel policy for the system.

### **German-Built Diesel Locomotive**

A German-built diesel locomotive is to be tested on the GNR, and was delivered on 14<sup>th</sup> December 1954. The loco in question is of a mixed traffic type, and although on loan it is in the Board's livery, and will be driven by a German (English-speaking) crew. The recent alterations to a number of platform facings suggest a wide loading gauge.

### **Flooding in Belfast**

On Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> November, Great Victoria Street station was partly flooded. Unfortunately, this occurred just at the evening peak-hour. Two platforms were rendered unusable and some trains were delayed, but this did not amount to more than about twenty minutes in most cases.

### **UTA Locos On Loan**

The GNR have, on loan from the Ulster Transport Authority, two locomotives; numbers 4 and 7. The former is at present working on the Antrim Branch, on which she makes two return trips daily. The

latter is reported to be in service between Belfast and Portadown.

### **December Flooding**

The GNR was not seriously affected by floods on 8<sup>th</sup> December, although the 08:50 goods from Dundalk to Dublin was delayed when a tree fell across it. The 08:15 ex Belfast was also delayed until single line working was instituted. In the early hours of the following morning the bridge carrying the main line across the River Tolka collapsed. This isolated the locomotives and coaching stock already in Amiens Street for the night, including locos 83 and 84. Arrangements were made for a bus service between Killester and Dublin to serve incoming trains during the morning. In time for the 14:45 to Belfast, Clontarf was organised as Dublin terminus with connecting road services to and from Amiens Street. These buses had to run via Drumcondra as the North Strand was flooded. The "Enterprise" left at 18:11 hauled by loco 3. The method of working was to use the up platform for arrivals and either platform for departures, treating the two lines as dead-end sidings from the crossover at Killester Cabin. Passenger services on the Howth branch were cancelled and goods trains worked to and from Sutton, where they were unloaded and their contents forwarded by road. On and from 10<sup>th</sup> December express trains were noticed arriving hauled by locos of the 83 or 206 classes running tender foremost. The 10:30 ex Belfast on this date was a diesel railcar which returned on the 17:30. The GNR announced on Friday that on and from Monday 13<sup>th</sup> main line trains would depart Clontarf at their advertised time, and the connecting buses would leave Amiens Street 15 minutes prior to this. For local trains, however, the bus departure from Amiens Street remained the advertised train time. They also stated that goods trains would work to Amiens Street from North of Drogheda via Navan Junction and the CIÉ Meath line, as from the same date. On Sunday, some of the trapped locomotives, carriages and main line diesel units were worked out of Dublin by the same route and that evening the first goods trains worked in, hauled throughout by GNR locomotives. Goods trains are now using this route regularly. The highest possible degree of credit is due to the officials and men of the GNR for the expeditious handling of traffic in what must have been an unprecedented disorganisation of their main line.

### **SL&NCR**

The bad weather in mid-October caused some flooding and on the 17<sup>th</sup> an embankment near Glenfarne subsided and the goods from Sligo was forced to halt. Then, another slip occurred behind the train, which was thus imprisoned for some time while repairs were carried out.

Recently, employees of the company placed a claim for an increase in wages. The company, in defence, stated that they were not in a financial position to meet this demand. As it was, they said they were in receipt of subsidies of £3,000 from the Government of Northern Ireland, and of £3,500 from the Government of Ireland. To meet the demand these sums would require to be increased. In spite of its losses, however, the line carries considerable traffic from West to North.

### **DN&GR**

The lifting of the last section from Bellurgan to Dundalk is now in progress, and should be completed early in 1955. Since July last, the well-known Square Crossing at Dundalk has been removed. The property of the company has all been sold.

### **UTA GENERAL NEWS REPORT**

#### **Strabane - Derry Closure**

The Authority has announced its intention to close the 14½ mile, 3 foot gauge line from Strabane to Londonderry to all traffic as from 31<sup>st</sup> December 1954. The line which for a number of years has had a

service of three mixed trains per day is reported to be losing £15,000 per annum. This appears to be due mainly to the heavy competition from the Authority's road services. The line was worked by the CDRJC for the UTA.

### **Branch Line Lifting**

The lifting of the Ballycastle Railway is completed by the scrap merchants and the Locos - Nos. 41 and 44 at Ballycastle and 43 at Ballymoney - have been cut up. The remaining rolling stock has also been cut up at both points mentioned, except the two ex Larne - Ballymena coaches Nos. 350 and 353 which have been sold as summer residences.

The rolling stock on the Larne - Ballyclare has been sold and Loco 42 has been cut up. This loco, together with the three mentioned in the last paragraph were 2-4-2Ts. They were the last compound tank engines in Ireland. As the 3' gauge rails are removed from Larne Harbour station the layout there is being altered.

Further south, in Co. Down, the former BCDR system is disappearing as the scrap merchants have almost completed the lifting of the Ardglass, Ballynahinch and Donaghadee branches. No trains are operating on the County Down main line, except the motor trolley used for removal of material lifted.

### **Queen's Quay Station**

Queens Quay station is being exposed to the atmosphere at present, as the over-all roof is removed to make way for the extension of canopies similar to those at York Road.

## **SOME INTERESTING EXCURSIONS RUN BY CIÉ IN 1954**

### **Droichead Nua - Kingscourt**

A four-coach diesel train ran on Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> March in connection with a GAA match at Kingscourt. The excursion was run by Irish Ropes Ltd, and was the only passenger train to or from Kingscourt during 1954.

### **Kingsbridge - Cashel**

A public excursion ran in connection with Tóstal celebrations on the Rock of Cashel on Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> May. The six-bogie train had four extra bogies attached at Thurles and the train engine, 311, was assisted by 256 with the extra load. It was the last passenger train to Cashel, although a football special ran from there on two occasions since. This branch was finally abandoned in September 1954.

### **Cork - Courtmacsherry**

The first public excursion of the season ran on Whit Sunday, 6<sup>th</sup> June. Six similar seaside excursions ran on the Courtmacsherry branch between June and August. No passenger trains have run since 28<sup>th</sup> August.

### **Enfield - Edenderry**

The first passenger train since 1949 ran on Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> June, for an IRRS party; Loco 598 and one coach. A football special from Edenderry to Amiens Street (which required an auxiliary) ran on Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> July after some strengthening of the permanent way and clearance of overgrowth.

### **Newmarket - Banteer**

A steam train (Loco 130) ran on Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> June in connection with Banteer Parish Sports. The train worked as an excursion from Mallow to Banteer, then ran empty to Newmarket and returned to Banteer as an excursion. The only other passenger train on this branch in 1954 was a pilgrimage train to Claremorris on Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> May.

## West Clare Section: Garland Sunday 25/7/1954

Six excursion trains were run from Ennis on this day in connection with the annual pilgrimage to Lahinch. Five of the trains were operated by the narrow gauge Walker-Gardner railcars, while the remaining train comprised: Loco 6C, eight coaches and a van. Our correspondents report that about 860 passengers travelled - the largest number to avail of a public excursion on the West Clare in 1954.

## All-Ireland Hurling Final

Cork opposed Wexford in this match on Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> September. 18 special trains ran from the Southern section of CIÉ into Dublin. Six of these were from Cork to Kingsbridge and two, being "all-in" excursions, ran from Cork to Amiens Street. Other trains ran from Gowran, Athlone, Thurles, Annacotty (with connection from Birr), Kilkenny, Limerick, Waterford, Killinick, Tralee, Rathluirc and Carrick-on-Suir, to Kingsbridge. Connections were given at Cork from Youghal, Cobh and the CB&SCR section. The trains, most of which were well supported, were mainly steam. An estimated 15,000 arrived in Kingsbridge on this day - the largest number for 1954. Eleven trains, including the regular Sunday train from Rosslare, ran to Westland Row from the Eastern section. 4 came from Enniscorthy, 2 from Wexford, 2 from Rosslare Harbour, and one each from Glenmore, New Ross and Gorey. An estimated 7,000 travelled on these trains, all of which were steam but one (a double diesel from Rosslare), which ran non-stop from Killurin to Westland Row. This was the greatest number of specials to operate from the Eastern section, in one day, for many years, and was perhaps the last on which it was possible to see ten steam trains run for such a function. Only one train ran on the Midland section from Galway, and as may be gathered from the foregoing no special ran over any branch line closed to regular passenger traffic.

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## Feature Section

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### REVITALISATION OF CB&SC SECTION OF CIÉ 1954

An important item which this inaugural edition of "Railfans' News" has to record is the remarkable revitalisation of the Cork, Bandon South Coast Section of CIÉ, which took place during 1954. This was brought about by the introduction of diesel railcars on this, hitherto neglected, part of the CIÉ railway system. In response to resolutions passed by the Bantry Town Commissioners, and the Clonakilty UDC, calling for modern diesel trains for West Cork, CIÉ ran a trial trip with a four-coach diesel train on 24<sup>th</sup> February 1954, from Albert Quay to Bantry, Baltimore and Clonakilty. This was so successful that a timetable trial followed on 4<sup>th</sup> March from Cork to Bantry and back. Then on Palm Sunday, 11<sup>th</sup> April, CIÉ ran the first public diesel train on the CB&SC system. A football excursion was run from Bandon to Bantry, and it was greeted with such wild enthusiasm that no less than 705 people travelled within the eight-coach train. Finally, on Monday 31<sup>st</sup> May, a diesel train was substituted for the daily steam train, to Bantry, and then, with the coming of the summer timetable on Monday 28<sup>th</sup> June, the diesel train made a double trip daily to Bantry in a new schedule which cut 38 minutes off the steam run. Immediate improvement in the passenger traffic was noticed since the introduction of the diesel train. Numbers rose from a mere handful of 20 or so, to a full trainload of 80 to 120 on certain weekdays. Simultaneously, the system was being renovated. Albert Quay terminus, for example, was newly painted in brilliant yellow and green, and electric light was installed to banish forever the gloomy and forlorn atmosphere of the old West Cork system. In the winter timetable the two trains daily, in each direction, were retained and, wisely, again ran to the Bantry terminus, rather than to Skibbereen. Since September the trains are retaining their popularity, apart from some falling off in

seasonal traffic. On Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> October, the first public diesel excursion was run from Clonakilty to Cork for a county football match. This train met with tremendous support from the Clonakilty folk, for no less than 720 people crammed the eight-coach train. On the same day a four-coach diesel excursion ran from Bantry carrying 461 people, and so great were the crowds returning to West Cork that evening that an auxiliary steam train had to be pressed into service for Clonakilty.

A weekly cheap fare day was introduced on Thursdays, since the advent of the diesel trains, and on 26<sup>th</sup> August over 300 availed of this day trip to Cork. On 1<sup>st</sup> November, so many availed of this privilege that a separate steam train had to follow the 18:00 Bantry diesel out of Albert Quay. So, with all credit due to CIÉ, the popularity of the diesel trains has miraculously revitalised the CB&SC Section. May it be our earnest wish that such improved services as those to Bantry will soon be extended to the Clonakilty and Baltimore branches of the system.