

THE

IRISH RAILFANS' NEWS

Volume 1

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EDITORIAL

First of all in this second issue of "The Irish Railfans' News" we would like to thank you - our readers - for the support given to our first number. Thanks are also due to those who wrote with suggestions, some of which have been embodied in this issue. This brings us to repeat the request in our last, for any notes or news of Irish railways. As the response was not as great as we would have liked, we would ask you please to let us know of any railway news you may hear or see.

Our feature article this time gives an outline of steam operation in Ireland at present. Here we would ask the indulgence of those of you who know precisely what motive power is likely on every Irish train. In this article it is hoped to give a complete picture of present operation, in view of the changes likely to take place later in the year, and so that it will not be necessary to repeat this information each time alterations are mentioned.

1955 bodes well to be a year of great changes in the Irish railway world, and consequently we would recommend those of you planning your holidays to ensure that you do not omit that railway trip that may prove later an unforgettable experience which cannot be repeated. Remember, there is no better way of appreciating railways than by travelling on them, so make this your Irish year.

News Section

CIÉ DUBLIN AREA NEWS REPORT

Rugby International 12/2/1955

Ireland met England at Lansdowne Road on this date and the suburban line from Amiens Street was fully taxed. The regular Saturday rush-hour service had to carry a considerable volume of the traffic but three additional trains were run to deal with the large number of Rugby fans. Four long distance excursions were run in connection with the match and at Amiens Street the following was reported: At 13:40 a seven coach train arrived from Galway with loco 587 piloting 396. Passengers off this special alighted and continued to the ground by the, suburban services. At 13:45 GNR loco 209 brought a ten bogie train from Belfast into the CIÉ station where the loco was detached. At 13:59 this train continued to Lansdowne Road behind CIÉ loco 602. In the meantime, a nine bogie train from Cork which had changed locos at Inchicore passed through at 13:48, hauled by loco 260. Then at 14:16 the train from Limerick, which had made a similar change at Inchicore, passed hauled by loco 261. The Cork train on the return trip was headed from Amiens Street by loco 801 and the Limerick train left behind loco 327.

Lansdowne Road

CIÉ engineers have now completed their work in connection with the new stand for the IRFU. The third and fourth tunnels were installed on Sundays January 9 and February 20 respectively. On the first of these dates the traffic for the 20:40 boat from Dun Laoghaire was dealt with by alternative road service. The severe 10 mph speed restriction past the ground, which has been in operation since last October was raised to 25 mph from February 28 as the sharp reverse curve on the Dublin side of the crossing had been eased. It is expected that the contractors will soon commence work on the part of the stand which will span the line.

CIÉ Chairman's Report

In the course of a recent address to the Dublin Chamber of Commerce, Mr Courtney mentioned the following points. When the present Board of CIÉ took up office in 1950 the rolling stock was in a poor state of repair. At that time there were 405 steam locos with an average age of 51 years, and 680 passenger coaches with an average age of 48 years. In May 1954 after research throughout Europe and a close examination of over 30 tenders, an order was placed with Metropolitan Vickers of Manchester for 60, 1200 hp Co-Co, and 34, 550 hp Bo-Bo, diesel-electric locomotives. The first of these is expected in June and delivery will continue at the rate of 8 per month, commencing with the Co-Co type. A further six railcars are to be built in Inchicore and the components for ten 400 hp diesel-hydraulic shunting locos have been ordered from Germany. These are to be built at Inchicore. A completely new type of locomotive to burn either turf or oil has been designed and construction is about to commence. When it has been completed and tested 50 of those steam locos are to be built at Inchicore.

Dublin Suburban Section

The new Park Royal coaches, details of which are given elsewhere in this issue, have now been brought into service on both of the suburban lines. The first two appeared together on January 17, but were withdrawn shortly after while a number of alterations to track and platforms between Amiens Street and Bray was carried out to enlarge the clearances. On February 28, 13 of these coaches entered general service and the remaining seven have been introduced since.

Park View Viaduct

On Sunday March 13, CIÉ engineers had possession of both lines between Tara Street and Westland Row in order to replace one of the spans of Park View viaduct. Both the Broadstone and Inchicore steam cranes were in use for this work, which was continued on March 26.

Dun Laoghaire Pier Trains

Regular travellers from England by the Holyhead route will be very glad to learn that CIÉ, at the request of the Minister for Industry & Commerce, have at last replaced the antiquated stock operating on the pier trains. On February 18 two new sets were placed in service as follows:

- 1) New corridor compo, timber suburban 3rd brake, two suburban Park Royal thirds.
- 2) Timber corridor 3rd brake, three suburban Park Royal thirds, pre-war steel corridor compo.

CIÉ PROVINCIAL NEWS REPORTS

Newmarket Branch

A change in the CIÉ branch line policy was displayed when the Transport Tribunal granted, for the first time, a modified Exemption Order to CIÉ in respect of their 8¾ mile branch from Banteer to Newmarket, with effect as from January 31. It ruled that CIÉ should be exempt from the provision of all services except cattle specials for fairs. Simultaneously, CIÉ announced that as the branch would

have to be maintained in future to deal with these livestock trains, opportunity would be taken to re-open it and to experiment with a lightweight diesel unit providing a service of goods trains. As the most suitable type of light diesel unit has not yet been chosen by the Board, it will be some time before the new goods service is introduced. When it is, the road freight service between the two points will be withdrawn. In the announcement of this decision it was stated that the future of other unremunerative branches which have been listed for closure, but have not been dealt with by the Tribunal, will depend on the information and experience gained by the new methods of operation on this and other branches. The Newmarket branch has been closed to all regular traffic since 27th January 1947. The principal station on the line is Kanturk, 3½ miles from Banteer.

Hazelhatch Collision

Four passengers, the driver, and the guard of the 17:00 Dublin - Waterford diesel train were injured when it collided with the side of an up goods train, which was crossing from the down to the up line in Hazelhatch station on January 4. The force of the impact, which completely wrecked the driving cab and the front first class portion of the leading diesel coach (2614), together with the last seven wagons of the goods train, was so great that it threw and embedded the diesel coach into the four foot high embankment beside the line. Consequently, both the up and down Dublin-Cork main lines were blocked until 04:00 on January 5, when the up line was cleared and single line working was established between Lucan and Straffan. Both lines were eventually cleared on the evening of January 6. Passengers and mails were conveyed between Dublin and Kildare by road while both lines were blocked, but as soon as the single up line was re-opened passenger services returned to normal. Goods traffic was seriously disrupted between January 4 and 7, due to the mishap.

Arigna Derailment

Loco 2L, while working an up coal special from Derreenavoggy Colliery was derailed at the 12¾ mile post on a roadside stretch of the Cavan & Leitrim Section near Arigna on January 8th, about noon. A cow, one of four being driven along the road, caused the accident by running in front of the train. The cowcatcher of the loco struck and passed over the beast, derailing the front bogie of the engine. The breakdown gang from Ballinamore arrived by road and had the line cleared just in time to allow the one daily mixed train (the 13:50 ex Ballinamore) to run normally.

Thurles Platforms

Work was completed early in February on the raising of the levels of both up and down platforms at Thurles station from about one foot to the standard three feet.

Proposed Branch To Castlemungret

On February 11, CIÉ announced that it had applied to the Minister for Industry and Commerce for an order under Section 14 of the Transport Act 1950, for powers to construct a railway line from Limerick to Castlemungret (3¼ miles) to serve a cement factory. If the order is granted and construction commences, it will be the first new standard gauge railway to be built in Ireland since the completion of the Gortnagallon branch, off the GNR Antrim branch, as a wartime measure in 1942.

Branch Line Demolition

Of the nine branch lines in respect of which CIÉ has already been granted exemption orders by the Transport Tribunal, lifting has been completed on the Tralee - Dingle (3'), Schull - Skibbereen (3'), Birdhill - Killaloe and Fermoy - Mitchelstown lines. Demolition has recommenced on the Cork - Macroom, where the Dooniskey - Macroom section had already been removed, and on the remaining Woodenbridge - Aughrim section of the Shillelagh branch. Lifting has not yet started on the Kilmessan - Athboy, Goold's Cross - Cashel or Crossdoney - Killeshandra branches.

Timoleague And Courtmacsherry Notes

The beet season on this branch line was the heaviest ever. Between mid-October 1954 and mid-January 1955, 185 trains were operated as against 166 last year. Three trains ran on most days although only two were scheduled. A local newspaper reported that 17,700 tons of beet were loaded, 11,200 at Timoleague and 6,500 at Courtmacsherry. Most of the work was done by loco 552, but locos 557 and 90 also assisted. The branch now has one and sometimes two goods trains weekly. It is hoped that more successful excursions will be run this year than last. The wet weather of 1954 certainly had a bad effect on last year's traffic, despite the optimistic hopes of the Courtmacsherry Development Association.

Dunmanway Derailment

A derailed wagon of the down 06:30 goods from Cork blocked the main line of the Cork, Bandon & South Coast section at Dunmanway on the afternoon of January 3, and consequently the 15:00 ex Bantry was unable to pass. A two coach diesel train left Cork (Glanmire) at 16:30, crossed the city railway and ran non-stop to Dunmanway to pick up the stranded passengers. This arrived back in Albert Quay at 19:15. The 18:00 Dublin express was specially held until 19:45. A diesel train, formed by the Cork Express set, left for Dunmanway at 18:27 with over 100 passengers. The line was cleared later the same evening.



The photograph included with this issue is of the 12:15 train from Cork (Albert Quay) to Bantry crossing the Chetwynd Viaduct, CB&SC Section.

Killeshandra Branch

The Transport Tribunal granted an Exemption Order to CIÉ in respect of their 7 mile branch line from Crossdoney to Killeshandra with effect from 31st January. This is the ninth branch line in respect of which such an order was granted since the Transport Tribunal was established in 1951.

West Clare Section

The three new diesel locomotives which were ordered from Walker Bros. of Wigan for this section have now been delivered to CIÉ. They arrived, the first on New Year's Day, the second about three weeks later, and the third at the end of March, at North Wall, Dublin, and were taken to Inchicore. It is expected that they will be taken to Ennis soon for trials. They are numbered 31, 32 and 33.

Waterford & Tramore

Due to a failure of one of the diesel railcars on March 14, buses ran instead of the trains on this section. It is believed that an extra train will be transferred to the line in time for the heavy summer traffic.

GNR GENERAL NEWS REPORT

Closure Threats

On February 1, the Board announced a plan for the closure of certain branch lines. This envisaged the closure of the Scarva - Banbridge, Banbridge - Castlewellan and Goraghwood - Markethill lines to all traffic and the Cookstown branch to passenger traffic. The Markethill line which has no regular service has brought forward no objectors and will probably close very shortly. The Scarva - Banbridge has not been opposed either and the objection raised by the Cookstown Urban Council in respect of their line has been withdrawn after a promise of a suitable substitute road service. The Banbridge - Castlewellan, which extends to Newcastle over the metals of the former B&CDR, carries a summer tourist traffic and the Newcastle Urban Council have lodged a protest against its closure. It is understood that a tribunal will sit to consider the case. Further west, both the Councils of Omagh and Enniskillen have passed resolutions of protest against an investigation by the GNR into the possible closure of the railway between the two towns. If such a closure should be proposed objections would probably be supported by the Dublin Government, as the resort of Bundoran would lose its rail link. Enniskillen would then have no rail connection with Belfast except via Clones.

Closure Of Dromin Junction

From Monday January 31, all services of trains to Dromin, where the Ardee branch diverges from the main line, were suspended. As Sunday trains have not called at this station for some years, the last train to call was the 07:35 Dublin-Dundalk on Saturday 29th. Goods traffic ceased on the same day and is now handled by the nearby stations of Dunleer and Castlebellingham. Dromin is served by the GNR road services.

Branch Line Blocked Near Goraghwood

The 07:31 passenger train from Goraghwood to Newry was delayed on January 21, when the line was blocked by boulders from a subsided embankment. After the crew of the train had cleared the line they continued to Newry and despatched a breakdown train to the scene. The remaining debris was soon cleared and the ordinary service was back to schedule by 09:00.

MAK

The German diesel-hydraulic loco mentioned in our last issue, now known as MAK - the initials of its builders - was on trials early in January. It first worked on goods trains between Drogheda and Dundalk, then for a time worked the 16:15 paper train between Dublin-Dundalk-Kells and Dublin. It was later tried on the Belfast-Derry line. On passenger work its train normally included one portion of a diesel railcar for steam heating as the locomotive was not fitted with a boiler.

Railcar Order

The GNR has placed an order for 24 new railcars with British United Traction Ltd, early in January. These cars are to be fitted with controls to enable them to operate in multiples of up to eight coaches.

Bailey Bridge

As the March issue of "Trains Illustrated" carried an article on this subject the details are not being repeated here. On March 1 some slight alterations to the suburban timetable were made to avoid delays at the single line over the bridge.

Warrenpoint Branch

From March 6 the Sunday train service on this line between Newry (Edward Street) and Warrenpoint has been cancelled. A service of UTA buses now operates instead.

UTA GENERAL NEWS REPORT

Derry-Strabane Closure

UTA narrow gauge rail travel came to an end on December 31 last, as all traffic on the line from Derry to Strabane ceased on that day. The last day of operation must have been one of its busiest as the two bogie train hauled by CDRJC loco No.1 "Alice" was semi-full on the first two down and up journeys. The last train to Derry left Strabane at 15:20 - ten minutes late - with seven additional bogies. This nine bogie train returned, packed with over 500 passengers, from Derry at 19:05 - five minutes late - having been seen out by cheering crowds and a BBC recording unit for which the usual departure time was deferred by half an hour. No rolling stock of any kind was left in the section after the closure.

Annual Report

A recent report of the Authority's accounts showed the first trading profit in six years. This was due mainly to the road services, both passenger and freight, which made £137,780 and £111,306 respectively. Of the rail services the all diesel Belfast-Bangor line made £9,881, but the former NCC section lost £248,019. The Authority has now adopted a plan to operate the remaining rail services by diesel power, except the Limavady branch and the Magherafelt-Cookstown section which are to be abandoned. At present some of the services on the Larne line are being handled by railcars.

CDRJC

Notes

Since the closure of the Derry-Strabane line there have only been two locos in steam each day on the Donegal. One of these is based on Letterkenny and the other on Stranorlar. Coaling of locos is now carried out at Strabane.

CIÉ ROLLING STOCK ADDITIONS

Since 1951 CIÉ have constructed 78 main line coaches and 14 buffet cars at their Inchicore Works. In addition they had 5 coaches built in the works at Dundalk, making a total of 97 new vehicles for the main line services. These coaches have timber frames and steel panelling and are all of uniform contour. The roofs of the coaches are formed by a continuation of the side panelling, a departure from the pre-war practice of separate tarred roofs.

From the beginning of 1954 all new coaches, with the exception of the buffet cars, have been built on a new design of all welded underframe mounted on cast steel bogies. These bogies incorporate coil springs and shock absorbers in place of the usual leaf springs and are similar to those used in new express trains in the USA.

Early this year the first of a fleet of 20 new suburban coaches emerged from Inchicore. They are of an unusual all-metal design and have a most peculiar appearance. This is caused by the fact that their extreme width of 10'2" cannot be carried through to the end of the coach, with the result that the last 9'6" at either end is straight sided, thus reducing the width to the conventional 9'6". There is accommodation for 70 in the wide part of the coach in the form of three-two main line style seating with an off centre passageway. In the case of the suburban coaches an extra 6 passengers are carried in the end compartment by two longitudinal triple seats facing inwards. Another feature, unusual to Irish railway practice, is the inward-opening doors with car type handles. These coaches are fitted with

corridor connections to facilitate ticket checking. Their bodies were assembled at Inchicore from prefabricated parts, 50 sets of which were supplied by Park Royal vehicles Ltd of London. It is understood that the remaining sets will be used in the construction of thirty seventy-seat main line coaches.

CIÉ Rolling Stock Table

Nos.	Date Built	Seats	Corridor	Remarks	Notes
		1 st	3 rd		
1339-1350	1951	56	Side		
1351-1355	1952	56	Side	Built by GNR	
1356-1371	1953	64	Open		
1372-1378	1954	56	Side		A
1379-1398	1955	82	Open	Suburban	A
1904-1908	1953	40	Open	Brake Thirds	C
2124-2129	1951	24	32	Side	D
2130-2136	1952	24	24	Side	
2137-2161	1954	24	24	Side	A
2405-2418	1953/4	40	Open	Buffet Cars	
2600-2647	1952/4	12	32	Railcars	
2648-2657	1953/4	12	36	Railcars	B
2658	1954	80	Open	Railcar	E
2659	1954	92	Open	Railcar	EF

A American type bogies.

B Suburban.

C 1906/7 are fitted as railcar driving trailers.

D 2126/7/9 have seats removed from one first class compartment to provide extra luggage space.

E Waterford & Tramore railcar. Bus type seats.

F No van, hence increased capacity.

The only rolling stock to be imported complete was the sixty diesel railcars, delivery of which began in November 1951. The underframes of these cars were built by AEC and contain two 125 hp diesel engines. The bodies were built by Park Royal and have timber frames and steel panelling. They conform generally with CIÉ coach design except that they are single ended. Corridor connection is provided at the rear end only, the front or driving end being streamlined.

Feature Section

STEAM OPERATION IN IRELAND TODAY

Since so much publicity has been given during the last few years to recent additions of diesel equipment to supplement the motive power departments on certain Irish railway systems, one is erroneously led to believe that steam locomotives in Ireland, if not already superseded to a great extent, are at last on the brink of being fumigated out of existence by their diesel rivals on the main lines and are being relegated to the last outposts on the more easygoing secondary and branch lines. This, of course, is far from being true, for steam traction is still very much alive here in 1955. If it is considered that only a bare third of the passenger traffic on Irish rails, generally, is handled by diesel trains,

together with a very insignificant handling of freight trains in the yards, it will be realised that steam is still the backbone of Irish motive power departments.

For example, on the CIÉ system - the largest and most dieselised in the country, half of the daily passenger train mileage is worked by steam. On the main lines radiating out of Dublin the heaviest trains are still steam operated. Of the seven trains which leave Dublin every weekday for Cork, the 06:40 Day-Mail, 10:30, and either the 12:15 Perishable or the 20:00 Night-Mail, with their corresponding returns from Cork at 11:25, 15:15 day-Mail, and either the 12:00 Perishable or the 21:15 Night-Mail are hauled by steam locomotives usually of either the 800 or 400 classes. One of the two Sunday trains on the Dublin - Cork line is also normally steam. On the Dublin - Galway line both the Day and Night Mails which leave Dublin at 08:40 and 20:05 and return at 15:30 and 20:10 still are the preserve of the 372 or 391 classes of 2-6-0 locos. On the Dublin - Rosslare line one train in each direction is steam worked, the 10:00 down and the 09:20 up. Elsewhere on the CIÉ the position is that trains between Dublin and Waterford via Portlaoise, Dublin and Kilkenny via Carlow, Dublin and Limerick via Roscrea, Tuam and Sligo, Cork and Bantry are worked by diesel trains. To these must be added the isolated Waterford & Tramore and narrow gauge West Clare sections. Diesel units also work certain trains on the Mallow - Rosslare, Mallow - Tralee, Mullingar - Sligo, Portarlington - Athlone, Athlone - Westport, West Cork and the Limerick - Tuam section of the Limerick - Sligo line. Steam trains alone ply on all other lines except the Thurles - Clonmel where a railbus supplements the steam working. All of the suburban traffic in the Dublin and Cork areas is handled by steam locomotives except for a number of services on the Harcourt Street - Bray and Cork - Cobh lines. Goods traffic on the whole of the network is steam-hauled except for some transfer goods between Kingsbridge and the North Wall in Dublin.

Of the six GNR main line trains which leave Dublin on weekdays for Belfast the 09:00, 14:30, 17:30 and 18:25 are steam trains as are their corresponding return workings at 08:15, 10:30, 12:00 and 18:00, also both Sunday trains between the two cities. The line between Belfast and Derry is steam run, except for the 14:10 ex Belfast and the 18:45 ex Derry, but it appears that the GNR do not conserve their steam power for their heavy main line but rather they distribute it amongst all sections of the system. In recent years some of the passenger traffic on the lighter density branch lines has been handled by the railcars and railbuses, yet as soon as traffic exceeds its normal proportions the steam trains come in to take their place. These lines include the Cavan, Oldcastle, Bundoran, Warrenpoint, Cookstown, Newcastle and Antrim branches, while the passenger traffic on the Scarva - Banbridge section is all handled by diesel railcars or railbuses. Railcars are also diagrammed on the light short local turns and use is made of them on the Dublin and Belfast suburban services. Otherwise all passenger traffic is worked by steam trains as are all goods trains on the system.

Except for the completely dieselised Belfast-Bangor line, the UTA is also a stronghold of steam. All main line trains between Belfast and Derry are so worked as are many of the suburban trains on the Belfast - Larne line, where use is made of diesel however for most of the off peak services. The Portrush branch has no diesel workings but they are used on some of the local trains between Belfast and Ballymena. Goods services on the UTA are almost exclusively steam hauled.

On the two remaining minor railways in Ireland, the CDRJC and the SL&NCR, extensive use is made of the diesel railcar or railbus to handle the low-density passenger traffic which cannot justify a steam train. All of the goods trains on both those systems, however, still rely on steam motive power.