

THE

IRISH RAILFANS' NEWS

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EDITORIAL

This issue of "The Irish Railfans' News" comes to you slightly late, as we were anxious to include in it some of the alterations brought about by the summer timetables of the principal railway companies. These came into operation on June 20 on the GNR and UTA, and on June 27 on CIÉ.

It, no doubt, came as a considerable surprise to many of our readers to see the announcement of the closure of branch lines in the North of Ireland. The lines affected are the Banbridge-Scarva, Banbridge-Newcastle and Goraghwood-Markethill of the GNR, and the Limavady Junction-Limavady and Magherafelt-Cookstown of the UTA, which passed away on April 30th. While the closure of the three branches open only to goods traffic is understandable, the case of the two lines from Banbridge is the more surprising as they carried a considerable passenger traffic and as rail connection to the seaside resort of Newcastle is now completely severed. Elsewhere in this issue we include some details of the lines which have been closed.

A word of thanks is due to those of our readers who kindly sent us cuttings and notes of interest. We are sure they will understand our inability to acknowledge each contribution, due to the high cost of postage, but we are nevertheless most grateful for their co-operation.

News Section

CIÉ DUBLIN AREA NEWS REPORT**Summer Timetable**

The new timetable, which became effective as from June 27, shows no important alteration from that which was in operation in the summer of 1954. All of the additional trains, including the fine Killarney and Tralee diesel express, have been re-introduced, while most of the main line winter timetable workings have been retained. The only accelerations of note are in the second Dublin-Cork non-stop service, first introduced on 20th September 1954. The up working of this train from Cork at 09:00 has been cut by 15 minutes, allowing an even three hours for the 165½ mile journey and the down afternoon train, now at 14:25, has been cut by 10 minutes to 3 hours 5 minutes which includes a set-back for the stop at Limerick Junction. The most welcome innovation of this timetable is the provision of the long-sought connections to and from Skibbereen out of the 12:15 from Cork and into the 15:00 from Bantry, on the CB&SC Section. This increases the frequency of the Cork-Skibbereen service to two trains each way every weekday. Other pleasing innovations include the extension of last year's Sunday Dublin-Wexford train to Rosslare Harbour and the introduction of a fourth Sunday train on the Cork-Youghal line, which will be the first regular non-stop train between these points since pre-war

days. The only other striking feature of the timetable is the unprecedented notice given below the Waterford-Tramore services, to the effect that "on certain days when traffic is exceptionally heavy, i.e. Sunday 31st July, Mondays 1st and 15th August, it may be necessary to run a more intensive service at peak periods, in which case the schedules will be departed from."

Co-Co Coming

As we go to press we learn that the first new Co-Co type diesel-electric loco for CIÉ has left the Metro-Vickers works in Manchester for Dublin, and should have arrived by July 4th.

Park Royal Coaches

It now appears that the Park Royal coaches up to 1418 are intended for suburban service, not merely the first twenty as mentioned in our last issue. The remainder are reported to be fitted with toilet accommodation. At the time of writing up to 1406 are in service on the Dublin Suburban section, with in addition numbers 1407 and 1408, which are, as reported elsewhere, on the Waterford & Tramore.

Radio Train

Composite coaches numbers 2126 and 2127 have been fitted out as studio coaches for use on the Radio Train. They now include a guard's compartment and can thus be marshalled at the end of the train. It is therefore possible to run a Radio Train composed entirely of post-war steel stock and this has been noticed during May for the first time, on a pilgrimage train from Dublin to Claremorris. The normal train, however, still includes kitchen car 1130 which is out of contour with the remainder of the train.

Railcars

A number of railcars have received a general overhaul and have appeared with three modifications. These are: larger 24" diameter buffers, the extension of the exhaust pipes to the roof at the rear of the car, and a new type of roll-up door in the van for the Manson staff apparatus. At least six cars have been already so treated.

CIÉ PROVINCIAL NEWS REPORTS

Waterford & Tramore

Some additional passenger rolling stock was recently delivered at Waterford Manor to this isolated standard gauge section, in order to strengthen the present two-coach diesel train for the heavy summer traffic. In mid May two new Park Royal type 10'6" wide coaches numbers 1407 and 1408 were delivered, fitted with bus type seats similar to those in the diesel units on the section. One of the coaches, number 1408, is adapted as a driving trailer and the other has extra luggage space. In the third week of June a further diesel unit (number 2657) was delivered to the section also fitted with bus type seats. It is understood that this addition will in future obviate the necessity for a supplementary bus service between Waterford and Tramore on occasions such as last Whit weekend, when the two coach train was unable to cope with all the rail traffic offering. The fate of the three steam locos (numbers 553, 555 and 560) on the section apparently remains undecided.

Cavan & Leitrim

Coal traffic was recommenced on this section at the end of March when the Arigna mines once more secured the contract to supply the sugar beet factories. This has resulted in the running of special coal trains in addition to the ordinary mixed train on the tramway between Arigna and Ballinamore. The new coach (number 7L) now works through to Belturbet on the 12:20 ex Dromod daily, and its place on the 14:35 from Ballinamore has been taken by coach 21L and van 22L, both ex Tralee & Dingle stock. The coach has been re-upholstered since it was transferred from the West Clare section last year.

Arigna Derailment

On June 17 the two wagons of an empty coal special were derailed near Creagh, in much the same manner as that reported in our last issue - by a cow. Again this occurred on a roadside section of the Cavan & Leitrim.

Bogie Coaches

Recently, with the improved coaching position, six-wheel coaches are becoming even more rare than they were. Bogie coaches have now been put into service on almost all branch line trains, including the Valentia, Loughrea, Ballinrobe, Birr and Ballaghaderreen lines. The Kenmare and Ballina branches have had bogie coaches regularly for over three years.

Cork Trial

During the month of May a diesel electric shunter number 1003 was on trial in Cork (Glanmire) on yard shunting duties. It was not used on the Cork City railways during this time and was transferred to Limerick at the beginning of June.

Castlemungret Branch

According to a question asked in Dáil Éireann, alterations to the route for this proposed branch are being considered by CIÉ and it may be necessary to hold a public inquiry.

GNR GENERAL NEWS REPORT

MAK

The GNR have purchased the German diesel-hydraulic locomotive, which has been on trial since December 1954, at a cost of £29,000. The Board is said to be considering construction of two similar locomotives in their Dundalk works, although the parts will have to be obtained from Germany.

Tolka Bridge

Work is progressing on the foundations for a new bridge at East Wall Road. The bridge - which will replace the present Bailey bridge, itself a replacement for the "Drogheda Bridge" washed away in last winter's flooding - is expected to be of pre-stressed concrete.

Summer Timetable

The layout of the timetable has been, somewhat altered and perhaps its most disappointing feature is that the Sunday services are no longer shown in red as has been the case since the January 1946 issue. An improvement is the inclusion of main line connections on branch line pages, and a new section showing Rail/Road connections to "Closed branch" areas. Services follow last year's pattern - the normal summer practice of dividing the 09:00 Dublin-Belfast at Dundalk into a non-stop and a stopping portion is continued. The stopping portion returns from Belfast to Dundalk at 14:45 feeding the following 15:00 semi-fast. Local trains in and out of Dublin and main line trains with the exception of the "Enterprise Expresses" have been allowed an extra five minutes on account of the 5 mph speed restriction over the Bailey bridge. On Sundays a Restaurant Car works through from Derry to Dublin via Portadown on the 09:30, and returns on the 17:00 - a practice which has not been known of recent years. On Sundays, a train runs from Cookstown at 13:50 to Warrenpoint. Although this has operated previously it is the first time it has been shown as a through train. An extra service from Belfast to Clones has been provided by the extension of the evening train to Monaghan to serve Clones. Passengers from Goraghwood and stations south for Newcastle, now travel to Warrenpoint and continue by UTA bus via Kilkeel.

Vernersbridge Derailment

On June 2 two vans of the 14:10 diesel train from Belfast to Derry were derailed at Vernersbridge - a closed station 9½ miles from Portadown - where they were struck by the 12:15 Derry-Belfast train fortunately without serious damage to either train.

UTA GENERAL NEWS REPORT

Summer Timetable

The 1955 summer timetable follows closely the pattern of previous years. The Saturday working is the most intensive with 8 trains each to Derry and Portrush. This includes the regular express which from July 2 to September 3 runs from Belfast to Portrush, calling only at Portstewart. The schedule for the 62½ mile journey is 84 minutes.

MAK

The diesel-hydraulic locomotive on loan to the GNR ran for a short period on the UTA in early April. Among its duties it ran to Cookstown, working the daily goods in the last month of operation on this line. It also worked passenger trains between Belfast and Larne.

SL&NCR GENERAL NEWS REPORT

Notes

Railbus 'A' was in the GNR Dundalk works in mid-May undergoing major overhaul and had not been returned to traffic in early June. Railbus '2A' has been working in its place on the 06:20 from Sligo and the 13:50 from Enniskillen. On May 30 Railcar 'B' developed mechanical trouble and its link - the 06:20 ex Enniskillen and the 16:00 ex Sligo - had to be worked by a steam train made up of Loco "Hazelwood" with bogie coach number 11 and a four wheel van. On May 21 an excursion from Enniskillen to Sligo was run for the opening of the new GAA ground in Sligo.

Timetable

The Company's summer timetable, effective June 20, has the normal extra summer service at 09:30 from Sligo and 12:00 ex Enniskillen. The 19:20 mixed train from Enniskillen remains as the only steam passenger working and consequently is the only train to carry first class.

SOME INTERESTING EXCURSIONS RUN RECENTLY BY CIÉ

Portarlington-Mullingar

On Sunday April 17, in connection with a football match Loco 260 hauled a nine coach steam train to Mullingar over the Clara-Streamstown branch, being the first passenger train to work over this line since 1954. On the outward run the stop at Clara was made at the ex GS&WR station, after which the special reversed to the junction to run on to the branch. On the return, however, due to lateness, the passengers for Clara were detrained at the ex MGWR platform, thus obviating the reversal. The special was well patronised, carrying over 250 passengers of whom some 18 boarded at Horseleap, the only intermediate station on the branch link-line. On Sunday May 1 another football special from Killucan to Droichead Nua availed of the line.

Cork-Courtmacsherry

Public excursions over the only remaining standard gauge roadside tramway in Ireland were revived on Whit Sunday May 29, when some 130 passengers travelled, despite inclement weather. Locomotives 90 and 100 were used from Ballinascarthy - a reversion from last year's policy of using a class J26

tank. On May 3 a trial trip had been hauled by Loco 552 of this class with three 45' bogie coaches, to test for clearances, as the longest coach used previously was only 43' long. This test proving satisfactory, five of these coaches and a four-wheel van made up the first excursion. The second excursion on June 19 fared no better than the first as only 140 travelled on account of torrential rain. The train was similar to that used on Whit Sunday, and it is learned that Locos 90 and 100 are expected to work also on the five remaining excursions this year on Sundays July 10 and 31, August 7 and 21, with an extra trip on Thursday August 4 for the Courtmacsherry Regatta.

Kingscourt IRRS

An Irish Railway Record Society party travelled to Kingscourt on Saturday June 25. Their outward journey was by way of Drogheda and the GNR Oldcastle branch as far as Navan Junction, where they joined a special train - Loco 645, Coach 340 and a four-wheel van - for the trip on this goods line to Kingscourt. The return journey was via Navan, Clonsilla and Liffey Junction to North Wall, Dublin.

CIÉ Locomotive Withdrawals

Most of our readers will be familiar with and many will possess copies of the "ABC of Irish Locomotives" published by Messrs Ian Allan in 1949, and still, we believe, available. As a number of locos have been withdrawn since then, a summary of those may not be out of place at the present time.

In all since the list in question, there have been 90 CIÉ locomotives scrapped, leaving a total of 375 on the active list, although in practice a number of the 375 mentioned are not in fact worked. This scrapping has had a more devastating effect than may at first appear, as eighteen classes in existence in 1949 are now extinct, a further eleven have but one representative, and another six can muster no more than two locomotives each. These smaller classes are listed below, although it is possible that even as we write their ranks will become further depleted.

4-4-2T	C3: 458, 460	C5: 269	C7: 317
4-4-0	D3: 338	D7: 539	
2-4-2T	F2: 432, 433		
2-4-0T	G1: 423		
2-4-0	G3: 291		
0-6-0T	J10: 614, 617	J13: Jumbo	J28: 299
2-6-0	K2: 461, 462	K4: 369, 370	J30: 90, 100
2-6-0T	K5: Argadeen		
0-4-2T	L2: Sambo		
2-6-2T	P1: 850		

The list of locomotives withdrawn is given below.

2 D19	213 I1	438 F1
5 D19	214 I1	439 F1
6 D19	222 J25	448 J1
7 D19	234 J17	454 D8
10 D19	236 J17	459 C3
11 D17	237 J17	495 M3
12 D17	239 J17	530 D16
13 D19	270 C5	532 D16
15 D19	271 C5	533 D16
27 C4	274 C5	534 D16
30 C4	276 G3	535 D16
31 C4	279 E1	536 D7
32 C4	290 G3	537 D7

37 C7	293 G3	538 D7
38 C7	295 E2	540 D6
44 D19	296 D15	551 J26
52 D17	298 D15	567 J16
56 D17	318 C7	609 J19
58 D17	319 C7	615 J10
98 D17	320 C7	616 J10
144 J15	393 K1a	618 J10
148 J15	424 G1	619 J6
153 J15	425 G1	620 J6
159 J15	428 F2	621 J6
174 J15	430 F2	628 J5
199 J15	431 F2	629 J5
204 J12	434 F1	631 J5
209 J11	435 F1	652 G2
211 J3	436 F1	658 G2
212 J3	437 F1	St. Nolaga L6

LATE NEWS

Derry-Strabane

On Thursday June 30 a train ran on this abandoned UTA narrow gauge section, conveying 100 Sunday School pupils from Strabane to Derry en route for Portrush. The line was tested by a loco on the previous day as it had not been used since the last regular train ran on 31st December 1954.

Stop Press

The entire County Donegal Railways Joint Committee 3' gauge system is to be closed, in stages, to all traffic within the next three years.

Feature Section

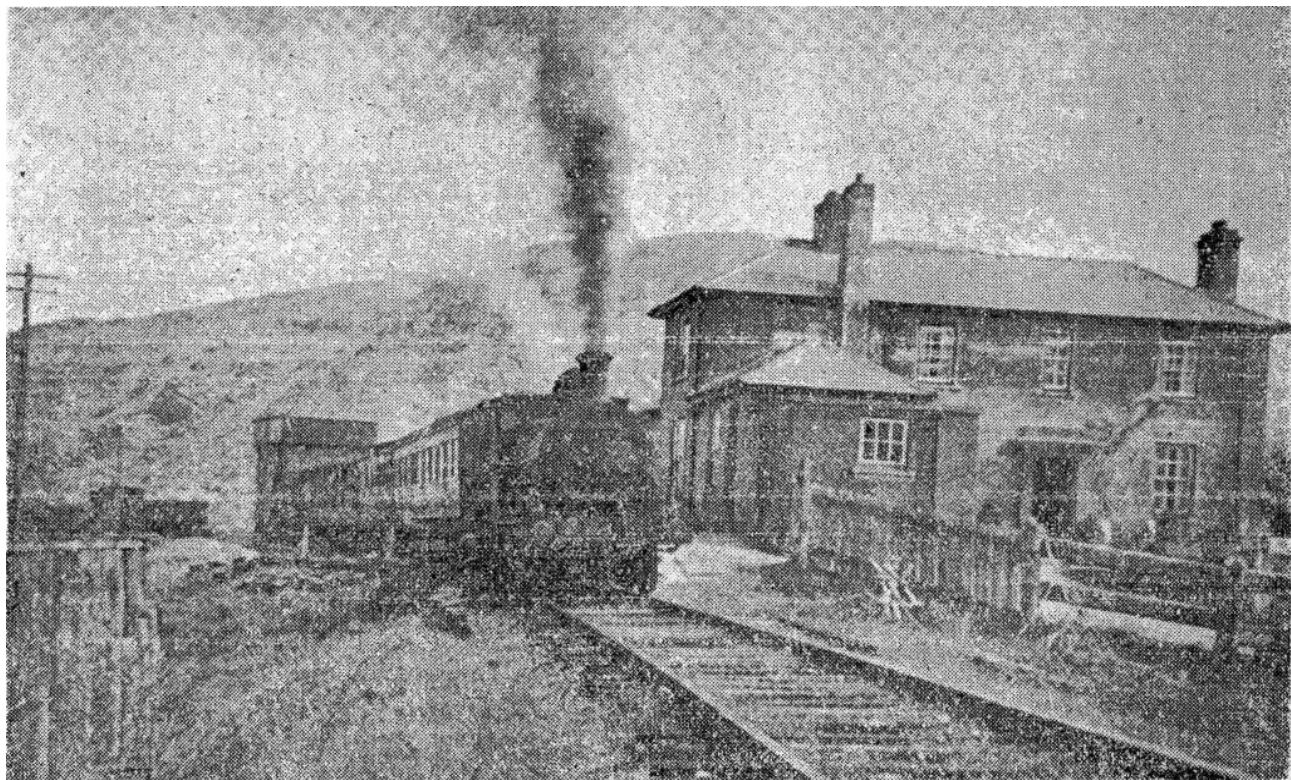
ULSTER RAIL CLOSURES

Although under threat since February the suddenness of the closure of the five branch lines in Ulster at the end of April last caught many railway enthusiasts, and others, unaware. The branches in question are the GNR Goraghwood-Markethill, Scarva-Banbridge and Banbridge-Newcastle, and the UTA Limavady Junction-Limavady and Magherafelt-Cookstown. A noticeable point is that the GNR Dungannon-Cookstown branch which was listed for closure to passenger traffic has not been affected and those who have travelled it will no doubt join with us in hoping that its four daily trains will continue to operate for some time to come. The Goraghwood-Markethill line - 8¾ miles long - was part of the Newry and Armagh Railway which was amalgamated with the GNR in July 1879. The complete Goraghwood-Armagh link was closed to all regular traffic, except fair specials, in 1933 and the portion between Markethill and Armagh was lifted at the same time. This latter section was the scene of the most serious railway disaster in Ireland on 12th June 1889, when 78 persons lost their lives. At the time of closure to passengers four trains ran each way daily between Goraghwood and Armagh, but thereafter only a maximum of one cattle special per month was operated.

Unlike the Markethill, the Banbridge-Scarva (6¾ miles) and the Banbridge-Newcastle (22¼ miles) lines were open to both passenger and goods traffic up to the end. The former was opened by the Banbridge Junction Railway on 23rd March 1859, the latter, as the Banbridge Extension Railway, was opened to Ballyroney on 14th December 1880 and further extension to Newcastle followed on 24th March 1906. The Castlewellan-Newcastle portion of this extension was over the metals of the Belfast & Co. Down Railway, over which the GNR possessed running powers. Much of the traffic on both these lines was handled by Railcar A, built by the GNR in 1932, and in fact it operated on the Banbridge-Scarva almost exclusively, with a railbus deputising when 'A' was on the Newcastle section. Thus the only steam working was the daily goods train between Scarva and Banbridge since railbuses were introduced on the line in 1934. Railcar A was fitted with folding steps which enabled stops to be made at level crossings and other non-platform halts. On the Banbridge-Newcastle, which more resembled a main line, the trains were more varied, including, at the time of closure, one working each of 'A', a two-car diesel and a four-coach steam train per day. One goods train daily also served the line. Since the closure of the B&CDR, traffic on the GNR was heavier, especially during the summer months.

The Limavady Junction-Limavady branch was but 3¼ miles of a line which once stretched to Dungiven - a total distance of 13½ miles. The line was opened to Limavady in December 1852 and was subsequently extended to Dungiven in July 1883. Passenger traffic was withdrawn from the extension in January 1933 and it was lifted in 1953. The Limavady branch itself lost its passenger traffic on 19th June 1950 when it had no fewer than 10 workings each way daily.

The Magherafelt-Cookstown branch (11 miles) was opened in November 1856 as an extension of the Belfast & Ballymena Railway which then terminated at Randalstown. Connection was made with the GNR at Cookstown when that company's branch from Dungannon was opened in July 1879, although the stations were alongside, not end to end. Passenger traffic on the UTA line ceased in August 1950 at which period at least four trains per day ran in each direction. Thereafter only one goods train per day operated and it was merely a matter of time before all traffic was withdrawn.



On The Kenmare Branch: Loco 175 on 11:00 mixed from Headford Junction to Kenmare seen shunting at Loo Bridge, May 1955. Train comprised bogie coach 2095, six-wheel brake coach 6M, seven goods wagons and a brake-van. Two wagons being hand-shunted into station's one facing siding.