

THE

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**EDITORIAL**

This issue of "The Irish Railfans' News" completes our first year of publication. We hope you have found some item of interest in each of the first four issues and will do likewise in those to come. The reception you have given us has been very encouraging and has indeed enabled us to expand considerably more than we expected at first. As always, expansion entails expense, and as our publication is managed on a non-profit making basis, our resources are consequently limited. To enable us to continue this trend of improvement we have decided to raise the annual subscription to 2/6<sup>d</sup>. However, we feel confident that you - our readers - who appreciate our position, will agree that even this is quite inexpensive by present day standards.

As reported elsewhere in this issue, the last day of the year may end the life of one of the most fascinating lines in the country - the SL&NCR. This independent company - the last such on the 5'3" - has been frequently threatened in the past, but now the shareholders have decided, due to financial difficulties, to apply for an abandonment order to enable the line to be closed as from 1<sup>st</sup> January 1956. This is most regrettable not only on account of the unique character of the line, but also because it will sever the only connection between the CIÉ and GNR systems in the North West.

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## **News Section**

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**DUBLIN AREA NEWS REPORT****Winter Timetable**

The new CIÉ timetable, which has been in operation since Monday September 19, follows generally the pattern of last winter's services. Most of the additional trains provided in the summer timetable have been cancelled and very few new services have been added. Among the select few, however, are some welcome innovations. One of the Cork Expresses now stops in each direction at Limerick Junction to make a rail connection with Limerick. The 14:25 Dublin-Cork connects with a non-stop train to Limerick, while the return working of this forms a new 18:20 train ex Limerick to connect with the 18:00 Cork-Dublin express, which now sets back for a three minute halt at Limerick Junction. The connection also runs non-stop between Limerick and Limerick Junction, and is booked to cover the 22 mile journey in forty minutes. A most welcome return of long absent facilities is featured in the Waterford & Tramore section, where winter Sunday rail services have been introduced again for the first time since 1943. The fine service of nine trains in each direction replaces the poor substitute road service which had operated on winter Sundays since. Furthermore, CIÉ have made the unusual announcement that "Additional trains will be arranged if required". A striking alteration in the

timetable is the withdrawal of connections (which first appeared in this year's summer timetable) to and from Skibbereen off the 12:15 Cork-Bantry and into the 15:00 Bantry-Cork services. Another noteworthy feature of the timetable is the replacement of the train connections into the 08:10 Westport-Dublin and out of the 18:50 Dublin-Westport, by a station wagon to and from Manulla Junction. This reduces the passenger service on the Ballina branch from five to three trains each way per day.

### **Sunday Trains**

Due to the heavy demand for transport to the seaside during the fine weather of July and August, CIÉ commenced their Sunday suburban services from Amiens Street and Harcourt Street to Greystones two hours earlier than the published timetable, between Sundays July 24 and August 28 inclusive. An almost half-hourly service was provided between Dublin and Bray from 11:00 to 22:40.

### **Westland Row**

Fluorescent lighting similar to that already installed in the other Dublin stations is at present being fitted in Westland Row.

### **Suburban Traffic**

On many occasions during the past five weeks, summer seaside traffic reached such proportions that a shuttle service of trains had to be substituted for the regular timetable. For example, on Sunday July 10, about 20,000 people were said to have been carried from the city on the Westland Row line alone, while 4,000 more travelled from Harcourt Street, and another 600 availed of the regular Sunday seaside train from Inchicore. On this day, and on subsequent Sundays, Killiney Cabin was opened to enable the frequency of the service to be increased. Some trains were reversed there for the first time since August 1954. The heavy traffic also gave a renewed lease of life to the six-wheeled coaches withdrawn on arrival of the Park Royal bogies.

## **CIÉ PROVINCIAL NEWS REPORT**

### **Branch Demolition**

The track lifting has recently been completed on two further abandoned CIÉ branches. The remaining section of the Woodenbridge-Shillelagh line has now been removed to within some hundred yards of the Junction, while the Cork-Macroom line has been lifted to within a short distance of Macroom Junction.

### **Castlemungret Branch**

A public inquiry was held in Limerick on August 24 and 25, to hear objections to CIÉ's further proposals for the building of this 3¼ mile branch line. Most of the 11 objectors were affected landowners. Only one of these presented a strong case against the building of the railway. It was announced in the course of the inquiry that the Local Authorities had withdrawn their earlier objections after agreement had been reached with CIÉ that the level of the new railway line would be lowered to permit the building of an overbridge carrying the main Limerick-Cork road across the line, in the event of that road being realigned. It was also stated that the total cost of construction of the branch would be approximately £53,000, and, when built, it would carry two 40-wagon cement trains daily from the factory at Castlemungret. Although roads are to be crossed on the level, it is intended that the guard or fireman of each train will operate the crossing gates so as to obviate the employment of permanent staff for these duties. The findings of the inquiry are still awaited.

### **Lixnaw Siding**

On July 20 a new private siding for the Kerry County Council was opened between Listowel and Lixnaw stations on the North Kerry (Limerick-Tralee) line. The siding which is ¾ mile north of

Lixnaw, is operated by a key on the train staff for the section, and was constructed to facilitate the unloading of tar-bitumen wagons at an adjacent County Council yard. This is the first private siding of its kind to be opened on the CIÉ system since the construction of the new sidings at Rathmore, Co. Kerry for Fry-Cadbury Ltd in 1948.

### **West Clare Locomotives**

Two of the three Walker Bros. diesel-mechanical locomotives were transferred to Ennis on September 26<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>.

### **Seaside Traffic**

Exceptionally heavy traffic was, this summer, experienced on many seaside provincial lines, due to the prolonged spell of fine weather. On Sunday July 10, no less than thirteen trains - the largest number ever to arrive in one day - conveyed over 11,000 people to the resort of Youghal. Excursions from Wexford to Rosslare, Cork to Courtmacsherry and Baltimore, Waterford to Tramore and Ennis to Lahinch, were also very well patronised. In the case of the last mentioned, traffic was so great that buses were run on occasions in addition to the train service. Capacity crowds were also carried on the "Sea Breeze" trains from Harcourt Street to Arklow on Wednesdays and Saturdays and extra workings ran on some Sundays in the height of the season.

### **Waterford & Tramore**

The three steam locos were removed by road from this section during August and early September. Loco 560 has been re-allocated to Rocksavage (Cork Albert Quay) for work on the Cork, Bandon & South Coast Section, while the other two - Nos. 553 and 555 - have been withdrawn. The last of the old six-wheel passenger coaches has been scrapped at Waterford Manor, and the three articulated Clayton bogie sets have been sold for £45 each for use as summer huts at Tramore. At the time of going to press the four covered and four open wagons were still on the section, although they have been out of use since the withdrawal of steam trains. No track alterations have been made either at Waterford or Tramore, but some resleepering has recently been carried out.

### **Cavan & Leitrim**

Coal traffic from Arigna still offers, requiring at least one coal special daily in addition to the regular mixed train. This traffic was so heavy that, between May and August, three and sometimes four coal specials ran daily for considerable periods.

### **Diesel-Electric Locomotives**

Up to the time of writing 11 of the diesel-electric locomotives being supplied to CIÉ by Messrs Metropolitan Vickers Ltd had arrived at Inchicore. These are part of the order for 94 locomotives mentioned in our last issue. Two of the locos went into service on Wednesday September 28, on the Dublin-Cork main line, working the 12:15 and 20:00 down and the 11:55 and 21:15 up.

## **GNR GENERAL NEWS REPORT**

### **Summer Traffic**

Fine weather during the last two months has considerably taxed the GNR. The Sunday trains continued on the Howth branch and between Dublin and Laytown until September 25, although they had been expected to cease with the summer timetable on September 4. Weekend seaside trains were so well supported that almost every available coach was pressed into service. In many cases schedules were departed from, and trains ran as soon as they were filled. Mid week traffic was also very heavy and was encouraged by reduced seaside excursion fares from Mondays to Fridays inclusive. The main line also shared in the heavy traffic as the influx of visitors made frequent duplication, and on occasions

triplication, of express trains necessary. On August 11, one of the advertised day excursions to Belfast at the 'lower-than-single' fare of 15/- proved so popular that in all five trains were run in place of the 09:00 Dublin-Belfast. Details are as follows:

|    |       | Loco | Bogies |
|----|-------|------|--------|
| 1) | 08:45 | 210  | 10     |
| 2) | 09:00 | 172  | 10     |
| 3) | 09:15 | 170  | 9      |
| 4) | 09:25 | 206  | 10     |
| 5) | 10:15 | 136  | 7      |

On this date the Bundoran Express ( 6 bogies, hauled by 4-4-2T No.4) was timed to leave at 08:52, but left late, reacting unfavourably on the later specials.

### **Winter Timetable**

The GNR winter timetable which became operative on September 5, shows little change from the summer one, except for the withdrawal of the regular 'summer only' trains. The five minute Bailey Bridge allowance is continued as mentioned in our last issue. The Sunday services between Newry and Warrenpoint were continued up to the 25<sup>th</sup> September and thereafter the UTA are providing a bus service, although the Sunday rail service is to recommence on 13<sup>th</sup> May 1956.

### **Overhaul Of Railcar A**

Railcar A, which worked the Scarva-Banbridge line until its closure last April, has been in Dundalk works for repair and refitting, and it is expected to return to traffic - probably on the Drogheda-Oldcastle line - shortly. If it does so, it will probably also take over a rather unusual railbus working which commenced with the winter timetable. This is the 18:35 (Saturdays excepted) from Drogheda to Laytown, which returns empty to Drogheda in reverse as there is no turntable at Laytown.

### **Diesel Shops**

The Dublin Corporation has passed the plans for the erection of a new diesel shed and works alongside the main line near Fairview. The site is on the down side between the Bailey bridge and Clontarf at Milepost 1. The structure will measure 500' by 100' and is expected to be capable of servicing about 30 railcars. Temporary sidings have already been laid and have a connection with the main line, facing to Amiens Street, operated by a ground frame in conjunction with East Wall Junction Cabin.

## **UTA GENERAL NEWS REPORT**

### **Traffic**

Unlike the other Irish railways the summer timetable is still in full operation, except for slight modifications. This is principally on account of the heavy traffic which has been experienced on all sections of the system.

### **B&CDR Demolition**

Lifting of the closed sections is nearing completion as only the Downpatrick-Newcastle and Dundonald-Ballymacarrett Junction sections remain. Some of the material - rail, chairs and sleepers - is being used for renewals on the NCC section.

### **Transport Museum**

The transport museum is now housed near Queen's Quay Station and can be seen on application to the Stationmaster. It contains, inter alia: Portstewart Tramway engine; Bessbrook & Newry car 2; Giant's Causeway trailer 5; Dundalk, Newry & Greenore coach 1; GNR loco 93; British Aluminium Co.

loco 2.

### **CDRJC GENERAL NEWS REPORT**

#### **Winter Timetable**

The winter timetable is similar to that of 1954, although there is a new service on Tuesdays from Ballyshannon to Rossnowlagh for church services at the nearby Friary. A halt known as Friary Halt was opened some three years ago for this traffic.

#### **Bridge Removed**

The bridge spanning the River Finn at Stranorlar, which carried the Glenties line has, with the completion of lifting operations, been removed. The bridge was of the single-span girder type and was originally intended for use on a Norwegian broad gauge line.

### **SL&NCR GENERAL NEWS REPORT**

#### **Closure Application**

The oft-threatened SL&NCR has now reached a crucial stage in its history, as on August 20 the company gave notice of an extraordinary meeting of the shareholders to consider a resolution authorising the directors to apply for orders enabling them to close and abandon the line and wind up the company. This meeting took place on September 9 in Sligo and the resolution was passed. It is understood that objections to the closure have been raised in Sligo, Manorhamilton and Enniskillen. The anticipated date of closure is 1<sup>st</sup> January 1956.

#### **Notes**

In spite of the rather gloomy outlook for the line, railbus A has returned from the GNR works at Dundalk, and at the time of writing Railcar B is in the company's Manorhamilton works undergoing extensive overhaul. A new crossover is being fitted in Enniskillen to connect the loco shed with the main line at the western end of the yard. The line is at present dealing with very heavy cattle traffic necessitating, on occasions, as many as five locos in steam at the one time.

### **BORD NA MONA**

#### **Shannon Bridge**

Tenders were invited on September 1, by Bord na Mona, for the erection of a 386', 8 span, steel girder railway bridge across the river Shannon some 2½ miles north of Lanesboro, where a new ESB turf burning power station is in course of erection. The bridge, 18 miles upstream from Athlone, will include a bascule lifting span, and will be on concrete piers. It is to carry a single 3' gauge track to transport turf from the bogs across the river to the new power station. Work is expected to commence on the bridge before the end of the year. When completed it will be the fifth railway bridge across the Shannon.

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## **Feature Section**

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### **CLOSED BRANCHES OF CÓRAS IOMPAIR ÉIREANN**

When CIÉ assumed control of the GSR system on January 1<sup>st</sup> 1945, they inherited a railway network in

which 11 branch lines had already lost their regular passenger traffic. These 11 had grown to 27 before the end of January 1947, as an acute coal shortage had compelled the undertaking to withdraw certain facilities on many of the remaining branch lines, and since only 3 of these - Roscrea-Birr, Attymon Junction-Loughrea and Skibbereen-Baltimore were fortunate enough to re-open subsequently, a total of 24 branches remained closed, at least to regular passenger traffic, when CIÉ became a fully nationalised concern on 1<sup>st</sup> June 1950.

Since then, CIÉ applied to the Transport Tribunal for an Exemption Order in respect of 12 of these lines, but have been granted permission so far to abandon only the following 9 branches:

1. Woodenbridge-Shillelagh (16½ miles)
2. Birdhill-Killaloe (3¼ miles)
3. Skibbereen-Schull (15 miles, 3 foot gauge)
4. Tralee & Dingle (31¾ miles, 3 foot gauge)
5. Cork-Macroom (24½ miles)
6. Fermoy-Mitchelstown (12 miles)
7. Goold's Cross-Cashel (5¾ miles)
8. Kilmessan Junction-Athboy (12 miles)
9. Crossdoney-Killeshandra (7 miles)

As their application was only partly granted in the case of the Banteer-Newmarket (8¾ miles) line, CIÉ have decided to operate an experimental diesel goods service on this branch and to withdraw, ad interim, their two outstanding applications for Exemption Orders in respect of the Clara-Banagher (18¾ miles) and Portlaoise-Mountmellick (7½ miles) branches.

Hence it remains that CIÉ today have 15 "closed" branches in their railway network, all of which are intact, and it may not be inappropriate at this stage to outline briefly the present position of these lines in the notes which follow.

#### **(1) Sallins-Tulow (34¾ miles)**

Closed to regular passenger and goods traffic since January 1947. Present traffic consists of a passenger special from Kingsbridge to Naas for each Naas Race meeting, a monthly cattle special from each of the Tulow, Baltinglass (24¼ miles) and Naas (2¼ miles) fairs, and an annual pilgrimage special from Tulow and Baltinglass to Claremorris (for Knock). Occasional football specials run from Tulow and some organised diesel excursions from Naas have also run in recent years.

#### **(2) Athy-Ballylinan (4¾ miles)**

This remaining section of the old Athy-Wolfhill colliery railway never had regular passenger or goods services. Present traffic consists of a daily goods working to the Asbestos Cement Co's siding at Barrow Bridge (1 mile) and beet specials thrice weekly during the season.

#### **(3) Muine Bheag-Palace East (24 miles)**

This link line has been closed to regular passenger traffic since February 1931, and to regular goods since January 1947. Present traffic consists mostly of special through workings between the D&SE and the GS&W sections of CIÉ. The line is used frequently during the summer for football specials from stations in Co. Wexford to Carlow and Kilkenny, and is also availed of as a short cut for pilgrimage trains from the South-East to Knock. Some of the football specials mentioned run only from Borris (8 miles). Used daily by beet specials during the season, when the intermediate stations on the branch are open to both goods and beet traffic.

#### **(4) Clara-Banagher (18¾ miles)**

Closed to regular passenger traffic since January 1947. Still open to a daily goods train and occasional

football and Knock pilgrimage specials. A second daily goods train runs during the beet season to cope with extra traffic.

**(5) Portlaoise-Mountmellick (7½ miles)**

Closed to regular passenger and goods traffic since January 1947. Present traffic consists of an occasional football special, seasonal grain specials and two daily workings in the beet season only, during which Mountmellick is also open to goods traffic.

**(6) Castlecomer Junction-Deerpark (10 miles)**

Closed to regular passenger traffic, which ran to Castlecomer (7¼ miles) only, since January 1931. A daily goods train still runs to cope mostly with coal traffic from the Deerpark Collieries. Only one or two special passenger workings have operated in recent years.

**(7) Rathluirc Junction-Patrickswell (17½ miles)**

This link-line is closed to regular passenger traffic since December 1934. Still open to the nightly Cork-Limerick goods in each direction. Frequently used for through football and pilgrimage trains and for special goods workings between Limerick and Cork.

**(8) Banteer-Newmarket (8¾ miles)**

Closed to regular passenger and goods traffic since January 1947. Present traffic consists of a monthly special from Kanturk (3¾ miles) fair, and occasionally from Newmarket, with an annual passenger special from Newmarket for the Banteer parish sports.

**(9) Gortatlea-Castleisland (4½ miles)**

Closed to regular passenger and goods traffic since January 1947. Present traffic consists of a monthly cattle special from Castleisland fair, seasonal grain specials and an annual pilgrimage special to Claremorris (for Knock).

**(10) Tralee-Fenit (8 miles)**

Closed to regular passenger traffic since December 1934. Still open officially to a thrice weekly goods service which, in fact, only runs occasionally as traffic requires, except during the beet season when the working timetable is adhered to. No passenger specials of any kind have worked over this branch in recent years.

**(11) Ballinascorthy-Courtmacsherry (8½ miles)**

Closed to regular passenger traffic since January 1947. A goods train still operates as required, usually once weekly on Tuesdays, except during the beet season when two daily specials run on the branch. A monthly fair special runs from Timoleague (6 miles) and the passenger workings consist of fortnightly Sunday seaside excursions run through from Cork to Courtmacsherry during the summer months.

**(12) Clonsilla-Kingscourt (43½ miles)**

Closed to regular passenger trains since January 1947. A thrice-weekly goods still operates to cope mostly with gypsum traffic from Kingscourt. Livestock specials run occasionally from Navan (23½ miles) ex GNR line, to and from Drumree (12 miles) and from Dunboyne (3½ miles), while football specials operate only very infrequently. Some organised excursions have, however, been run recently from Navan and Dunboyne.

**(13) Enfield-Edenderry (10¾ miles)**

Closed to regular passenger traffic since June 1931 and to goods traffic since September 1932. Present traffic consists of a weekly market-stock special from Edenderry on Tuesdays, seasonal beet and grain specials and very occasional football specials. The first pilgrimage train from Edenderry to Claremorris



(for Knock) ran in July last.

**(14) Inny Junction-Cavan (24¾ miles)**

This link line between the CIÉ and GNR systems has been closed to regular passenger traffic since January 1947. A daily goods still runs from Mullingar to Cavan. Occasional livestock specials are run from the Midlands to Cavan (for GNR lines) and a small number of pilgrimage specials to Knock also run over the line from Cavan and stations north of it on the GNR system. No football specials have run on the line in recent years.

**(15) Streamstown-Clara (7½ miles)**

This link-line has been closed to regular passenger and goods traffic since January 1947. Occasionally used for through empty stock and special cattle workings, while some football specials running between the GS&W and MGW sections of CIÉ have worked over the line in recent years.

NB: In the above notes the mileage on branches reads from the junction with the main line, and in the case of connecting link lines, from the first mentioned terminus of the line.