

THE

# **IRISH RAILFANS' NEWS**

Volume 3

July 1957

No.3

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### EDITORIAL

The recommendations of the Committee of Inquiry into Internal Transport have come as quite a shock, even to those of us who expected the employment of drastic measures to reduce the ever recurring losses of CIÉ. The report, published early in June setting out the Committee's recommendations, advocates a complete dismemberment of our railway system as we know it today.

In view of "the preponderant position of CIÉ in public transport in the Republic" the inquiry paid particularly detailed attention to that organisation. Very briefly, the Committee regards all CIÉ railway lines in the country, except those radiating from Dublin to Sligo, Ballina/Westport, Galway, Cork/Tralee, Waterford via Carlow, and Rosslare Harbour and the Rosslare-Waterford-Limerick-Sligo line, as unnecessary and dispensable. The report also recommends that the number of CIÉ stations be reduced to about a quarter of its present total by the elimination of all but those serving the principal towns and that a road network be concentrated on each of these towns. Other recommendations include a considerable reduction in staff, a relaxation of obligations restricting the commercial flexibility of the organisation, a revision of the procedure for obtaining abandonment orders to enable speedier elimination of railway lines and a rejection of any suggestion of restriction on private transport.

Undoubtedly the Committee has boldly faced a very controversial problem. Some of its suggestions - notably, a reduction in the number of stations and staff to man them - are sound and even overdue. Nevertheless, the reduction in rail mileage seems to be altogether too drastic to enable the reconstituted system to form, as it should, the backbone of a satisfactory integrated inland transport network. No matter how the report may tend to minimise our traffic peaks, there are still mass movements of people best suited to rail transport, as a spectator at any large terminus on fine summer weekends, Christmas Eve, or the night of a hurling final will testify. Similarly, one of the few CIÉ statements which the Committee appears to accept without reserve is that rail and road do not at present compete with each other. We feel that many of our readers will be able to bring to mind instances which leave the validity of this dictum open to considerable doubt.

It is quite impossible in the space at our disposal to comment adequately on a report running to some 250 printed pages. We would therefore strongly recommend all who are interested in Irish transport to study its contents carefully in order to form their own opinions of the recommendations contained therein. The report is obtainable from the Government Publications Sale Office, GPO Arcade, Dublin and the price is 8/6<sup>d</sup>.

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# News Section

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## CIÉ DUBLIN AREA NEWS REPORT

### **Improved Suburban Services**

Although the reconstruction of Dun Laoghaire station was completed by June 23 (as described in our feature article) CIÉ announced in mid-June that it would not be possible to introduce the promised new timetable on the D&SE Section as from June 24 "due to insufficient equipment being available". Consequently a service almost identical to that operated last summer has been provided since that date, although it is learned that a revised timetable will commence operation in September.

### **Summer Timetable**

The summer timetable, which became effective on June 24, contains a few interesting alterations. Perhaps the chief of these is the acceleration of the Sunday trains between Dublin and Rosslare Harbour in each direction by about 30 minutes - a very welcome improvement. On the Dublin-Cork main line a change worth note is the deferment of the 16:10 Tralee-Dublin express to 16:50, which brings it into Kingsbridge at 21:15 - 15 minutes later than the 18:00 Cork-Dublin, instead of 10 minutes before it as in last year's timetable. Extraordinarily, the 18:00 retains its winter Limerick Junction stop normally performed by the Kerry train in the summer. On the Waterford line the 18:00 from Kingsbridge via Carlow which formerly terminated at Kilkenny is extended to Waterford and provided with a buffet car previously worked on the 17:00 via Abbeyleix. The corresponding new up working is at 07:25 but in the up direction the 08:10 via Abbeyleix retains the buffet. There are thus five trains on weekdays in each direction between Kingsbridge and Waterford - three via Carlow and two via Abbeyleix. A lengthy gap in the Cork-Cobh service has been filled by an extra train at 11:00 returning at 12:15 and an extra evening train has been provided at 21:30 on the Waterford & Tramore Section. Although the public timetable shows a similar service to last year on the Farranfore-Valentia line, an improved timetable has, in fact, been put into operation and all trains have been accelerated by amounts varying from 18 to 24 minutes. CIÉ are to be congratulated on their early publication of the summer timetable and also on the production of a most attractive new pocket size timetable giving main line trains and principal branch connections. Also commendable is the distinction made in the public book between ordinary passenger and perishable or night mail trains with limited passenger accommodation.

By courtesy of the Public Relations Department of CIÉ we are enclosing a copy of the new pocket timetable mentioned above.

### **Dieselisation Progress**

To date of writing - June 29 - 25 of the order of 34 C class Metrovick 550 hp DE Bo-Bo locomotives have been delivered to CIÉ. One further B class Sulzer DE loco has been delivered since our last issue bringing the total of this class to 10. Construction of the 19 E class Maybach DH locos is progressing rapidly at Inchicore and the first - E401 - is reported to have already been on trials. With the introduction of the C class locos to traffic since our last issue steam has been superseded by diesel motive power on some further CIÉ lines. Two C class units were introduced on the Ballina branch in early and mid-May respectively and now operate the entire service on this line. As mentioned elsewhere in this issue all services on the CB&SC Section are now diesel except the once-weekly goods train to Courtmacsherry and even this is expected to be converted at an early date. In the Dublin area loco C213 replaced the steam station pilot in Westland Row on June 12, while C208 was subsequently delegated to similar duties in Bray. On June 24 the shed at Bray was turned over to diesel locomotives and since that date locos for the many steam workings still in the Dublin suburban area

have been provided by Broadstone shed. Since the same date the three principal fast trains run at peak hours on the Amiens Street-Bray line have been operated by A class DE locomotives although as yet no suburban link has been regularly worked by a C class locomotive.

### **Rolling Stock Developments**

Since our last issue new 30ft vans have been put into traffic by CIÉ. In appearance they are similar to the steam heating vans already in service in that they are 10ft wide four-wheeled vehicles with an unpainted stainless steel finish but, unlike the "hot water bottles", are provided on each side in the centre with double doors. The vans have been numbered in the 2700 series and at the time of writing up to No.2749 has been reported in service.

### **6T**

Loco 6T is very shortly expected to leave Inchicore works, where she has undergone a complete overhaul, to augment the hard pressed stud of locomotives at Ballinamore. This loco which was transferred to the West Clare in January 1953 had worked on that system until the advent of the F class locos and will now join the other three ex Tralee & Dingle locos already working on the Cavan & Leitrim.

### **TPO 2950**

Further to the report in our last issue regarding TPO vans it now has transpired that van No.2950 is not destined for scrapping as it has since reappeared in traffic.

## **CIÉ PROVINCIAL NEWS REPORT**

### **Fire On Tralee Diesel**

On June 13, a fire broke out in the rear unit of the railcar working the 18:45 Dublin-Tralee shortly after the train had left Killarney for Ballybrack. The guard, who first noticed the fire, had the train stopped at a point some two miles beyond Killarney and had the passengers removed from the burning car which was then uncoupled. Despite this prompt action the railcar - No.2617 - was completely gutted and the remains had to be towed to Killarney when the fire had burned out. In the meantime the rest of the train had continued to Tralee.

### **Courtmacsherry Excursions**

The first of the season's excursion trains on this last remaining standard gauge roadside tramway was run on Whit Sunday, June 9. The train of five bogies with van 5J was worked from Cork (Albert Quay) to Ballinascarthy by loco 466 and thence to Courtmacsherry was hauled by loco 552 - an ex MGWR 0-6-0 tank. Further excursions from Cork to Courtmacsherry have been announced for July 7, August 4, 11 and 25, but it is possible that these will be hauled by a C class locomotive as one such unit has been tried on the line.

### **Diesels In West Cork**

On April 15 C class DE locomotives replaced the well-known Bandon tanks on the Cork-Bantry line goods trains. A month later, on May 13, a revised timetable was brought into operation with the effect of speeding up the goods trains and reducing from three to two the number of locomotives required to work them. Under the new arrangement the loco which leaves Cork with the down Bantry goods at 03:45 returns light to work the up goods from Drimoleague and in a similar manner the down Drimoleague goods locomotive works the up goods from Bantry. On May 21 a further step was taken in the dieselisation of the CB&SC Section when C206 arrived in Skibbereen to work the line to Baltimore and since then on June 3 steam was similarly usurped from its place on the Clonakilty branch by another of the C class units.

## **Killeshandra Branch**

Lifting operations on the seven mile branch line from Crossdoney to Killleshandra commenced in late April with the dismantling of the station at the latter town. In view of its length, removal of the entire branch is expected to be completed shortly.

## **Newmarket Branch**

Interesting statistics concerning the experimental re-opening to goods traffic of this branch are given in the recently published report of the Committee of Inquiry into Internal Transport. The deficit on the operation of the once-daily goods service during June, July and August 1956 - the first three months after the re-opening - amounted to £921, while the loss sustained in the operation of the railhead lorry services at Kanturk and Newmarket amounted to £102 for the same period. The report, commenting on these results, states "while it may be too soon to judge, it would appear from these figures that the prospects of economically working this and similar branch lines by means of small diesel units are not good."

## **Opera Specials**

Inspired doubtless by the circus specials which ran last year, CIÉ during May offered excursion tickets from four provincial centres - Wexford, Kilkenny, Athlone and Thurles - to Dublin in connection with a season of Italian opera in a city theatre. The combined ticket issued at the local station included rail travel to Dublin and a seat at the evening opera performance. In each case passengers travelled to Dublin on the regular afternoon services but special trains were provided for the return journey, departure times being about 23:00 in each case. So successful was this innovation that excursion tickets were offered from a fifth provincial centre - Nenagh - during the last week of the opera season. Furthermore during a season of ballet at another Dublin theatre at the end of May, similar cheap fare facilities were offered, with equal success, from Wexford and Thurles.

## **GNR GENERAL NEWS REPORT**

## **Oldcastle Branch**

As the position created by the recent oil shortage has now returned to normal the threat of withdrawal of passenger trains from the 39½ mile Drogheda-Oldcastle branch again looms menacingly close and is expected to take place during the coming autumn if the closure proposals in Northern Ireland are implemented. The final decision in respect of the line may, however, be deferred pending the emergence of a reorganised transport policy in the Republic in the light of the report of the Committee of Inquiry into Internal Transport. Railcar A, which worked most of the branch services during the past 12 months, was in Dundalk for repairs in May last. It is understood that the front bodywork requires renewal following a minor 'argument' with a steam locomotive. In the meantime Railbus 1 is working on the line although unable to handle the heavier services - such as the 15:40 ex Drogheda on Saturdays - which are at present steam. The evening service to Kells latterly handled by 'A' has reverted to a two car diesel set as on its inauguration on 6<sup>th</sup> September 1954.

## **New Railcars In Service**

Following trials on the Dublin-Belfast main line the first of the new GNR multiple-unit diesel sets went into service on the Enterprise Express link - 10:30 up and 17:30 down - on Wednesday June 19. The new train comprised railcar 703, bogie 1<sup>st</sup> 225, bogie brake 1<sup>st</sup> 232, dining car 124, bogie 2<sup>nd</sup> 176, railcars 702 and 701, and provides seating accommodation for 54 first class and 192 second class passengers. The new railcars, which are quite unlike previous GNR or other Irish cars, are each powered by two vertical diesel engines of 150 hp and transmission is by means of a fluid flywheel and a four-speed gearbox. The chassis were supplied by British United Traction Ltd and of the 24 on order

10 are understood to have arrived in Dundalk where their bodies are being or have been fitted. Each car seats 56 second class passengers and is gangwayed at both ends with a new shortened type of connection. A driving cab is located at both ends of each car on the left hand side and a toilet compartment occupies the space opposite each of these cabs. Of the 24 railcars to be constructed 16 will be of this new type which can be operated as multiple unit trains up to 8 coaches. The remaining eight will be of the conventional type with full-width cab and front first class observation saloon. During the course of its trials the new "Enterprise" set made a non-stop journey from Belfast to Dublin on May 16 on a two hour schedule - taking 2 hours 7 minutes which was nevertheless 8 minutes faster than the present timing - but no alteration has yet been made in the journey time of the regular services since the changeover on June 19. A special inaugural run was made on June 4 to demonstrate the new train to the press, transport operatives and business executives. In an address on the occasion the Traffic Manager - Mr J.C. Bailie - stated that over 75% of the present passenger services could be diesel operated when delivery of the new fleet of cars is complete.

### **Summer Timetable**

On account of the numerous alterations made in the timetable during the winter months the summer issue made its appearance on May 12 - about three weeks earlier than last year. The full summer services were not, however, immediately introduced but were built up gradually as the holiday traffic developed. While Sunday trains commenced on the Howth and Warrenpoint branches on May 12 the Bundoran Expresses did not begin their daily run until June 1. On this date also the 15:00 Belfast-Dublin reverted from diesel to steam working for the season. A new feature of this timetable is the operation from July 7 of a train from Dublin to Derry at 09:40 quite separate from the 09:00 Dublin-Belfast. This "Londonderry Train" calls only at Dundalk and Goraghwood before reaching Portadown where it is attached to the 11:15 semi-fast Belfast-Derry serving only Dungannon, Omagh, Strabane and stations thence to Derry. It is the fastest through service scheduled between Dublin and Derry and takes only 5 hours 5 minutes against the 5 hours 35 minutes of last year's 09:00 connection. Another feature is the inclusion in the public timetable of the Sunday trains from Enniskillen and Omagh to Bundoran from June 30. Between them the two trains serve all intermediate stations to Bundoran except Gortaloughan Halt.

### **Diesel Shops**

Preceding the introduction of the new multiple unit diesel trains by just over two months was the opening on April 1 of the new diesel depot in Dublin. The depot, which is a concrete building with three roads passing right through it, is situated on the down side of the main line at MP 1 near Fairview. The land on which it is built is a waste plot hitherto unused but nevertheless owned by the GNR. Each road in the shed comfortably houses a six coach train and inspection pits are fitted at the required intervals while outbuildings flank the outermost road. In addition, a long siding runs alongside the shed parallel with the main line serving at times as a carriage siding.

### **Main line Damaged**

Traffic on the Dublin-Belfast main line was interrupted when, in the early hours of Thursday, April 18, Bridge No.174 was seriously damaged by two explosions which blew a hole in the floor of the bridge and broke both up and down lines. The damage to the bridge, which carries the main line over a by-road between MP 63½ and MP 63¾, was discovered only just in time to enable railway workers to bring the 02:25 Portadown-Dublin diesel railcar, on its nightly mail-carrying trip, to a stop by detonators about a mile from the wreckage. Throughout the day, while repair gangs were engaged in restoring the bridge sufficiently to carry a single track, trains from Dublin terminated at Dundalk and trains from Belfast ran to Newry Edward Street. A fleet of buses bridged the gap between these stations and Customs examination, even for passengers on the Enterprise Expresses, took place at the road frontier posts. Some loco links had to be reorganised as the V and VS classes could not be used into

Newry Edward Street. On Good Friday, April 19, the 10:30 Belfast-Dublin Enterprise inaugurated single line traffic on the temporarily restored down line with a speed restriction to 5 mph over bridge 174. At first the working was by pilotman but later in the day ETS instruments were installed in Bessbrook and Adavoye cabins. From the night of April 23 the single line traffic was switched to the up line while repairs were carried out on the down side of the bridge. The double line was re-opened on April 26. Eight days after this incident - at about 00:30 on April 26 - another explosion occurred at an underbridge near Silverwood, Lurgan. Some slight damage was caused to the main line and a signal was destroyed but both lines were open for traffic by 08:00 the same day. Some early morning goods, newspaper and passenger trains were delayed and passengers were conveyed between Lurgan and Portadown by bus. Altogether the GNR staff are to be commended for their speed in making good the damage caused by these incidents.

### **Closure Proposals**

The statement made on May 25 by Mr Lemass - Dublin Minister for Industry and Commerce - on his return from talks with the Belfast Minister of Commerce - Lord Glentoran - sounded what appears to be the death knell of a large part of the GNR. The lines affected by the closure proposals are: Omagh-Enniskillen-Newtownbutler (43½m), Portadown-Armagh-Tynan (17¼m) and Bundoran Junction-Belleek (27½m). In the statement Mr Lemass indicated that he did not propose to invoke his right under the GNR Act (1953) to retain the services on these lines by meeting in full the losses which were incurred in their operation. In addition to the above-mentioned, the branch lines from Armagh to Keady (8m), Belleek-Bundoran (8m) and the unique Fintona horse tram (½m) will close as they will become isolated by the closure of their parent lines. It is also most unlikely that the SL&NCR can outlive the GNR line through Enniskillen into which its traffic is fed and the future of the Clones-Newtownbutler (5m) and Clones-Monaghan-Tynan (21¾m) stubs is similarly in jeopardy. Thus at one sweep the Belfast Government will reduce the GNR total route mileage from 478 to 346 and leave but two main lines from Belfast to Dublin and Derry shorn of all branches except the Howth, Oldcastle, Clones, Cavan and Belturbet, Warrenpoint and Antrim with the Ardee, Cookstown and Carrickmacross as freight only lines. The closures are expected to take place on October 1.

### **Last Train To Newcastle**

In connection with the removal of the Newcastle-Castlewellan section of the UTA (formerly BCDR) a train consisting of a GNR loco, the UTA track lifting train and a stock of empty wagons, travelled from Antrim to Newcastle on May 13. There, with the aid of the petrol-engined lifting trolley, the remainder of Newcastle yard was removed. Part of the latter had been taken up during the lifting of the BCDR main line. The yard is now cleared and a road, replacing a steep overbridge, is being built across the site just short of the divergence.

## **UTA GENERAL NEWS REPORT**

### **Ballymena Bridge Widening**

Work is at present in progress on the task of rebuilding and widening Bridge 119 which carries the Belfast-Derry line across the street at the south end of Ballymena station. The former bridge was a narrow arch which prohibited even low-bridge double-deck buses from entering the bus terminal beside the railway station. The new concrete structure will be of modern design and should be completed in the next month or so. A speed restriction to 30 mph has been imposed on both up and down trains at this point while work is in progress.

### **Signal Cabins Destroyed**

In the early hours of May 1 the signal cabin at Killagan, on the main line between Ballymena and Ballymoney, was wrecked by an explosion which demolished the brickwork and caused the roof to

collapse on the debris. Traffic on the line was not interrupted although the goods trains during the night were slightly delayed. On May 18 the cabin at the next station - Dunloy - was destroyed in a similar manner.

### **Summer Timetable**

Since our last issue the UTA has published two timetables, one operating from April 8 and the second to become effective on July 1. In the former there were but a few alterations of departure times - the principal reason for the issue being the innumerable amendments to bus services. The July timetable is very similar to that in operation last year at the same period and includes the Saturday Belfast-Portstewart non-stop express departing this year at 09:30. Portstewart station, which was closed on January 7, is re-opened for the period July 1 to September 1 only. Principal innovations are in the Saturday service which includes a new 19:05 Belfast-Ballymena and a new 09:50 Ballymena to Portstewart and Portrush which calls at Cullybackey and Ballymoney but not Coleraine. This brings to three the total of down Saturday trains which pass Coleraine without stopping.

### **Cookstown Branch**

Auctions have taken place in Moneymore (May 2) and in Magherafelt (June 19) of material removed from the 11 mile branch from Magherafelt to Cookstown which has now been completely lifted. Although the second auction contained equipment from stations between Kilrea and Randalstown inclusive, the daily goods from Belfast to Kilrea and back continues to operate.

### **Annual Report**

The UTA Annual report for the year ended 30<sup>th</sup> September 1956 reveals that the trading loss on its operations amounted to £317,265 - an improvement of £79,385 on the previous year. The report also states that there has been an improvement in the trading accounts of all operating sections - that of the rail section being of £6,514. The necessity for the modernisation of its railways was stressed and the proposed handing over to private enterprise of road freight traffic was condemned by the report which remarks that the latter proposal would "set the stage for the ultimate and probably early elimination of virtually all railways in Northern Ireland".

### **SL&NCR**

### **Notes**

If the timetable which came into force on June 24 does not differ in the services provided, it most certainly does in format. The public timetable this year instead of being a poster sheet is a most attractive threepenny booklet which bears on its front cover two photographs, one of railcar B and the other of a Lough class locomotive leaving Florencourt with the 07:20 down mixed train. The usual extra summer trains - 09:30 ex Sligo and 12:00 ex Enniskillen - have been provided this year for the period from June 24 to September 7 inclusive. The "Lough Gill" locomotive has been sent to Dundalk where she is said to be awaiting repairs. She was, however, on the back sidings behind Dundalk loco shed in mid-June without having yet received attention.

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## **Feature Section**

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### **THE RECONSTRUCTION OF DUN LAOGHAIRE STATION**

Since the extension of the Dublin & Kingstown Railway beyond Dun Laoghaire in 1855 along the bed

of the earlier short-lived Atmospheric railway to Dalkey various schemes had been proposed from time to time to build an up platform at Dun Laoghaire and to double the single track main line through the station. Any such scheme would, of course, have been the obvious remedy to overcome the traffic congestion which invariably recurred in Dun Laoghaire at peak periods. However, the heavy capital outlay involved in any scheme, which of necessity included the widening of a cutting through solid granite, repeatedly deferred the realisation of all such desirable proposals. Since the turn of this century a steady decline in the fortunes of railways, becoming decidedly more marked in the last few decades, was experienced in Ireland, resulting ultimately in the transfer of all railways operating exclusively within the 26 counties to semi-State control in 1945. All hopes of any improvement scheme being undertaken at Dun Laoghaire seemed then to have faded but in the early post-war years cross-channel boat traffic between Dun Laoghaire and Holyhead gradually began to regain its pre-war status. This traffic increased due to the relaxation of war time travel restrictions and soon began to assume, and in summer even exceed, its pre-war proportions. As each year's tourist influx grew, the efficient handling of cross-channel boat traffic through Dun Laoghaire by rail became increasingly difficult until finally in the summers of 1953 and 1954 rail traffic during the height of each season surpassed congestion to become chaotic. Such heavy and widespread public criticism was levelled at British Railways, Bord Fáilte Éireann and CIÉ at that time for the deplorable delays caused to incoming and outgoing holiday makers at Dun Laoghaire that consultations were initiated between transport and tourist authorities in Ireland and in England in an endeavour to rectify the unsatisfactory conditions of peak period boat travel. The outcome of these talks was the introduction of an improved sailing ticket system at peak periods, the provision of better passenger facilities at Dun Laoghaire Pier and, above all, the recognition that rail traffic facilities to and from Dun Laoghaire could not be permanently improved unless a general reconstruction of the station was undertaken.

A final improvement scheme was designed by CIÉ in 1955 and in October of that year preliminary test borings were made in the area surrounding the station. Negotiations were opened with land owners on whose property CIÉ proposed to encroach in the course of the reconstruction scheme and an application was made to the National Development Fund for a grant towards the cost of the works, claimed to be a necessary improvement making a worthy contribution to the tourist industry. This latter approach was, fortunately, successful for on 20<sup>th</sup> February 1956 the Minister for Industry & Commerce allocated a £20,000 grant to CIÉ to enable the improvements to be carried out. As the project was expected to take nine months before completion, it was decided not to commence the work until the Autumn of 1956, thus enabling the major reconstruction to be undertaken during the quieter winter season and the entire scheme to be fully completed before the commencement of the summer timetable on 24<sup>th</sup> June 1957.

In the first week of September 1956 work began on the first stage of the scheme. A level-crossing, constructed with old sleepers, was laid across the station yard from the exit gates of the coal quay siding to the grassy bank flanking the southern side of the yard and in the following week the task of removing this bank with excavators was begun. By the end of September the bank had been completely removed and the site it had occupied was levelled in preparation for the additional trackwork intended to be laid in the yard.

Attention was now focussed on the widening of the cutting at the Sandycove end of the station. As this cutting was spanned by a public road overbridge, it was found necessary to obtain an order from Dun Laoghaire Corporation permitting the closure of this bridge to all road traffic together with the public road on the sea-front from Dun Laoghaire Town Hall to the entrance gates of the Royal Marine Hotel for a period of two months from 1<sup>st</sup> October 1956. Following the road closure the troughing of the overbridge - No.89 - was uncovered and the construction of a new abutment on the seaward side some six feet further from the railway was commenced from the Sandycove end. Simultaneously, the span of the bridge girders and troughing was increased by the riveting thereto of short lengths of similar section

which sufficiently extended the span of the bridge to meet the new abutment. This widening of the road overbridge was tackled in two stages and by 22<sup>nd</sup> November 1956 the first stage of widening the Sandycove end had been completed. By this latter date also the railway cutting between the road bridge and the junction to Dun Laoghaire Pier had been fully widened to allow sufficient room for the laying of the new up main line and with this task completed it became possible to reopen the road to public traffic eight days earlier than planned. This achievement reflected a very creditable performance by CIÉ for within seven weeks they had succeeded in widening half of the overbridge and removing many tons of granite from the cutting without causing any interruption to rail services on the busy suburban line through Dun Laoghaire. Before the end of November 1956 work commenced on widening the second half of the road bridge at the Dublin end, while on Sundays throughout December demolition of the Sandycove end of the former abutment - now within the new one - was undertaken. As there is no regular Sunday traffic on the line in winter the complete possession necessary for this operation posed no difficulty. By mid-January the new abutment was complete and as the old one had by then been demolished, the widened bridge and cutting was ready to accommodate the new up main line.

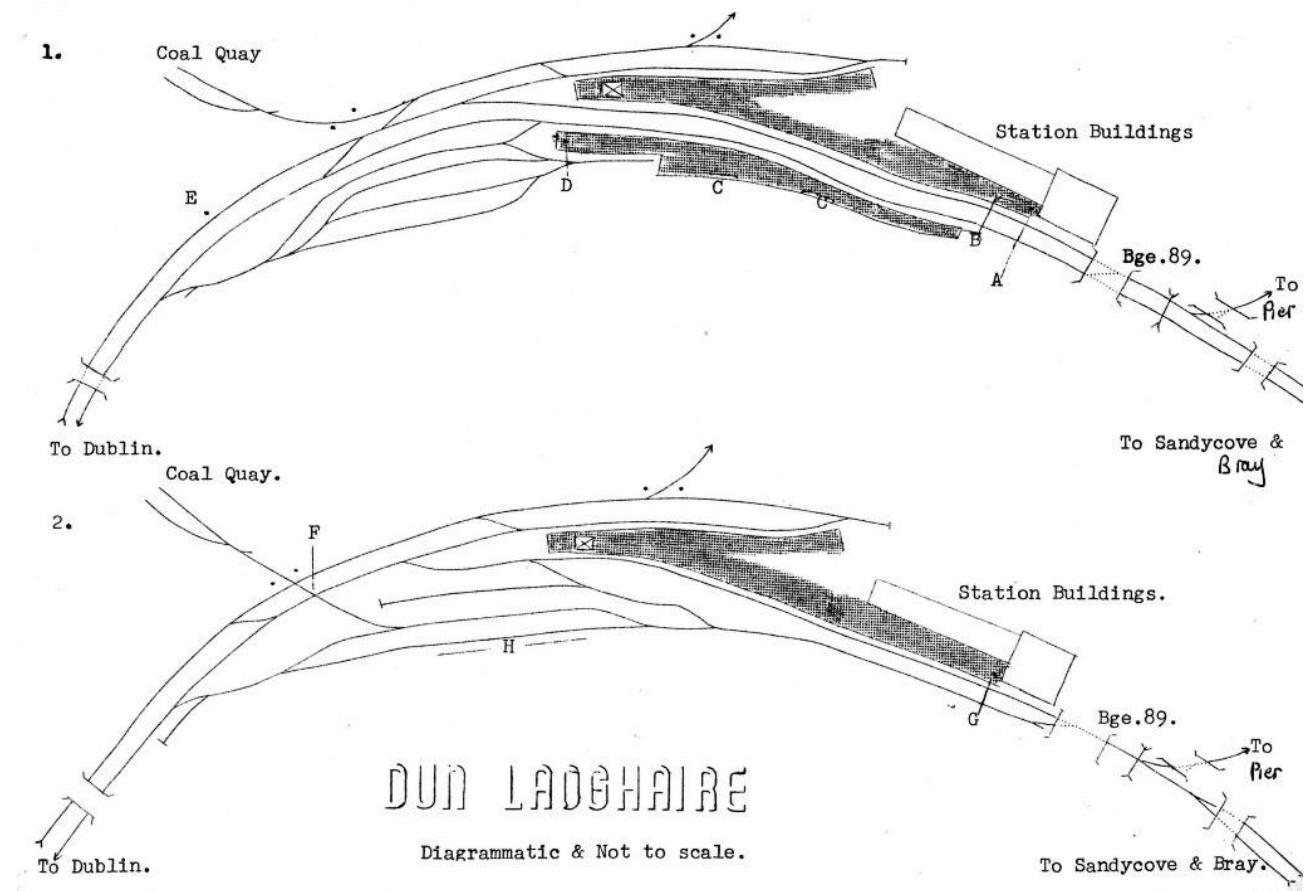
While the widening of the bridge was nearing completion work had commenced on the reconstruction of the station. On November 11 the water tank at the Sandycove end of the existing down platform was removed and in its place a three aspect colour-light signal was erected. Part of the platform face was then cut back some four to six feet thus allowing room for the new up main line through the station once the down line had been slewed and readjusted to the reconstructed down platform. This reconstruction was completed by the end of March 1957. In early February work commenced on the extensive track alterations necessary to enable a continuous double-track main line to be laid through the station. This substantial task was successfully carried out in stages, the major alterations being effected on Sundays during February and March. On Sunday February 17 the manganese crossing, by which the coal quay siding traversed the main line in the centre of the yard, was removed and a new connection to the coal quay was made from the bay sidings (see plan). On Sundays during March the new up line was laid through the yard, under the recently widened bridge and into the cutting although it was not connected to the existing up line at that time.

Finally, at the end of March construction of the new up platform in the station was started. This was carried out during the following three months without encroachment on the public road in front of the station beyond some two or three feet for a short distance at the Sandycove end of the new platform where an entrance to the station from the roadway was made. During May a handsome pre-stressed concrete footbridge was constructed linking the new platform with this entrance and the existing down platform, while ornamental wrought iron railings were erected on the footbridge and along the public road between the new station entrance and the widened overbridge. Two waiting shelters of a contemporary design were erected on the new platform while fluorescent lighting on attractive modern standards was also installed.

The track layout in the station yard was completed during June 1957 when three parallel carriage sidings and a run round loop were laid on the site of the old grassy bank removed during the first stage of the improvement scheme in September 1956. These four lines unite in an engine release cutting into the back of the up platform at its Dublin end. (see plan).

The new signalling installed at Dun Laoghaire to meet the requirements of a double line station consists, strangely, of both semaphore and colour-light signals. The up starting signals from the new platform and from the old bay platform on the down side of the station are both semaphores, while the down home and starting signals are both three aspect colour lights. A new colour light signal has been erected between Sandycove and Glenageary, close to the latter, serving as up distant for Dun Laoghaire. The Dun Laoghaire outer home signal - sited at Sandycove - remains, however, a semaphore.

With the connection of the new and existing up lines at the Sandycove end of the widened cutting in the early hours of Sunday June 23 the improvement scheme had been completed to an extent sufficient to allow suburban traffic to utilise the new up line and platform from that date. Thus the bottleneck created by the former single track main line through Dun Laoghaire station has been banished for ever.



Notes applicable to track diagram:

Diagram 1: At present.

Diagram 2: Before reconstruction.

A New colour light signal 3 down starter.

B New footbridge giving access to both platforms from Crofton Road.

C New up platform shelters.

D New semaphore signal - up starter.

E New colour light signal - down home.

F Manganese crossing from yard to Coal Quay.

G Water tank (removed November 1956)

H Site of waste ground "grassy bank".