

THE

# IRISH RAILFANS' NEWS

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Managing Committee:

L. Hyland (Editor)

B. MacAongusa

D. Seymour

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### **EDITORIAL**

We would like, first of all, to explain that this issue of "The Irish Railfans' News" has been delayed intentionally in order to report fully on the most sweeping closure of railways ever to take place in this country. We refer, of course, to the secondary lines of the GNR on which regular traffic ceased on October 1 and which are the subject of the feature article in this issue. Sweeping as this vast purge has been, it is not all, for on October 14 the remainder of the "Irish North" from Dundalk to Clones, the Glaslough-Cavan line and the Belturbet branch are to lose their passenger traffic. It is still too early to assess the devastating effect of these closures on the areas involved but it is most painfully obvious that the alternative road services leave a great deal to be desired.

Although generally comparable in frequency with the rail services they replace, the journey times of the buses are considerably longer and their connections often quite inconvenient. Bundoran is now 8¼ hours from Dublin and 6 hours from Belfast whereas by rail the times were 5¼ hours and 4¾ hours respectively. That these timings will discourage traffic will be most clearly seen when the handling of next season's summer visitors to the resort has to be dealt with. The fares on the alternative road services also invite severe criticism and justifiable resentment. In order to impose transport charges of a level equal to their standard road service fares, the UTA have found it necessary to introduce gradually on the alternative buses fares which are proving to be often almost double those of the withdrawn GNR trains. For example, the monthly season ticket from Enniskillen to Clones, formerly £3:18:0 by rail, has risen to £5:19:6.

Alternative road services for freight traffic in the areas affected by the closures make no provision in many cases for cross-border goods traffic formerly handled by the GNR. Indeed, the substitute road freight arrangements so far announced are in no way comparable to the amenities withdrawn and appear to suggest no more than an 'ad interim' measure.

While this sudden creation of vast rail-less tracts tends to spread a feeling of despondency and reduce faith in railways, none of us can view without elation the report of the opening of a completely new branch line to Castlemungret - the very antithesis of the situation in Northern Ireland. The opening of a railway in these days is extremely rare and this historic event can not but reassure us by demonstrating that railways still have an important role to play in Irish transport.

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As is customary with the October issue of "The Irish Railfans' News" a renewal subscription form for next year is included. Readers will, however, notice that we have had to increase the subscription rate from 2/6<sup>d</sup> to 3/- per annum due to the postage increase of 1956 and a recent rise in the cost of duplicating paper. We regret having to take this step but feel that our readers would prefer this small increase in price to a reduction in the number of pages per issue.

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# News Section

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## CIÉ DUBLIN AREA NEWS REPORT

### **Suburban Timetable**

Since September 16, a slightly improved timetable has been in operation on the Dublin suburban lines. One train additional to the normal winter service has been provided in each direction on the Harcourt Street - Bray line while one up train has been added to the Amiens Street - Bray service. The running time between Dublin and Bray by both routes has been cut by an average of 4½ minutes. This welcome, though slight, acceleration in the service has become possible with the allocation of additional diesel motive power units to suburban workings all of which, with the few exceptions mentioned below, are now operated either by railcar sets, A class or C class DE locos. The only remaining steam workings on the Dublin Suburban lines now consist of the Westland Row - Dun Laoghaire Pier boat trains and four odd non-link workings which are operated at peak hours on the Amiens Street - Bray line by steam locos of these boat trains. The latter four workings are the 08:20 and 08:52 Dun Laoghaire - Amiens Street (weekdays), the 17:23 Amiens Street - Dun Laoghaire (Monday to Friday), and the 17:48 Amiens Street - Dalkey (Monday to Friday). On Saturdays the 13:23 Westland Row - Dun Laoghaire and 13:28 Amiens Street - Dalkey are steam. Although the 07:37 Dun Laoghaire Pier - Kingsbridge boat train is still steam operated its reverse working - the 19:35 from Kingsbridge to the Pier - is worked by a DE loco as are all boat trains on Sundays. In this new timetable four steam locos are sufficient to operate the boat trains and the above non-link suburban workings.

### **Dieselisation Progress**

5 further C class 550 hp Metrovick DE locomotives, together with one further B class 960 hp Sulzer loco, have been delivered to CIÉ since our last issue, bringing to 30 and 11, respectively, the totals of each class delivered to date. Early in June loco E401 - the first of the 19 Maybach 400 hp DE locos under construction at Inchicore - emerged from the works and, together with E402, has since taken up shunting duties in Kingsbridge goods yard. Four more of these Maybach locos are now reported to be ready for traffic, while construction of the balance is progressing rapidly. Following the allocation of additional C class locos to traffic, steam motive power on the Galway - Tuam passenger trains was superseded by diesel in mid July while at the same time the branch to Castlecomer became dieselised, consequent on the replacement of the steam pilot engine in Kilkenny by a DE. On the introduction of winter services on the Dublin suburban lines on September 16 a number of A and C class locos were assigned to regular link workings on the Amiens Street - Bray - Greystones and Harcourt Street - Bray routes with the resultant slight improvements in running times as described in the previous paragraph.

### **Turf-Burning Locomotive**

Following exhaustive stationary tests in Inchicore Works, the long awaited first trial run of this loco was made from Inchicore to Kildare on August 16. Further trial runs over varying distances on the Dublin-Cork and Dublin-Galway main lines have been made since that date, but so far no statement has been released by CIÉ regarding the loco or its trial runs. In appearance the locomotive resembles the experimental "Leader" class of British Railways, designed, as is this turf burner, by Mr O.V.S. Bulleid - now CIÉ's Chief Mechanical Engineer. When running, the loco is comparatively silent unlike the diesel electrics, although it does boast their valuable operational advantage in being duo-directional. Should the present trials prove satisfactory a total of 50 turf burning locos will be constructed at Inchicore over the next few years.

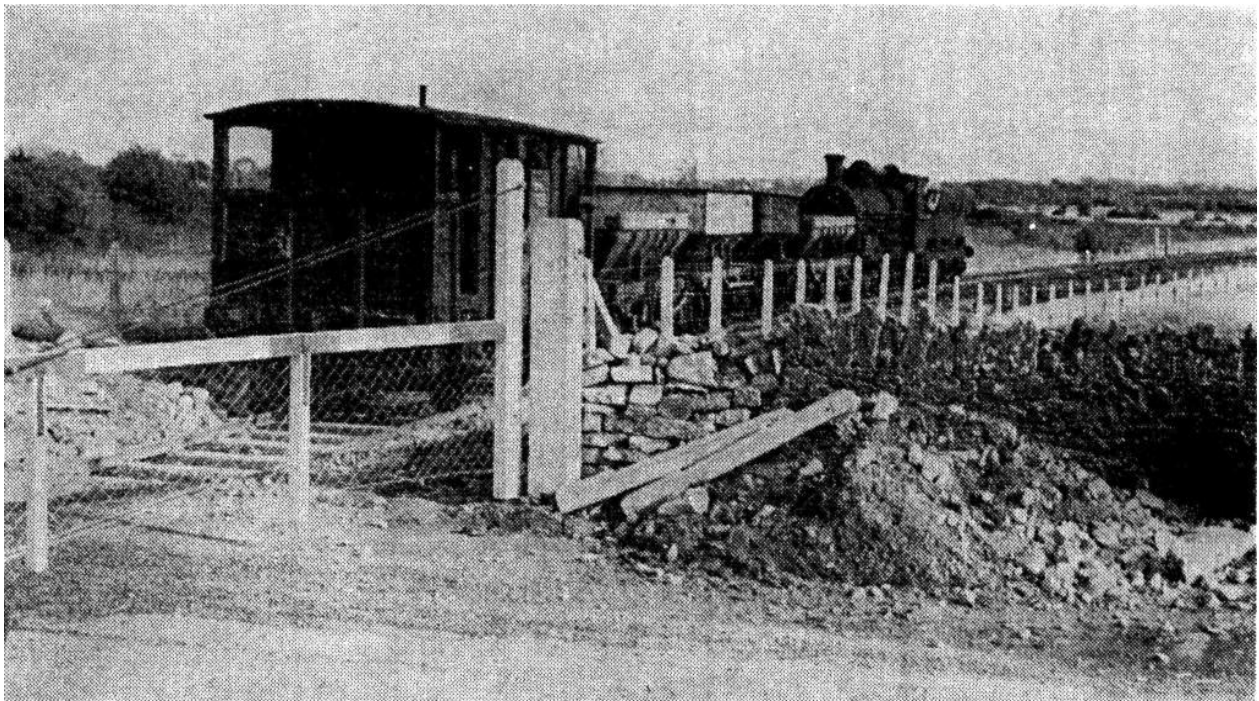
## **Rolling Stock Developments**

A number of the AEC railcars which were not originally provided with toilet accommodation are at present being fitted with suburban bus-type seating in replacement of that existing, which is more suited to main line service. By this conversion of seating it has been possible to increase the accommodation provided in each car from 44 (12 first and 32 second) to 74 (all second) as the new seating provides for three on one side of the central passageway and two on the other: This increase will enable greater economies to be achieved in future with these cars on suburban work. To date of writing nine cars - 2648 to 2656 inclusive - have been converted as above and are in traffic in the Dublin suburban area. Of the new 30' vans being at present constructed in Inchicore, as reported in our last issue, 61 are now in service. During July, diner 2400 underwent extensive reconstruction in Inchicore. The new layout comprises an 18 seat dining compartment, a central kitchen section and, at the other end, a most attractive lounge bar. The latter is of most modern appearance, is beautifully veneered and has contemporary lighting. A feature of the bar section is the unusual and attractive wrought iron partition on the corridor side.

## **CIÉ PROVINCIAL NEWS REPORT**

### **Castlemungret Branch**

On October 1, the day following the railway closures in the North of Ireland, the new three mile long branch line to the cement works at Castlemungret was officially opened. At a ceremony attended by the Directors of CIÉ and Cement Ltd, the Mayor of Limerick, Dáil deputies and representatives of local authorities, a satin ribbon stretching across the railway at Castlemungret was formally cut with golden scissors by the Chairman of Limerick County Council to allow the first freight train to leave the cement works for Limerick. On the initial journey the train, consisting of DE loco C204 and 15 laden wagons of cement, passed under a decorated arch bearing the arms of Munster and Leinster.



*A ballast train on the new Castlemungret branch. (Courtesy Echo Photo Service, Limerick; Block, Cork Examiner)*

Construction of the Castlemungret branch commenced in September 1956 after many years of negotiations between CIÉ, Cement Ltd, state and local authorities. A ministerial order made in November 1955, following a public inquiry in Limerick, finally bestowed on CIÉ powers to compulsorily acquire lands and build a railway line connecting the Cement factory with the Limerick-Tralee line about one mile from Limerick station. The construction of the earthworks of the branch, which was undertaken by Messrs Murphy Bros. of Cork in preparation for the laying of the permanent way, included the excavation of 20,000 cubic yards and the construction of three public road level crossings and eight culverts. The branch line which was laid by CIÉ is single track throughout with two sidings provided at Castlemungret for marshalling purposes. The junction with the Limerick-Tralee line at Rosbrien level crossing, near MP 2, is operated by a ground frame released by an Annett's key off either the Limerick-Patrickswell or Limerick Check-Patrickswell electric train staffs. The total cost of constructing the branch is estimated at £53,000. Consequent on the opening of this link line to Castlemungret transport of cement by road from the Limerick factory will cease, as the entire daily output of 800 tons will in future be carried over the new branch by rail.

### **Winter Timetable**

In addition to the slight improvements in the Dublin suburban services described elsewhere in this issue, some further amendments are included in the new winter timetable which has been in operation since September 16. Two trains additional to the normal winter service have been provided in each direction between Cork and Cobh while the substitution of rail for certain road connections at Manulla Junction has resulted in the provision of two extra trains between there and Ballina and vice versa. Five trains daily are now provided each way on this branch line. Substitution of steam by diesel motive power on the Ballina branch and on the Galway - Tuam passenger trains has enabled accelerations of 5-10 minutes to be made in the services in the new timetable. The 18:00 train from Kingsbridge, which ran to Kilkenny via Carlow in previous winters, has been extended to Waterford thus retaining its summer status and forming an early morning departure from Waterford to Kingsbridge via Carlow at 07:25. The buffet car provided for the first time last summer on the 18:50 Westland Row - Galway and its return working is retained this winter.

### **Enthusiasts Special To Tullow**

On September 21, a special steam train was run by CIÉ for the Railway Enthusiasts Club of Farnborough from Kingsbridge to Tullow and back. The train, consisting of loco 64, a new four-wheel van and three bogie coaches, departed from Kingsbridge at 12:20 and on the outward journey called at all stations on this 34¾ mile closed branch for inspection and photographic purposes. It returned at 16:22 semi-fast to arrive in Kingsbridge at 18:36. This unusual trip, in which the REC were joined by the IRRS, was part of a one week tour of Ireland organised by the REC and covering inter alia the Kingscourt, Carrickmacross (GNR), Edenderry and Cavan branches - all closed to passenger traffic - the Cavan & Leitrim system and the lines in the North West which have been since closed.

### **Extra Loco For C&L**

Loco 6T which recently underwent a complete overhaul in Inchicore works as reported in our last issue was sent to the Cavan & Leitrim section at the beginning of July bringing the stud of locos now at Ballinamore to its highest ever total of 10. The additional loco was required on the line to assist in handling heavy coal traffic from the Arigna mines, which in recent months has reached such proportions as to require the running of 4 special coal trains daily in each direction on the Arigna Tramway in addition to the one mixed train. Two of these specials run from Arigna to Belturbet with coal for Drogheda cement factory, while the other two run to Dromod with coal for the cement factory at Castlemungret, Co. Limerick.

## **Diesel Train Fires**

On August 7 the rear unit of a railcar on a suburban working from Bray to Harcourt Street caught fire near Dundrum station and was damaged. Passengers were evacuated from the unit at Dundrum and the fire was brought under control before the damaged car was towed to the Harcourt Street terminus. CIÉ stated that the fire was caused “by some outside agency, possibly a lighted cigarette or a dropped match”. On August 31, railcar 2612 was completely gutted by fire at Multyfarnham when working the 19:00 from Sligo to Dublin. When the fire was noticed the burning car was detached from the train and shunted into a siding where it burned out completely despite the gallant efforts of the 46 passengers and station staff who worked a chain of water buckets to the fire in the absence of any continuous water supply. CIÉ have so far been unable to detect the cause of the latter fire. Further to the report in our last issue of the fire which destroyed railcar 2617 near Killarney on June 13 last CIÉ have since stated that the fire was caused by “the overheating of some mechanical parts”. A fire which occurred in DE loco A56 hauling a Dublin-Cork train on August 11 caused only minor damage and was stated by CIÉ to have been due to “excess carbon in the exhaust system”.

## **GNR GENERAL NEWS REPORT**

### **Derry Line Dieselisation**

The Belfast-Londonderry line has since October 1 undergone a transformation due to the introduction of a further set of the new multiple unit diesel railcars and the replacement, with the older 600 series railcars, of the remaining steam trains to Derry. The 11:15 ex Belfast is now a six-coach train and on the date of its inauguration was: railcar 707, brake 1<sup>st</sup> 232, railcar 708, buffet 267, railcars 706 and 705. This set returns on the 16:10 ex Derry which has been accelerated from the 3 hours 10 minutes of the former 15:50 to 2 hours 45 minutes. Three coaches of this set on arrival at Belfast form the 20:05 to Derry and return on the 07:15 the next morning when they are joined to make the six-coach set again. All the remaining trains are three coach diesel sets, and the greatest acceleration is that of 40 minutes on the 09:20 (formerly 08:25) down. Railcar A has been transferred to Omagh where it is rostered to work two services to Dungannon and back, on the second of which it continues to Strabane before returning to its base. Use is made of railcar E on some of the local Portadown-Dungannon trains although a few steam workings remain. The 17:00 Belfast-Omagh which chases the 16:55 railcar Belfast-Derry is also steam. This train acts as a relief to the railcar which takes passengers for Omagh and beyond only. The most far-reaching effect of this dieselisation is that the through coaches between Dublin and Derry have now disappeared altogether.

### **Dundalk Works**

As considerable redundancy was foreseen in the works following the closure of the GNR secondary lines, a new company has been formed at the instigation of the Dublin Minister for Industry & Commerce. The company, known as “Dundalk Engineering Works Ltd”, has as its chairman Mr A.P. Reynolds and four directors, one each from GNR, CIÉ, and two local business interests. It is to lease the works from the GNR and will continue to maintain the rail and road equipment of the Board but it will also be free to accept, and indeed to seek, contracts outside the railway sphere.

### **Winter Timetable**

In view of the sweeping curtailments of services mentioned elsewhere in this issue the GNR postponed the introduction of the winter timetable until October 1. While generally similar services to those of last winter are in force on the lines remaining open, the following alterations are worthy of note. The 10:30 up and 17:30 down Enterprise Express workings have had five minutes taken from their schedule and now perform this 112½ mile journey in 2 hours 10 minutes - an average of 51.9 miles per hour. The Derry line has a revised, and to a large extent dieselised, service mentioned elsewhere in this issue, and

minor alterations have been made in the Belfast-Portadown suburban service due mainly to the closure of the line from Portadown to Armagh and Clones. A welcome feature of this winter's timetable is the provision of two additional trains on weekdays between Portadown and Dungannon. Details of the alternative services on the closed sections of railway are given in the paragraphs which follow.

### **Clones-Omagh**

Excitement reached great heights at Enniskillen and, indeed, all along the section during September 30 and hardly a train during the day did not encounter detonators and last-trip passengers in plenty. The culmination was to be seen in the last trains at Enniskillen. The 18:20 to Clones - loco 42 and 2 bogies - and to an even greater extent the 18:40 to Omagh - locos 74 and 155, two bogies and van - met with crowds, photographers and the customary detonators. The last train in from Dundalk arrived 6 minutes late with 196 heading two bogies, a wagon and a four-wheel van, while a three coach steam train made the last arrival from Belfast and Omagh. Buses are being run by the UTA roughly at the same frequency as the trains which have been withdrawn but changes are necessary at Enniskillen for all through journeys. North of Enniskillen services are advertised as buses but between Enniskillen and Clones the Erne Bus Service - which has come under UTA authority since October 1 - are shown as the operators.

### **Bundoran Branch**

Over 100 townspeople gathered in Bundoran on September 30 to speed the 14:25 to Enniskillen on its last journey. The train was made up of loco 42 and 2 bogie coaches and left to the explosion of detonators and prolonged whistles. At Pettigo it crossed loco 73 with 2 bogies and van making the last down train on the branch which, too, was received with great acclamation in Bundoran. On the following day - October 1 - buses took over the two daily workings and are operating through from Enniskillen to Bundoran with connections to and from Omagh at Ballinamallard. Although advertised in the amendment booklet as UTA these services are run by buses of the Erne Bus Company. Pettigo is served by a 'branch' bus from Kesh to Tullyhommon - just at Pettigo but within Northern Ireland.

### **Fintona**

In Fintona hundreds turned out to watch "Dick" haul tram 381 on its final trundle into the town. The staff had taken precautions to see that souvenirs would not be taken from the tram which is now in Belfast where it is hoped it will be preserved. "Dick" is presently unemployed and the townspeople are anxious that he should end his days in peaceful retirement, preferably not too far away. Buses are operated in replacement by the UTA from Fintona direct to Omagh, as the through Omagh-Enniskillen bus does not serve the town.

### **Portadown-Clones**

Considerable excitement arose on the last evening of operation on the Glaslough - Portadown sector of this line, principally in connection with the last train from Armagh to Portadown on which many travelled. Some delay was caused by over enthusiastic passengers pulling the communication cord. The service of buses in lieu of this line is more complex than on other closed lines. One route covers Belfast to Monaghan with, for the time being, rail connections to Clones, but this does not serve Killylea and Tynan which are covered by 'branch buses' from Armagh. The unfortunate passenger from Belfast to Clones has at least two changes in what was formerly a through service.

### **Cootehill Branch**

In June last the GNR commenced lifting the abandoned 7¾ mile branch from Shantonagh Junction - between Ballybay and Monaghan Road - to Cootehill. At the time of writing the task of demolition has almost been completed.

## **Pending Closures**

On September 20 the Transport Tribunal held a Public Inquiry to consider the GNR application for permission to withdraw passenger services from the Dundalk-Clones, Clones-Cavan, Ballyhaise-Belturbet and Clones-Glaslough lines. Speaking for the Board, Mr J.C. Bailie, Traffic Manager, said that in view of the closure of their counterparts across the border these lines could not, even with dieselisation, survive without considerable losses. In spite of many protests from local and other interested bodies the Tribunal granted authority for the withdrawal as from October 1. In view of the short notice, however, the Board decided to retain passenger services until Sunday October 13 after which alternative services will be provided by their own buses. Freight traffic on the sections mentioned is being retained. A supplement to the winter timetable has been published to give details of the rail services and their bus connections up to October 13. A further supplement will be issued covering the service of GNR buses to operate after that date. While the service is very similar to that in previous winter timetables the Belturbet branch has lost one of its two passenger trains, while the Clones-Cavan has one extra working from Clones in the morning and from Cavan in the evening. An interesting change is that the former steam trains on this line have been replaced for the period to October 13 by railcars C1 and C3 coupled back to back. It is worthy of note that when introduced in 1935 railcars C2 and C3 were intended to work in this fashion and, in fact, did so for some years. C1, however, is not so designed and has a rounded end which gives the present combination an extraordinary appearance. The Clones - Glaslough section is being worked by loco 72 and one coach making three return trips each weekday and two on Sundays with a short working to Monaghan only.

## **Enniskillen Express**

On and from July 22 an experimental weekday express service was provided between Enniskillen and Belfast. The service which covered the journey in 65 minutes less than the normal time taken, was much welcomed by the Enniskillen people and during its brief life span was well supported. The train, which consisted of a new 700 class multiple unit diesel car hauling a brake second, left Enniskillen each morning at 08:50 and called at Bundoran Junction and Omagh only. On account of the trailing junction at Omagh the motor unit had to run around the trailer coach there. Up to September 2 a connection was taken at Bundoran Junction from the 07:35 ex Bundoran. The return express working left Belfast at 19:00 and with the same calls arrived in Enniskillen at 21:05. Again, up to September 2, a connection was given at Bundoran Junction into a train arriving at Bundoran at 21:38. Although this service came too late to save the Enniskillen-Omagh line from closure, it demonstrated to those who used it the advantages which modern rail travel can offer over such a journey by comparison with the road/rail service now substituted.

## **Ballyhaise Layout**

At the end of September the GNR completed work on simplification of the over extensive layout of Ballyhaise. The island platform is now the only one in use and is signalled for two-way running to and from Cavan. Belturbet trains are, however, forced to use the up side both arriving from and departing for the branch. All but one of the sidings have been lifted.

## **CDRJC**

## **Subsidence**

Traffic on the Donegal-Killybegs line was suspended on September 25 when a section of track near Port halt - between Inver and Dunkineely - subsided, trapping one railcar in Killybegs. The breach was repaired very speedily and on September 27 a special railcar run for the REC was passed and goods traffic resumed. Passenger services recommenced on October 1.



## SL&NCR

### **Finis**

With the departure from Enniskillen, at 19:32 on September 30, of loco “Lough Melvin”, two bogie coaches and a goods brake van, the era of the Sligo, Leitrim & Northern Counties Railway came to a close. Crowds were present on the platform to bid farewell to the line which had served them for so long. At many stations en route almost the entire population gathered to pay their last respects and to wish the crews “Good Luck” in a future that is by no means promising. The train reached Sligo, almost an hour late, to the continuous explosions of detonators and the strident whistling of “Lough Melvin”. During the days which followed a number of trips were made to gather wagons and other property. The future of the locomotives, railcars and rolling stock of the company is uncertain, as no announcement regarding them has been made. Thus the last of Ireland’s privately-owned railways has passed on and it is certain that all rail lovers will feel a pang of regret to realise that this highly individualistic ‘little’ railway has, after so many years struggling, finally ceased to be. Alternative road passenger services in the area served by the late SL&NCR are being provided by CIÉ who now operate - for the first time in their history - public cross-border services. Since October 1 three CIÉ buses are being run daily in each direction between Sligo and Enniskillen, with an additional return working on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays only. Two of the daily buses in each direction - from Sligo at 06:15 and 16:00 and from Enniskillen at 06:05 and 20:20 - maintain similar schedules to those of the withdrawn SL&NCR trains over almost the same route as the closed railway, but the third daily bus, together with the thrice weekly one, operates via Glencar, covering the areas served by the withdrawn SL&NCR buses. Although freight traffic in the area of the SL&NCR within the Republic of Ireland will be handled by the CIÉ road freight department, no through cross-border services between Sligo and Enniskillen have been announced in substitution for the withdrawn goods trains.

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## **Feature Section**

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### **THE GNR CLOSURES IN THE NORTH-WEST**

It is difficult for those of us who were so severely shocked by the closures proposed but four months ago to realise that the lines threatened are now no more. Their demise was swift and ruthless and although nominally the sections earmarked for closure were Omagh-Enniskillen-Newtownbutler, Portadown-Armagh-Tynan and Bundoran Junction-Belleek, their closure simultaneously condemned the Belleek-Bundoran, Fintona Junction-Fintona, Armagh-Keady, Tynan-Glaslough and Clones-Newtownbutler stubs to a similar fate. This scythe-like stroke severing the GNR secondary lines, to the tune of 114½ route miles has also made the continued existence of the SL&NCR - at best a tenuous business - impossible and that last surviving of Ireland’s privately owned minor railways has thus fallen alongside the GNR with which it was so closely associated. Nor is this all, for, as reported elsewhere in this issue, the GNR have been granted permission to discontinue passenger services on the remainder of the “Irish North” and its associated connecting links, thereby almost denuding of railways the vast stretch of country between the CIÉ Dublin-Sligo line and the GNR Portadown-Derry line. It is therefore, an opportune, if melancholy, moment for us to paint a brief pen-picture, as before their closure, of these departed railways of which we have been so summarily bereaved.

The Clones-Omagh line - 49 miles in length - is the longest of the lines under review. Not a separate entity in itself, it comprises a portion of both the Dundalk & Enniskillen and Londonderry & Enniskillen Railways. The latter was opened from Omagh to Fintona on 15<sup>th</sup> June 1853, on 16<sup>th</sup> January

1854 extended from Fintona Junction to Dromore Road and on August 19 of the same year completed to Enniskillen. The Clones-Enniskillen section was opened by the Dundalk and Enniskillen Railway on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 1859. In 1860 the D&E took a lease of the L&E and the whole was in 1862 renamed the "Irish North Western Railway". The line has since had a rather uneventful history and has been distinguished by its very normality in day to day operation.

Clones (MP 40½) is the most extensive station on the section as befitted its position as cross roads of the Portadown-Cavan line with the Irish North Western Railway. There are three through platforms each of which can accommodate two trains of four bogies each. As frequently happens with GNR cross roads stations, the timetable grants to Clones a number of rush hours when trains converge from all directions at once, connect with each other in a pandemonium of passengers, parcels and papers, to disperse as quickly as they arrived, leaving the station to a more leisurely existence for an hour or so more.

Just half a mile outside Clones to the west, the Cavan line, on separate metals, diverges on the down side but in this length the enthusiast will find an apparent anomaly as mileposts 40 and 41 stand but some hundred yards apart! The explanation, that one is 40 miles from Portadown Junction via Armagh and the other 41 miles from Dundalk - the old INWR terminal at Barrack Street, not the more recent junction station - does not always dawn at first sight. Newtownbutler (MP 45½) and Lisnaskea (MP 52¼) are both crossing stations although each boasts but a single platform, unlike Maguiresbridge (MP 54¾) which has two. This station was also the western terminal of the Clogher Valley Railway up to its closure on 31<sup>st</sup> December 1941, although surprisingly little trace of it now remains. Lisbellaw (MP 58) is the next station, having in the centre of its one platform a signal post bearing up and down arms on opposite sides.

Enniskillen (MP 63) must rank as one of the most extraordinary stations on the line as it is sited in a semi-cutting at the base of a horse shoe curve so sharp that a speed limit of 5 mph is imposed on all trains passing through. There are two platforms with a release road in between the running lines and an avoiding line passing behind the up platform. A feature of the South Cabin is its situation on a hill overlooking the SL&NCR and as much of the GNR curve as possible. The consequent array of point bars climbing the bank is most impressive. A GNR trait here evident is the provision of a large 6' station name in concrete on the bank of the cutting - a feature also to be seen at Lisnaskea, Lisbellaw, Trillick and Dromore Road.

The tiny halt at Gortaloughan and Ballinamallard station (MP 68) intervene between Enniskillen and Bundoran Junction (MP 71). Trillick is a single platform halt 1½ miles further north while two platforms are the rule at Dromore Road (MP 76¼) and Fintona Junction (MP 82) whence the ½ mile branch to Fintona diverges on the up side. This branch came into being on the extension of the L&ER in 1854 and the passenger service is maintained by the famous horse tram No.381 hauled by one "Dick" who makes the 11 return trips each weekday to connect with trains at the Junction.

Omagh, where the former Portadown, Dungannon & Omagh Railway converges to form the GNR Belfast-Derry line, is a rather cramped station sited on a curve and with the junction actually between its platform faces. As the two bay platforms face Derry and Portadown respectively, the Enniskillen trains are forced to use the main line platforms - a rather inconvenient, although unavoidable arrangement, for, on arrival the Enniskillen coaches at the rear of a Belfast-Derry train usually lie foul of the junction points. At Omagh, like Clones, the timetable is wont to provide for periodical gatherings of trains interspersed with brief lulls.

Although not unique, as two others - Moyasta and Greenisland - are in current use, Bundoran Junction is certainly the best Irish example of a triangular junction and is furthermore in a most picturesque location enhanced by a clump of trees. The North spur has no platform and is used for through Omagh - Bundoran workings common in summertime. On the Enniskillen-Omagh side of the triangle there are

two platforms of which the Bundoran branch platform backs the down one inside the triangle. This platform, in addition to the usual offices, has a refreshment room and a small shed for the petrol luggage trolley used here. It is usual for the two main line trains to cross here when a branch train is due, to give three-way connection.

Irvinestown (MP 3½) - the first station - has a long siding used during the war for supplies to the RAF base at Castlarchdale. All stations on the branch are ETS block posts although at Kesh (MP 9¾) there is no loop and only one platform on the up side. Pettigo (MP 15) is the railhead for pilgrims to Lough Derg and thus has the largest passenger traffic concentration on the branch. Two platforms with special awnings running almost the entire length of the up one cater for the waiting passengers and it is not uncommon on the occasion of a pilgrimage to find the eight coach Bundoran Express run in duplicate with 800/900 passengers in all. Castle Caldwell (MP 22¾), a picturesque station on the shores of Lough Erne, and Belleek (MP 27½), of china-making fame, are both single platform stations. At the latter there is a siding to the potteries and beyond the station a narrow cutting emerging on to the Erne bridge - the chef d'oeuvre of the branch. At Ballyshannon the station is a two platform one on the south of the town and river. It is over a mile distant from the CDRJC station.

Bundoran terminus is well laid out with a long island platform, and it is here that the principal loco shed for the branch is found. Extension to Sligo was the ultimate idea of the promoters and the Enniskillen & Bundoran Railway changed its name to the Enniskillen, Bundoran & Sligo Railway before even the line to Bundoran was opened on 13<sup>th</sup> June 1866. The extension was never built and the line became part of the GNR on 1<sup>st</sup> October 1896.

The Portadown-Clones line started life through extensions of the Ulster Railway which had in 1842 reached Portadown. On 1<sup>st</sup> March 1848 the terminus was pushed south to Armagh and extended to Monaghan on 25<sup>th</sup> May 1858 and to Clones on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 1863, some four years after the arrival of the D&ER in that town. Although originally double track Portadown-Armagh and Monaghan-Clones, the latter section was singled in 1932 and two years later the Richhill (MP 6¾) - Armagh was likewise dealt with. Retreat Halt (MP 7⅝) is remarkable in that it has no platform and passengers boarding and alighting from trains have to do so by means of small steps kept for the purpose.

Armagh, at MP 10½, is the most extensive intermediate station and is responsible for most of the passenger traffic. Here, until its closure in 1933, diverged the Newry & Armagh Railway to Markethill and Goraghowood and at the other end of the station the 8 mile line to Keady makes a facing junction with the Armagh up platform line (Portadown-Clones is 'up'). The Keady branch is but a portion of its former extent as prior to 1924 it continued to Castleblayney. The line from Armagh to Keady was opened on 31<sup>st</sup> May 1909. It was deprived of all but a daily goods train in February 1932 and the intermediate stations, Armagh (Irish Street), Milford, Ballyards and Tassagh were closed.

Onwards from Armagh the Clones line climbs through Killylea (MP 15¼) to Tynan (MP 16¾) where one is immediately struck by the station architecture which, with Glaslough (MP 21½), is quite unlike the others passed. The explanation is that this section of the railway passes the fringe of Tynan Abbey and it was made a condition of the construction that the stations should harmonise with their distinguished surroundings. Tynan was the eastern terminus of the Clogher Valley Railway which we previously met at Maguiresbridge. Between Tynan and Glaslough the border is crossed and the line drops in to Monaghan (MP 27¼) - a fair sized station which has a considerable goods traffic. Through Smithboro' (MP 33¼) the railway drops gradually to its junction with the Enniskillen line at Clones. All the stations south of Richhill are block posts but Smithboro' is frequently switched out.

On all these lines, except the Portadown-Clones, steam trains predominate and frequently take the form of a PP class 4-4-0 with a two or three bogie train according to traffic. The U class 4-4-0s are also common, particularly on the heavier trains on the "Bundoran Express" link, while a few light workings and one of the winter trains on the Bundoran branch are handled by one of the C railcars. The AEC

railcar sets have also been used extensively on the Portadown-Clones section and on odd workings elsewhere.