

THE

# IRISH RAILFANS' NEWS

Volume 5

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No.2

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**EDITORIAL**

It is a well-known proverb that one must "take the rough with the smooth" and in the last few months CIÉ has provided us with plenty of both.

On the one hand there has been distinctly rough treatment in the four railway closures - the Harcourt Street line, now but a memory; the Tullow branch; the Ballyhaise - Belturbet branch of the erstwhile GNR and the narrow gauge Cavan & Leitrim system. The last mentioned in particular fell not only as a heavy blow on the railway enthusiast fraternity who had learned to love its atmosphere and antiquity, but also on the railwaymen whose way of life it had moulded into the "Cavan & Leitrim" spirit. With its closure, a gallant 'little' railway passes away leaving the little lakes, the little hills and, more important still, the little towns it served in solemn silence. It is sad that such should be so.

On the smooth side, to partly offset these depressing happenings, is the undoubted overall stimulus of CIÉ in general, brought about by the vigorous policy of Dr Andrews and his new administration. This reawakening has boosted staff morale and a scheme allowing a percentage to staff who attract new business to the Board's services has brought salesmanship home to all employees. The remodelled rates policy has enabled the rail section to win back and to hold lost traffic, while the camping coach experiment shows that types of traffic new to CIÉ are not to be neglected. Overall is an infectious enthusiasm to brighten and modernise the railway service and make it more attractive. The success of these measures, however, will be determined by the response forthcoming from the general public.

The appearance of a book dealing solely with Irish Railways is an occasion of note but when the book covers a subject hitherto as much neglected as Irish Industrial lines have been and, furthermore, is written and published by as well-known an authority as Walter McGrath, the event must not pass unheralded. The booklet entitled "Some Industrial Railways of Ireland" will soon be on the market. It will have over 40 illustrations and will deal with 22 minor lines, many of them heretofore unrecorded. The background and 'atmosphere' of the railways will be especially described. Amongst the lines to be featured are: the unique Bianconi railway in Co. Clare which had an oil burning steam rail-lorry and was equipped with three signal cabins in its one mile of track; Ford's rooftop railway in Cork; the full story of Allman's tramway, Bandon (Loco 495); the Shannon scheme construction with its 106 narrow gauge locomotives; the line from Lucan (GS&WR) to Baldonnell aerodrome; the island railways at Haulbowline and Achill, etc., etc. The author intended publishing only 500 copies but has been urged by many enthusiasts to increase the number to 1,000. Your copy may be reserved by sending the modest charge (7/- post free) to the publisher.

**-o-O-o-o-O-o-**

Regular readers will notice that some of their suggestions for improvement in "The Irish Railfans' News" have been embodied in this issue. To cater for those whose interests are in Irish stations a new feature called "Station Survey" is included and for the material for the pioneer article we are indebted

to Mr S. Carse. Due to the pressure on space in this issue “Journey Jottings” has had to be curtailed.

### **SOME ARTICLES OF IRISH RAILWAY INTEREST**

#### **Railway Magazine**

January     Working of the GNR (I) (Paragraph)  
                 Bog Reclamation Railways (Letter)

February   Cheap Trains Act 1858 (Letter)

#### **Railway World**

April        The Case of the Vanished Engines (Exported from Ireland to Spain)

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## **News Section**

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### **CIE GENERAL NEWS REPORT**

#### **Chairman's Speech**

While addressing Dublin Chamber of Commerce on January 13, Dr C.S. Andrews outlined how CIÉ intended to meet the challenge of the new Transport Act decreeing that they must pay their way within five years. The aim now would be not only to prevent a decline of traffic on the railways but to get more traffic and a target has been set to increase the Board's revenue by 10%. Package deals will be offered to firms to carry all their traffic on an annual contract basis. An advisory service to managements of businesses will be established by CIÉ to freely advise on transport problems without obligation and to encourage the use of containers and other modern equipment. Emphasis will be on service in the drive for increased traffic. The Chairman added that CIÉ believed that the main areas of population should not, unless for very cogent reasons, be deprived of a railway service. No line would be closed where there was any hope that CIÉ's best efforts could save it. Patently uneconomic lines which merely imperilled the network as a whole would, however, be closed and removed. It was intended to extend the dieselisation programme to the former Great Northern portion of the undertaking and the ultimate object was to eliminate steam entirely from the system.

#### **Rolling Stock Developments**

Work has continued at Inchicore on the construction of the new open-centre second-class coaches and to date of writing up to number 1466 has been completed. In February and March suburban steel composites 2170 and 2171 appeared in traffic painted in the standard CIÉ green livery with black roofs and ends. These are the first of these coaches to be painted and are a great improvement on the unpainted steel finish which they have had since their construction. The former MGWR Royal Saloon - No.346 - has recently had its six-wheeled bogies removed and replaced by four-wheel Pullman bogies recovered from one of the four Pullman cars which has now been scrapped. This saloon was used frequently during 1958 for the transport of semi-invalids on Knock pilgrimage trains. Stretcher cases are, however, not conveyed except in the two ambulance coaches 94M and 163M. The coaches being converted into camping coaches are: HC1: 803, HC2: 811, HC3: 802, HC4: 934, HC5: 832 and HC6: 347.

#### **Camping Coaches**

The Chairman of CIÉ announced on January 26, while speaking to the Galway Chamber of Commerce,

that the Board had decided to provide Holiday Camping coaches at three centres on the CIÉ system during the coming summer and autumn. Two coaches each are being placed at Carrick-on-Shannon, Killarney and Dungarvan from May 2 to October 24, this being the first time ever that such coaches have been available on the CIÉ system. Shortly after the announcement, work commenced in Inchicore works on the conversion and fitting out of a batch of six varied corridor timber coaches as caravan coaches. The first of these, numbered HC1, has since been finished in a dull pink and cream livery and includes sleeping accommodation for eight persons, a spacious living room and a fully equipped kitchenette. Lighting, heating and cooking are by Kosangas while bed and table linen, crockery, cutlery, cooking utensils, etc., are also provided. Bookings are being arranged for one and two week periods on condition that the hirers buy in advance ordinary return rail tickets from their home station to the camping coach site for not less than six adults. Priority is being given to parties travelling the longest rail distance. The rentals of the coaches range from £7:10:0 to £12:0:0 per week depending on the month chosen. It has been stated that the conversion and fitting of each coach costs £650 and that, if this year's experiment proves successful, it is intended to provide further camping coaches at many more centres next year. The first coach was completed in early March and placed on exhibition at the end of platform 3 in Amiens Street from March 16 to March 28 when it was transferred to Westland Row. CIÉ deserve to be congratulated on their enterprising move and it is hoped that this venture will meet with the full support that it undoubtedly deserves.

### **Green GNR Stock**

Further progress has been made at the Dundalk Works on the repainting of former GNR coaches in green CIÉ livery and to date of writing no less than 10 coaches, 3 "600" class railcars and 1 vacuum braked bogie wagon have appeared in traffic. These are in addition to the coaches mentioned in our last issue. All coaches which have been repainted since January, in addition to being prefixed with the letter 'C', are being suffixed with the letter 'N'. A number of the more recently painted coaches bear the CIÉ emblem but only one - first class coach C90N - has appeared with class numerals on the doors. The additions are: Coaches 23, 47, 66, 67, 74, 90, 95, 110, 122, 325; Railcars 601, 605, 609; Wagon 779.

### **Brighter Stations**

Following the creation of a new post of General Services Officer in CIÉ in January last, a campaign was launched to brighten and clean railway stations throughout the system. Amiens Street Station was first chosen and since our last issue this terminus of the former GNR has undergone a veritable transformation. The grimy roof glasswork has been cleaned and the interior of the station has been entirely repainted and redecorated in a pleasing livery of yellow and grey and this, together with brilliant fluorescent lighting installed throughout, has undoubtedly created a brighter and more comfortable atmosphere. The exterior stone of the building has been cleaned by sanding while the large white letters "C. I. E." have been erected high up on three sides of the station tower. These letters, illuminated by night by neon, can be seen from a great distance. A large green "C.I.E." emblem has also been erected above the main entrance in place of the former lettering "G.N.R.". In February decoration and brightening of Kingsbridge terminus was commenced. All glass work was cleaned and the station has been finished in a very attractive livery - white, ecru, bright yellow and purple stone - while the main booking hall is undergoing a complete renovation and reconstruction. During March similar cleaning and redecoration of Westland Row station commenced and it appears that this station is to be finished in a beautiful livery of soft pink and pale grey. CIÉ recently announced that it intended in the future to vary the livery of each station to suit the surroundings rather than adhere to the standard green and yellow for all stations throughout the system.

### **Theatre Trains**

On January 15, CIÉ operated the first theatre special on the recently acquired section of the former GNR within the State. A train consisting of ex GNR loco 197 hauling five CIÉ second class centre

corridor coaches and an ex GNR centre corridor brake was run on this date from Dundalk to Dublin in connection with a pantomime in a city theatre. The usual CIÉ combined tickets covering return rail travel, seat in theatre and transport between the theatre and the Dublin terminus were issued for this special. Demand proved to be so heavy that the train was completely booked out and it became necessary to run another similar special a fortnight later on January 29. It would now appear that the popularity of such theatre trains is well established on all sections of the CIÉ system. Since our last issue theatre specials have been run on a number of occasions from the following centres to Dublin calling at the principal intermediate stations en route: Wexford, Waterford via Port Laoighise, Kilkenny via Carlow, Cork, Thurles, Limerick via Nenagh, Athlone via Tullamore and via Mullingar, Dundalk and even Belfast. It indeed appears that similar trains may also be run in the future to centres other than Dublin as already theatre excursions have operated from Dublin to the Wexford Festival in October last and cheap fares have been offered by ordinary trains to and from the Mullingar Drama Festival.

### **CIÉ LOCAL NEWS REPORTS**

#### **Rugby International, February 14**

On this date Ireland met England at Lansdowne Road and to deal with the traffic on the local services some steam locos put in an appearance. The 13:13 from Amiens Street was a 4-car diesel followed by Loco 200 (0-6-0) with 6 bogies on the 13:28. Loco 210 (UTA, ex GNR 4-4-0) arrived at 13:31 with a 10 bogie special from Belfast, the make-up of which included kitchen cars 272 and 399 and, at rear, control trailer 9. Loco 196 (0-6-0) took this special on to Lansdowne Road at 13:49. Meanwhile 626 (0-6-0) and five bogies left at 13:33; A60, HV and 6 bogies left at 13:46 and A29, HV, 9 bogies and LV arrived at the home signal with the special from Cork which could not continue to Lansdowne Road until 13:41½. The Limerick special - B112, 7 bogies and HV - suffered a similar fate at the home signal awaiting the arrival of loco 199 (CIÉ, ex GNR 4-4-0) and 6 bogies of ex GNR stock on the Howth to Lansdowne Road through train - a feature appearing for the first time on an "International" Saturday. The 14:07 - C217, 5 bogies and HV - and the 14:10 special - loco 625 (0-6-0), 7 bogies and LV - completed the outward procession to the ground. As predicted in our last issue the CIÉ entrance to Amiens Street Junction was opened to handle the crowd for this event.

#### **Harcourt Street**

CIÉ are at present engaged in the lifting of track at Harcourt Street Station and already the turntable and some track have been removed. The station is to be offered for sale shortly and the remainder of the line will be treated as two separate tracks for lifting purposes.

#### **Enniscorthy Pilot Loco**

On Saturday February 28 loco 186 (0-6-0) departed ceremoniously from Enniscorthy for Wexford and since then Enniscorthy has had no regular pilot engine and the shed there has been closed. From March 2 all shunting previously done by the pilot engine has been attended to by the DE locomotives of the up "Day Goods", which is allowed over 3 hours in Enniscorthy, and the down "Night Goods" which spends an hour there. The 15:45 mixed train Enniscorthy - Wexford is now worked by the DE loco of the down "Day Goods" and returns at 17:30 instead of 18:15. Six-wheel coach 75M - all second! - has been reported on this link recently. The only regular steam train into Enniscorthy is now the Up "Night Goods" which continues northwards hauled by a DE loco while the steam loco returns light to Wexford.

#### **Waterford - Macmine Diesels**

It is learned that during January trials were carried out on the North Wexford line from Waterford to Macmine Junction with both diesel railcar sets and DE locomotive hauled trains. As yet, however, the steam passenger trains working on this branch have not been replaced by diesel motive power. The

goods trains on the line are already handled by DE locos, usually of the B class.

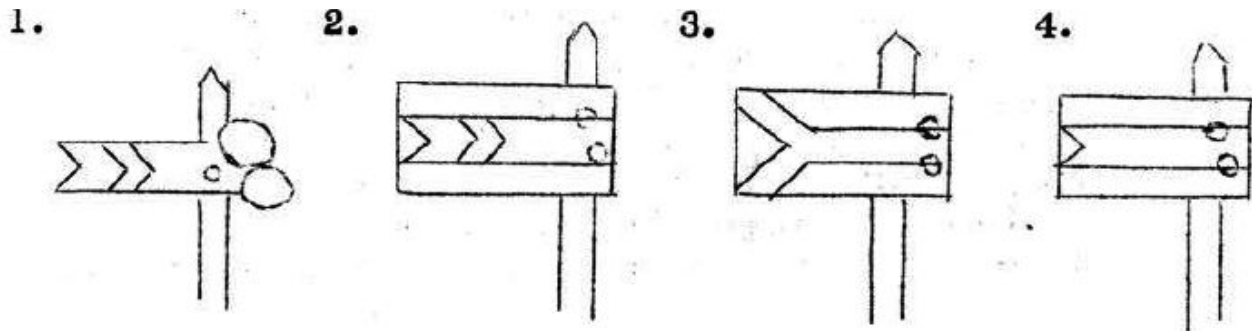
### **Accident At Monasterevan**

The fortunes of CIÉ were at a low ebb on Good Friday (March 27) when the 03:50 Dublin - Waterford goods running at some 45 mph between Cherryville Junction and Monasterevan was derailed at Hybla bridge between MP 35 and 35¼. Permanent way workers were making track adjustments at the time and a length of rail which had been removed caused loco B101 to leave the track and plough into the ballast. The leading wagons of the train containing sodium chlorate went on fire and 14 were destroyed or damaged although no one was injured. Both up and down lines were blocked. Trains were diverted via Carlow and Kilkenny to Port Laoighise while the line was being cleared and the track slewed to clear the disabled locomotive which had remained upright and, in fact, suffered very little apparent damage. The up line was re-opened by the passing of Friday's 21:15 from Cork early on Saturday morning. The down line was re-opened by a light engine at 17:00 on Saturday. Three cranes - Inchicore, Broadstone and Athlone - were in use for clearing the line of debris.

### **Tullog Closure**

The closure of the 34¾ mile Tullog branch was fittingly marked by the inclusion of two bogies for members of the IRRS in the composition of the last down train - an empty cattle special - on Sunday March 15. The train, hauled by loco 171 (0-6-0) with 22 wagons and van behind the coaches, left Islandbridge Junction at 13:56½ and stopped at Sallins to attach the four-wagon track lifting train and at Dunlavin and Colbinstown to load station property. At Baltinglass the cattle wagons were detached and the loco took coaches and lifting train to Tullog where the latter was deposited on a siding as soon as 171 had been turned. The laden special returned on March 16 with 16 laden and 6 empty wagons and called at Harristown, Naas, Sallins, Straffan and Hazelhatch. At 14:02 on March 21, A46 left Kingsbridge on the last race special to Naas with HV, 5 bogies and LV. This was the last train to use even this two mile portion of the branch and the ETS has since been removed beyond Naas, there being now but one engineer's train allowed in the section at a time.

### **New Signals Near Cork**



The tall semaphore signal at the north portal of Glanmire tunnel has been replaced by a single aspect colour light. This signal acts both as Cork Down Outer Home and Kilbarry Advance Starter and is the first colour light signal in Cork apart from the signals situated inside the 4,065 ft long tunnel - presently Ireland's longest. Kilbarry Down Distant has also changed greatly in appearance in recent times as it has been successively: 1) a normal fishtailed semaphore, 2) a "placard" (a plastic arm imprinted on a rectangular white sighting board which moves with the arm) with a red fishtailed arm and a yellow chevron, 3) a "placard" with a red 'Y' laid on its side and now 4) a "placard" with a yellow fishtailed arm and no chevron. This distant falls automatically to the off position when the Kilbarry stop signals are pulled clear.

### Albert Quay Buses

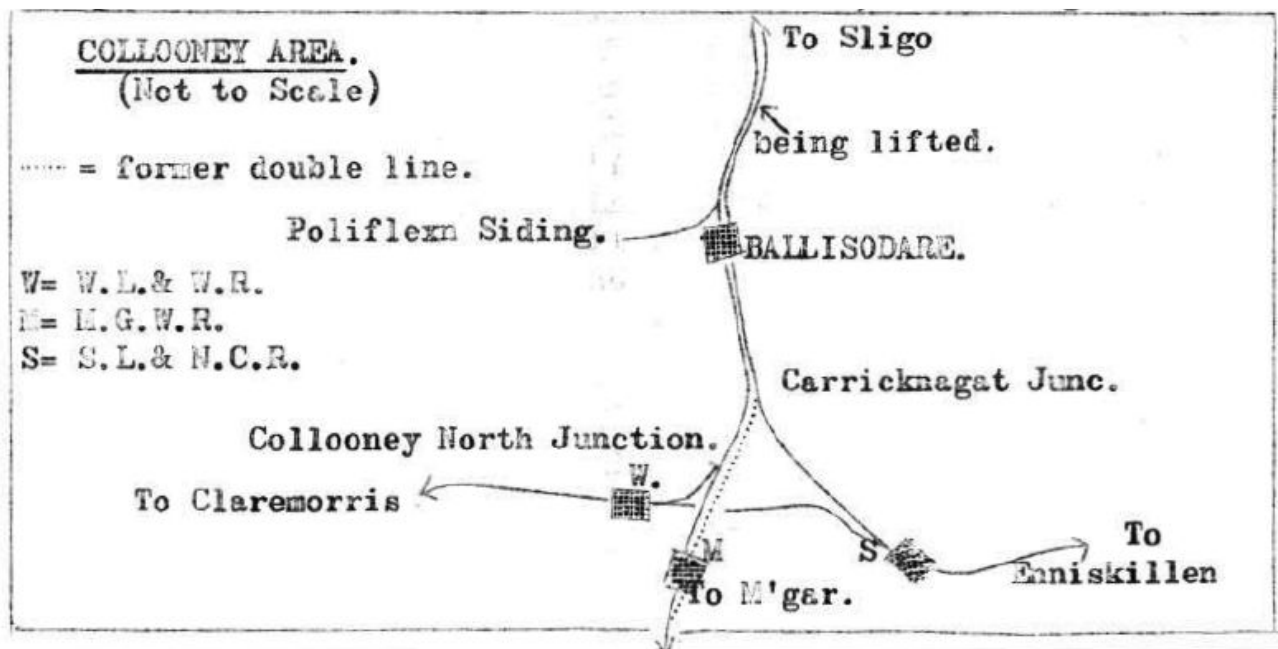
Since January 12, Albert Quay Station - the ex CB&SCR Cork terminus - has in addition to its normal activity been acting as the temporary city bus terminal. Part of the goods yard has been re-surfaced as buses enter from Albert Street and, having loaded, depart by the gateway on to Albert Quay.

### New Siding In Cork

During the reconstruction of Penrose Quay, close to Glanmire Road Station, a new double line siding has been laid on to it from Cork goods yard. This part of the Cork quayside previously had railway connection with the Cork City Railway.

### Single Track Into Sligo

ETS instruments which had been installed in Sligo and Ballisodare signal cabins were brought into use on January 18 as, since this date, trains in both directions have been using the former up line as a single track preparatory to the removal of the former down line. The 4½ mile section of the Mullingar - Sligo line is also used by trains from Limerick via Claremorris and Collooney North Junction and was used by SL&NCR trains from Enniskillen until the closure of that line on 30<sup>th</sup> September 1957. Up to 1923 the double track to Collooney extended through Carricknagat Junction (1½ miles beyond Ballisodare) but on the destruction of the signal cabin there the junction was moved to Ballisodare and the two single lines ran parallel to the site of the former cabin, then diverged.



### Belturbet Closure

Coincidental with the termination of all services on the Cavan & Leitrim section, the four mile standard gauge branch from Ballyhaise has closed to all traffic on and from April 1. Passenger services were withdrawn on and from 14<sup>th</sup> October 1957 and since then a daily goods train, worked by the Dundalk - Cavan goods loco, has been the only service. There was, even to the end, a fair measure of goods traffic on the line although the coal traffic off the Cavan & Leitrim had ceased in 1957. Since the extensive alterations made to Ballyhaise in 1958 the branch to Belturbet has been worked as a siding since June 2 of that year.

### Monaghan Developments

The 5¾ mile stub of the former Portadown - Clones line between Monaghan and Glaslough, which was

inherited by CIÉ on the dissolution of the GNR and which has been abandoned, is now being lifted. At Monaghan, the North Cabin is now permanently closed and the North goods yard out of use entirely. The South cabin remains in use but consequent on the closure in March of Smithboro' cabin the Clones - Monaghan section is now worked by "one engine in steam". It is understood, however, that the long section Clones - Monaghan instruments are being retained for the present.

### **Cavan & Leitrim Closure**

Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> March 1959 will be long revered in railway enthusiast circles as the last day of regular operation on the narrow gauge Cavan & Leitrim system. The period leading up to the closure was one of great excitement. On Monday March 30 the IRRS organised a large party from Dublin and accordingly on the 08:00 from Ballinamore Loco 6T worked four coaches and two vans to Dromod for the return 12:20 service. One of these coaches was worked to Belturbet (Loco 6T) and two to Arigna (Loco 5T) while loco 4T with the fourth coach formed the 14:35 to Dromod. This loco had been in use in the morning on a special to Drumshanbo for clearance of goods wagons. All of these trains were very well filled and the Arigna train was escorted by half-a-dozen cars on the roadside sections but it was on the 19:00 Ballinamore - Dromod that the crowd was greatest. The train was two coaches and van hauled by 6T. On March 31 loco 6T also performed the "lion's share" of the work on the 08:00 to Dromod, 12:20 thence to Belturbet and 16:20 back to Ballinamore. Again crowds travelled on all trains, loco 5T worked two crammed coaches to Arigna and 6T also had two for Belturbet, but the 19:00 - the real climax of the day - was double-headed: Locos 5T and 4T with coach 7L, van 14L, coaches 5L, 6L, 21L, 1L and van 18L - the entire working stock. This monster train was well filled and many came to pay their last respects at crossings and halts en route while the salute of detonators was at times ear-splitting. Speeches were made at Dromod and a meeting held after the train returned to Ballinamore to protest at the immediate lifting of the track which commenced on April 1. Strangely, the line is to be lifted outwards from Ballinamore to Belturbet and Dromod (the Arigna line will be dealt with by road) and the stock will be broken up, it is said, at these places. It is anticipated that coaches 1L and 7L, some engines, and possibly loco 6T, will be transferred to the West Clare section. The 'substitute' service is provided by one bus. It works from Ballinamore to Dromod on weekdays at 08:30 and returns at 12:15 whence it continues to Belturbet and back on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays and serves Arigna on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. It also runs to Dromod on weekdays at 19:30 and returns at 20:40. The freight side is being handled by lorry services based on Dromod, Carrick-on-Shannon and Cavan. From the foregoing it will be seen that Ballinamore suffers considerably from the closure - the railway was the largest employer in this small town - and is not even recompensed by the basing of road freight services there.

### **Interworking**

The 10:30 local train from Amiens Street to Donabate and the 13:00 Amiens Street - Howth together with their return workings are at present being handled by CIÉ railcar sets. The cars of the 10:30 on their return to Amiens Street run light to Fairview shed for servicing before operating the 12:53 to Dalkey.

## **UTA NEWS REPORT**

### **Coaching Renumbering**

The UTA is in progress of renumbering its entire coaching stock, including that inherited from the GNR, into one series. The system which has been adopted is not readily apparent as some unrepainted coaches have been seen with their GNR numbers prefixed 'N'. Others, repainted in Brunswick Green, are apparently renumbered and also prefixed 'N'. Control trailer 9 has become N586 - the 500 series being reserved for unpowered diesel fitted coaches as is the case with similar coaches on the NCC. The



‘N’ here serves to indicate that the cable couplings are not adaptable to the UTA diesel cars.

### **Locomotive Notes**

A recent visit - March 17 - to Adelaide Shed, Belfast, revealed the following ex-GNR locos on shed: 13, 16, 40, 41, 76, 78, 79, 97, 102, 109, 119, 167, 183, 192, 196, 200, 201, 202, 205, 208 and 210. In addition the following were on shed but marked ‘X’ which is understood to indicate that they will be withdrawn as they become due for repairs: 4, 5, 42, 66, 83, 86, 87, 122, 127, 142, 156, 165, 185, 186, 187 and 189. On the scrap lines were: 6, 21, 22, 46, 69, 108, 125, 157, 160 and UTA (ex NCC) 2-6-0 No.110, some of them already partially cut up. On the same date on the NCC section locos 50, 56, 57 (2-6-4T) and 19 (0-6-0T) were in steam at York Road, while 2-6-4Ts 2 and 7 were also in steam - the latter on the 13:05 from Derry. On shed at Ballymena were locos 72, 78, 80, 94 and 99, but only the last-mentioned was in steam. Also seen in Ballymena was locomotive 230 (BCDR 30) which has recently been prepared for preservation. This loco was until recently in the shed at Cookstown Junction which is now closed completely and the track into it removed. There are also three locos stored in Carrickfergus: 14, 96 and 103, and a further three in various stages of disrepair on a siding at Greenisland: 76, 85 and 86.

### **Railway Lifting**

The lifting of the line to Newcastle mentioned in our last issue has continued and to date of writing - March 27 - only about two miles beyond Banbridge remains. The lifting train in use on the section is that belonging to the UTA with a number of six-wheel trucks as additional rail wagons. Loco 10 - marked with the ominous ‘X’ - was observed between Banbridge and Knockmore with a train load of rails and sleepers on the date mentioned. It is also learned that lifting operations on the Banbridge - Scarva line have just been started. Lifting operations are also in progress on the Armagh - Keady line since March last following the sale of the effects from the stations involved.

### **New Diesels On Trial**

Further progress has been made with the complete dieselisation of the erstwhile NCC section of the UTA and 8 additional railcars Nos. 44-51 are now ready. 51 was on trial in mid-March and will probably by now be in traffic. These new cars, which, like their predecessors 36-43, are converted from existing coaches, are not main line stock but compartment type coaches and 47 and 50 have been observed working on the shore line to Carrickfergus and Whitehead.

## **SL&NCR**

### **Auction**

The disposal of the effects of the SL&NCR in the Republic of Ireland will take place in Manorhamilton on April 28 and 29. The track from the “Border Bridge” near Belcoo to Carricknagat Junction will be disposed of as well as the locomotives and rolling stock at present in store at Manorhamilton.

## **CDRJC**

### **Revised Timetable**

A revised timetable has been in force on the CDR since April 1. Although there is no reduction in the number of services in any section, departure times have been altered in some cases, the Strabane & Letterkenny line timings partially recast and most trains slightly decelerated.

## JOURNEY JOTTINGS

### **February 2: Rosslare Strand - Waterford**

With a characteristic coughing sound B111 drew into Rosslare Strand from Rosslare Harbour with a steel bogie second, a steel composite coach, HV and 2 bogie vans, to await the arrival at 07:24 of loco 354 (0-6-0), 6-wheel van, 2 bogie compos and LV, on the 06:50 Wexford - Rosslare Harbour. Together these trains provide the only daily service from Wexford to Waterford by the South Wexford line. At Killinick some minutes were spent loading newspapers from a CIÉ lorry for distribution en route. All the stations on the South Wexford line have a marked similarity in layout - down loop, island platform, up loop and goods loop are common to all, as also is a beet loading bank, for sugar beet is the business of the line. Passenger traffic was light as befitted the early hour but some shoppers and school children were picked up at the intermediate stations. Horsebox No.3003 was attached at Campile, despite which delay B111 just avoided blocking A13 with 22 wagons and van on the 08:55 goods from Waterford to Rosslare Harbour. Loco 166 (0-6-0) was standing behind Waterford East Cabin on pilot duty on the CIÉ wharf. At 09:50 the North Wexford Goods arrived with 10 wagons and van while C222 departed 10 minutes later with HV and 12-wheel bogie brake/compo 861 on the South Wexford market train (SO). Later on loco 186 (0-6-0) arrived with the 10:00 from Wexford and Macmine hauling a bogie compo, LV, 4-wheel wagon and a horsebox.

## STATION SURVEY

### **Donegal: CDRJC**

Donegal Station, situated 31½ miles from Strabane on the 3' gauge County Donegal Railways, is, since the closure of the Stranorlar - Glenties branch, the only junction from the main Strabane - Killybegs line although, in addition, connection is made at Strabane with the Strabane & Letterkenny - nominally independent but worked by the CDRJC. The junction at Donegal is of interest as the branch from Ballyshannon circles the town and trails into the main line at the north end of the station. As will be seen from the sketch map reproduced, there are two main platforms. The up one holds 7 carriages and the down one 9 and each of these platforms has an up bay behind it. The offices and station house are situated on the down platform.

The signal cabin contains a 22 lever frame, 19 active and 3 spare (Nos. 1, 22 and 23) and also the ETS instruments. There are large type staffs for the Donegal - Inver and the Donegal - Ballyshannon sections and miniature staffs for the Donegal - Lough Eske section. The crossing gates at the Killybegs end of the station are interlocked with the up home and down starting signals. The up starting signal from the down platform is of the somersault type. It may also be mentioned that this well-kept cabin contains a splendid display of geraniums in season.

A total of 22 passenger trains - all railcars - and two steam-worked goods trains (if required) is dealt with at Donegal daily with an extra four railcar movements on Saturdays. In the winter timetable, up to March 31 these services departed as follows:

To Killybegs	09:07	13:07	16:10	18:47 (SX)	20:00 (SO)
To Ballyshannon	09:05	13:25	17:50 (SO)	18:10 (SX)	20:00 (SO)
To Stranorlar	08:35	09:45*	14:10	17:05	20:00 (SO)*

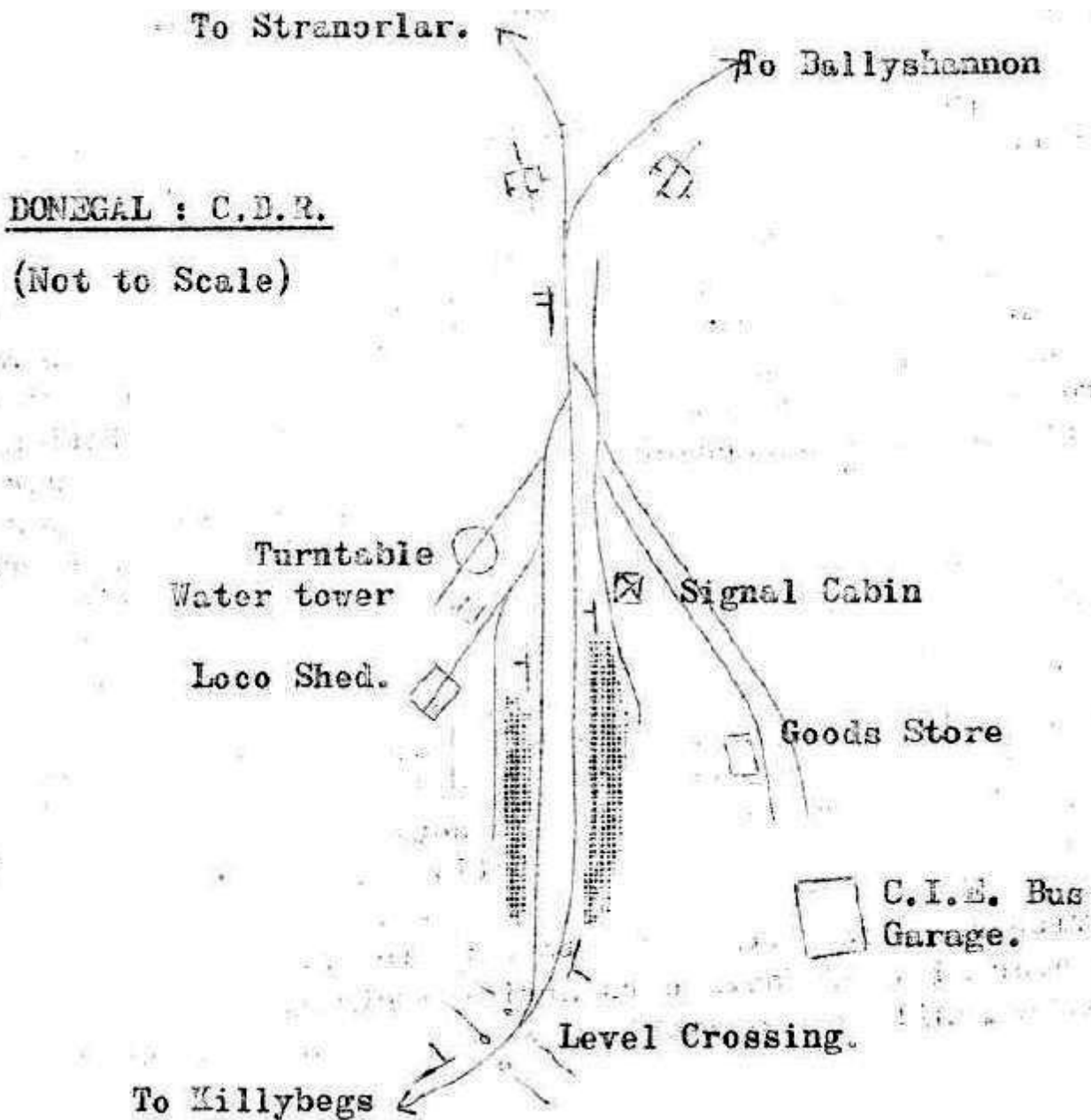
\* To Stranorlar only, all others are through to Strabane.

The busiest passenger service is the one arriving from Killybegs at 09:05 and that returning at 16:10 in the evening to the same destination. A trailer is attached daily to the railcar working these services.

There are two paths for goods trains, one arriving at 08:15 from Stranorlar, returning at 09:10 and the other arriving at 17:35 from Strabane and continuing to Stranorlar at 18:10. If traffic warrants this

goods may continue to Killybegs, returning the following morning to take up the working of the 09:10. The principal bulk of goods handled at Donegal includes wool, yarn, cement, manure and flour and, of course, general traffic.

The bay platforms are seldom used as it is more convenient to back the Ballyshannon railcar into the down platform on the arrival of the main line train. Transfers of passengers and sundries can then take place under the roof instead of in the open.



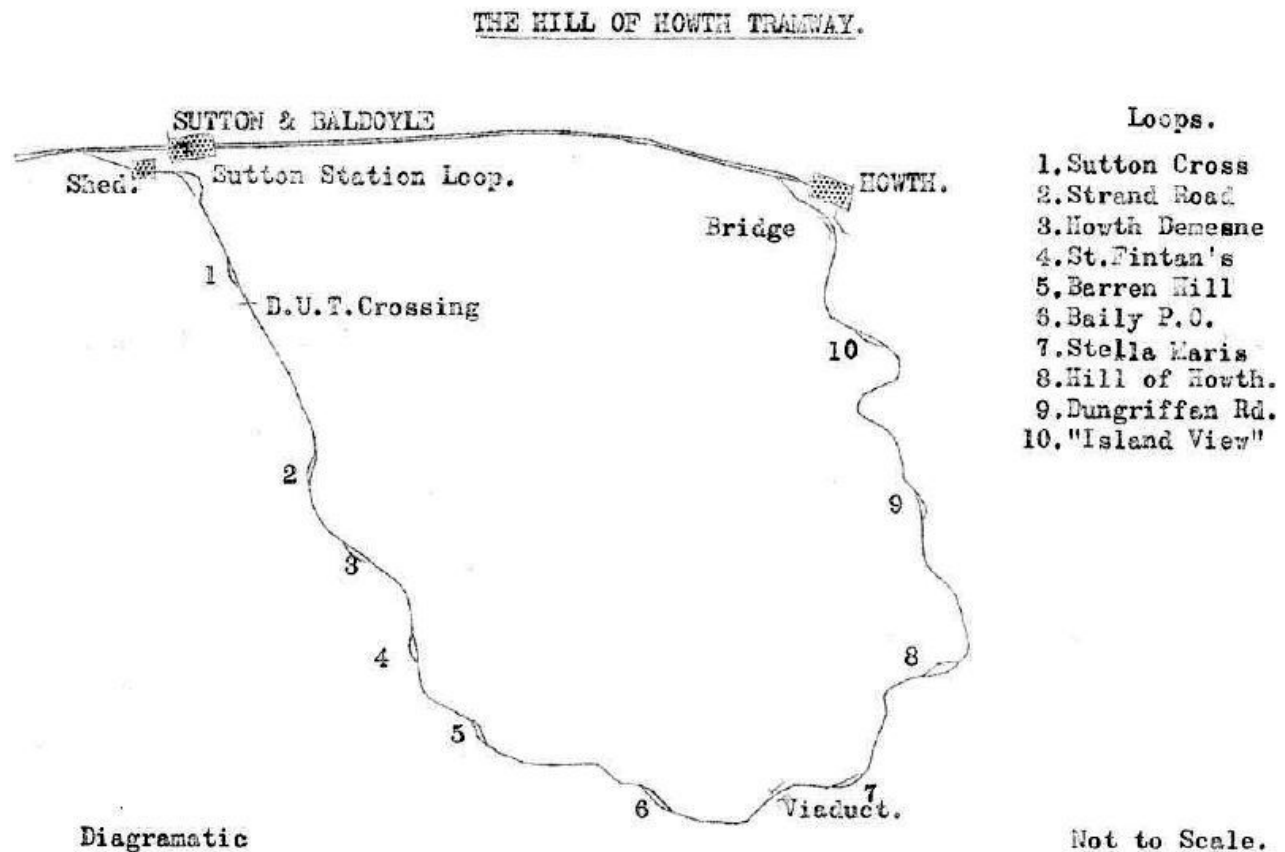
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# Feature Section

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## THE HILL OF HOWTH TRAMWAY

Where in Ireland is there a branch line on which every station is a junction? This, of course, is a 'catch' question, posed for those who regard neither Sutton nor Howth as junctions in their own right. Nevertheless standard gauge metals diverge from the up line at each of these stations giving access to the subject of our article - the Hill of Howth Tramway. This last surviving electric tramway in Ireland circumscribes the headland of Howth which stands as the northern sentinel of Dublin Bay. It is perhaps appropriate to devote our feature article to the tramway since, despite the fact that recently a portion of the power cable has been renewed, some poles and track replaced, CIÉ are quoted as having confirmed the GNR decision to close the line as soon as the roads are made suitable for substitute bus services. On the Howth side one ½ mile section of the road has already been widened and it is expected that work on portions of the Sutton side will commence this year.



The line starts at Sutton & Baldoyle - the intermediate station on the double line Howth branch - where a connection leads from the up line into the three road tramway depot and car shed. This short stretch of track is used only when cars have to be towed to Dundalk for overhaul - a rare occurrence as almost all repairs are attended to nowadays in the Sutton shed. Outside is a wide loop, the departure side of which crosses the public road to pass in front of the station building where passengers transfer to the "Electric cars for Hill of Howth" as proclaimed by a prominent notice board.

Let us take an imaginary journey around the hill atop one of the electric cars. Our tram first crosses the station road, rejoins the other side of the loop and on its own right of way separated from the road by a

stone wall heads for Sutton Cross Loop. At this point passengers who have travelled from the city by bus join the car which, in crossing the main road, clatters on the diamond crossing which up to 1941 carried the Dublin United Tramways Company's Route 31 across the GNR tramline without physical connection. It is interesting to recall that before the withdrawal of the DUT Dublin - Howth service on 31<sup>st</sup> March 1941 its cars to Dublin had the right of way over Hill of Howth cars arriving simultaneously at this crossing, while the opposite was true of the Dublin - Howth cars.

From here to Strand Road Loop the tramway is on its own reservation alongside the public road, except for a short length of paved street track - the only such on the line. There are two-request stops in this sector. At Howth Demesne - the next loop - climbing begins in earnest and continues past St. Fintan's Loop to Barren Hill with one request stop between each loop. Beyond Barren Hill - the name aptly describes the peak of Sheil Martin towering over the picturesque loop - the tramway falls then rises again past three request stops until at Baily Post Office the line swings on to its own right of way at the loop of the same name. Here we meet one of the panoramic viewpoints for which the line is famous as the Dublin and Wicklow Mountains flanking the south side of Dublin Bay are viewed in majestic array behind Dun Laoghaire Harbour. Passing over Stella Maris viaduct, which is almost unnoticeable in between a high wall and a grove of trees, the car stops dead before crossing and rejoining the road on a reserved track for the short distance to Stella Maris Loop. In the section just traversed there are three request stops and there are two in the section to follow which, also on its own right of way, climbs to the summit of the line 350 feet above sea level at the Hill of Howth Loop. A GNR refreshment room once operated here but no trace of it now remains. A waiting room for passengers adjoins the loop and behind a high hedge there is the "Battery House". While waiting between cars here one has time to inspect the site of the former siding and stroll to the summit for a view before continuing the journey to Howth.

On rejoining the electric car we note that, having crossed the Balkill Road, the conductor lowers the trolley - except for obvious reasons during the hours of darkness - since the force of gravity provides sufficient power for the descent. For this reason only one trolley wire is provided between Hill of Howth and Island View loop. On the Howth side of the hill the tramway is on its own right of way throughout, quite unlike the Sutton side which is, as mentioned, partly roadside. Passing two request halts, brakes are applied for the obligatory stop before crossing Dungriffan Road to reach the loop of the same name. Another request stop is found at the second crossing of the Balkill Road and then the tramway enters upon what is perhaps its most magnificent stretch as it describes a series of reverse curves in its efforts to lose height as rapidly as possible. On the lowest of these is No.10 loop - unofficially called "Island View" on account of the prospect of Ireland's Eye standing guard outside Howth Harbour. On the last section, with a single request stop serving a new housing estate, our tram descends sharply and cuts across the Dublin - Howth road on a metal overbridge to stop at the back of the single platform Howth Station. The line continues for a short distance to make a trailing connection with the up line of the Howth branch.

The passenger rolling stock once totalled ten trams but for some time now two of them - Nos. 5 and 8 - have been out of traffic. Numbers 1-8, which are 67 seaters, were built by the Brush Engineering Co. on Brill trucks and are in the GNR blue end cream livery, but Nos. 9 and 10, which are 73 seaters built by Milnes on Peckham trucks, still retain the older varnished mahogany livery. All of the cars are open topped with wooden reversible seats on the upper deck. Nos. 1-8 have longitudinal seats on the lower deck while Nos. 9 and 10 have a curious mixture of transverse and knifeboard seats which partly accounts for their greater capacity. These latter two have 32 hp motors - one hp more powerful than those of cars 1-8. Until 1958 the "brown" trams were restricted to the Sutton side of the hill as they lacked cross springs between their bogies but now they have been fitted with the springs recovered from the two redundant cars and can therefore operate from Sutton through to Howth. Only one other vehicle remains to be mentioned. This is No.11 - the maintenance tram with platform for repair of

overhead installations.

The system of signalling is of interest and is as follows. At each loop or terminus there is an attachment to one of the standards with a light on each side one of which faces and the other of which points away from an approaching car. The former indicates whether the section to the next loop is clear or not, an "on" light indicating a clear section. On arrival at a loop the driver alters the aspect of both lights by means of a key. Thus, the light for the section he is about to enter is switched off and the same action also extinguishes the light which points away from him at the next loop showing that the line is blocked for a car approaching from the opposite direction. In a like manner the section behind is cleared by the switching on of the second light. This system, which is much more simple than the description of it seems to indicate, has been in great measure responsible for the accident free record of the tramway.