

THE

# **IRISH RAILFANS' NEWS**

Volume 6

October 1960

No.4

## Managing Committee:

L. Hyland (Editor)  
B. MacAongusa  
D. Seymour  
B. Pender

---

**EDITORIAL**

The tenth Annual Report of CIÉ, which is described in the following pages, records a considerable achievement in the annals of that undertaking so long bedevilled with demoralising deficits. As compared with the previous year, CIÉ has reduced its net loss by £1,240,858. This most satisfactory improvement reflects great credit on the new administration of the Board, which, under the guidance of its Chairman, Dr C.S. Andrews, has since 1958 succeeded in increasing the revenue in each department of the undertaking, in addition to reducing expenditure substantially. In the railway section alone the revenue has increased by no less than £230,709 during the past year. Two general reasons are advanced in the Annual Report for the improvement; the introduction of the "Package Deal" policy for merchandise and livestock and a campaign of extensive publicity "to bring to the attention of the public the advantages of using public transport services". The former has been successfully developed to give 24 hour delivery service to any part of the country, but, in our view, the advertising campaign is still lacking in some respects in its declared aim mentioned above.

It is not the intention to suggest that the publicity so far given is inadequate or insignificant. Indeed, on the contrary, advertising of all CIÉ's services - in particular the rail services - has been widely extended and improved out of all recognition in the past year and this, in no small way, has contributed to the increased revenue now being yielded by both the rail passenger and goods services. Yet despite much commendable improvement it seems that certain aspects of publicity for the rail passenger services continue to be overlooked. In particular we refer to the public timetable booklet. Since the summer of 1950, this basic guide to travel by rail in Ireland has remained virtually unchanged in layout and still lacks fundamental information concerning train services which is found in almost all modern European railway timetables. For example, the CIÉ "public book" gives no indication to the prospective traveller whether he is to enjoy a through coach between any two points on the system. This significant failing could be remedied simply by making alternate use of heavy, light and italic type in the timetable.

Information regarding road connections is also most inadequately tabled. Only the arrival and departure times of buses at the various railheads are shown at the back of the rail tables. This information is of no conceivable interest to the traveller bound for a destination some distance from the nearest railhead. Surely he would find far more valuable the time his connecting bus to or from the railhead would arrive at or depart from his ultimate destination? Some evidence of an attempt to remedy this failing appears in the current winter timetable where, for the first time, road services substituted for branch lines recently closed are shown in one table with their rail connections.

Another small though important failing was to be noticed in the otherwise excellent newspaper advertisements for the named express trains. Only the departure times of these trains were shown and no indication was given of the journey times other than a reference to their being "fast trains". Surely, mention of their arrival times would not alone improve the impact of the advertisement on the public mind but would also impress on potential travellers the remarkable efficiency with which these crack

services are operated.

It may be pleaded that the foregoing failings are of a minor nature, unworthy of serious consideration. Of small account they may be, but many business enterprises stand or fall on the quality of their service to customers. These amendments are some of the small improvements noticed only by travellers when they are found to be lacking.

## SOME ARTICLES OF IRISH RAILWAY INTEREST

### **Trains Illustrated**

August et seq The Irish Scene

### **The Modern Tramway**

May The Saving of Howth No.10

### **British Narrow Gauge Steam**

Although regrettably a booklet on present-day narrow gauge steam locomotives can hardly aspire to any size, Mr F. Jux - author and publisher of the above booklet - has produced twenty 6" x 4" pages on the subject with 16 illustrations, one of which depicts Guinness loco 22 at work. A page is devoted to Irish locomotives and includes those preserved at the Belfast Transport Museum and the Guinness locos still on the brewery premises - the preserved loco at Towyn is under "Wales". All the remainder are "no longer in use, and may be in any state of repair". The only quibble one might raise is the ascribing of the number 14 to loco 5C. This fictitious number was for the purpose of the film "A Minute's Wait" (one of "The Rising of the Moon" trio) in which the loco played the star part on the mythical "Ballyscran & Dunfail Railway" - its last act before withdrawal. The booklet is available from Mr Frank Jux, price 4/- post free.

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

For the "Journey Jottings" in this issue we are indebted to Mr N.J. McAdams.

---

## **News Section**

---

### CIÉ GENERAL NEWS REPORT

#### **Rolling Stock Developments**

Since our last issue none of the five heating vans nor the new buffet car under construction has been seen in traffic although work has commenced on the construction of five of a further series of open centre seconds. In September a large number of older passenger coaches had their numbers suffixed with the letter "S", which, it is learned, indicates that the coaches are for secondary use only. Recently a large number of wagons have been "stored" in sidings at various stations throughout the system. These wagons, which have been branded with the letter "C", are, for the time being, withdrawn from traffic.

#### **Annual Report**

On September 1, CIÉ issued its annual report for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 1960 - the Board's first full year's working since the introduction of the Transport Act of 1958. The report is presented in an attractive format, its appearance enhanced by illustrations, and printed on art paper throughout. It reveals a considerable improvement in CIÉ's finances and the net deficit for the year stood at £709,006,

compared with a net deficit of £1,949,864 in the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 1959. An operating profit of £446,978 was achieved compared with an operating loss of £424,415 in the previous year. This improvement was due to a combination of an increase in revenue and a reduction in operating costs and each department of CIÉ showed a better operating result. The new Commercial Department which was established to enable the Board to avail itself of the freedom conferred on it by the Act of 1958 in the matter of rates, charges and common carrier obligations, successfully launched the "Package Deal" for both merchandise and livestock. By means of over 400 such deals, much additional traffic was attracted to the Board's freight services. Extensive publicity by way of newspaper advertising, brochures and talks also resulted in a considerable increase in revenue. The most significant financial improvement during the year under review was achieved in the railway section where the loss of £1,247,484 for the previous year was reduced to £558,614. Railway revenue was increased by £230,709 while expenditure was reduced by £458,166. As compared with the previous year, passenger trains earned an additional £108,558 while revenue from rail freight was up by £123,320. The report contains for the first time a table showing the percentage attributable to each department and also the allocation of the total expenditure. The figures are: Receipts: Buses 36.46, Goods trains 22.95, Passenger Trains 18.89, Road freight 11.26, Hotels & Catering 4.76, Miscellaneous 1.87 and the deficit 3.81. Expenditures: Wages, etc. 57.76, Materials 21.72, Depreciation 8.54, Rates, etc. 2.66, Interest 4.25 and Miscellaneous 5.07. It is specifically mentioned in the report that the closure of seven uneconomic branch lines during the year did not significantly influence the satisfactory results in rail operation, since the economies accruing thus are not fully reflected in the accounts under review.

### **Ministerial View**

At a meeting of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions in Belfast on July 25, Mr. Childers, Dublin Minister for Transport & Power, read a statement on the future of railways in Ireland. Mr Childers declared that it was not his intention to convey an impression that the rail services in Ireland would be closed down entirely and replaced by road services. Only where a rail service was completely uneconomic and where a satisfactory and more economic service could be provided by road would any rail service be withdrawn. The Minister stated that he visualised the maintenance of a railway system as outlined in the Transport Committee's Report (1957) "together with such other lines as could be economically worked in addition". He believed that losses which might be involved in the operation of uneconomic transport as a public service could be borne by the public transport system as a whole. If, however, at the conclusion of the 5 years allowed to CIÉ to achieve economic wording it was found that uneconomic services existed which could not be absorbed into the cost of operating the transport system generally, the matter could then be re-examined. The Minister did not think that any question would arise of the abolition of a service necessary to the public, even though it might not be fully economic.

### **Locomotive Contracts**

Since our last issue CIÉ has announced the placing of two further contracts for diesel-electric and diesel-hydraulic locomotives. The American concern, General Motors Corporation, has been awarded the contract for supply of fifteen 950 hp diesel-electric locomotives capable of a top speed of 77 mph to be used on main line services. Delivery of these locomotives is expected to commence before the end of the year. It was also announced early in July that a contract had been placed with the German firm, Maybach Motorenbau, for the supply of 14 sets of power equipment to be used in 400 hp diesel-hydraulic locomotives similar to the present E class, which will be used on freight and shunting work. These locomotives, which will weigh 40½ tons with a top speed of 45 mph, are to be built in Inchicore works and delivery is expected to begin in August 1961. When delivery of all the locomotives under the above contracts is completed, together with the further contract for 7 G class 160 hp Deutz diesel-hydraulic locos mentioned in our last issue, the number of standard gauge CIÉ diesel locomotives will

be increased to 172.

### **Winter Timetable**

The most spectacular improvement in the winter rail services, which have been in operation since September 12, is the transfer to Amiens Street of the Sunday Cork trains. This commendable move should achieve operating economies for CIÉ since it will in future be possible to close Kingsbridge to all traffic on Sundays during the winter months. A further important improvement in the winter timetable is the provision of a third Sunday train in each direction between Amiens Street and Cork. These additional trains, at 10:00 down and 09:00 up, which complete their journeys in 3½ hours, will, in conjunction with the existing service, enable day trips to be made on Sundays between Dublin and Cork in each direction. Boat trains serving the Dun Laoghaire-Holyhead sailings have also been extended from Westland Row to Amiens Street on Sundays. This winter, for the first time, rail connections between Limerick Junction and Limerick are being provided into and out of the fast main line Sunday trains in each direction. The former road service connection is retained in the case of the “all-stations” trains. On Saturdays the traditional “Market Train” from Waterford to Wexford and back has been abolished. In all other respects the winter schedules do not differ significantly from those operated in recent years, with, of course, the striking exception of the Dublin-Greystones suburban section which is dealt with under a separate heading.

### **Liftings**

The current position of the demolition work on abandoned lines is as under.

Valentia Harbour: Track from Valentia to beyond MP 33 has been lifted. In early September loco 133 was stabled at Killorglin to work materials trains on this and the Kenmare line alternately. Signals and equipment have been removed from all stations south of Killorglin.

Kenmare: Lifted from Kenmare to Morey's Bridge Halt.

Harcourt Street: The lifting of the remaining spur from Shanganagh Junction has now been completed and the Junction signal cabin is now permanently out of use although it has not been dismantled and can, indeed, be switched in if required.

Irish North: The lines from Clones towards Monaghan and the break at Corkill Bridge have now both been lifted to within two miles of Clones. Although removal of the Carrickmacross branch has been completed, the line from Corkill Bridge to Dundalk is still intact. The stub of the Belturbet branch has, however, been taken up. In early September ex GNR locos 161 and 179 (0-6-0s) were shedded in Clones.

### **Mishaps**

Since our last issue CIÉ have suffered from an extraordinary number of mishaps, none of which, fortunately, had fatal consequences. On August 9 fire destroyed a coach on a Mystery train from Dublin to Enniscorthy. The train was stopped, the coach emptied and shunted into Avoca loop where it burned out. The train later continued to Arklow where it terminated. Another accident, on August 11, involved a passenger train when the 08:15 Belfast-Dublin struck the buffers on arrival at Amiens Street. Four persons sustained minor injuries, although but little damage was caused. More serious, however, is the spate of goods train derailments of which four are worthy of mention. On July 26, ten wagons were derailed at Ballybroy and caused the diversion of the 10:40 from Dublin to Cork via Port Laoighise, Waterford and Limerick Junction and the 11:25 to Tralee via Port Laoighise, Waterford and Fermoy. Buses bridged the gap between Mountrath and Lisduff in the case of the morning “Sláinte” and “Fáilte” and the line was cleared by 15:00 but, unfortunately, the heavily booked Radio Train to Killarney had to be cancelled. On August 22 the down day goods for the Wexford line was derailed on the curve between Newcomen Junction and Amiens Street. Hardly had the debris been

cleared when the accident was exactly repeated by the night goods of August 23. On September 3, thirteen wagons of the up day goods were derailed between Rathdrum and Wicklow and the line was blocked for the day. Since this last-mentioned, CIÉ has imposed a speed limit of 40 mph for all loose-coupled goods trains as a precautionary measure.

### **Mystery Developments**

A development in the highly successful series of Mystery Train excursions has been the operation, since August 7, of long distance trips on Sundays from Dublin at a charge of 10/- instead of the normal 6/-. These trains have visited such destinations as Limerick, Galway, Waterford and Cahir.

## **CIÉ LOCAL NEWS REPORTS**

### **Suburban Curtailment**

With the introduction of winter schedules on September 12, CIÉ further curtailed suburban trains on the Amiens Street - Greystones line to a service at the morning, lunch-time and evening peak hours only. As reported elsewhere in this issue, five halts on the line were finally closed completely and a sixth - Lansdowne Road - was closed to all but three up and four down trains on weekdays. Blackrock station was also reduced to a halt and the same fate befell Sandycove, Glenageary, Dalkey and Greystones on October 1. Sixteen trains in each direction are provided this winter on Mondays to Fridays and eleven each way on Saturday, as compared with 37 trains daily in each direction last winter. In the new timetable the last suburban train to Bray departs from Amiens Street each evening, Mondays to Fridays, at 18:10, while on Saturdays the last one leaves at 13:29. Passengers for Dun Laoghaire, Bray and Greystones may, however, avail of a later train on weekdays - the 18:45 Rosslare boat train - which starts this winter from Amiens Street instead of Westland Row, as in previous years. To provide extra services for suburban users two of the up main line trains have been extended from Westland Row to Amiens Street - the 06:40 from Rosslare and the 11:45 from Wexford. Despite the austerity of the new service, some welcome features are included. Two extra trains are provided to Bray at lunch-hour on Saturdays compared with the summer "economy" timetable, and the extra lunch-time train to Dun Laoghaire on Mondays to Fridays, which was reluctantly provided by CIÉ in June last after public protests, has been retained in the winter timetable.

### **Halts Closed**

On July 8, CIÉ gave formal notice of its intention to close to all traffic the following five halts on the Amiens Street - Greystones suburban line on and from September 12: Sandymount, Sidney Parade, Booterstown, Salthill and Woodbrook. An attempt to close the first four of these on June 10 last proved abortive, as reported in our last issue, and they enjoyed a token service for the duration of the summer timetable. Woodbrook, however, which only serves a golf club, is an addition to the closure list. As from September 12 also, Lansdowne Road was closed to merchandise traffic although still retained for passenger traffic to the adjacent football ground and for a limited service to facilitate the employees of Irish Hospitals Sweepstakes.

### **Enthusiast Specials**

The summer of 1960 is of note in that it has produced the largest number of spectacular enthusiasts' day trips ever and details of these are set out below:

Ballylinan & Palace East: On Saturday July 9 loco 184 (in GS&WR livery) headed the first IRRS dining car special ever out of Amiens Street. The train consisted of HV 3122, second 1469, ex GNR dining car C144N, brake second 1905 and the 1912 GS&WR Officers' Saloon 352. The special travelled first to Athy and then diverged to traverse the 4½ mile Ballylinan branch - the first occasion of a dining car working on this line! The train returned to Athy and continued to Muine Bheag to travel

over another semi-closed branch to Palace East - the subject of "Station Survey" in this issue. The return trip to Amiens Street was made via Macmine Junction and Enniscorthy.

Ballylinan & Mountmellick: On July 16 a party of REC members took part in an outing to the Curragh siding, Ballylinan and Mountmellick branches and the Portarlington ESB siding. They returned to Dublin via Athlone and the MGWR Liffey branch. The train was worked by railcars 2661 and 2662. Of interest was the departure from the LMS yard in Dublin and the requisitioning of loco 197 (0-6-0) off the "Ballylinan" goods to haul the railcars up the branch.

Kilrush to Cappa Pier: On July 18 the first railway enthusiasts' special ever to run on the one mile extension from Kilrush to Cappa Pier was operated for a party of REC members. This line is nowadays very rarely used even by goods trains and has not had a passenger service since about 1914. The train consisted of loco F501 hauling a bogie van - an unusual 'passenger' train, even for the West Clare.

Courtmacsherry: On August 20 a party of IRRS members left Cork (Albert Quay) behind loco 201 (0-6-0T) in a train consisting of 45' bogie coach 688, LV and a goods brake van. On arrival at Ballinascarthy loco number 90 - 85 year old veteran - took over for the 8½ mile stage of the journey on Ireland's last remaining roadside tramway. On the return journey loco 201 took over at Ballinascarthy and hauled the special to Cork.

Mountmellick & Castlecomer: September 10 saw yet another special, this time an IRRS train to Mountmellick, Castlecomer and Deerpark. The train, hauled by ex-GNR loco 197 (4-4-0), consisted of LV 2717, second 1465, dining car 2400, brake second 1911 and again saloon 352. The special ran first to Mountmellick via Port Laoighise and Conniberry Junction and then proceeded to Kilkenny. It returned thence to Castlecomer Junction, released the subsidiary ETS instrument there and started up the branch. Owing to rails slippy from the misty rain, the loco - now running tender foremost - had some difficulty in starting the train on the steep 1 in 80 incline. On arrival at Castlecomer, the train was split and 197 continued up the 1½ mile incline to Deerpark colliery with 352 and 1911. On returning to Castlecomer the train was re-assembled and returned without difficulty to Kilkenny and thence via Carlow to Amiens Street. This excursion was notable in that it provided Mountmellick, Castlecomer and the Kilkenny loop with a first GNR locomotive working and it was also the first time a dining car had worked into Castlecomer.

## **Football Final 25/9/1960**

In the All-Ireland Final this year Down met Kerry at Croke Park on September 25. For this event 13 specials ran to Kingsbridge, 9 to Amiens Street and 5 to Westland Row. Most of the Kingsbridge arrivals were some 10 minutes behind time and came from such points as: Grange via Clonmel (A6, LV, 8 bogies, LV); Gortatlea (A11, HV, 8 bogies, LV); Tralee via Limerick (8-coach diesel); Cahir (B107, LV, 8 bogies); Tralee (A35, 9 bogies); Limerick (A4, 10 bogies); Waterford (B105, 8 bogies, LV); Annacotty (A17, 7 bogies, 6-wheel van) and Gowran (A41, 11 bogies). In addition one midnight special each came from Killarney and Tralee. In the Amiens Street departures steam was distinctly in evidence. After A2 and 12 bogies left for Dundalk, UTA 58 (4-4-0) worked 12 bogies north on the regular Belfast train at 18:20. UTA 97 (2-6-0) with 8 bogies for Derry followed at 18:47. A relief Belfast special left at 18:59 - a 4-coach AEC set - while UTA 59, also bound for Belfast, left at 19:20. Three further moguls left next - 94 with 10 bogies for Belfast at 19:48; 95 and 8 bogies at 20:07 and 91 and 8 bogies at 20:36 both for Newry. Lastly at 20:53, 2-6-4T No.51 departed with a Warrenpoint special of 8 bogies - almost certainly the first time one of the "Jeeps" has worked a passenger train from Amiens Street, although, during the repair of the Tolka Bridge, No.4 worked regularly to Clontarf for a time.

## **Proposed Closures**

On September 27 CIÉ announced Ireland's most sweeping closure proposals since the withdrawal of

services on the GNR secondary lines in 1957. The lines involved are the West Clare, the entire West Cork system and the Waterford & Tramore. The total mileage involved is 151 $\frac{3}{4}$  of which 53 is narrow gauge - the last remaining passenger-carrying 3' gauge line in Ireland. In addition, CIÉ stated that unless certain specific traffic being sought by the Board is secured, the Macmine Junction - Waterford and Muine Bheag - Palace East lines, a further 56 $\frac{3}{4}$  miles, must suffer the same fate. It was stated that they hoped to save £80,000 or so per annum by the closing of the three lines and that "except for small stations these are the final substitutions of rail services by road services which the Board envisages within the five year period set by the Transport Act of 1958." The closure dates have not yet been announced but are to be on or before 31<sup>st</sup> March 1961 - the end of the financial year. It is rather surprising that the entire weight of the closures should fall on the Province of Munster which has already suffered in its loss of the Kenmare and Valentia Harbour branches. Except, perhaps, for the lines in the Clones and Cavan area no other part of the CIÉ system seems to have received such determined attention. On the West Clare goods traffic has been extremely heavy and only the poor weather and lack of rolling stock has kept the passenger traffic down to its present proportions. The non-acquisition of stock from the CDRJC is probably explained by the anticipation of the impending closure. The West Cork system has been carrying reasonable passenger traffic and is expected to break records in sugar beet haulage in the coming winter. The Tramore line has carried capacity loads frequently during the summer and on a recent Sunday was even unable to cope with all the traffic offering. Why this traffic should be thrown on the roads is not explained by CIÉ, especially when the loss on the Tramore line can be but small as such little expenditure is incurred in its operation. Already, since the announcement, considerable opposition to the closures has been voiced in the affected areas.

## **UTA GENERAL NEWS REPORT**

### **Winter Timetable**

The timetable which came into operation on September 12 is almost unchanged from that for the same period last year. On the GN section a slight increase is noted on the Newry-Warrenpoint line and an afternoon Belfast-Derry train, which once ran every weekday, has been reinstated on Saturdays only, although with a change at Omagh. On the main line to Dublin the 18:00 from Belfast is still an unbalanced working and continues to suffer from the lack of restaurant car facilities. On the NCC section separate tables show the "open" and "closed" periods on the Portrush branch, but are otherwise unaltered.

### **Portrush Branch**

On and from October 3 the 6 mile branch, from Coleraine to Portrush will be temporarily closed. During the winter months passenger services will be withdrawn and bus connections will be provided to and from Coleraine. As there is no freight traffic on the line, it will remain dormant until 1<sup>st</sup> May 1961 except for brief periods at Christmas and Easter. Perhaps as a prelude to this withdrawal of services, the overall station roof at Portrush was removed at the end of July last.

### **Antrim Branch**

The withdrawal of passenger traffic from the Knockmore Junction - Antrim line is described in the feature article in this issue. In addition, however, on and from September 12 the goods workings on the branch have been completely recast and the train now leaves Belfast at 03:45 and arrives in Antrim at 05:15, returning at 06:15 to Lisburn, due 07:20, where the loco is required to work the 08:15 local to Belfast. A final "coup de grace" is the imposition of a 25 mph speed limit throughout the 18 $\frac{1}{2}$  miles of line.

### **"Wasp" Railcars**

To enable permanent way workers to identify approaching railcars more easily the Authority has as an

experiment painted the lower front part of some cars with a striking black and yellow "wasp" design. So far four railcars - MED 21 and MPD 40 on the NCC, MED 35 on the Bangor line and AEC 116 on the GN section - have been observed in traffic with this eye-catching colouring. The last mentioned car has even ventured as far south as Dublin - for the football final on September 25.

### **Flooding**

Heavy rains caused the suspension of rail services between Coleraine and Castlerock on August 24/25 when a culvert on the section was undermined. Traffic was also suspended on the Portrush branch on August 25/26 as portions of the line were completely submerged and, although re-opened on the 27<sup>th</sup>, the branch was closed again on 29<sup>th</sup>/30<sup>th</sup> while repairs were carried out.

### **CDRJC**

### **Lifting**

The lifting of the CDR is now complete except for a few short lengths in Donegal, Stranorlar, Strabane and Letterkenny. On completion of the Ballyshannon line in June, work commenced at Killybegs using railcars 12 and 16. These were, on July 4, isolated from the rest of the system as lifting started from Donegal through the Barnesmore Gap to Stranorlar, using loco No.4. Removal of the "Gap" line took some five weeks to complete but the Killybegs line was not finished until September 8. On the Letterkenny line the road was broken near Raphoe and loco 11 worked the demolition train thence to Letterkenny - reached at the end of August - while the diesel tractor No.11 "Phoenix" was used for the section to Lifford, completed about a week later. For this operation "Phoenix" had to be brought to and from Strabane by road. The last section completed was the Finn Valley line - Stranorlar to Strabane - on September 10, where loco 4 and railcar 10 were used. The former was, on September 3, run to Clady and back while sound recordings were made - probably the last 3' gauge steam engine to run on a public railway in this country. The final disposition of locos and railcars was: Donegal, Railcars 12 and 18; Letterkenny, Loco 11; Stranorlar, Railcars 14, 15, 18, 19, 20, Locos 1, 3, 6, and 7 coaches; Strabane, Railcar 10, Locos 2, 4, 5, and 11 coaches.

### **LOOSE LINKS**

- BUT railcar 121 has been painted in the UTA Brunswick green livery - the first of these railcars to be so treated.
- The UTA have formally abandoned the Cookstown Junction - Kilrea and Coalisland - Cookstown lines.
- UTA single unit Leyland railcar No.1 has been overhauled and has returned to traffic on the NCC section.
- In preparation for the arrival of the new DE locos CIÉ inspection car No.2 has been equipped with a framework to test clearances and has been operating on the Northern and Midland sections.
- A new CIÉ lightweight Matisa ballast tamper has been recently reported in operation on the section of line between Waterford and Kilmeaden.
- In August loco G602 returned from Inchicore works to Tralee and is once more working the Castleisland branch.
- To facilitate loading of pilgrimage trains at Claremorris, letters corresponding with the coach lettering were erected on the lamp standards of the station in mid-August.

## JOURNEY JOTTINGS

### **24 August: Limerick - Sligo**

The longest through train working in Ireland not radiating from Dublin is the railcar link from Sligo to Limerick and back. On the date mentioned the 15:15 had a complement of 81 passengers and comprised railcar 2610, open second 1350, railcar 2665, 6-wheel van 71 and the ex GS&WR mortuary van 253 now in use as a stores van from which were delivered oil cans and litter baskets en route. Departure was 1½ minutes behind time due to mechanical difficulties with 2610 but once under way time was regained throughout. Calls were made at Cratloe and all stations thence to Ennis where some 20 passengers transferred to the West Clare train standing in the bay platform. C203 was engaged in its four-hour shunting session on the 07:00 goods Claremorris-Limerick while 109 (0-6-0) was also crossed on a 12 wagon “overload” goods which has been a frequent feature of this line during recent months. On departure the lateness of the railcar had been reduced to 6 minutes and further smart running cut this to 2 minutes at Athenry where 17 passengers alighted, some of them for the bus connection to Galway. Tuam saw the train set down 10 and pick up 28 passengers - a healthy traffic. Here the mileposts which had run consecutively from Limerick recommence at zero and thus commemorate the one time “Athenry & Tuam Extension to Claremorris Railway Co. Ltd.”; one of the five small companies on this sector which were amalgamated into the WL&WR. The train was on schedule by Milltown, now the only survivor of the three standard gauge stations to carry that name although its tickets still bear the letter “(G)” to differentiate from the Kerry and Dublin examples. At Claremorris A32 with 6 bogies, LV and a wagon arrived at 18:39 on the 14:30 Dublin-Westport and some passenger interchange took place. At 18:41 inspection car No.4 arrived off the Sligo line, clearing the section for the railcar to depart 6 minutes later. A fair number of passengers alighted at most stations thence to Sligo which was reached at 20:29½ - slightly earlier than the four minute recovery margin allowed in the timings between Ballisodare and Sligo.

## STATION SURVEY

### **Palace East**

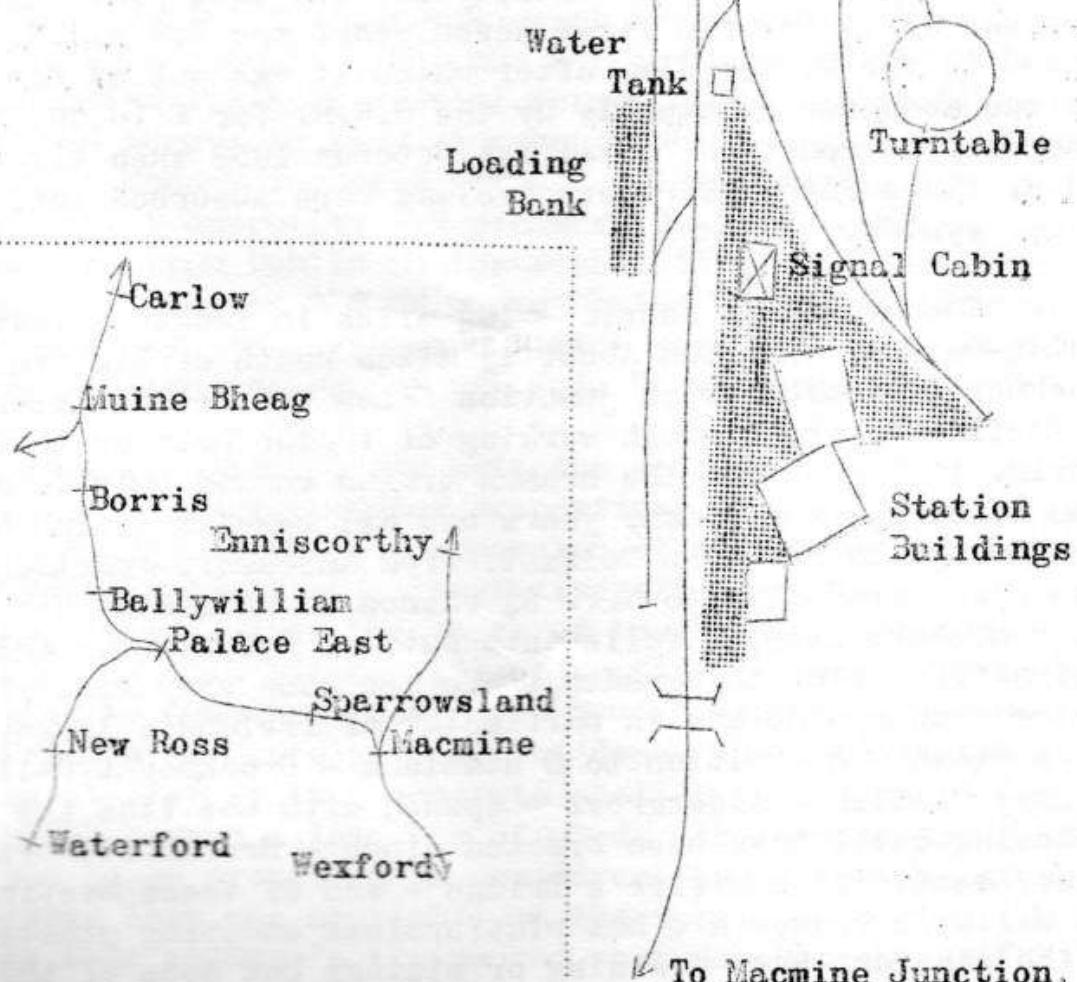
Almost 400 feet above sea-level in the hills flanking the Blackstairs Mountains is the junction at Palace East where the branch from Muine Bheag (formerly Bagenalstown) meets the North Wexford line. The railway history of this line is complicated and begins with the Bagenalstown & Wexford Railway's attempt to establish its route from Dublin via the GS&WR line to Carlow and the Irish South Eastern Railway to Bagenalstown. The company was at no time affluent and having opened its line from Bagenalstown to Borris on 20<sup>th</sup> December 1858 was forced to close again in 1863 due to financial troubles. On 5<sup>th</sup> September 1870, however, the line was re-opened to Borris and extended through Ballywilliam to Sparrowsland on 26<sup>th</sup> October 1870. At this stage Palace East came into being although the connection with the Dublin, Wicklow & Wexford Railway at Macmine was not opened until 1<sup>st</sup> April 1873.

The section south of Ballywilliam was owned by the Waterford, Wexford & New Ross Railway, but in 1875 it became the property of the DW&WR (D&SER from 1907). On 19<sup>th</sup> September 1887 the latter company opened a branch from Palace East to New Ross and in 1904 extended it to Waterford. In the meantime the entire line from Bagenalstown to Palace East became the property of the GS&WR. Despite this, Palace East did not develop as a point of interchange and the connection between the two companies' trains was usually quite accidental.

To New Ross &  
Waterford  
To  
Muine Bheag

PALACE EAST.

(with area diagram inset)



Diagrammatic & Not to scale.

The station at Palace East (94 $\frac{1}{8}$  miles from Harcourt Street) is of unusual layout as it is perched at the top of a steep bank falling towards Waterford and Ballywilliam to the West. A single platform is provided with its opposite faces serving North Wexford and branch trains respectively. There is no loop on the D&SER side and consequently trains are not normally crossed here. On the ex-GS&WR side (MP 90 from Kingsbridge) there are normal terminal facilities including a loop and turntable and a water tank serving both lines. The last mentioned is of great importance as no steam loco could reach this near-summit level without considerable expenditure of water. The junction of the lines to New Ross and Borris is at the platform end and faces westbound trains. The two lines run parallel down the 1 in 63 bank for almost a mile to cross the Enniscorthy - New Ross Road on separate adjoining bridges before diverging near MP 95 (North Wexford). The signal cabin which stands on the platform controls the junction and houses the ETS instruments from Macmine, New Ross and Muine Bheag. The branch has been one section since 1957 when the instruments at Borris were removed and is the longest single line section on CIÉ.

All services on the branch were interrupted for over 10 months from December 1922 during the civil war. It was re-opened in October 1923 but lost its passenger traffic, which had been always sparse, on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 1931 - the first of the GSR withdrawals. Goods traffic ceased on 21<sup>st</sup> April 1944, although occasional excursions and seasonal beet trains continue to run. Last winter from mid-October to December two beet specials each weekday used the branch, one of which - from Carlow Factory - terminated at Palace East while the other worked through to and from Wexford. On the North Wexford there were minor interruptions to traffic in the 1923 period but from September 1923 to early 1924, while the South Wexford line was disabled the GS&WR boat trains for Rosslare were worked over the line. The Macmine-Waterford line was closed to passenger traffic during the coal crisis from April 1944 to January 1946 and for a month or so from 25<sup>th</sup> January 1947. Traffic at Palace East nowadays consists of one goods and two passenger trains each way every weekday. Two-coach railcars are used on the passenger workings - 10:53 and 16:53 down to Waterford and 11:35 and 15:53 up - since dieselisation on February 3 last. A B class loco usually works the goods - 07:22/40 down and 20:11/24 up.

---

## Feature Section

---

### THE ANTRIM BRANCH

On July 15 last the UTA made application for permission to "terminate wholly the railway passenger transport services at present provided between Knockmore Junction and Antrim" and set the date of closure as from September 12.

On 11<sup>th</sup> July 1861 an Act of Parliament was passed authorising the construction of the Dublin & Antrim Junction Railway to connect Lisburn on the Dublin-Belfast main line with Antrim on the Belfast-Derry main line and thereby bring about acceleration of the services between Dublin and stations on the NCC line. Due to bankruptcy of the original contractor, construction of the line was seriously delayed and the official opening ceremony did not take place until 11<sup>th</sup> November 1871. For the first seven years the D&AJR was leased to the Ulster Railway, after which it was put up for auction and was acquired eventually by the GNR for £70,000 in whose ownership it remained until 1<sup>st</sup> October 1958 when all former GNR lines within Northern Ireland were absorbed into the UTA system.

The branch to Antrim - 18 $\frac{1}{2}$  miles in length - leaves the Dublin-Belfast main line about 1 $\frac{1}{2}$  miles south of Lisburn at Knockmore Junction, which junction faces the Belfast direction to facilitate the through

working of trains between there and Antrim. At the outset the branch trains worked only to and from Lisburn, but for many years now all regular trains have run through to and from Belfast. From Knockmore Junction the line rises gradually to MP 3½ whence it undulates, until after a sharp rise, it falls into Antrim. Despite the relative insignificance of the grades, there are some very fine views of the countryside and in particular of Ireland's largest lake - Lough Neagh. In addition to 5 stations - Brookmount, Ballinderry, Glenavy, Crumlin and Aldergrove - opened with the line the following halts have been erected since - Brookhill, Meeting House, Legatiriff and Miller's Bridge - and of these Meeting House and Miller's Bridge are but platformless stopping places. All of the stations have a siding or sidings but none of the halts are so provided. At Antrim trains run into the bay on the left of the NCC down platform. A turntable and a siding to the now roofless shed is provided and three sidings fan out beyond.

The branch, which is operated on the Electric Train Staff system, is single throughout with crossing places at Ballinderry and Crumlin. Formerly, Glenavy and Aldergrove were crossing stations as well but the loops were removed although that at the latter station, with its signal cabin, was provided as late as 1943 when heavy wartime traffic over this important link line necessitated an additional crossing place. After the 1914/18 war the branch grew in importance following the successful development of summer holiday traffic from the south to northern resorts. A summer arrangement introduced by the GNR in conjunction with the NCC provided through coaches from Dublin to Portrush - normally slipped at Lisburn off the 09:00 train these coaches were returned to Dublin on the 14:45 from Belfast which called at Lisburn for this purpose. This arrangement continued until the outbreak of the last war in 1939. In addition, a number of through excursions was operated each year by the GNR to Portrush and these used the Lisburn-Antrim line. Unlike the through coach arrangement these excursions were resumed after the war and have been continued by CIÉ since its takeover of former GNR activities south of the Border in 1958. A recent Dublin-Portrush through excursion, on Monday August 2, attracted 188 passengers and on the last day of operation - September 10 - a guaranteed excursion ran from Dublin to Portrush with a works outing. This train - 9 bogies and 2 HV - was hauled by A35 to Lisburn and by a 2-6-0 thence to Portrush and vice versa. It was the most northerly penetration yet of a CIÉ Radio Train.

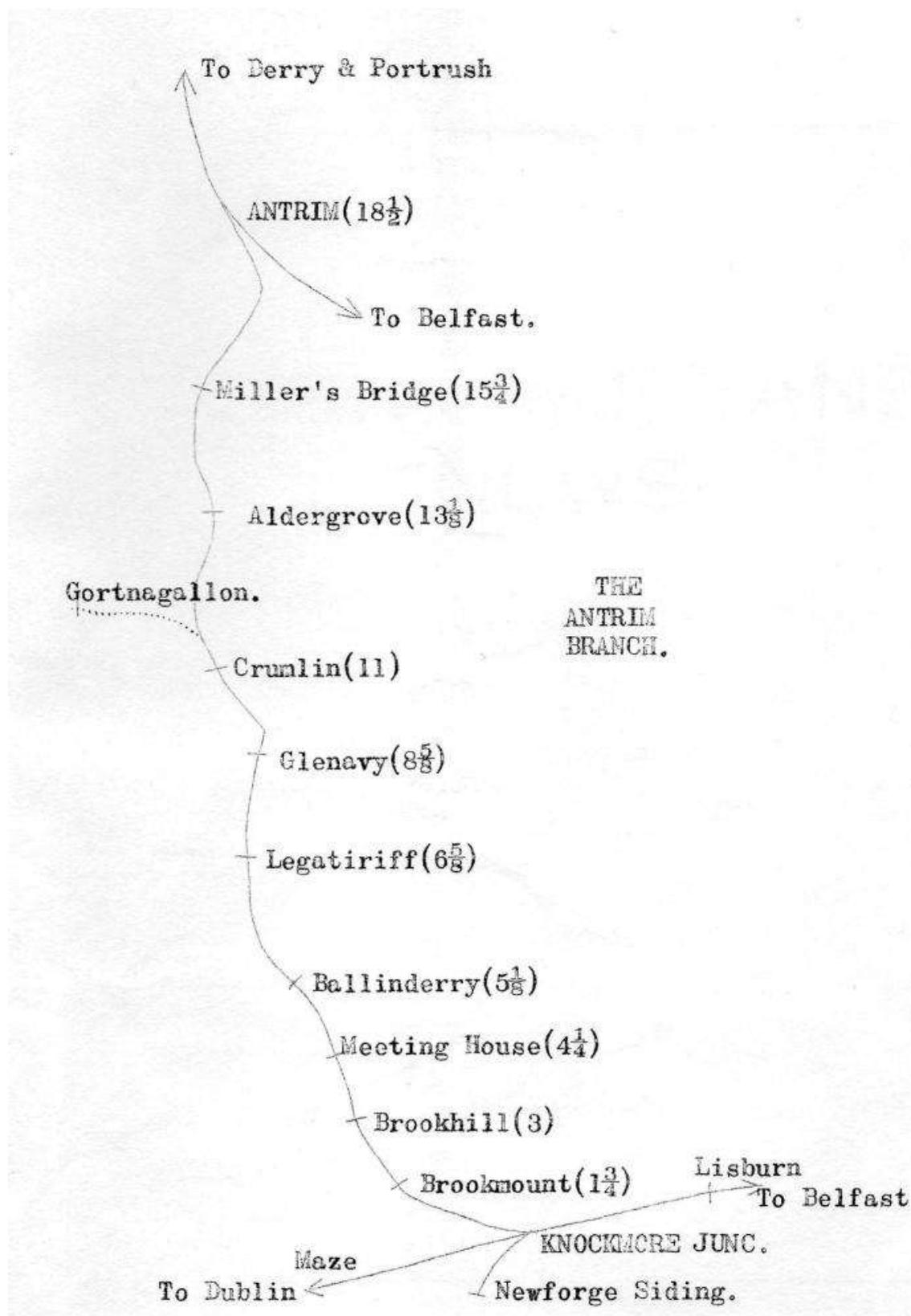
During the 1939/45 war both the goods and passenger traffic grew to unprecedented proportions. The largest contributory factor was the expansion of Aldergrove Airport and the establishment of a large aircraft assembly and repair shop at Gortnagallon on the shore of Lough Neagh. To cope satisfactorily with the additional traffic it became necessary in May 1942 to construct a 2½ mile branch from a siding a mile beyond Crumlin to Gortnagallon. The depot there consisted of an island platform with a concrete shelter and four sidings, two of which served a long row of sheds. All trains using the branch had to be propelled in one direction or the other as no run-round loop was available at the terminus. During the war years, four workmen's trains ran each day between Belfast and Gortnagallon together with a daily freight train and a number of specials. After 1945 the line fell into disuse and shortly afterwards was finally dismantled.

The value of the Lisburn-Antrim line was proved during these war years. Booked passenger trains increased to 24 per day with 7 goods trains, compared to 8 passenger and one goods at the time of closure. Special troop trains were also run including many through trains from Larne Harbour to Enniskillen - a journey requiring two reversals.

On and from July 4 alterations were made to the Monday-Friday timetable which resulted in a most extraordinary working. The 17:15 Antrim-Belfast, up to then a GNR railcar set banked as far as Aldergrove by an NCC loco and coaches (loco in rear), was withdrawn and instead the NCC train departed (loco in rear, propelling its train) at 16:20 for Crumlin where it was attached to the front of the down 15:35 railcar from Belfast and proceeded to Aldergrove. There the steam train, destined for

Ballymena, was severed from the railcar bound for Belfast and each went on its way in opposite directions. Passengers from Antrim for beyond Crumlin thus passed through that station and Aldergrove twice in the course of their journey! These bizarre antics were performed for the last time on September 9 when loco 99 "King George V" (2-6-0) and coaches 222 and 257 comprised the steam train and railcar 118 and driving trailer 586 formed the 15:35. On the following day last-trip passengers were out in force. Some availed of the steam working at 13:10 from Belfast to Antrim - Loco 47 (0-6-0) with four bogies - many more were aboard the railcar working at 15:35 ex Belfast. Car 118 and control trailer 586 worked the last train from Antrim at 17:15 and the 18:30 to Crumlin but for the 22:40 to the same point a three coach set was used - 112, 585 and 117. Fanfares of fog-signals sped these last workings on their way.

Today the Lisburn-Antrim branch is still indispensable to the UTA. Since the closure of the two branches to Cookstown it remains the only satisfactory link between the former NCC and GNR lines for the transfer of freight traffic, locomotives and rolling stock. No alternative method for such transfers exists, as the connections at Derry - across the lower deck of the Craigavon Bridge - and at Belfast - via the Harbour Commissioners' lines - are unsuitable for the transfer of bogie vehicles due to the restricted clearances.



Diagrammatic & Not to scale.