

THE

IRISH RAILFANS' NEWS

Volume 8

January 1962

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EDITORIAL

The recent announcement by the Stormont Government of its intention to write off £9½ million of the capital of the Ulster Transport Authority denotes an air of realism for the first time in recent years in the many attempts of policy planners to solve the difficulties of a financial nature besetting public transport in Northern Ireland. In addition to the relief from the unrealistic burden of totally unremunerative capital, the UTA is being granted an extension from 1964 to 1966 of the period within which it is required by statute to pay its way. Furthermore, a sum of up to £2½ million will be made available to the Authority with a view to assisting it in achieving this requirement.

Our main comment on this most welcome announcement is an expression of regret that the Government's decision should have been delayed until this eleventh hour for the railways now forming the UTA system. It is indeed incredible that the Stormont Government should have waited for a lead from Great Britain before arriving at its belated decision, especially when the Government in Dublin had been so successful in revitalising the railways of CIÉ since 1958 by the adoption of measures almost identical with those only now being applied to the UTA. However, it is better late than never - but only if we can be assured that this is an honest attempt to include rail as well as road services in the future integrated public transport system for Northern Ireland.

At this stage it must be stated that the present indications are not reassuring. A Committee of Inquiry - the eighth since 1922 - is being set up to examine the position and, seemingly on the assumption that the UTA railways will always be uneconomic, to report whether they can be integrated into the future system of public transport. It is also, perhaps, significant that no portion out of the £2½ million being provided for the UTA is to be specifically utilised on modernisation of the railways where a most obvious need exists for an injection of new capital. Indeed, it would appear that the UTA rail system is to be deprived of any further investment, other than essential maintenance, until the findings of the Inquiry are made known "within two years". Such a situation must be emphatically deplored because, without doubt, an investment starved UTA rail system will probably perish if it has to endure still further the procrastination of the Stormont Government.

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The Committee of "The Irish Railfans' News" would like to take this opportunity of wishing readers the Compliments of the Season. At the same time we would also like to remind those who have not yet sent in their subscriptions for the coming year to do so as soon as possible - your co-operation will greatly assist us. If you can interest a friend please let us have his name and address and we will be pleased to send him a specimen copy.

SOME ARTICLES OF IRISH RAILWAY INTEREST

Railway World

November The Kinsale Railway 1863-1931
 Day Trip to Dublin

Trains Illustrated

October et seq The Irish Scene

IRRS Journal

Autumn Irish Railways in 1859
 West Carbery Tramways
 CIÉ Restaurant Cars

News Section

CIÉ GENERAL NEWS REPORT

Strike At Cork

On Wednesday November 8, a lightning unofficial strike occurred at the Glanmire Road loco depot following the suspension of a driver who refused to carry out his instructions, saying that he had already worked for 8½ hours that day. The entire Cork footplate staff took unofficial strike action, and all train services into and out of Cork were consequently cancelled on November 8. On Friday November 10 the loco staff at Tralee stopped work in sympathy, thus paralysing rail services throughout the counties of Cork and Kerry. An abortive attempt was subsequently made by the strikers to win the support of their colleagues in Limerick, Waterford and, later, Athlone. The latter depot did, in fact, serve strike notice on CIÉ, but withdrew it at the last moment on Saturday December 2. The strike was thus confined to the Cork and Tralee depots and caused the cancellation of all rail services operated with motive power from these centres as from November 8 and 10. Serious disruption to traffic resulted from the strike as many of the links interworked with Cork or Tralee based crews had either to be completely reorganised or, in most cases, unavoidably cancelled. All Dublin - Cork services ceased for the duration of the strike as did all services between Cork, Cobh and Youghal, Cork - Limerick via Croom, Mallow - Waterford (except the Waterford - Dungarvan goods), Mallow - Tralee together with the Newmarket and Castleisland branches, Tralee - Fenit and Tralee - Limerick (except the Limerick - Foynes "Mixed"). When the strike had persisted for three weeks, CIÉ issued protective notice to all rail operatives rendered redundant. These numbered some 500 employees throughout counties Cork, Kerry, Tipperary and parts of Limerick and Waterford and all were relieved of their duties as from December 2. Within another week, the strikers were prevailed upon to resume their work and CIÉ was in a position to operate services once more as from Saturday night, December 9. This most regrettable strike lasting 4½ weeks, caused irreparable damage to CIÉ's rail traffic for it resulted not only in a serious loss of revenue but also in a far greater loss of public confidence and goodwill which the railways had only fostered with the greatest of difficulty over the last few years and particularly since it attained commercial freedom of charging under the 1958 Transport Act.

Modernisation Of Stations

The following progress in the CIÉ station modernisation programme has been noted:

Limerick: The entire concourse floor is now tiled in black and white, while the bookstall, formerly at

the end of No.1 platform has been moved to the south wall of the concourse and has another separate shop frontage beside it. On the opposite wall, a new left luggage office is provided, the former one becoming the Stationmaster's office. The new glass-fronted enquiry office facing the main entrance is now in use as also is the new booking office. The interior walls of the station have been painted in an attractive shade of light blue. The "Top Yard" store extension is taking shape while on the south (loco shed) side of the line, out behind the Limerick Check cabin, a long strip of land is being cleared and levelled for a fan of five sidings which will be installed. These sidings are to provide space for storing wagons awaiting repairs and are to stretch to the loco shed, four roads of which are to be appropriated as a wagon repair shop. The traverser in the present shop is to be moved to the rear end of the loco shed.

Ennis: Following completion of the modernised booking hall and office in Ennis, CIÉ are now engaged in the modernisation of platform offices and waiting rooms which are being finished in a contemporary decor. The new glass-fronted booking office is equipped with "Bellmatic" ticket racks while the circulating area in front of it is redecorated and panelled with hardwood strips. The platform canopy has been removed during these operations.

Galway: The additional siding accommodation at Galway is now installed and a vehicle approach to it has been completed. In our last issue we implied that the loco shed was demolished; this is not so as a two road shed is still in situ. The third road, formerly in the shed, is now serving the new platform.

Bridge Trials

Trials were carried out with two General Motors "B" class locos double-heading a train across the Shannon Bridge at Athlone on Sunday December 3. The following Sunday there was a similar test over Shannon Bridge, Drumsna.

Rolling Stock Developments

None of the four additional composites mentioned in our last issue has yet been seen in traffic but they should appear shortly. Meanwhile, ex GNR diner 268 is undergoing extensive interior reconstruction. The layout of the bar and kitchen is being modified and when completed should resemble that of the newest diner - 2402. The conversion of AEC railcars to "powered intermediates" is almost complete. Three of these - 2614, 2617, 2656 - are to be renumbered 2666-2668 to conform with the numbers of the other "powered intermediates": 2660-2665. 2668 has been in traffic since October 23 in the new livery and bearing her new number. Although still in Inchicore Works, the railbus (2508) is scheduled for scrapping. It now appears that the brown, black and white livery described in our last issue has been adopted as standard, as several coaching vehicles have appeared so painted. These vary from main line coaches, the President's train, several older wooden panelled coaches (including 'secondary' stock), ex GNR railcar C608N (painted in the Dundalk Engineering Works), heating vans, luggage vans and even six-wheel van No.18!

Dieselisation Progress

In mid-December the first of the 7 new Deutz 160 hp locomotives, similar to the present G class, was delivered to CIÉ and the remaining six will follow at intervals early in 1962. Meanwhile, G601, reported displaced from the Newmarket branch, took up duty as pilot engine in Portarlington on November 14. None of the fourteen Maybach/CIÉ "E" class locomotives has yet appeared. Although a Dublin newspaper reported that CIÉ had ordered 30 1,500 hp locomotives from the General Motors Corporation this statement was denied by CIÉ the following day.

Lifting

The present position on the lines being lifted is as follows:

West Clare: The line is now lifted to the loop in Ennis leaving only that part of the yard north of the

overbridge to be removed. Although advertised for sale, neither railcars nor locos have yet left the section, but the 3 trailers have been bought by Bord na Mona. Vans 51C and 202C were removed from the section on November 28 for shipment to the USA.

Valentia: Lifting continues in the Killorglin-Castlemaine section.

Cavan: Lifting continues in the Drumhowna-Ballywillin section.

Preservation

Following negotiations between the IRRS and CIÉ the Board has agreed to preserve two locomotives - 5C (0-6-2T) and 90 (0-6-0T) - and, as mentioned in our last issue, the former has been transported to Ennis. This loco, the last West Clare loco extant, has been repainted in West Clare livery with crest on the side tanks and is now installed on a roofed pedestal close to Ennis station approach road. The second loco, No.90, is to be preserved at Cobh and although painted in GS&WR livery ready for despatch is still delayed in Inchicore Works due to the Cork strike. Although 90 formerly worked the Fermoy-Mitchelstown branch she is even more closely connected in most minds with the Timoleague and Courtmacsherry section of the erstwhile CB&SCR, where in summer she was often used to double-head passenger specials with loco 100 (0-6-0T), now scrapped. A total of three historic locomotives have thus therefore been preserved by CIÉ - the two above-mentioned and No.36, the Bury 2-2-2, which stands in Glanmire Road station, Cork.

CIÉ LOCAL NEWS REPORTS

Inchicore Signalling

On December 10, track and signalling alterations near Inchicore were brought into operation. Two important crossovers have been provided; the first leads from the "long siding" - the outermost headshunt from the works - to the down main line and the second, just outside the first, is a trailing crossover between the down and up main lines. These allow ingress to and egress from the works at the Cork end. Previously it was necessary to enter the sidings at the Dublin end and reverse up the long siding to reach the diesel loco servicing bays. Both new crossovers are electrically operated from Inchicore Cabin. Colour light signals control both running and shunting movements in the vicinity and their provision has made redundant almost all semaphore signals nearby.

Presidential Specials

On October 23, the President of Ireland travelled by the 18:45 train service to Killarney, en route for Kenmare. In honour of the occasion, the Kerry portion of the regular 18:45 train was marshalled that evening as a separate train running in a path 10 minutes behind the 18:45 as far as Mallow. To accommodate the Presidential party the State Coach No.351 (last used to convey Cardinal Agagianian from Dublin to Cork and back on June 20 during the Patrician Year celebrations) was included in the train and was completely repainted in the new CIÉ livery of black, golden brown and white. Indeed, the entire train was adorned in the new livery and was made up as follows: composite railcar 2628, powered intermediate railcar 2661, buffet 2419, powered intermediate railcar 2668, State Coach 351, diner 2402 and combo railcar 2609. The same set, forming the 08:00 ex Tralee brought the Presidential party back from Killarney to Dublin on October 25. President de Valera again journeyed by rail on November 8, when his party travelled from Dublin to Cork on the 18:45. The train set on this occasion was identical to that provided for the earlier journey to Killarney; the railcar train being hauled by loco B123. Most unfortunately, the disastrous unofficial strike which occurred later on November 8 at Cork prevented the President from returning to Dublin by rail and his journey of necessity was completed by road. Similarly, the Cork strike prevented the President and Mrs de Valera from a third rail journey planned for their visit on December 5 to Rushbrooke for the launching of the "Irish Rowan" - the first ship completed in the new Cork Dockyard.

Washing Plant

During November Ireland's first carriage washing plant went into operation at Kingsbridge. Situated on the main shunting neck - the headshunt between the up and down main lines just beyond the platform ends - the plant consists of six overhead spray loops (pre-wetting, detergent and 4 washing sprays) and six nylon brush pillars. The whole plant is operated from a control hut alongside the up main line. On arrival, as soon as trains are emptied, they are drawn through the plant (in the idle position) and then reversed slowly through it at a speed which allows the washing of about one coach per minute. A second plant may later be installed at Westland Row, if the first proves economical and satisfactory.

UTA GENERAL NEWS REPORT

Capital

The capital of the UTA is to be reduced to about £3,300,000 at the end of January 1962 when the Government of Northern Ireland will write off £9,645,000 of the Authority's capital debt. In addition, £2½ million will be provided to enable the Authority "to run its undertaking substantially in its present form for the time being". An independent Inquiry into the operation of public transport in Northern Ireland will be set up and is to report its findings within two years. As a result, the date by which the UTA is obliged by statute to pay its way is to be put back from 30th September 1964 to 30th September 1966. It is mainly to avoid the Authority incurring bank overdrafts during this period that the £2½ million grant is being made.

Fare Enough

In a move to resuscitate its almost non-existent first class traffic the Authority has announced that on and from 1st January 1962 rates for first class rail season tickets will be reduced from 50% to 25% over the second class rates. It is hoped that this move will attract the traffic anticipated by the UTA for it makes the first class rates much more realistic and in accordance with the accommodation provided.

Ballyclare Junction

In the same manner in which cessation of services removed Mossley from the timetable in 1954, Ballyclare Junction has been, since December 4, bereft of all trains. No official closure notice seems to have been published and the withdrawal of passenger services is not even mentioned as such in the timetable alterations leaflet which merely lists the 07:17 (SX), 07:22 (SO) and 17:50 (SX) Cullybackey - Belfast as "ceasing to call".

Loco News

Locos 4, 8 (2-6-4T), 43 and 44 (0-6-0) are at present in Duncrue Street for overhaul as the locos mentioned in our last issue (6, 36, 37 and 40) have since been returned to traffic. Consequent on the transfer of York Road shed to diesel maintenance, most boiler washouts, etc., are being done at Ballymena or, sometimes, Adelaide.

Lifting

Lifting of the "Irish North" is almost completed to Omagh. Sidings, track and materials at Dromore Road, Fintona and Fintona Junction were auctioned at Fintona on December 6 - the rails and sleepers of the Fintona branch alone realised £1,170.

Railcar Developments

Following No.63, which went into traffic last October, a second Multi-Purpose railcar, No.64, emerged from Duncrue Street on November 15. Both cars are similar, seating 70 passengers and having driving cabs at each end. It is interesting to note that they have a left-hand driving position, unlike the earlier single ended MP units. Already 63 has been reported working as a single unit on Belfast-Ballymena

trips and 64 has run singly to Carrickfergus and back. The third, No.65, is expected early in January but the replacement car for BUT 129 will not be ready for some two months yet. No further railcars have as yet been planned. Railcars 6 and 7 (with intermediate coach 528) reported in our last issue as working on the NCC after overhaul, were returned to the GN section in November. ME railcar trailers 501-514 have had their original heaters replaced by Smith's apparatus and their seating capacity is increased to 98 as a result. Railcar 104 (ex GNR "F") has been overhauled and repainted at Queen's Quay and, having run a trial to Bangor on December 1, returned to the GN Section on the following day. An innovation since our last issue was the use of two MP railcars to bank MP-hauled goods trains out of York Road to Ballyclare Junction. The former steam loco shed at York Road, transformed for servicing railcars, was brought into use early in November. It can house only a four coach set on each of its four roads. MP railcar No.44 is reported rebuilt as an all-second; formerly this car was a compo, while ME car No.26, a brake compo, has been provided with controls in the van enabling it to be used as a single unit. Car 24 is also similarly altered.

Auction

On December 15 a total of 12 locomotives, 5 tenders, 18 coaches 1 railcar and 233 goods wagons were offered for sale by auction. The locomotives were UTA Nos. 15 (0-6-0), 72, 80, 84 (4-4-0) and 96 (2-6-0); all five ex NCC, and UTA Nos. 39 (0-6-0), 64X and 65X (4-4-0), ex GNR 17, 196 and 200 respectively. The remaining four, never renumbered into UTA stock, were GNR Nos. 30X (4-4-2T), 100X, 151X and 165X (0-6-0). The coaches were UTA Nos. N208, N271, N273, N301 (formerly 388 and the first dining car in Ireland), N302, 307, 311, 319, N337, 451, 463, 469, N475, N487, N608 and ex GNR Nos. 184 and 247 (6-wheel van) and a BCDR bogie saloon of 1919. The railcar item was UTA No.102 - formerly GNR "C3".

Great Victoria Street Changes

The work of altering Great Victoria Street station, Belfast, into a combined road-rail terminal commenced early in November. First, the buildings between platform 5 (which is to be ceded to the road terminus) and Glengall Street were removed and the land cleared and levelled. Two short sidings off platform 5 were then removed and early in December the carriage sidings on the down side behind the North Cabin were shortened by some 50 yards. Work commenced in mid-November on the extension of platforms 2/3 to enable the former to handle customs examination of the "Enterprise" and other non-stop trains from Dublin when No.5 is removed. This involved severance of the approach to No.2 and slewing the lead into No.1 to clear the extended platform. No.2 has been, and still is, out of use, but Nos. 1 and 3 are available for traffic. A new customs hall is being built at the barrier end of platform 2 and is nearing completion.

Scarva-Banbridge

In November the UTA invited tenders for the purchase in situ of the Scarva-Banbridge branch. The line is 6 $\frac{3}{4}$ miles long and formerly belonged to the GNR, having been closed to all traffic by that company on and from 1st May 1955. No trains have run since and the section is very overgrown. This possibly explains why the UTA are anxious to have the line lifted by an outside contractor who will probably use road equipment, for, as regular readers will recall, clearance and relaying had to be undertaken before the nearby Goraghwood-Markethill line could be lifted by rail.

Carrickfergus Harbour Junction Railway

The Carrickfergus Harbour Junction Railway is to be abandoned and the formal notice will be published shortly. The line, just over a mile long, linked Carrickfergus Harbour with the Belfast-Larne line near the present Mount Station. It was opened in January 1887 and closed in 1957 although it had been very little used for some time prior to its closure. The line is steeply graded from the junction to the Harbour and when working the line, or Minorca siding which diverged from it, the locomotive had

always to remain at the Harbour end of its train, even to the extent of propelling it back to the Junction.

Belfast Museum

Two additions to the Belfast Transport Museum have recently taken their places in the new premises which, it is hoped, will open at Easter. First to arrive in early November was BCDR loco No.30, a 4-4-2T built in 1901 by Beyer Peacock, which had been stored for a considerable time in Ballymena shed before being taken into Duncrue Street Works for repainting last September. The second exhibit is loco 2L, a Stephenson 4-4-0T of 1887 from the narrow gauge Cavan & Leitrim Railway, where up to the year 1925 she bore the name "Kathleen". This loco has been lying in Dromod since the cessation of lifting operations and had to be transported by road to Belfast, where she arrived on December 1. Coach 5L remains in Dromod and it is not known if this historic vehicle will be broken up or preserved. 4-4-0 loco 74, ex NCC, has also been acquired by the museum but has not yet been painted.

LOOSE LINKS

- Loco 85N (4-4-0) has returned to traffic having had some tubes replaced by second-hand ones ex Woolwich 2-6-0, No.376.
- The "Turkey Train" - the extra perishable from Westland Row to Athlone for a period before Christmas - was worked this year by locos 132N and 170N (4-4-0s) on alternate days.
- Loco 42 (2-4-2T) has returned to traffic as pilot loco in Kingsbridge.
- An unusual combination was the trial run to Bangor on December 9 of railcars 115 (ex GNR AEC) coupled to ME car 24; the latter was dead on the down journey but hauled 115 on the up trip.
- UTA Mogul 104 was transferred in October to the GN section leaving the NCC devoid of what was once its preponderant locomotive type.
- The UTA, for the first time, have offered free parking space at stations to motorists so that they can "travel in comfort by rail".

JOURNEY JOTTINGS

November 25: Sligo - Ennis

The formation of the 08:50 Sligo-Limerick - normally a three-coach diesel railcar - shrinks in the slack winter months, of which November is one of the slackest, to the two units. Thus it was on November 25, with railcars 2621/2606 hauling LV 2764; the last mentioned, in the new black and brown livery looking quite out of place behind the green railcars. At Ballisodare the 06:45 Sligo-Limerick goods - A13, 11 wagons and van - was standing in the down loop to allow the passenger train to overtake it. At Carrowmore the six passengers on board since Sligo were augmented by a dozen more, mainly schoolchildren and factory workers for Tubbercurry. Stops at Curry and Charlestown yielded four passengers apiece while 10 joined at Swinford. Claremorris was reached on time at 10:35, where C230 was shunting a rake of wagons. Here too the 09:45 Westport - Westland Row appeared with A56, 4 bogies LV and HV, and added 8 passengers off the railcar to its complement of 14. Passing Tuam beet sidings the Comhlucht Siúicre Éireann diesel was noted at the weighbridge and an unidentified 0-6-0 was shunting a confusion of laden wagons. At Tuam 7 passengers alighted. Three 0-6-0 locos, 232, 603 and 719, were in steam outside the shed while A12 was remarshalling the 03:40 Limerick-Sligo goods. At Belville siding, between Ballyglunin and Athenry, one wagon was being loaded with beet, this being the only traffic for which the siding is used. Arriving at Athenry (2 minutes late) the railcar was quickly shunted to the down siding to leave the platform clear for the 08:40 Westland Row - Galway which comprised B129, a TPO, bogie van, compo, buffet 2093, two seconds, a brake second and HV.

Meantime B125, HV, 2 bogies and LV had arrived at the up platform with the 11:40 Galway - Tuam. On departure of the down train the railcar returned to the platform, loaded passengers, set forward, loaded two pigs and departed sharp to time at 12:21. At Craughwell loco 124 (0-6-0) was passed heading for Ardrahan with 9 empty beet wagons. The latter is a source of heavy beet traffic, loading 29 wagons on the date of this journey and had been despatching a formidable 50 wagons per day earlier in the campaign. At Gort C214 was passed on its return journey with the 06:15 "overload" special from Limerick to Athenry and back. This train runs regularly and is normally steam-hauled. The diesel was available this week probably on account of the Cork footplatemen's strike. Arrival at Ennis was 1½ minutes before time and here A23, a bogie van, a second, a compo and HV was crossed on the 12:45 Limerick-Galway passenger train while the two C class locos off the 08:50 Limerick-Claremorris and 07:00 Claremorris-Limerick goods trains were in the yard.

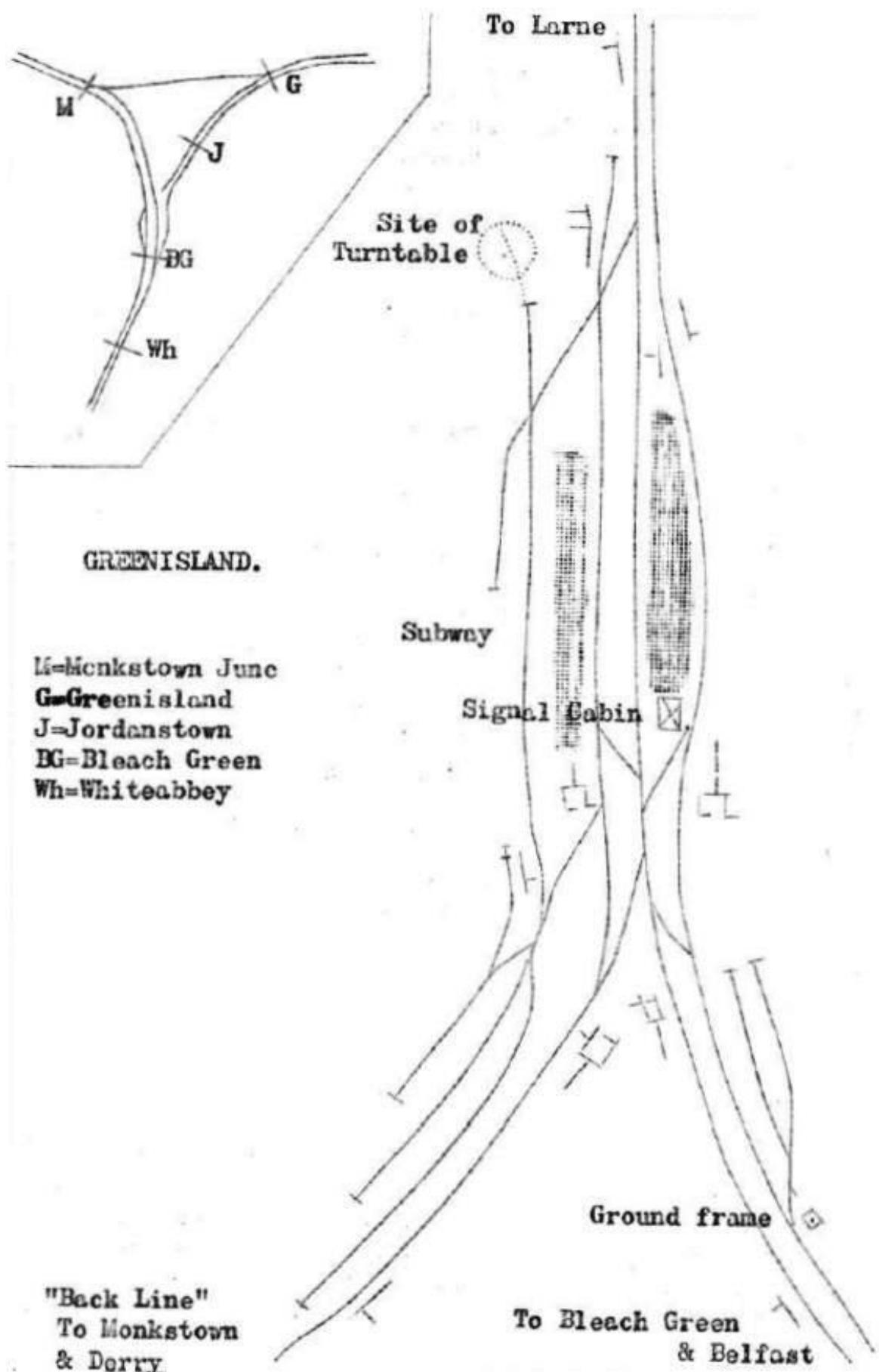
STATION SURVEY

Greenisland

In the sphere of traffic control on the NCC, Greenisland holds pride of place, as the signal cabin there controls the whole triangle of tracks close by and therefore all the approaches to Belfast. Initially, however, Greenisland was a junction station for, on 11th April 1848 the Belfast & Ballymena Railway was opened from Belfast to Carrickfergus and from Greenisland to Ballymena and Randalstown. In these early days the station was known as Carrickfergus Junction and the lines approaching it were single throughout. In September 1863 the double track from Belfast reached Greenisland and was extended to Doagh in November 1875; the Doagh-Dunadry section had already been doubled in 1872. Lastly, in April 1897, the Greenisland-Carrickfergus section was doubled, leaving two tracks in each direction from the junction. All this time the main line trains had to reverse direction at Greenisland. The procedure adopted was to detach the loco at the junction to be turned while the train which it brought in was taken on by a loco standing waiting at the other end of the station.

In January 1931 work began on the construction of a new cut-off line from Bleach Green to Monkstown Junction in order to obviate the Greenisland reversal. The new line was opened on 17th January 1934 and was the largest reinforced concrete railway bridge in the British Isles. The new double track loop, on a 600ft long, 70ft high, ten span viaduct, crossed over the down Larne line, which was itself on a seven span viaduct 40ft high. The "Back Line" from Greenisland to Monkstown Junction was reduced to single track at the same time and is now subject to a 20 mph speed restriction. Most important, however, was the construction at Greenisland of a new signal cabin to control the whole area. The Belfast Advance Starter and the following two down signals and, in the up direction, the Whiteabbey starter and the following two signals are automatic, but the remainder are worked by Greenisland which despatches trains to Belfast on a special train describing apparatus which, with continuous track circuiting, dispenses with normal block working. On the main line the colour lights extend to near the site of Mossley Halt, but on the "Shore Road" they end at the approach to Greenisland which therefore controls several semaphore signals as well.

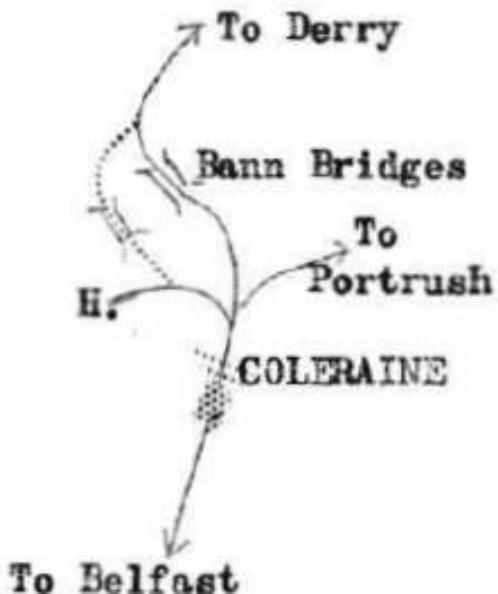
Greenisland station itself is rather unusual in that its trains invariably use the island platform; the main platform on which the station building stands is only used by the rare workings from the "Back Line". In the current winter timetable there are 38 down (35 Saturdays) and 37 up (38 Saturdays) calls and an additional 4 down and 5 up (4 Saturdays) non-stop trains on weekdays. There is also a daily goods and a "fitted" freight each way daily. A Sunday service of 18 trains each way is provided. For a long time Greenisland was noted by railway enthusiasts for the "stored" locomotives in the down siding but now even the last of these (No.15) has been removed and auctioned. In the last few months a new subway - there is no footbridge - has been brought into use.



Feature Section

NOT IN THE TIMETABLE

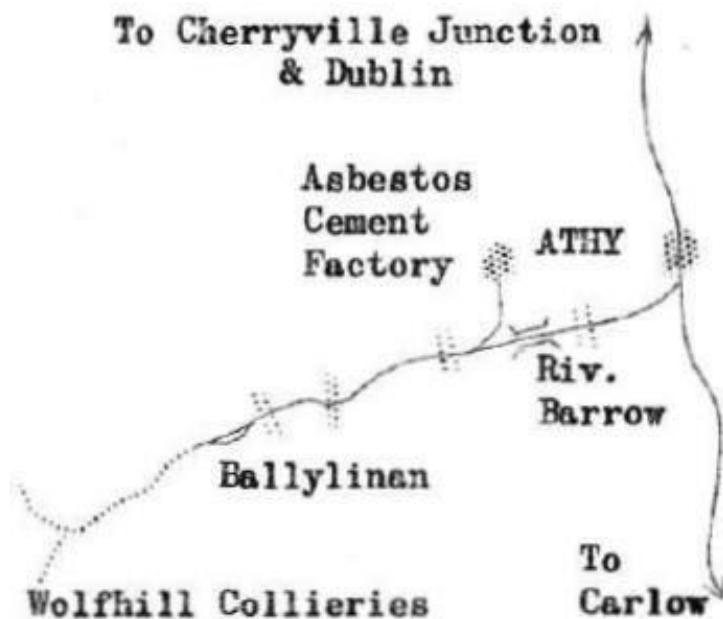
It is rather surprising to think that the railway historian of years to come, when, and if, railways are superseded, may stumble across a disused embankment and on consulting a prized working timetable for 1961, find no trace of the line mentioned in it. For there are, scattered around the country, four short branches which do not appear in the timetable at all. True, they do not carry passenger trains or even, except in one instance, a daily goods train but when we recall the care with which some abandoned lines were shown in the WTT for years after they were lifted it is odd that these four should have remained secret so long.



The oldest is the Coleraine Harbour Railway which was opened in January 1892. It was then only a short siding as the first railway bridge over the River Bann here was further upriver than the present (1924) structure. When the new bridge was built the old main line remained to give a connection to the Harbour branch. The line, now $\frac{1}{2}$ a mile in length, diverges from the main Belfast-Derry line almost opposite the Portrush branch and just beyond Coleraine's busy level crossing. The junction, facing towards Belfast, is on the down loop at the Derry end of the station. From this the line curves on a falling gradient, is crossed by an overbridge and in turn crosses the main road by an underbridge before it splits to form two sidings on the quayside. The site of the original Bann bridge (1860-1924) is just discernible. The staple traffic was at first coal and, when this declined, meal traffic took its place but this ceased when the firm concerned moved to Belfast. General traffic formerly arriving by boat now comes in via Larne. During the last War such heavy traffic was experienced that the Army rebuilt the underbridge so that the weight restriction which prohibited any loco heavier than an A1 class 4-4-0 or a V class 0-6-0 could be lifted. The line is still officially open and the only timetable reference to it is a 15 mph speed restriction. Regular traffic ceased on 16th December 1960 although one train, a 2-6-4T and 4 wagons of girders for harbour construction work, has since used the line on November 11 last.

Next in order of age is the branch from Athy to Ballylinan (4½ miles long) which was brought into use on 24th September 1918. At this time, however, the line continued to Wolfhill collieries; the coal shortage during the First World War was the spur which caused the line - and Ireland's two other

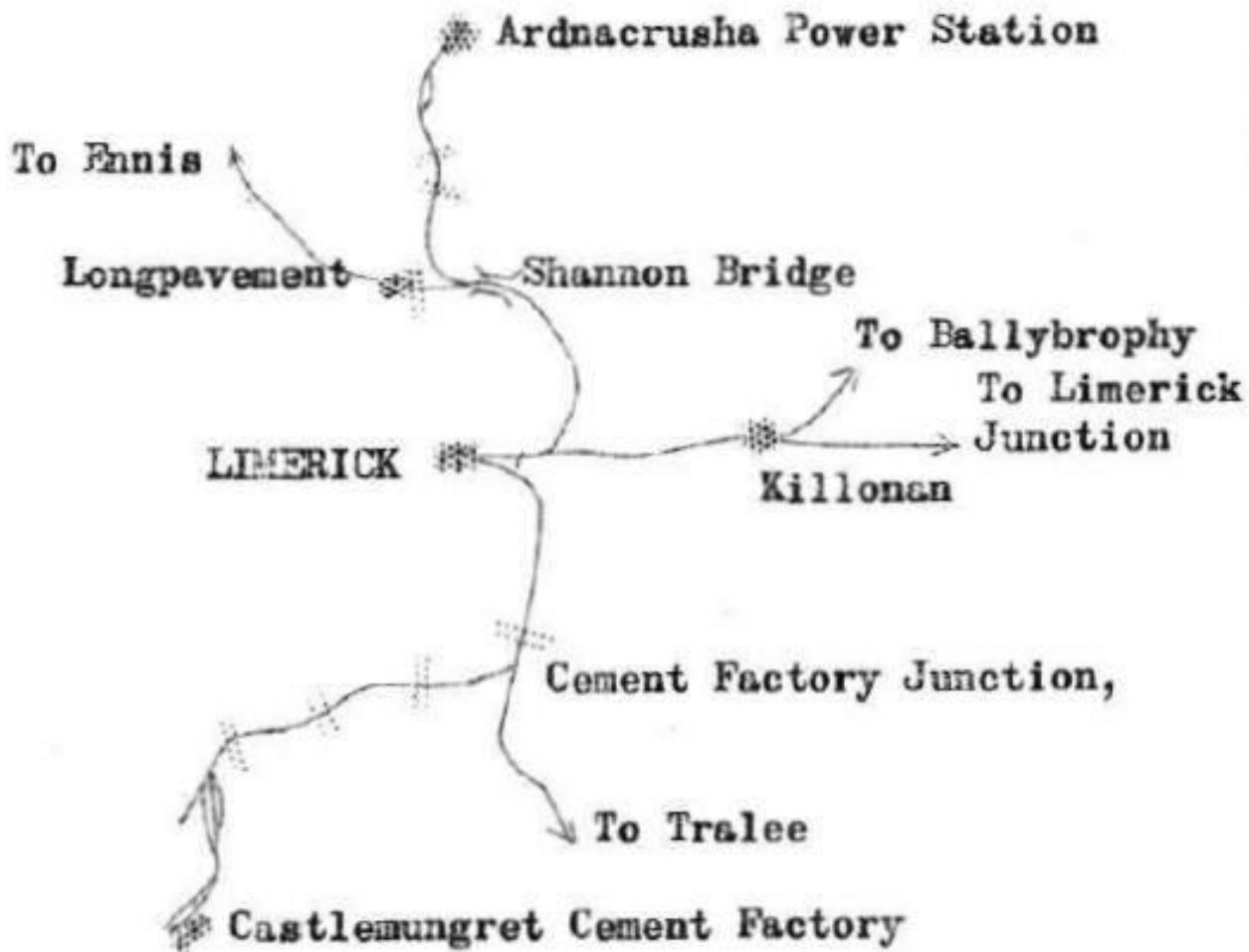
colliery railways - at Castlecomer and Arigna - to be built. The line served two pits, at Modubeagh (10 miles from Athy) and Gracefield (9 miles) and was built and worked for the Ministry of Transport by the GS&WR. The track was obtained by singling the section from Cherryville Junction to Athy. Following the Amalgamation in 1925 the line passed to the GSR and, soon after, the section beyond Ballylinan was lifted without, as far as is known, ever having carried a passenger train. The Ballylinan branch remained for the transport of sugar beet to the Carlow factory, a function which it fulfils to this day. There is, therefore, only a twice-weekly train on the line for three months - October to early January - of the year; for the remaining nine months it is dormant although in recent years three enthusiasts' specials have been run. On July 14, 1956 the IRRS had a special coach, No 854, attached to the Curragh race special and this was worked to Kildare where loco 171 (0-6-0) was used to haul it and the regular "Ballylinan Goods" to Athy and up the branch. This was almost certainly the first passenger train ever to traverse the line. The second passenger train, also run for the IRRS, was a special hauled by loco 184 (0-6-0) on 9th July 1960 which was the first occasion on which a dining car reached Ballylinan. A week later the REC ran a special two-coach railcar but this was hauled on the branch by loco 197 (0-6-0) in each direction to prevent sticking on the sharp grades.



It is, perhaps, necessary to explain that the "Ballylinan Goods" mentioned above does not, in fact, run to Ballylinan but from Kildare to Carlow! It works the Asbestos Cement factory siding which diverges from the Ballylinan branch between Carlow Road gates and Fortbarrington gates, after the crossing of the River Barrow on a 9 span concrete bridge. It is said that this goods did run to Ballylinan "if required", but whether or not it did so is uncertain. In addition to the two level crossings mentioned there are two more in the 4½ miles - at Drimroe and Ballylinan. The only WTT reference to the line is in the naming of the Kildare-Carlow goods train as the "Ballylinan" goods.

The third branch on the list, the most secretive of all, is the one mile line from Longpavement to Ardnacrusha power station. It was built in 1928/9 under the direction of the Minister for Industry & Commerce and was handed over to the ESB on 28th June 1930. The branch diverges from the Limerick - Ennis - Sligo line between the Shannon Bridge and Longpavement station. The junction is worked by an Annett's key on the Ennis Junction - Longpavement ETS. The line runs parallel to the Longpavement - Parteen road which it crosses on the level after a ½ mile. It then passes through a grove of trees, crosses a laneway at a gated crossing and, running close to the power station tailrace, approaches the power station itself. Some ¼ mile before the power house is a long loop enabling locos

to run round their trains. An interesting feature of the line is that many of the rails are of German manufacture and bear dates between "Osnabruck 1888", "W&LR 1892" and "A.H.V. 1911". Also to be seen are the spike marks on many of the sleepers which indicate the position of the mixed gauge track sections. The narrow gauge was the 900cm contractor's line from Longpavement to the power station which existed from 1925 to 1930 and is described in Mr W. McGrath's book "Some Industrial Railways of Ireland". The standard gauge branch is still used for the renewal of ESB machinery, sometimes as often as once a year although the most recent working was some two years ago.



The fourth of the branch lines not to be found in the timetable is the Castlemungret Cement Factory Railway which is the newest line in the country and the busiest by far of the quartet in this feature. The three mile branch was commenced on 3rd September 1956 and was opened on 1st October 1957. The inaugural train of 15 wagons of cement was hauled by C204 and since its opening a steady traffic has been interrupted only by trade disputes. The line diverges from the Limerick - Tralee line close to MP 2 and faces towards Limerick. It turns north across the marshes of Dooradoyle and crosses the Cork-Limerick road on the level near Ballinacurra. Not far beyond, a by-road is crossed, again on the level, and the line falls sharply to the third crossing, the Limerick-Foyne road. Beyond this the line swings parallel to the road and fans out into a three track through yard, with a dead-end siding on the up side that has a wagon weighbridge. Beyond the marshalling yard the line crosses a road on the level into the factory premises and a loading shed where bagged cement is delivered to the wagons. There are usually three trips daily worked on the line, and at present these account for over 40 wagons each day.

Normally a steam locomotive is used for all the factory trips. The line is controlled by an Annett's lock opened by a key on the Limerick Station - Patrickswell or Limerick Check - Patrickswell ETS. This

enables the branch staff to be released and the cement train “locked in” - freeing the Patrickswell section again. Unfortunately, however, delays to the cement trains are frequent as the withdrawal of a staff for the section is necessary at frequent intervals for transfers from the Station or Check Cabin to Carey’s Road Yard and often for shunting on the crossover at the latter point. If the problem becomes acute we may yet see the cement branch continued for the 1 mile from its junction to Carey’s Road Yard allowing the Cement trains to come and go without occupying the section.