

THE

# IRISH RAILFANS' NEWS

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**EDITORIAL**

The announcement by CIÉ on March 26 of its intention to close over 30 small stations in the Midlands and West of Ireland before the introduction of this year's summer timetable would seem to indicate that CIÉ is relaxing its hunt for uneconomic branch lines in favour of a search for unjustified stations and halts. Notwithstanding the strong recommendations by the Committee of Inquiry into Internal Transport in 1957 that the number of stations on the CIÉ system should be reduced to about one fourth of the number then existing and the powers subsequently granted in the 1958 Transport Act permitting the closure of any station on two months prior notice, CIÉ had not closed even one station on its system prior to 1<sup>st</sup> January 1963 - apart from five suburban halts in the Dublin area and the stations directly affected by branch line closures.

For four full years after 1958, CIÉ was so fully occupied in seeking out its uneconomic branch lines that it was obliged to overlook any losses being caused by the retention of numerous small stations in its network. Trains continued to run throughout the country stopping frequently at many halts and stations which could scarcely have satisfied an economic criterion if CIÉ had been able to closely examine their workings. The ideal average distance of 25 miles between stations, which the 1957 Committee thought desirable to provide the railway system with an opportunity to demonstrate how well it could provide for fast long-distance transport of passengers, goods and livestock remained a consideration postponed to the indefinite future.

It would appear that a desire to nullify possible public resentment over the closure of the faster Dublin-Waterford route via Port Laoise at the end of December last suddenly brought CIÉ to realise that considerably faster train services between Dublin and Waterford could be provided even over the hitherto slower route via Carlow if only stops at the smaller stations en route were eliminated. Hence the first step towards the long-awaited acceleration of its main line routes was adopted by CIÉ on 1<sup>st</sup> January 1963, when it succeeded in reducing the journey time between Dublin and Waterford from 3 hours 25 minutes to 2½ hours by closing 8 wayside stations. The obvious advantages to through traffic following this acceleration of the Waterford route has not been overlooked by CIÉ and it is now about to extend similar improvements to the services on other lines. The closure of many stations on the Midland section is now imminent while a similar fate is shortly expected to befall those on the Southern and South-Eastern sections.

This long-awaited "tidying-up" is welcome and should improve the efficiency of operation to the extent that new traffic gained from the resultant acceleration of services will quickly offset the loss of the sparse and inherently uneconomic traffic offered by the smaller wayside stations. It is only to be hoped that the speed-up of rail services which should now become possible in the 1963 summer timetable will have been introduced in time before the majority of regular rail travellers in Ireland realise that with existing schedules many long-distance rail journeys can be more quickly completed by private car averaging only 40 mph!

## REVIEW

### **Gradient Profile Sheets - drawn by Mr R.C. Flewitt**

In our July 1959 issue we reviewed the first three of these sheets - there are now 14 of them covering the greater part of the Irish railway system. The profiles are attractive in appearance and are unabridged - the original D&SER one has been redrawn - and cost 4/6<sup>d</sup> or 2/6<sup>d</sup> according to size. Full details can be obtained from Mr R.C. Flewitt.

## SOME ARTICLES OF IRISH RAILWAY INTEREST

### **Railway Magazine**

February	Owencarrow Accident (Paragraph)
March	Irish Loco Notes

### **Modern Railways**

February et seq	The Irish Scene
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### **Railway World**

March	Kells-Oldcastle Centenary (Short note)
April	Ballaghaderreen & Loughrea (3 photographs) Streamstown-Clara Centenary (Short note) Cavan & Leitrim Coach

### **IRRS Journal**

Autumn 1962	Clontarf & Hill of Howth Tramroad Irish Railways in 1860 The "Derry Road" Locos of the Dublin & Kingstown Railway
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# **News Section**

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## CIÉ GENERAL NEWS REPORT

### **Rolling Stock Developments**

The GSR suburban steel panelled stock of 1936 has recently been passing through Inchicore Works for the fitting of gangway connections and some of these so fitted have been seen in traffic on main line long-distance trains. Work has commenced at Inchicore on two new first class coaches, while at the end of March Buffet car C97N emerged overhauled and refurbished. Park Royal coaches on the Dublin-Bray suburban section have had small notices placed on the saloon sliding doors stating "Please close the door - Thank you!"

### **Station Closures**

It has been announced that CIÉ has decided to close over 30 small stations on the Midland and Limerick-Sligo sections, and an announcement is expected before the end of April. This will bring the number of stations closed under the 1958 Transport Act - including those on closed branch lines - to over 200. CIÉ's examination of the railway system is said, however, to be nearing completion but the closure of further stations on the Southern and Eastern sections is to be expected. As we go to press the

details of the initial station closures have just been announced and details of CIÉ's intentions are given below.

### **Transport Legislation**

The Transport Bill 1963, which was introduced in Seanad Éireann on April 3, contains a number of important provisions relating to CIÉ. Perhaps the most interesting of these are the provisions giving powers to CIÉ to construct extension railways. These powers which include the acquisition - by compulsion, if necessary - of lands and buildings required for such construction, are identical with those granted to Bord na Mona under the Turf Development Act of 1946 and should therefore enable CIÉ in future to extend private sidings on request from its railway system into the premises of any large customer with a minimum of delay. Once this Bill becomes law it should be possible for CIÉ to secure much additional economic freight traffic and to reduce considerably the handling costs incurred with existing traffic requiring laborious cartage from customers' premises to the nearest railhead. It is understood that CIÉ intend to avail of these powers immediately after the enactment of the Bill in the cases of: 1) the proposed connection from Wicklow goods station to the factory of Shamrock Fertilisers Ltd, and 2) a further connection off the Dublin-Wexford main line near Arklow into the £6m nitrogenous fertiliser plant at present under construction for the State-sponsored organisation Nitrigín Éireann Teo. Important financial provisions of this Bill include the raising from £12m to £15m of CIÉ's borrowing powers by stock issue and the extension to 31<sup>st</sup> March 1964 (the end of the 5 year re-organisation period) of the provision in the 1958 Transport Act which empowers the Exchequer to compensate CIÉ employees rendered redundant by the re-organisation scheme. The latter provision is being widely interpreted as an indication that CIÉ has not yet quite completed its re-organisation of the railway system and that further redundancy is likely to arise next autumn, probably from the closure of many more small stations. It is also possible that further secondary lines may also be closed - at least to passenger traffic - before the end of March 1964. Other provisions contained in the new Transport Bill include powers enabling CIÉ to expedite the legal procedure for disposal of abandoned lines. A peculiar, but most unobtrusive, provision is included legalising two Orders already made under the 1950 Transport Act - Orders relating to the now apparently illegal construction of the Castlemungret Cement Factory line in 1955 and the Cork Quay extensions of 1958.

### **Enthusiast Specials**

During the month of March two enthusiast specials of extraordinary interest were run and may well have brought to an auspicious close the age of steam on CIÉ; most appropriately using the type of loco most familiar on Irish railways - the invaluable J15 (0-6-0).

*Horseleap And Athlone:* On March 18, the last J15 in steam in Ireland, No.151, left Dublin (Amiens Street) at 09:47 and headed west along the MGWR main line working an IRRS buffet car special. The train consisted of LV 2715, brake first C90N, seconds 1457, 1478, 1376, diner 2400 and LV 2719. Brake trouble with 2715 necessitated its removal at Mullingar before the train departed for Streamstown and the MGWR branch from there to Clara - the first passenger train to cross the "Horseleap branch" since 1959. The train reversed at Clara, traversed the branch once more and from Streamstown continued to Athlone where 2719 was jettisoned. After a stop to inspect Athlone's attractions, the return journey was made by the erstwhile GS&WR Athlone Branch to Portarlinton, whereafter 151 bravely took up its path in the nightly diesel procession to Dublin on the Cork-Dublin main line. An otherwise gallant run, however, was upset by the difficulty of coaxing sufficient water from the column at Kildare and Amiens Street was reached just over 30 minutes late.

*Ballylinan And Palace East:* On March 23, 151 was again the motive power on an enthusiast special, this time sponsored by the RBAI Railway Society, when, with a small train comprising seconds 1478, 1457, 1487 and LV 2709, she retraced the path blazed by her sister 184 on 9<sup>th</sup> July 1960 on an IRRS tour over the same lines, with even the same driver in charge. The train left Amiens Street at 11:26 for

Athy whence the Ballylinan branch was traversed - the last train of any sort on the line before its closure on March 31. Having returned to Athy, the train continued to Muine Bheag and proceeded over the branch to Palace East and on to Macmine Junction. The run home over the D&SER main line, although to a great extent in darkness, recaptured the atmosphere of steam days as this tortuous route was tackled, accompanied by the distinctive J15 bark and showers of sparks. If, indeed, this was a steam finale on CIÉ, 151 certainly put up an exciting performance even if the overall time was 194 minutes more than scheduled.

## **Closures**

The CIÉ rail closure programme was carried two stages further since our last issue and 122¼ additional miles have been closed to all traffic while another 115 have lost passenger trains. The first stage became effective on and from February 4 and the second stage followed with effect from April 1. Details of the closures are given hereunder:

*Kilfree Junction - Ballaghaderreen:* Abnormally, Saturday February 2 was a very busy day on the branch as services ran for the last time. The 11:50 mixed to Kilfree was loco 574 (0-6-0), seconds 1289, 1314 and van 69, with 160 children and 30 adults aboard and was seen off by as many spectators at 11:56. Edmonstown Halt added nothing but lost time although this was almost all regained before Island Road Halt. Here, 3 passengers alighted while 12 well-wishers joined the mob on board for the final section to the junction. The interval at Kilfree saw 574 turned, run round and add a wagon to the train while the 09:25 ex Dublin disgorged 5 passengers for the branch and picked up one for the Sligo direction. At 13:00 the return journey was started to the thud of detonators and ended in good time at Ballaghaderreen with the local band playing farewell. 8 passengers alighted at Island Road. The last train out was the Sligo cattle special at 15:22 which left with loco B133, 9 empty and 4 laden cattle wagons, 3 loaded covered wagons and van. A call was made at Island Road and Kilfree was reached at 15:50.

*Banteer - Newmarket:* The Newmarket branch experienced heavy traffic during its last month of operation as many of the roads in the area were rendered impassable by the snow. Indeed, Newmarket yard on the last day was a white wilderness with tracks. The last train, C221 with 15 wagons and van, left Banteer punctually at 10:00 on February 2. It arrived in Newmarket at 11:40 with only 8 wagons, the remainder having been shunted at Kanturk. For the return journey the "Moveable Assets" were loaded and the C class departed to a fanfare of detonators clearing the branch of all rolling stock en route.

*Cobh Junction - Youghal:* The withdrawal of passenger traffic from the Youghal line was achieved fairly quietly. On February 2 the down 09:30, its return working at 13:00 and the 16:20 down comprised loco B156, coaches 1376, 1144 and HV 3147. This loco returned to Cork on the 18:15 goods which worked the empty coaches back instead of leaving them in Youghal for the 07:55 of Monday morning as would normally be the case. The last down passenger train at 18:15 was made up of loco B109, HV 3128, compo 2124, seconds 1482, 1446, 1451 and 6-wheel van 1077, with about 90 passengers aboard including two Gardaí. Only five minutes were lost on the down journey but, returning, a four minute late departure grew to a 20 minute late arrival in Cork due to demonstrations en route, particularly at Killeagh and Mogeely. Since the closure only one goods train runs in each direction on weekdays, leaving Cork at 09:00, due Youghal 11:50 remaining there until 17:30, due Cork at 20:24. A speed limit of 30 mph was imposed on the entire Cobh Junction - Youghal line on the withdrawal of passenger trains but this has since been increased to 40 mph. There are 7 bus services each way weekdays between Cork and Youghal but this includes the service to Waterford existing before the branch closure. It is, however, intended that summer seaside services will be operated by rail.

*North Kerry And Foynes:* The 70½ mile Limerick-Tralee line and its 9½ mile branch from Ballingrane

to Foynes also had their last passenger workings on February 2. In the case of the Foynes line the "passenger service" was provided by the inclusion of a coach - latterly six-wheeler 100M - on the 11:15 goods ex Limerick and a passenger was a rarity and almost invariably of the genus railway enthusiast. On the last day the train was hauled by a Sulzer B class loco and had in addition to the coach 5 horseboxes and about 28 wagons and van. The last train from Limerick to Tralee was a two-coach railcar 2622/2601 and to accommodate the crowd travelling hauled a new second 1502 as far as Ballingrane where it was detached and returned to Limerick on the Foynes goods which was crossed there. At Rathkeale B160 with 15 wagons and van was crossed on the up goods. At many stations en route farewells were said and detonators exploded. Arrival in Tralee was exactly 4 minutes late, as the departure from Limerick had been, but the schedule was not so closely adhered to throughout. The goods trains have not been significantly altered since closure although a 30 mph restriction has been imposed throughout. On February 17 a passenger special ran from Listowel to Tralee and back. With the withdrawal of passenger services on February 2 the stations of Kilgobbin, Ardagh, Barnagh, Devon Road and Kilmorna were closed completely and on February 4 the ETS was removed from Barnagh making the section Newcastle West - Abbeyfeale (14¼ miles).

*The North Wexford Line:* Regular passenger services from Waterford to Macmine on March 30 were worked by loco B135, HV 3144, coaches 1329, 2101 and LV 2760. On the evening trip a cattle wagon from Carrick-on-Suir to Macmine was attached, and a passenger complement of some two dozen was aboard. Considerable interest was aroused as newspaper reporters and a few local people came to salute its passage. Waterford was reached on the return journey 10½ minutes late just in time to allow the goods to depart at 18:01 for Macmine - A31 with 14 wagons and van. After prolonged shunting at New Ross a 12-wagon and van train left for the last time northwards. At Palace East two wagons were attached and 1 detached while at Chapel a further three were added. A measure of the traffic flow is the fact that 12 of the 14 were for the up Wexford-Dublin night goods which left Macmine at 23:00 - B141, 24 wagons and van. There was an unusual finale on the line in that on Sunday March 31 a Gorey-Kilkenny football special was routed via New Ross and comprised B149, LV 2751, seconds 1448, 1468, 1466, 1435, compo 2164 and HV 3121. On its return journey this, the last passenger train on the branch, carried 130 passengers of which over half detrained before Macmine. At New Ross salvoes of detonators were out and at 20:45 the last train on the Macmine - New Ross sector came to a stand in Macmine. A train to collect empty wagons was expected to run on April 8. The Waterford - New Ross section remains open for goods traffic only and the timetable provides two services in each direction, from Waterford at 08:00 and 15:00 and from New Ross at 09:35 and 18:30. The branch will be worked on the "one engine in steam" system but the ETS is being retained for a time while engineer's trains are running.

*Muine Bheag - Palace East:* There might well have been no train on the Muine Bheag - Palace East line after the ending of the beet season in early January but in fact the RBAI special of March 23, described elsewhere in this issue, provided a last passenger train while the following Monday March 25 a fair special ran from Muine Bheag to Borris and gave loco A4, hauling 24 wagons and a goods brake van the distinction of being the last movement of the line before its closure.

*Enfield - Edenderry:* The last train to work over the Edenderry branch left Enfield on March 25 at 07:58 for Edenderry where it picked up 5 wagons. It arrived back at Enfield at 11:05. The train was the 05:15 goods from North Wall, Dublin, to Athlone which stops as required at Enfield to work the branch. The last passenger train was on March 17 in connection with a football match in Dublin. The train, consisting of loco B173, brake second 2491, seconds 1388, 1391, 1386, 1412, brake second 1898 and HV 3138, left Enfield at 19:04 and, calling at Carbury, arrived in Edenderry at 19:44. The empty carriages left Edenderry at 20:30 and regained the main line at Enfield at 21:14.

*Athy - Ballylinan:* Apart from the RBAI special of March 23 no train has run beyond the Asbestos

siding since the close of the 1962 beet season in early January 1963.

The Meath Lines: See Feature article in this issue.

## **Lifting**

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

West Cork: The Baltimore line has been lifted into Drimoleague and the gang is now working towards Cork. The lifting of the Clonakilty branch is now almost completed into Clonakilty Junction.

Port Laoise - Kilkenny: The line was broken shortly after closure at MP 24 and lifting gangs commenced working both north to Port Laoise and south towards Castlecomer Junction and Kilkenny. The northbound gang is now working between Attanagh and Abbeyleix about 1½ miles beyond the former. In the other direction removal is almost complete to Castlecomer Junction and, presumably, will move to Deerpark and commence on the Castlecomer branch when the junction is reached.

Other Lines: No move has yet been reported as to the commencement of lifting operations on the Birr, Banagher, Mountmellick, Ballaghaderreen or Newmarket branches. It is possible, however, that efforts are being made to sell these lines in situ.

## **Steam Finale**

On the delivery of almost every new order for diesel locos since 1955 it has been said that it signified the end of steam. Today, some 8 years later, somewhat sadly we report that the latest onslaught of new GM, Maybach and Deutz locomotives has at last achieved this long foretold end. The thinning of the ranks began in Drogheda on January 14 when the steam pilots were replaced by two A class diesels. The neighbouring shed of Dundalk soon followed suit when on February 4 one A class and one C class joined the G class there and all steam workings ceased. At this time also, steam workings ceased at Waterford, Limerick, Tralee, Athlone and Mullingar and the delivery of two new E class locos to Cork reduced steam to train heating in the severe weather and trips on the West Cork lifting trains but even these now seem to have ceased. Dublin for a time remained faithful to the old regime. The last regular steam passenger working on the GN section - the 07:48 to Howth and its return working - ended on January 8. On February 18, nine E class diesels and one G class were transferred to Amiens Street shed and C class diesels took over the Dun Laoghaire Pier train links (although steam had to reappear on these at least once, as loco 151 was noted). By this time only 7 engines per day were in steam: goods pilot and relief passenger pilot at Amiens Street, one train heating at Kingsbridge, another at Westland Row, one working engineer's trains to Ballygannon, one working a pier train and one acting as banking engine at North Wall. These were gradually reduced until finally on March 30 the last steam workings: 143N on Amiens Street goods pilot and 15N on North Wall banker were replaced by the allocation of two more E class locos to Amiens Street on April 1.

Meanwhile, the great trek to the scrap yards at Inchicore, Dundalk and Mullingar had started.

To Inchicore for scrap went: 42, 105, 110, 128, 131, 133, 154, 166, 193, 201, 250, 301, 354, 462, 552, 700 and "Sambo".

To Mullingar for the same purpose went: 121, 123, 161, 162, 190, 232, 253, 583, 588, 589, 606, 610, 613, 639, 653, 654 and 719.

Arrivals at Dundalk were: 96N, 112N, 154N, 155N, 161N, 163N, 164N, 177N, 184N, 197N, 199N, 203N, 122, 255, 258 and 638.

A total of 53 locos are to be retained in store in various depots. They are as follows: Dundalk, 85N, 152N, 158N, 171N, 204N; Drogheda, 8N, 131N, 148N; Limerick Junction, 106, 125, 130, 164, 186, 351; Mallow, 109, 116; Athlone, 574, 593, 599, 603; Mullingar, 159N; Amiens Street, 3N, 15N, 80N, 117N, 132N, 170N, 174N, 179N, 181N, 207N, 637; Sutton Tram Shed, 91N, 143N, 132, 151, 172,

197, 198, 261, 562; Inchicore, 179, 183, 249, 461; Thurles, 104, 124, 195; Cork, 118, 251, 262, 463, 560. This total remaining steam stock comprises 23 GS&WR, 21 GNR, 7 MGWR, 1 D&SER, 1 CB&SCR types.

For the first time the numerical superiority of the J15 0-6-0 class has been reduced so far as to be equalled by another Irish class - the UTA 2-6-4Ts - there now being 18 of each extant. Other locos not mentioned above are 184, 800 and 14N, while 354 and 464 are used as stationery boilers at Inchicore works. It is understood that the two first mentioned will be preserved. 14N is in store in Dublin but is not listed among the locos to be retained. A feature of the engines being kept is the large number of ex GNR passenger locos, in contravention of the former CIÉ practice of concentrating on goods or mixed traffic locos. It is understood that the UTA is interested in 5 of these, probably, 85N, 170N, 171N, 174N and 207N.

FLASH: As we go to press it has been learned that 463 is again working the West Cork lifting train.

### **Ticket Machines**

On and from January 14, as mentioned in our last issue, 4 Almex ticket printing machines are on trial in Kingsbridge and all tickets issued there are so produced. This machine produces one-piece tickets on a machine roll of green paper similar to those issued at Donabate and Harmonstown, but can also issue tickets on thin card. Initially three-monthly returns were of this type and were partly pre-printed. Subsequently several other thin card type tickets in distinctive colours were introduced. One inherent disadvantage is the indication of both the destination and the type of ticket by code number (although the type is shown on certain pre-printed tickets) so that a passenger is unable to ascertain whether he has been issued with the ticket he requested by any means other than the fare. The chief advantage in the system, apparently, is in its reduction in manual accountancy.

### **Modernisation Of Stations**

Kilkenny station and yard is currently undergoing some alterations and improvements. The principal platform has been extended some 30 yards to the signal cabin. That part of the station roof over the second little-used platform has been demolished but the main platform is still covered. The crossover between the Carlow and Waterford lines outside the station has been eased and a high level loading bank is being additionally provided.

### **Ballygannon**

Every winter difficulties and disruption of traffic occur when the sea floods the Dublin-Wexford line between Greystones and Kilcoole near Ballygannon Point, but this winter the severe weather and high tides combined to close the line roughly once a week throughout January and February. The first and probably worst was a washout which stopped services from December 31 to January 3 as mentioned in our last issue. The trouble point was near MP 18¾ not MP 17¾ as in previous years. Short interruptions occurred on January 10 and 19 and again throughout January 21. The storm of February 5 again stopped traffic for four days up to 18:00 on February 8 while again high tides caused shorter blockages on February 11 and 14. During the trouble period and up to February 18 the 10:15 down and 09:20 up terminated at Bray and Wicklow respectively and buses bridged the gap. This enabled the engineers to have possession of the line throughout the hours of daylight to expedite the work.

### **Loughrea Revival**

On and from February 4 the passenger service on the Attymon Junction - Loughrea branch was increased from two trains per day to four trains per day, each direction. On the same date the road passenger service between these points was withdrawn and loco 583 (0-6-0) was replaced by one of the new G class Deutz locos. The timings of the new service are: ex Loughrea, 08:25 passenger; 11:10 mixed; 15:35 mixed/mail; 20:15 passenger; ex Attymon, 09:15 mixed; 12:05 mixed/mail; 16:30 mixed;



21:50 mixed. The total sectional running time for passenger trains has been increased and is now 28 minutes while mixed trains take 30 minutes. The maximum load for passenger trains is now 90 tons and for mixed trains, one coach, 5 wagons and van. Since the introduction of the new service the branch has been worked by G class diesel locos. At first G612 and later G615 was reported. The passenger accommodation on the train consists of CIÉ built brake second 1910 and a novel method of heating has been devised by CIÉ; three pairs of seats have been removed and replaced by electric storage heaters. Provision has been made at Loughrea for connecting these heaters to the mains supply during the night and sufficient heat is thus generated to keep the coach comfortably warm during the following day. First class has been provided by designating one section, the former non-smoking compartment, as first class and by fitting antimacassars to the original second class seats! 1910 now seats 6 first class and 26 second class.

### **Kilmacow Smash**

On April 9, 23 wagons, which became uncoupled from the 39-wagon evening goods from Kilkenny to Waterford near Kilmacow, ran away and collided with the remaining portion of its own train resulting in considerable damage but without causing serious injury to the train crew. While wreckage blocked the line, the Waterford - Dublin train service was rerouted via Clonmel to Thurles where it made connection with Cork - Dublin trains. A temporary service was operated between Thomastown and Kilkenny which gave connections into and out of a Kilkenny-Dublin service.

### **Athlone East**

Work has commenced on the installation at Athlone East Junction - where the Portarlinton to Athlone branch joins the ex MGWR main line from Dublin to Galway - of the power-operated points recently recovered from Inny Junction following the completion of lifting of the branch to Cavan. These points will be worked from Athlone West Cabin and the East Cabin will be dispensed with. Special arrangements for the locking of the Shannon Bridge will also require to be made as this is presently controlled jointly between the two cabins.

### **Waterford Line**

Following the operation of a trial train, consisting of a diesel loco and van, on March 19, CIÉ brought automatic staff exchanging apparatus into use on the Waterford line on April 1. The apparatus, which has been installed at the Cherryville Junction, Athy, Muine Bheag, Thomastown, Mullinavat and Waterford West cabins, is similar to that in use on other sections of CIÉ and will enable speed to be maintained in future through each of the intermediate block posts en route.

### **Sunday Galway Train**

On Sunday February 24 CIÉ introduced a regular Sunday service between Dublin and Galway at 10:45 from Westland Row, returning at 19:30 from Galway. This is similar to the service run last summer; calls are made at Mullingar, Moate, Athlone, Ballinasloe and Athenry in each direction.

## **UTA GENERAL NEWS REPORT**

### **Winter Weather**

In the first week of February, a blizzard wrought havoc in Northern Ireland and snow caused such dislocation of transport and supplies that a state of emergency was declared by the Government. For a number of days rail transport was the only means of communication in the area and in thus forcibly demonstrating its ability to continue throughout the freeze-up it may help to improve the normal frigid temperature of the Stormont Government on matters of railway retention. The worst affected areas were in Counties Down and Antrim, particularly in the region of Belfast. Whilst road and other services ground to a halt, rail services were maintained on all sections with varying degrees of success despite

falling and drifting snow (on February 5 and 6), frozen points and fallen telegraph wires.

On the Belfast - Bangor section the rail service ran continuously with generally only minor delays. The only bad hold-up on this line was on February 5 when the 23:20 Belfast-Bangor was delayed for some four hours due to frozen points. The automatic signalling failed and was replaced by telephonic block working for some ten days.

UTA's only snow plough was pressed into service on the NCC section. On February 6 the 05:35 York Road - Derry MP railcar set was blocked by snow drifts at Ballyclare Junction and the assistance of a 2-6-4T at the rear merely embedded the railcars further into the drift near Templepatrick, blocking both roads. Frozen points were, however, the greatest cause of delay on the NCC Section.

The GNR section fell in for more than its share of misfortunes. The crash at Lisburn and the subsequent derailment there added to the dislocation. All telephonic communication was broken over the 25 mile section from Belfast to Portadown and was not completely restored until Saturday February 9. On February 6 the Belfast-Lisburn locals did not run until the afternoon when an unscheduled service commenced. During the forenoon the only trains to depart from Belfast were the 08:15 Belfast-Dublin at 10:15; 10:30 "Enterprise" at 11:30 and the 11:15 Belfast-Derry at 13:15. To add to the chaos, Adelaide shed became blocked up with snow and by frozen points, while the AEC railcars experienced difficulty due to snow blocking their air intake pipes. In the down direction delays were not so great, the 09:15 and 11:00 ex Dublin arriving in Belfast 1 hour, and 30 minutes late, respectively. CIÉ co-operated in the maintenance of cross-border services by providing a special train, working in the path of the 08:15 from Belfast as between Dundalk and Dublin and also on the 14:45 ex Dublin as far as Dundalk thus enabling the UTA set to be turned at Dundalk. Conditions on the Belfast-Portadown section remained bad until the weekend February 9/10 although February 6 was the only day on which there was any serious dislocation. While wires were being re-erected trains had to work over various stretches under caution; the 14:45 ex Dublin on February 7 worked under caution from Seagoe cabin to Belfast North Cabin - a distance of 24 miles. The Portadown-Derry section was remarkably trouble free, but the Antrim branch was blocked for three days.

Notwithstanding these difficulties the railways proved to be a lifeline - the only means of communication - in the province during this time of stress.

### **Locomotive Developments**

Since our last issue the following locos have been overhauled at Duncrue Street Works: 91 (2-6-0), 35 (0-6-0), 50 and 54 (2-6-4T). Locomotives currently being overhauled are 2 (2-6-4T) as a result of the Lisburn crash referred to elsewhere, 10, 57 (2-6-4T), while awaiting attention is 36 (0-6-0). 19 (0-6-0T) is at Maysfields pending disposal. 0-6-4T 27 has returned to Adelaide from York Road. Since the abolition of steam workings by CIÉ at Dundalk on February 4 it has become impossible for northbound goods trains to be banked from Dundalk to Goragewood as the practice of banking trains with diesel-electric locos was suspended by CIÉ following a series of derailments some years ago. It had been the custom to bank goods trains from Dundalk with the steam pilot engine. Since February 4, where necessary, the UTA loco works a portion of the train to Goragewood and returns for the remainder. This happens quite frequently as most goods trains are worked by 2-6-4Ts which can only take a load equivalent to that of ex GNR 'SG' or 'SG2' 0-6-0s - 43 wagons and van. Even this load has sometimes proved too much for the 2-6-4Ts, particularly in poor weather conditions, and it is on such trains that the now rare sight of a steam loco being worked to full capacity is to be seen. To obviate the necessity of such double working between Dundalk and Goragewood the large ex GNR 'SG3' class locos have been observed occasionally when they could be spared from duty on the Portadown-Derry line.

### **Railway Advocate**

The Stormont Government published in March a report on the development of Belfast and

recommendations for its future, compiled by Sir Robert Matthew. In general the report recommends that the growth of Belfast be limited and that certain selected satellite towns be used to house the influx of country people into conurbations. It proposes that Lurgan and Portadown be developed into a new town of 100,000 inhabitants and that further population increases be concentrated in Ballymena, Antrim, Larne, Carrickfergus and Downpatrick. It will be noted that all these, except the last-mentioned, are situated on existing railways and Sir Robert - following, perhaps, a pre-publication peep at the Benson Report? - recommends the retention of the present rail network, agreeing with the UTA that it is at the limit of its smallness. It is also worth comment that of six towns suggested for industrial development - Newry, Derry, Coleraine, Omagh, Dungannon and Enniskillen - only one, Enniskillen, lacks rail facilities. Can it be that the Governmental cold climate in which the UTA have been operating for so long is beginning to thaw?

### **Railcar Developments**

Railcar 104 was out of traffic from mid-January to March 1 and while repairs were being carried out at Queen's Quay its workings were taken over by steam between Goraghwood and Newry, often the 2-6-0 of the same number - 104! Railcars recently overhauled were 114, 115, 121, 124, 135 (ex GNR) and 39, 47, 53 (Multi-Purpose).

### **Coaching Stock**

Yet another coach has been converted into a service vehicle; this time brake second N460 which has become an Engineer's welding plant van, renumbered 3108. The coaching stock damaged in the Rush derailment reported in our last issue (N196, N328, N372, N404, N406 and N612) was taken to Adelaide in late January. N404 and N406 were repaired and returned to traffic almost immediately, and in time for N406 to be involved in the Lisburn crash on February 5. The other coaches damaged at Lisburn were N286 and N466 which were also removed to Adelaide. N406 has again been repaired and N196 is at York Road awaiting space in the works. Bogie van N612 was badly damaged at Rush and is currently being replaced by her sister vehicle now CIÉ C434N. Catering vehicles currently being overhauled are N554, N556 and 549.

### **Bridge 300**

The long awaited work on underbridge 300 at Balmoral station commenced in January and by mid-March the line had been raised through the station and across the bridge to allow the stone arch to be replaced by a new structure giving greater headroom to allow for the passage of double deck buses underneath. The platforms at Balmoral have had to be raised and this has been done with cribs of sleepers. Passengers for the halt must now travel in the front three coaches of the train.

### **Timetable Alterations**

Since April 1 two new weekday services have been working between Belfast and Portadown in each direction. They are at 10:10 and 15:00 (SX) from Belfast and 11:10 and 16:15 (SX) from Portadown and call only at Lisburn and Lurgan. The new trains are second class only as they are rostered to be worked by single unit BUT railcars. Carrigans, one of the CIÉ outposts on the Portadown-Derry line, lost one of its few services on February 4 as the 19:00 Strabane-Derry ceased to call. The temporary replacement of the "Caledonian Princess" by the "Shepperton Ferry" on the Larne-Stranraer route during March caused some recasting of boat train connections to Belfast.

### **Station Improvements**

At the end of January the old destination indicators at Great Victoria Street were replaced by a new modern style board showing rail/road connections. The new board is, however, regrettably small and requires close examination to obtain information, whereas the previous one could be read from almost any part of the concourse. It is reported that Warrenpoint station has been cleaned and painted.

## **No Spare Wheel!**

While permanent way inspection car No.8178 - formerly GNR railbus No.4, and now based on Portadown shed - was making an engineer's inspection of the Adavoyle - Mount Pleasant section on February 8, one of its patent Howden-Meredith wheels became deflated causing the railbus to become derailed. As the emergency equipment failed to produce the means of repairing a puncture the railbus was later raised on a bogie frame and ignominiously hauled to Goraghwood to await the assistance of the Road Motor Department! No.8178 is the only railbus still in use.

## **Lisburn Crash**

During one of the worst blizzards for many years on February 5, Lisburn was the scene of a collision between an express and a local railcar which fortunately resulted in no loss of life or serious injury. The 18:03 railcar from Belfast to Lisburn was at the up platform in Lisburn awaiting departure for Belfast when the 18:15 Belfast-Dublin express consisting of 2-6-4T No.2 and four bogies collided with it. The local set consisted of railcars 6 and 7 with intermediate coach 528. The driver of the railcar succeeded in jumping clear before the crash. Railcar 7 was extensively damaged and it is not yet known whether it will be repaired. The steam loco was also extensively damaged and is presently being repaired in Duncrue Street works. Breakdown gangs were quickly mobilised and their difficulties under the appalling weather conditions were further increased by the derailment of their loco, No.63 (4-4-0). Single line working through the loop platform at Lisburn was quickly established and the greatest delay was to the 16:10 Derry-Belfast which was held up for 76 minutes. Disrupted telephone communications on the 25 miles from Belfast to Portadown forced the breakdown crews to suspend operations until the following day.

## **Track Alteration**

Early in January the crossover between the up and down main lines at Adelaide was disconnected necessitating workings between Belfast and Adelaide shed being made along the "third line" provided from Central Junction to Adelaide.

## **LATEST NEWS**

### **June Closures**

Following the preliminary announcement at the end of March (mentioned above and commented upon in our Editorial) CIÉ, on April 13, gave formal notice of its intention: 1) to close the Claremorris-Collooney line to passenger traffic; 2) to close 33 stations completely; 3) to close 20 further stations to certain traffics.

Those closing completely are: Ardsollus, Ballindine, Ballinlough, Ballycar, Ballycumber, Ballymurphy, Ballyvary, Began, Carrowduff, Carrowmore, Castlegrove, Castletown, Cratloe, Crusheen, Curry, Drumsna, Donamon, Foxford, Islandeady, Kiltoom, Knockcroghery, Longpavement, Leyny, Manulla Junction, Milltown (Co. Galway), Moyvalley, Multyfarnham, Newtownforbes, Oranmore, Sixmilebridge, Streete, Streamstown and Tubber.

In addition, CIÉ intend to close: Balla, Ballymoe, Clonsilla, Hill of Down, Kilcock, Leixlip and Maynooth to all traffic except livestock while Clara and Mostrim (Edgeworthstown) will be closed to all traffics except passengers and livestock. In passing, it may be mentioned that Clonsilla, Kilcock, Killucan, Leixlip and Maynooth have already been closed to regular passenger traffic.

Another seven stations: Ballyglunin, Ballysodare, Charlestown, Craughwell, Kiltimagh, Swinford and Tubbercurry, are to close to passenger traffic with the surprising provision that Ballyglunin and Craughwell will remain open for passenger traffic in the northbound direction only! The only train to call will be a new 15:40 Limerick-Claremorris which will carry passengers both to and from the two

stations. Both will be closed to goods traffic (except beet in the case of Craughwell only), a truly extraordinary state of affairs!

There are three other partial closures under various heads: 1) Geashill to all traffic except beet; 2) Woodlawn to all merchandise, but remaining open for passengers; 3) Clarecastle to all traffic except tar!

All of these closures will take place after the passage of the last trains on June 15 and alterations caused thereby will be incorporated in the new summer timetable commencing on June 17.

### **LOOSE LINKS**

- Loco F301 - the first of the West Clare diesel locos to be moved from Ennis - appeared in Inchicore early in February.
- To help drivers locate it at night, "H" boards have been provided at a distance either side of Camolin Halt.
- The ex GNR Dundalk Locomotive Department steam crane has been transferred, with its match truck and six-wheel breakdown van 8403, to Waterford.
- Ex GNR bogie parcels van C780N has appeared from Dundalk paint shops in the new CIÉ livery.

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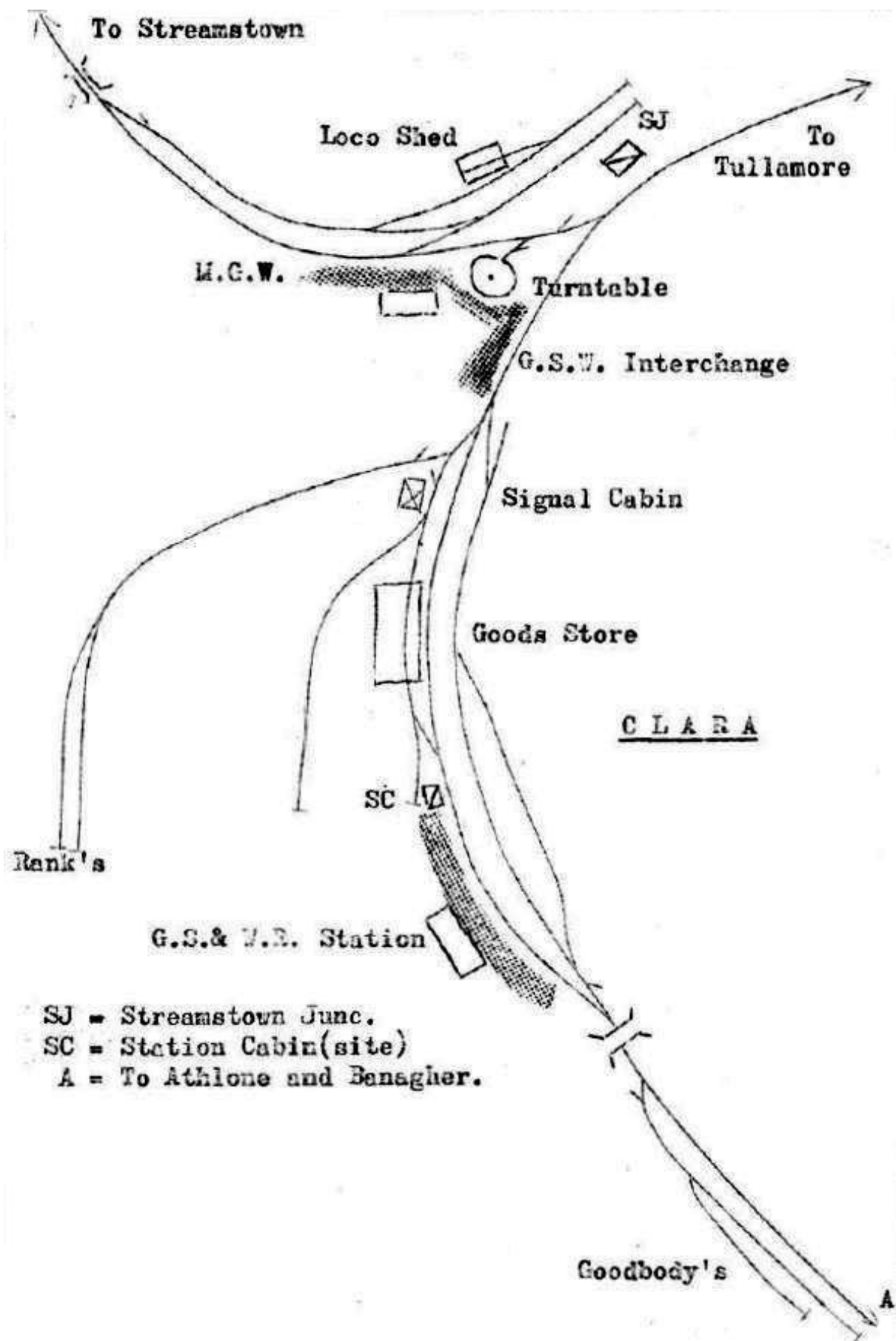
Due to pressure on space our "Journey Jottings" feature has had to be omitted from this issue.

### **STATION SURVEY**

#### **Clara**

With a population of only 2,600, Clara recently shed some of its importance as a railway crossroads with the closure of the Banagher branch but its two private sidings serving local industry still retain for it a place of importance as a traffic centre. The Portarlington-Athlone line of the GS&WR was the first to reach Clara when on 3<sup>rd</sup> October 1859 its Tullamore-Athlone section was opened. This was a triumph for the GS&WR as an MGWR countermove for a Tullamore-Streamstown link had been cut back by Parliament to a Clara-Streamstown line. This was much less attractive and was built, only reluctantly, and opened on 1<sup>st</sup> April 1863 - a hundred years ago. The remaining line was that from Clara to Banagher which was opened by the Clara & Banagher Railway on 29<sup>th</sup> May 1884 after an earlier company, the Midland Counties & Shannon Junction, had failed. The C&BR became part of the GS&WR in 1895.

The growth of Clara is responsible for the unconventional layout shown on our sketch plan. On the Tullamore side the former "Streamstown Junction" signal cabin still stands but is now out of use. The platforms at the Junction served both MGWR and GS&WR trains and the latter stopped to interchange passengers before continuing to the GS&WR station - the one used today. The MGWR did not provide their own station until late 1866 and presumably the GS&WR station had been used for the preceding two years from the opening of the Streamstown line. The present cabin with its 34 levers (3 spare), which now controls the whole area, replaces the GS&WR station cabin which, up to the amalgamation, was sited at the Tullamore end of the platform. At the same time the former cabin at Clara & Banagher Junction was dispensed with and the junction operated by power points from Clara cabin until on 14<sup>th</sup> November 1958 it was replaced by a ground frame at the junction unlocked by the Clara-Ferbane ETS.



Passenger train services on both lines have varied. The Portarlington-Athlone opened with two trains, increased later to three and maintained at this level (with several periods as an exception) up to the amalgamation in 1925. Two trains per day has been the general rule since, with reduction to one in the 1947 fuel crisis. Banagher branch connections, some of them “mixed”, were given off most of these but this branch lost its regular passenger service on 25<sup>th</sup> January 1947. On the branch to Streamstown a sparse train service of 1873 - one each way - had improved to three in 1888 and to four in 1897 - its most frequent service ever. One advantage of the amalgamation was the interworking of this with the Banagher branch; this move, however, replaced the Attock 0-6-0T locos by ex GS&WR ones. The branch lost all regular traffic on 25<sup>th</sup> January 1947 but unlike the Banagher branch which retained a daily goods up to its final closure on 31<sup>st</sup> December 1962, the Streamstown line lay dormant up to 1960 except for occasional specials, the last of which was a football special from Longford to Tullamore on 24<sup>th</sup> June 1959. For three years the branch was used as a storage siding for crippled wagons but its clearance early this year paved the way for the IRRS special of March 18 described elsewhere in this issue.

At Clara the present timetable provides two passenger trains each way worked by a railcar set or a General Motors B class or even a C class diesel. In addition the “Cu na Mara” railcar set from Galway to Dublin (Westland Row) and vice versa passes at 10:55 up and 20:28 down. One goods train each way from Kingsbridge (02:00) and Athlone (17:20) serves Clara at 08:37/09:56 down and 18:11/19:33 up. The long stop enables the private sidings to Rank’s and Goodbody’s premises to be worked and in each case a passenger train is crossed.

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## Feature Section

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### THE MEATH LINES

Forming a cross on the map of Co. Meath are two branch lines which since March 31 have been reduced by closures to the appearance of the letter “L”. The lines of which we write are the Clonsilla - Navan - Kingscourt (43½ miles) with its 12-mile branch from Kilmessan to Athboy and the Drogheda - Navan - Oldcastle (39½ miles), the only section remaining today is the Drogheda - Navan - Kingscourt (37 miles).

The line from Clonsilla was built in two sections by two separate companies. First of these was the Dublin & Meath Railway which, having been incorporated in 1858, was opened on 29<sup>th</sup> August 1862 between Clonsilla and Navan. The D&MR was in close liaison with the MGWR and ran over that company’s metals into Broadstone Station, Dublin. Northwards from Navan the line was extended to Kilmainham Wood on 1<sup>st</sup> November 1872 and to Kingscourt on 1<sup>st</sup> November 1875. This section was built by the nominally independent Navan & Kingscourt Railway but the company was very much a tool of the MGWR who worked it from the opening. In 1869 the MGWR took over the working of the D&MR and eventually, in 1888, the two small companies were vested in the MGWR. The Athboy branch - built by the D&MR - was opened on 26<sup>th</sup> February 1864. It, too, became a part of the MGWR in the same way and at the same time as the remainder of the D&MR. In course, the 1925 amalgamation brought the MGWR into GSR which in turn became CIÉ in 1945.

At Clonsilla the “Meath Road” diverges from the Dublin-Galway main line west of Clonsilla station, now at the end of double track from Dublin. Up to 1930 the main line continued double track to Ballinasloe. The Meath line was single to 1889 but in that year was doubled to Drumree by the MGWR. In 1918/9, however, the Dunboyne - Drumree section was reduced once more to single track

and the Clonsilla - Dunboyne length suffered the same fate in 1925. The stations on the line are Dunboyne, Fairyhouse (used for the adjacent racecourse), Batterstown, Drumree, Kilmessan, Bective, Navan Junction, Proudstown (another racecourse platform opened in the mid-1920s), Gibbstown, Wilkinstown, Castletown (a halt opened in 1928 but closed after some 7 years), Nobber, Kilmainham Wood and Kingscourt. ETS sections have varied from time to time and, except for Fairyhouse, Bective, Proudstown, Castletown and Kilmainham Wood, all have had signal cabins at one time or another. In recent times only Drumree, Kilmessan, Navan Junction, Wilkinstown and Kingscourt were staff stations and on the occasions since 1959 when several specials were worked to Navan for GAA matches it was customary to use pilotmen at Dunboyne, Batterstown and Bective in addition.

Services have varied from two to three passenger trains per day and one goods train but on 25<sup>th</sup> January 1947 regular passenger services ceased and the Athboy branch was closed to all traffic except a weekly stock train, which continued up to 1953. Occasional passenger specials were run in this period; the last of them was on 28<sup>th</sup> September 1952 and was hauled by loco 603. Afterwards the line was used to store carriages and wagons until lifting commenced in August 1958.

The other Meath line was under the aegis of the GNR. The Dublin & Belfast Junction Railway was, in 1845, authorised to construct it but the ownership was transferred to the Dublin & Drogheda Railway on opening - 15<sup>th</sup> February 1850. The latter company also built the Navan-Kells extension which was opened on 11<sup>th</sup> July 1853 and the remaining sector to Oldcastle which was opened just over 100 years ago on 17<sup>th</sup> March 1863. An interesting provision in the Navan-Kells Act was that any company which built a direct Navan-Dublin line would automatically have running powers from Kells to Navan. These powers were, indeed, exercised by the D&MR from its opening in 1862 up to 1<sup>st</sup> June 1869. The D&DR was a constituent of the 1875 amalgamation which led on 1<sup>st</sup> April 1876 to the formation of the GNR(I). As from 1<sup>st</sup> October 1958 ownership of the line was transferred to CIÉ on the dissolution of the GNR.

At Drogheda the branch diverges, facing to Dublin, on the Dublin side of the station and hence all passenger trains had to reverse into or out of the station. The branch was single track throughout with stations at Duleek, Lougher Halt, Beauparc, Navan, Navan Junction, Ballybeg, Kells, Virginia Road and Oldcastle. All except Lougher and Ballybeg were block posts. Virginia Road Cabin was closed in May 1955. When railbuses were introduced in the early 1930s stopping places were made at Factory Crossing, on the east side of Navan, and at Newgate, Ardbraccan, Castlemartin and Phoenixtown crossings between Navan and Ballybeg. The only one of these to survive the Second World War was Factory Crossing which remained in use, at least nominally, up to the cessation of passenger services after the last trains of 12<sup>th</sup> April 1958. It was announced that Duleek, Beauparc, Ballybeg and Virginia Road would close completely after 31<sup>st</sup> May 1958, but in practice goods traffic was handled at Duleek, Beauparc and Ballybeg occasionally thereafter.

The normal service - worked mainly by small 0-6-0 locos - was three passenger trains and one goods train in each direction but in the 1930s one or two additional short workings to Navan became common with the introduction of railbuses. In September 1955 Railcar A, which had spent most of its working life on the Scarva-Banbridge line, was transferred to Drogheda and for two years was the mainstay of the line. Railbus 1 worked a great deal on the branch in its latter days.

After passenger services ceased, both "Meath Roads" shrank to a daily goods and the Kingscourt line became very erratic, dependent on the flow of gypsum from its terminus. Oldcastle, however, remained regular and in early 1961 the steam loco shedded there was replaced by a diesel loco working from Drogheda. The Kingscourt goods was altered to run from Drogheda leaving the Clonsilla-Navan stretch without a regular service although on Saturdays a train was scheduled to run from Navan to Kilmessan if required. It seldom was. Stock specials operated from the Clonsilla end to Drumree or Kilmessan fairly often and in its last week of life it had no less than three such trains - on March 22 and 29 to



Drumree and on March 30 to Kilmessan. On March 26 Wickham PW inspection car No.2. ran through to Navan and back to survey the line. The two specials which followed were both worked from Dublin by loco G612; the first with 8 laden wagons and the second - the last train on the line - with 7 laden wagons ex Loughrea Fair, and four empty wagons for the collection of signalling equipment. The train originated at Liffey Junction at 09:50 on March 30 and passed Clonsilla at 10:10. Calling at Batterstown and Drumree, it reached Kilmessan at 11:50 and left on the return journey at 12:20 to come to a stand at Clonsilla at 14:00 - the line to Navan was closed.

Meantime on the Navan-Oldcastle section on March 30 traffic was flourishing. The 05:30 goods ex Drogheda arrived in Oldcastle (1½ hours late): A34, 24 wagons and van, making a total of 96 wagons in Oldcastle! On departure at 11:46, A34 had 36 and van in tow and it was deemed necessary to run an additional special goods to clear Oldcastle yard. A55 and van therefore left Drogheda at 16:00 and at 19:15 commenced its return with 40 wagons and van, attaching a further 8 at Kells and reaching Drogheda about 23:00. This left 20 wagons in Oldcastle and 11 in Kells which were cleared on April 6 by an after-closure special. This, the last train from Oldcastle, left at 10:00 and with the exploding of detonators wrote the final page in the saga of the GNR Meath line. Goods trains continue to operate to Kingscourt on Mondays to Fridays leaving Drogheda at 05:30, reaching Kingscourt at 08:40 and returning at 09:25 due in Drogheda at 12:30. All intermediate stations except Navan (i.e. Duleek, Beauparc, Gibbstown, Wilkinstown, Nobber, Kilmainham Wood) are closed completely. The line is worked in two sections from Drogheda to Navan and from Navan to Kingscourt.