

THE

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EDITORIAL

The closure of the lines under sentence in the North is now assured, after highly complicated moves in the game of law have been played out to the bitter end. In brief, the sequence was opened by Transport Tribunal hearing of objections on October 30 which authorised the UTA to close the lines in question. The UTA duly announced the closure but in the meantime Tyrone County Council had appealed against the Tribunal's decision. This appeal, heard on December 7, upheld the objection on a point of law and on December 18 the Tribunal was told that it had the power to decide on retention, deferment or closure. The Tribunal could not arrange a sitting before December 30 so the UTA, on December 23, knowing it could not continue operation without staff, decided to keep the Derry line going on its own account until the case was settled. Newry and Warrenpoint then entered the fray and threatened legal action. The Tribunal, inexplicably, on December 30 agreed to hear their objections and the UTA only succeeded in closing the Warrenpoint line on undertaking to leave it intact. Now, on January 16, the Tribunal has announced that all the closures can take place.

We are not impressed.

The Transport Tribunal has a role to play in the protection of the public and in this instance it has given the impression that it is concerned only in closing the lines without reference to what will happen thereafter. While there is no case for the retention of the Portadown - Goraghwood intermediate stations and little for the Goraghwood - Warrenpoint branch, the Derry line is a horse of a different colour. The traffic is undoubtedly there - the fact that it is mostly to Donegal makes one suspicious of political interference or direction - and there is no apparent reason why a line with such traffic should be closed when lines with far less, even far less potential, can be retained elsewhere in the country. Are the allegations of the UTA mismanagement which the Strabane people tried (but were not allowed) to make well-founded? The Tribunal's attitude has been that of one who has something to hide and it is not hard to surmise some of the skeletons in the UTA cupboard. The Tyrone appeal was more than a token objection, it was a revolution on behalf of the people who use the railway. Now it has been put down, but the flavour left is highly unsatisfactory - as of a dictatorship having its way over all opposition. Maybe, however, the opposition, or the lack of it, in the past is as much to blame.

We are still not impressed.

SOME ARTICLES OF IRISH RAILWAY INTEREST**Railway Magazine**

November	Irish Puzzle (Letter)
December	Irish Railways in 1864 "Maeve" at Belfast
January	An Irish Monorail (Paragraph)

Modern Railways

December et seq The Irish Scene

Railway World

December There's Still Steam in Ulster

IRRS Journal

Autumn Coaching Stock of the NCC
Irish Railways in 1862
The Drinagh Railways

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For the Feature article in this issue we are indebted to Mr P.J. Flanagan.

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

News Section

CIÉ GENERAL NEWS REPORT

State Special

Just over two months after the special for the President of India, a special working was arranged for President Kaunda of Zambia on Thursday 26th November 1964. The journey from Limerick Junction to Kingsbridge was made attached to the regular 08:00 Tralee - Dublin hauled by two General Motors diesels, B151 and B142 - resplendent with white lamps and silver buffers. The train comprised HV 3155, state saloon 351, new first 1145 fitted with tables, kitchen car 2403 and brake second 1906 with the regular train in the rear - compo 2138, buffet 2416, second 1512 and HV 3129.

Rolling Stock Developments

The latest of the Craven's type coaches noted in traffic is numbered 1535, making 32 now in service. Withdrawal of obsolete stock is taking place simultaneously and at Mullingar many old six-wheel friends have been consigned to the flames in recent months. A selection of bogie coaches, mainly GS&WR of the 1900 era, has likewise been destroyed, notable amongst which are the Officers' Saloon No.352 in November and the MGWR Saloon No.346.

Locomotive Developments

Work on the fitting of a 950 hp engine in C234 is continuing but as yet the loco has not appeared on trials. The MAK diesel-hydraulic loco K801 was overhauled at Inchicore after a long delay while awaiting spare parts. During December it was despatched to Cork to take up its old duties but failed en route at Sallins and was taken back to Inchicore where it has remained since. A number of steam loco whistles off scrapped engines of different originating companies has been overhauled at Inchicore and will be fitted experimentally to some of the A class DEs. This results from complaints by guards on goods trains concerning the audibility of the existing warning devices. J15 Loco 130 which we reported in our last issue in use at Inchicore to pre-heat trains is, in fact, providing heat for one of the diesel maintenance shops. Loco 118 is in use at Cork as a stationary boiler for steam heating trains. Although A class locos continue to handle most of the CIÉ freight trains GM locos have been noted during the beet season on the 20:10 Kingsbridge - Cork goods; two B141 class in tandem.

Rosslare Resurgence

Traffic on the Rosslare - Fishguard route increased in 1964, as was to be expected with the introduction of twice daily sailings during the summer period. Although the day boat train connections were poorly supported, except during the height of the season, the day steamer accounted for a satisfactory 36% of the traffic passing by this route.

A considerable percentage is made up of passengers accompanying their own cars; a growing trade somewhat impeded by the lack of road access to Rosslare Pier. At present cars for shipment are driven on to a special "block" train of flat trucks, mainly the underframes of former six-wheel coaches, and this is worked as required from Ballygeary to the pier by the pilot engine. A coach is attached for passengers. The capacity of this train is only 14 cars and hence it is a bottleneck to the rapid discharge of the steamer. As drive-off facilities are being made available on the vessels it is obvious that this interesting working must be replaced by a roadway on to the pier itself. CIÉ commenced work on 9th November 1964 to provide such access. One of the two tracks on the viaduct linking the pier and the shore has been removed and only the seaward "passenger line" remains.

The "goods road" will be replaced by the new roadway and cars will have to cross the passenger line hard by the landward end of the viaduct. Somewhat surprisingly, the "concrete bridge" is not being extended across the line but a new level crossing to be equipped with automatic barriers will be installed. Having crossed the passenger line, the roadway will parallel it to the seaward end of the viaduct where it will curve on the site of the quay siding which has already been removed, and rise to occupy the position of the bay platform currently used for trains departing towards Wexford and Dublin. As this will reduce the platform area available, a new platform is presently being constructed along the former "Wall siding" - opposite the long platform adjacent to the steamer. This will mean that three trains can be loaded simultaneously (two at the long platform and one at the new platform) and can depart at ten minute intervals if alternately scheduled over the South Wexford and South Eastern lines; the time allowance to Rosslare Strand is six minutes for a passenger train.

At Ballygeary a new loop will be made to enable passenger trains to be crossed to compensate for the loss of the "goods road". In addition, a facing connection will be made into the "Fishermen's Siding" to allow a goods train into Ballygeary yard to clear the new loop. Yard shunting can take place on this siding without fouling the main lines. Passenger entrance to the pier will be altered from the seaward to the landward side, where the one time cattle path was.

As at present, control of operations is in the hands of Ballygeary cabin with an auxiliary 6-lever ground frame on the pier locked by Ballygeary's lever No.15. (There are 14 others, none of which are spares.) Colour light signals will replace all semaphores on the pier itself; as much for space saving considerations as for clarity in this instance.

Roadworks alongside the steamer will involve the removal of many of the present offices and some will be transferred to Ballygeary, close to a new car park to be constructed on the sands opposite the "concrete bridge".

These facilities will be matched by an increase in the sailings from two to three each weekday in the summer. This will be the most intensive service ever operated on the Rosslare route since its inception in 1906. Train connections will be provided into and out of most of these sailings which are expected to depart at 12:00, 20:45 and 04:00 with corresponding arrivals at 05:00, 10:15 and 18:00. Somewhat similar connections to those of 1964 are expected except that on the South-Eastern the train ex the 18:00 arrival is to terminate at Enniscorthy. No direct connections will be provided for the 04:00 departure as most passengers will likely sleep on board; loading of cars will probably cease at about midnight. The works are expected to be complete in May 1965 but whether this will include drive-on side-loading is not certain and cranes may have to be used.

Liftings

The present position on the lines closed is as under.

West Cork: Lifted to the Cork side of Waterfall station and should at the present rate be completed by March.

Other Lines: No lifting has taken place on the Athy - Ballylinan, Macmine - New Ross or on the Clonsilla - Fairymount stub of the Meath line. The Streamstown - Clara line, which has not been formally abandoned but is now disused, remains intact.

Sligo Goods Altered

The alterations to Sligo line goods trains, mentioned in our last issue, has now been tried in the hard school of practice over three months and some teething troubles in the operation of the revised service became apparent. Little leeway for out of course running remains today on the single line Midland section between Clonsilla and Mullingar (43 miles). Where up to 1963 there were 9 intermediate cabins there are now only 7 and the longish sections either side of Enfield (9¼ to Hill of Down and 7¼ to Kilcock) tend to make regulation difficult; most of the other sections are about 5 miles. Accordingly delays at Mullingar, seemingly caused mainly because a lengthy goods can not shunt on the Sligo line without fouling the mainline as well, have reacted on all following trains through delay to trains in the opposite direction.

To ease the position a revised timetable became operative from January 4 which alters running times to prevent, as far as possible, two trains being in Mullingar simultaneously. This is achieved except for two periods of the night: the first between 22:50 and 23:40 when the fast Sligo goods (19:30 ex North Wall) crosses the up 20:15 Galway - Westland Row night mail and allows the Sligo - Mullingar connection to arrive (22:25), turn and precede the goods (23:10) to Sligo. The second is a short spell soon after midnight when both the second down Sligo goods (22:25 ex North Wall) and the 16:20 Galway - North Wall goods cross. The only alteration of paths is in the up direction when on Friday the "Sligo Shipper" leaves in the path of the 21:15 goods, which itself is deferred to 22:35.

Shallee To Foynes?

Mr J.J. Byrne, Area Manager, at the Annual Staff Dinner in Limerick, said that there was a possibility of securing heavy traffic in barytes for the rail services from the Silvermines to Foynes. The Ballybrophy - Limerick line passes close to the mines at Shallee halt, closed in September 1963, and either a siding could be installed or the material loaded at Nenagh some 7 miles away. The barytes is presently being sent by road but the mining companies involved both hope to increase their tonnage through Foynes for export in the coming year. The Mogabar Company alone hopes to export some 250,000 tons per annum and for this quantity rail transport would be much more convenient than road.

Siding at New Ross

During December the first cargo was handled from the new siding at New Ross. The traffic was discharged from one of the now-frequent cargo boats calling at the wharf on the west side of the Barrow, known as "Stafford's Wharf", alongside the new Albatros-Windmill fertiliser factory. Traffic from this factory, however, does not yet appear to have been transferred from road to rail as was, presumably, expected. The siding itself diverges from the Waterford - New Ross branch facing towards Waterford at 102 miles 51 chains from Harcourt Street. The mileposts have not been altered despite the closure of the Macmine - New Ross section in March 1963. Entry is gained by a two-lever ground frame locked by a key on the branch manual staff. There is provision for reversion to ETS working if necessary. On the wharf there is a long loop.

Kilberry Siding

The Bord na Mona peat moss factory increased its output during 1964 and to cope with the traffic an

extension to the sidings at Kilberry has just been completed. The factory is fed by a 2ft gauge system on the nearby bog. When processed, bales of peat moss are loaded into standard gauge wagons on the siding - basically a loop on the down side of the Dublin - Waterford line between Cherryville Junction and Athy at MP 40¾. Traffic going north is regularly worked by the 16:15 goods Athy - Kildare - Portarlinton for attachment to an up goods at the last-mentioned. On occasion when the peat moss is heavy - as on January 5 when it ran to 28 wagons - it is worked forward as a special to North Wall by the loco of the up Athlone goods.

Timetable Alteration

The Sunday train from Dublin to Waterford and back which commenced operation on 21st June 1964 was advertised in September as continuing "up to the end of the year". Now it has been decided to extend it throughout the winter. This has been advertised in the press although the train does not appear in the winter timetable booklet and no amendment slip has been produced mentioning its extension of operation. Nevertheless it continues to carry heavy traffic particularly in the up direction.

1144

The "Enterprise" alterations brought ex GSR all-first 1144 on to main line work again. On January 4 it was on the 18:30 Dublin - Cork with buffet, ex diner, 2401.

"Enterprise"

On Monday January 4 a new train set at last went into operation on the 11:00 "Enterprise" from Amiens Street to Belfast and its return working at 16:45. It lacked, however, the publicity being lavished on the new Dublin - Derry and Dublin - Letterkenny express road service inaugurated the same day. The train is still hauled by a B121 type General Motor loco but comprises new 42-seat first 1146, buffet car 2402 and up to four Craven's type seconds 1518/1522/1533/1534. This replacement, oft advocated in these pages, brings the "Enterprise" back into its rightful standard as one of CIÉ's named trains.

At the same time CIÉ had intended to alter the departure times from 11:00 to 10:30 down and from 16:45 to 17:10 up. This involved the use of paths utilised by Derry line trains between Portadown and Belfast but due to the closure of the Portadown - Derry line being postponed, the "Enterprise" alteration had also to be deferred. Sundry minor alterations to local trains contingent on the revision of the "Enterprise" paths were also postponed.

Suburban Survey

On Monday 2nd November 1964 CIÉ conducted a market research survey on the Dublin Suburban services extending from Dundalk to Greystones. Object of the survey is to establish a timetable suitable to as many commuters as possible and hence only season or weekly ticket holders were approached. CIÉ in the questionnaire sought to establish passengers' wishes in regard to timings of their morning and evening travel requirements and at lunch time if applicable.

Another question significantly sought specific information regarding the number of rail travellers who enjoyed a 5-day week and the incidence of half-day travel where a 6-day week was worked. Since July 1964, when Civil Service workers were granted a 5-day week, travel patterns have altered considerably and, for instance, the trains leaving Dublin after 17:30 now carry a much greater weight of traffic. Some suburban formations have been altered accordingly but no significant retiming has yet taken place. It seems likely that the results of the survey will enable any revisions to be incorporated in the summer timetable of 1965. Already there are signs that the present service has attracted some former motorist commuters. A better timetable might well improve traffic further.

Signalling Alterations

Far from that at Shelton Sidings in the Woodenbridge - Arklow section of the Dublin - Wexford line being the first single line automatic barrier level crossing in Ireland, the honour has fallen to the new level crossing on the Limerick - Athenry section, half a mile north of Craughwell at MP 55¾. In our last issue we anticipated a conventional gated installation as the road crossed is a trunk road from Dublin to Galway. The rail traffic frequency is light and presumably this factor influenced the Department of Transport and Power in granting approval for its erection. The crossing, which was brought into use on 14th December 1964, replaces an extremely dangerous overbridge; an unusual transition. The installation is identical with the four double line crossings in operation except for the omission of the "Second Train Coming" warnings. The fertiliser factory at Shelton is not yet in production and as, therefore, road traffic is light the barriers are not yet in use.

On January 5 alterations were made to Mallow North and an extra down home signal was provided to protect a new facing crossover. This crossover is north of the north end of Mallow goods yard and gives a down train access to the yard without reversal. This is of considerable importance on account of the new goods store which is positioned on the east side of the yard close to the up main line, but north of the station. The former store was opposite the station on the west of the yard.

Killiney cabin has had three of its signals removed as from January 5. They are the up and down advance starters and the up starter from the down platform. Killiney is switched in for one hour each evening although it is not even mentioned in the WTT list of signal cabins. The signals in question were superfluous and have stood "off" in the case of the advance starters and "on" in the case of the up "wrong road" starter for years.

Craughwell cabin, opened for the beet season, was again closed as a block section on 21st December 1964. Similar treatment has been meted out to Carrowduff which closed on 16th December 1964.

Station Improvement

The up platform at Ballinasloe is being extended considerably and this is now almost complete. Minor track improvements and an extension and surfacing of the goods bank are also in progress.

Beet From Campile

Early in October improvements were completed at Campile, on the Waterford - Rosslare section, to ease the working of the 1964/65 beet season. Formerly the "Store Road" extended as a long siding behind the goods store. Now an extra loading bank has been built in between the former bank and the "Store Road" which enables up to 70 wagons to be loaded against the former capacity of some 45. This alteration would have deprived Campile of a "cart-road" - a siding from which wagons can be discharged down into carts or lorries - so an extension to the goods loop has been made in the form of a siding alongside the up loop at the Waterford end of the station. Although beet is undoubtedly the most important traffic at Campile - about 33 wagons per day throughout a 10-12 week season - cement is expected to arrive in large quantity early this year. This traffic is destined for the ESB's new generating station at Great Island, overlooking the confluence of the Barrow and Suir Rivers and close to the 2,131ft Barrow Bridge - Ireland's longest, rail or road. The road leading to the power station spans the railway close to the Co. Wexford - east - end of the Barrow Bridge by a new concrete structure.

Cork Improvements

Almex ticket machines came into use at Cork Glanmire Road on and from January 4, thus bringing it into line with Kingsbridge in this respect. The machines will displace almost all standard ticket stocks and will cover both main line and Cobh branch bookings. The booking hall modernisation mentioned in our last issue is now complete. It is tiled in green and white plastic tiles, the walls are attractively decorated in varnished wood and formica and an aeroboard ceiling has been fitted. Three glass-fronted

ticket windows are positioned on the north wall of the booking hall - two for second class and one for first - while a fourth window around the corner, facing the concourse, caters for suburban bookings. The last-mentioned replaces the former semi-circular booking office. The erstwhile stationmaster's office on the south side of the booking hall has now become an inquiry office. Painting in dark and light grey and white and cleaning roof girders is also completed and it is understood that the bar in the Glanmire buffet is to be modernised. The display of railway crests in the buffet will not, however, be altered.

2509

The ex Sligo, Leitrim & Northern Counties Railway railcar "B" - now CIÉ 2509 - lay in Limerick shed for almost a year since its failure in December 1963. Although repairs were effected, it has seen little use since; none of it on passenger trains. On 28th December 1964 it went into use on crew training duties on the Dublin - Belfast main line leaving Amiens Street at 08:30 and maintaining goods running from Dundalk to Belfast, reached at 14:30 with sundry stops. Return was at 15:10 due Dublin at 20:15. A similar operation continued each day up to January 1.

On that day the 14:55 North Wall - Belfast goods - the "Porter Train" - failed for lack of fuel on the ascent of Kellystown bank, north of Drogheda. The train was eventually hauled back into Drogheda by the pilot engine, this operation blocking the 16:20 Amiens Street - Dundalk railcar at Drogheda. Passengers from it for Dundalk were transferred to the 17:30 Amiens Street - Belfast "Enterprise", stopped specially at Drogheda for the purpose, and the problem of bringing the Dundalk passengers waiting for the 18:25 - the return working of the 16:20 - was solved by the happy inspiration of loading them, all 10, into 2509 returning from Belfast at the crucial time. At Drogheda they transferred to the waiting railcar set, a vast increase in temperature being thus afforded them! 2509 has not worked since.

Speed Trial

As we go to press we learn that a speed trial train ran from Kingsbridge to Cork on January 18. The train comprised two General Motors B141 class locomotives hauling a van, five Cravens type coaches and a HV and was scheduled to travel the 165½ mile run in 2 hours 55 minutes in each direction. It was, however, expected that this time would be substantially bettered and staff were instructed to ensure a clear road for the train even if running early. The overall speed restrictions - mostly 75 mph but with some stretches at 70 mph, and several at lower speeds - were not being relaxed for the trip but as the overall time has already been bettered while the overall maximum was 70 mph, it seems that a 2½ hour timing is not impossible. If this is an endeavour to accelerate the Cork line service it is extremely praiseworthy, for although air competition is at present slight this is due to the rather unimaginative air timetable rather than to any other factor.

UTA GENERAL NEWS REPORT

Transport Tribunal

On October 30, the Northern Ireland Transport Tribunal gave judgement in favour of the UTA's application to close the Portadown - Derry (including Dungannon - Coalisland), Goraghwood - Warrenpoint lines and stations at Goraghwood, Poyntzpass, Scarva and Tanderagee, together with the cessation of freight services on the remaining portions of the railway system.

In giving his judgement, the Chairman made several statements defining the Tribunal's interpretation of the 1948 Transport Act which set it up. The most important of these decisions was that the Tribunal had power to either recommend a closure or reject the application but not to postpone a closure until certain things happened. This decision later became the subject of a Belfast High Court appeal. The Tribunal also stated that amongst its obligations it had to be satisfied that the proposed alternative services were adequate. In deciding that, they were under no obligation to consider whether the roads

were suitable or not. On November 11, the UTA gave official notice of the closures and fixed January 3 as the last day of traffic on the lines concerned and for the withdrawal of freight services on the remainder of the system.

Locomotive Developments

The policy of concentrating heavy repairs on the 2-6-4Ts is continuing. During 1964, 2-6-4Ts Nos. 3, 51, 52, 53, 55 and 56, and 0-6-0 No. 49, were extensively overhauled at Duncrue Street. Currently in the shops are 2-6-4Ts Nos. 4, 6 and 54 and, in addition, the ex SL&NCR 0-6-4T No.27. Reconditioned boilers for the 2-6-4Ts are coming from Derby and Swindon. Northern Counties section "Jeeps" Nos. 1, 7, 8 and 9 are presently in use on the GN section where the acute locomotive situation has now been worsened by the deferment of the Portadown - Derry closure. Ex GNR engines, particularly 0-6-0s, have been let run down and the problem of maintaining the goods service to Derry has been in no way lessened by the present volume of cement traffic from Drogheda requiring special workings.

Traffic Interruption

Due to the reconstruction of a culvert between Dunloy and Ballyboyland on November 1, the 22:00 Belfast - Coleraine of October 31 ran to Ballymena only and passengers were conveyed to Coleraine by bus. On 1st November 1964 trains worked to Dunloy and Ballymoney only.

Closure Complications

On 28th December 1964, Tyrone County Council lodged an appeal with the High Court against the findings of the Transport Tribunal concerning the Portadown - Derry line. On December 7, Lord Justice McVeigh heard the case in which Mr James Brown QC for Tyrone County Council claimed that the tribunal had "misdirected itself" for 6½ days on the assumption that it had no jurisdiction to postpone the closure. The Tyrone County Council case before the Tribunal was based on its request for a postponement, but the Chairman of the Tribunal did not raise the question of whether they had power to defer closure until the Council had an opportunity to deal with the point. Even the UTA counsel thought that there was power to defer, because when the matter was raised he asked for how long the deferment would be on its merits and not on the point of whether the Tribunal had jurisdiction or not.

Lord Justice McVeigh reserved judgement which he finally pronounced on December 18. He decided that the Tribunal had the power to defer the closure under Rule 37 by which the Tribunal was set up, but pointed out that whether a deferment should or should not be granted was a matter for the Tribunal to decide. The Judge said that the appeal had been limited to a point of law and so other decisions of the Tribunal were final and not subject to appeal to any other court. He then dealt with the manner in which the Tribunal had considered whether it had powers to defer or not and found that both the Tribunal and the objectors were at fault in grasping certain points and contributed equally to the difficulties. He ordered that each side pay its own costs and referred the matter back to the Tribunal.

As a result of this ruling the UTA were faced with the decision as to whether they could close the line on January 4 as intended. Efforts were immediately made to arrange for the Tribunal to sit but, in fact, they did not meet until 30th December 1964. Thus on December 23 the UTA gave notice that the Portadown - Derry line (including Dungannon - Coalisland) would, pending a determination of the matter by the Tribunal, continue in operation until further notice. But they also stated that they would proceed, as already announced, to close the Goraghtwood - Warrenpoint line, the stations at Goraghtwood, Poyntzpass, Scarva and Tanderagee, and to withdraw the general freight services on the NCC section. They were also obliged to withdraw notice which had been given to some 200 men, many of whom subsequently refused to come back.

The decision to close the Newry and Warrenpoint branch sparked off the threat of further legal action, this time from the local authorities of Newry and Warrenpoint. This was further added to when the

Tribunal met on December 30 and said that it would hear the objections being raised. At the last moment the UTA gave an undertaking not to move any equipment or to do anything to prevent the line from reopening should the Tribunal so determine. This was accepted by the objectors and, although not scheduled to close until January 3, the last train between Warrenpoint and Newry ran on January 2, because of the lack of a Sunday service.

The last passenger train was the 08:40 from Warrenpoint and consisted of 3 coaches - N212, N326 and N369 - hauled by loco 40 (0-6-0). It left some 7 minutes late and, after a brief stop at Newry Dublin Bridge, it arrived at Newry Edward Street at 09:05. The Saturday goods was the last train on the section and was also hauled by loco 40. On Sunday January 4 a six-coach AEC railcar set, 112, 581, 111, 114, 58 and 119, formed the 20:40 to Belfast from Newry Edward Street. Prior to this it made an unscheduled return trip to Goraghowood and back for the benefit of last-trippers and in so doing became the last train to turn at Goraghowood. It finally left Newry at 20:41 and, despite the guard failing to collect the staff at the first try, it reached Goraghowood at 20:50 where it made a brief unscheduled stop.

Even if the Transport Tribunal decree that the line be reopened the intermediate stations between Goraghowood and Portadown will not, as their closure is not contested. The position of the junction, Goraghowood, is obscure.

NCC Rail Freight Ceases?

General freight services on the NCC section were officially withdrawn on and from January 4. As anticipated Courtaulds traffic continues to be conveyed by rail. Notwithstanding closure, however, one express freight is running daily between Belfast and Derry via Coleraine. This, the 20:05 Belfast – Derry, arrives in Derry at 22:20 and is a fitted train conveying containers, worked by two MP diesel cars. These cars form the 07:25 Derry - Belfast. The up working is at 19:20 from Derry and is due in Belfast at 21:50. It is also worked by two MPDs which form part of the 15:40 Belfast - Derry passenger train. Whether these arrangements will continue permanently is not yet known.

Timetable Alterations

In December the UTA published an altered timetable based on the closure on January 3 of the Portadown - Derry and Goraghowood - Warrenpoint lines. This timetable was but little changed between Belfast and Portadown but showed the connecting bus services in lieu of the lines to be closed.

The principal alterations concerned the Dublin - Belfast main line. As Goraghowood was to be closed, Portadown was to become the Customs post for Northern Ireland and this, in fact, has happened. Trains are scheduled to run non-stop between Dundalk and Portadown and all except the “Enterprise” expresses are allowed reduced running times on this sector.

CIÉ locomotives were to have worked all services with the exception of the 10:30 up “Enterprise” and its 17:30 return working and the 18:30 (Saturday only) Dublin - Belfast which were to have been worked by UTA railcars. Thus the change of locos at Dundalk and all steam workings would have been abolished. The 11:00 Dublin - Belfast “Enterprise” was to have been altered to 10:30 and its return working at 16:45 altered to 17:10. The 14:15 and 18:20 Belfast - Dublin were to have been altered to 14:30 and 18:45. Additionally a mail train (no passenger accommodation) was to have been provided from Dublin to Portadown at 06:30. The 19:55 “Vacuum Train” from Dublin (passenger to Dundalk) was to be altered to 20:30.

Two goods trains to and from Derry and two to and from Belfast were to have been instituted. The two Derry goods trains were to have been worked by diesel-electric locos to Lisburn but the Belfast ones would have had similar power throughout. The former would have been taken from Lisburn to Derry by multi-purpose diesel cars. These goods trains were to serve Belfast and Derry only, and provision was made for them to be fully fitted. One train could have been in fact an extension of the present

19:55 “Vacuum train” from Dublin.

Resulting from the deferment of the Derry line closure the new arrangements were cancelled and the only change operative is the non-stop running from Dundalk to Portadown of both passenger and goods trains and the termination of the former Newry trains at Portadown, in the up direction.

With the closure of Goraghwood, facilities for customs examination have had to be provided at Portadown. The buildings on Platform 4 have been repainted and barriers erected on the platform and subway steps.

Temporary Closure

Through working of trains from the GN section to the Bangor line will not be possible next summer as one of the Belfast Central line bridges is to be temporarily removed. The UTA in a letter to Bangor Borough Council intimated that it proposed to authorise Belfast Corporation to remove the Middlepath Street railway bridge to facilitate the construction of the new Lagan road bridge and its approaches.

The period of severance will be such that it was estimated that the railway could not be available to carry traffic across the river during the summer season of 1965. The Authority would, it said, endeavour to arrange with organisations concerned to continue excursions by rail to Bangor but with bus connections between Great Victoria Street station and Queen’s Quay. The Authority’s present proposals before the Transport Tribunal do not include the closure of the Belfast Central Railway and for this reason they do not intend to give statutory notice to remove the bridge, as this envisages a permanent closure.

Rolling Stock Developments

A programme for the renovation of certain passenger coaches and their upgrading to class A has been embarked upon by the UTA. Composites Nos. 274, 276, 278 and 280 are being converted to second class, each seating 56 passengers. Other coaches mentioned are 334, 336, 338, 340, 342, 344, 352, 354, 356, 360, 362 and 364. The gaps in numbering are because the corridor coaches are even numbered, non-corridor ones have odd numbers.

Belfast Alterations

In anticipation of the closure of Adelaide shed which was scheduled for January 1, but has not taken place, the former motor shed at Great Victoria Street is being extended and renovated. A new turntable is being installed very near the site of that removed during the reconstruction of the station.

Railcar Developments

It is learned that the English Electric diesel-electric railcars to be delivered to the UTA in 1966 will be made up into two sets consisting of two units and four trailers to work on the NCC main line and one of one unit and two trailers to work on NCC locals. Two power units will be kept in reserve to cover shortages due to servicing or failures.

LOOSE LINKS

- At Portarlinton the former Odlum’s Store has been converted to a general goods store.
- A new road overbridge, replacing the former dangerously sited one, is nearing completion at Clonhugh (MP 56) between Mullingar and Multyfarnham on the Sligo line.
- On November 2, the UTA withdrew first class travel from the Bangor line completely, but firsts remain on the GN and NCC local trains.
- The plant and equipment from Goraghwood Quarry was sold by public auction on 5th November.

STATION SURVEY

Dungannon

One of the three most important reasons for the building of the Portadown, Dungannon & Omagh Railway was the town of Dungannon which today has a population of 6,500. Situated at MP 15 (from Portadown), on a grade of 1 in 107 falling towards Portadown, the area is bounded at the south end by the approach to the half mile Dungannon tunnel and at the north end by the former Dungannon Junction - now the divergence of the Coalisland siding - an overall length of one mile. The railway reached Dungannon from Portadown on 5th April 1858 and was extended thence to Omagh on 2nd September 1861.

As the diagram shows, through passenger trains are accommodated at two platforms, each 348ft in length. The down platform is an island, the back face being formerly used by local trains and also by the Cookstown branch trains up to the withdrawal of passenger trains on 15th January 1956. The connections at both ends of this bay together with the engine release road have been removed since and access to the bay is now by a crossover just short of the goods yard, via the line which formerly served the turntable.

The goods yard is entirely on the up side of the line, which until 15th October 1959 was double as far as Dungannon Junction. When the cabin there was closed on that date the up main line became the Coalisland siding and was then connected to the wagon weighbridge siding. In recent times sand traffic to Maysfields has been the only reason for using this siding; the most recent train operated to Coalisland on 24th October 1964.

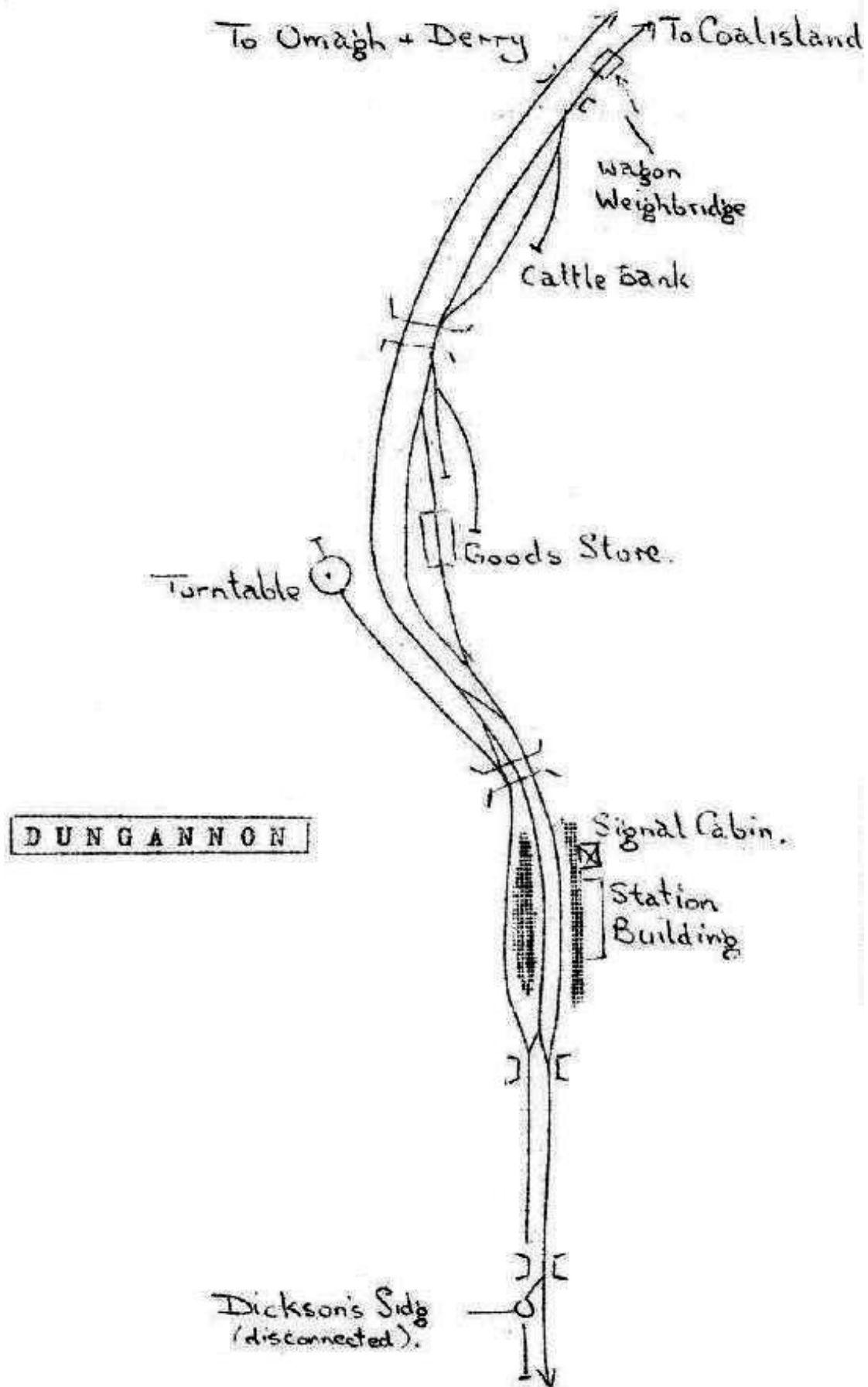
In spite of the threatened closure of the line, traffic to Dungannon is still very substantial and a goods train operates from Portadown to Dungannon on weekdays, the engine of which works the Coalisland siding if required. The traffic nowadays includes farm machinery, coal, milled goods, bread and confectionery - in the traditional skips - as well as general freight. On a visit in mid-December all the sidings were in use, as was the siding at the top of the cattle bank where lorries can run alongside at ground level.

The whole station is controlled by a 30-lever (1 spare) frame signal cabin on the up platform. This houses ETS instruments for the neighbouring sections to Pomeroy and Trew & Moy. Prior to the closure of Dungannon Junction the cabin there controlled the section to Donaghmore (closed) and Coalisland, in addition to the north entrance to the goods yard. A connection formerly served the siding at the textile factory of Messrs Dixon's at MP 14¾, but while the siding remains in situ along with a 2-lever ground frame, the connection has long since been removed.

As well as the local goods workings already mentioned two through goods in each direction call at Dungannon each weeknight. Passenger and parcels traffic is also very healthy under the present circumstances and most trains are well patronised. Bus connections operate to and from Cookstown, etc., from the station approach.

All of the 8 daily passenger trains each day call at Dungannon and one of these from Portadown terminates. An additional working operates to and from Portadown on Saturdays for shoppers. The Sunday trains number three each way, one of which terminates.

In bygone days local trains kept the station busy and frequently started here for every direction possible. In pre-war days railcars for Omagh or Cookstown often called, on request, at Junction level crossing, between the station and the Dungannon Junction cabin.



Feature Section

LISDUFF

One of the best known landmarks on the Cork line is the big wooden ballast loader just south of Lisduff station, 72½ miles from Kingsbridge. For many years this has been the main ballast supply point for our railway system. Although the quarry at Lecarrow on the Mayo branch of the Midland section is still used it has nothing like the importance of Lisduff. Indeed, so well established is the latter that one might think it dated from early GS&WR days, but this is not the case, and it may be of interest to outline its origins.

Just a little to the south-west of the station at Laffan's Bridge on the Thurles - Clonmel branch is a large level expanse of grassy land. From the opening of the branch up to the 1900s this was a large ballast pit. But, as the GS&WR system grew, there was need for more and more ballast and the quarrymen worked their way farther and farther inland from the railway. Eventually they reached the limit of the railway's land and, being unable to buy or lease more land, were forced to move out.

This meant the end of some interesting workings. Every morning the driver of the Thurles goods took his engine (for years J15 No.114) and a coach up to Laffan's Bridge with the workmen. Acting fireman was the Clonmel loco cleaner who booked off duty on his return from this run. Oddly there was no corresponding return trip made.

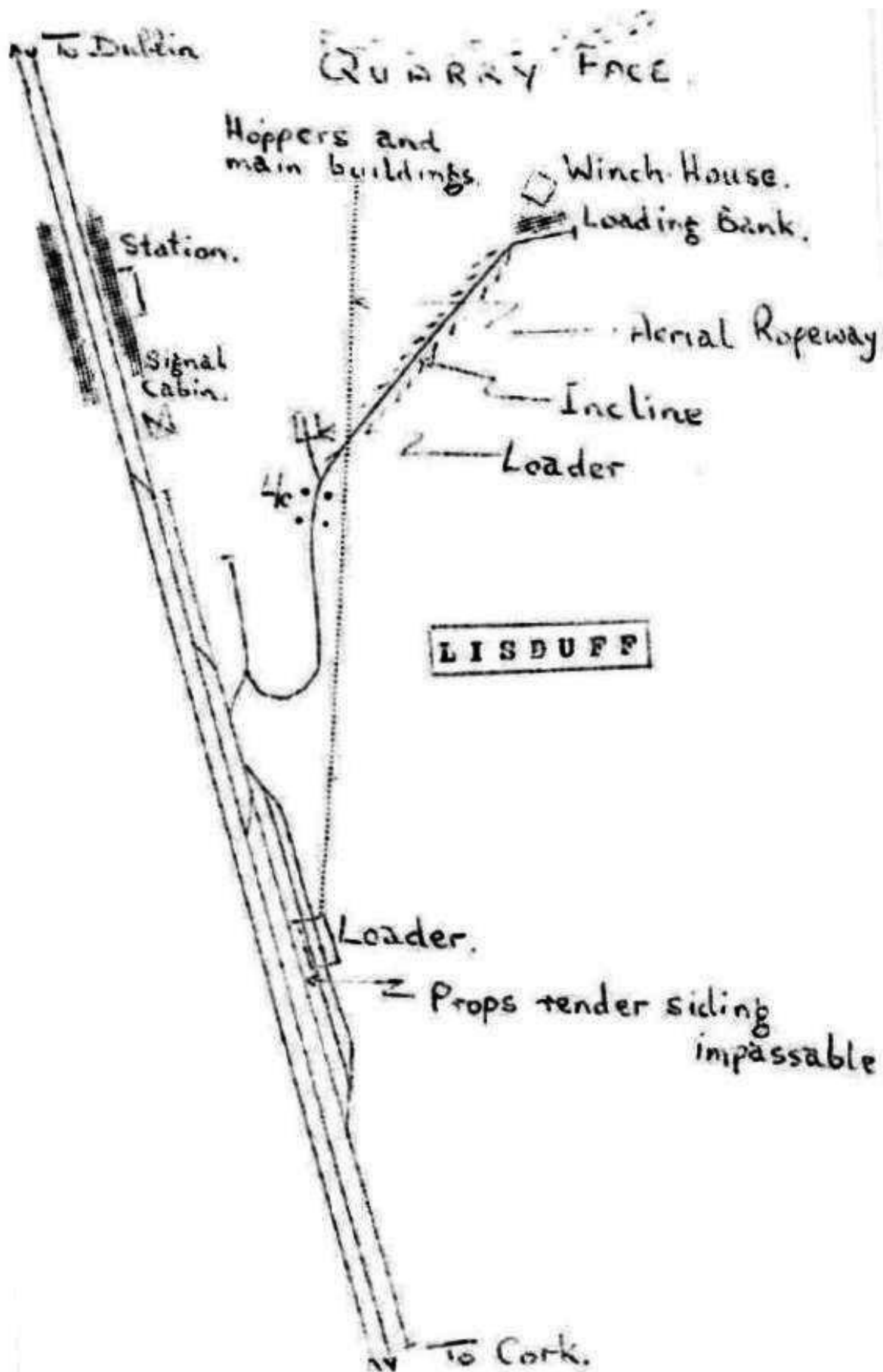
The move took place about 1913 and the GS&WR settled for Lisduff. They took good care that they had a big enough site - the quarry is still very much in use today.

Explosives have always been used in the initial stages of the process from quarry to ballast train and for years the stone was handled to the crusher. A temporary narrow gauge system (about 2 ft gauge) was used with the familiar "hutches". In the 1950 period, however, much modernisation was carried out and, in addition to electrical equipment, the ever handy dumper truck made light of much of the labour. This enabled the output to be stepped up to 80,000 tons a year from the former 50,000 - about 75% of the CIÉ requirements. It also meant the stabilisation of the labour force to about 40 men. At one time there were said to be 300 men at work there.

In addition to the 2,000 tons of ballast turned out weekly, quite a lot of a finer product is produced. This consists of screenings which are used, for example, in the tarmac surfaces at the Board's hotels, garages and station approaches. Incidentally, few people realise that the divisional permanent way inspectors are responsible not only for the railway in their area, but also for all buildings, garages, private roads and yards and so have quite a need for the products of Lisduff.

For the last year or so there have been persistent rumours that the quarry is to be sold to an outside firm but surely it would be an odd move for the railway to dispose of one of its most valuable assets.

For the railway enthusiast a visit to Lisduff is well worth while. The casual glance from a passing train reveals little of interest. As regards the station itself, suffice it to say that without the quarry sidings it would be a most insignificant place on the main line. There are both up and down platforms with a solidly built GS&WR station house on the latter. Just south of the down platform is the cabin which has been retained (the station is now closed) but is switched out in the evenings. In fact when the station last had a passenger service, passengers boarding the down evening Clonmel train had to purchase their tickets on the train as there was no staff on duty at the station.



Just beyond the cabin is the one crossover between the up and down running lines and after this is the crossover to the sidings. Two short trailing sidings lead to a goods bank and store and curving away from one very sharply a line leads right into the quarry. The line makes an almost complete 'U' turn and runs across the Rathdowney road on a level crossing to enter the quarry proper. Just inside the crossing gates there is a short spur on the left to serve the quite recently built screenings loader or "ben", to use the local term.

The 'main line' veers to the right past a protecting trap point and becomes a steep inclined section of about 120 yards in length. Near the top it curves further to the right and ends beside a small loading bank. This steep line is winch operated from a small winding house near the top while the level section is manually operated. This line is now seldom used and then for inwards materials only. One of the last times it was used was when the winch wagon of the Port Laoise - Kilkenny lifting train came in for repairs.

Paralleling the line is an aerial ropeway by which means the stone is brought from the quarry to the big "ben" at the running lines. This is similar to ropeways used at the Derreenavoggy collieries at Arigna and is in regular use. Although the principle employed is similar to the Drogheda Cement system, the buckets and standards are of a lighter construction. The ropeway is an interesting one and can be viewed easily from a passing train. As is the case with all aerial rope systems, there is heavy wear on the rope and relevant moving parts, necessitating regular repairs and renewals.

Returning to the 'main line' section again, another set of facing points leads to a fan of three parallel sidings which serve the large wooden "ben". Two of these roads run under the "ben" enabling ballast wagons to be loaded directly underneath. The third, that nearest to the down main line, runs alongside but not under the "ben", but this is now impassable as heavy timber props have been placed across it as supports. At the north-east corner of the "ben" is a timber staging where ropeway buckets enter it with their heavy load. South of it all three roads converge and finish in a long siding parallel to the down running line.

Of CIÉ's three materials trains two operate from Lisduff, serving the Southern section, the South-Eastern and the Limerick - Athenry section of the Limerick - Sligo line. The remainder of the system, including the CIÉ section of the former GNR main line, is supplied from Lecarrow - between Athlone and Knockcroghery.

Lisduff was formerly a haunt of the J15 and Thurles shed kept a couple for ballast train use. Familiar also were, and still are, the rakes of heavy iron trucks and the ballast spreader vans which are stabled there at weekends. At the present, Lisduff is still in operation by CIÉ and, despite the rumoured sale, there have been plans to develop it further. One of these was to convey the stone by belt to a new "ben" while the other proposed railing the stone directly out of the quarry itself. One objection to the latter was the fact that it would necessitate much use of the level crossing and consequent blockage of the road.

For the time being, at any rate, Lisduff continues to be a place of great interest for its varied techniques of railway operation, both past and present.