

THE

IRISH RAILFANS' NEWS

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EDITORIAL

In view of the pessimistic tone of the editorial in our issue of October last, no doubt you are surprised to find another issue of "The Irish Railfans' News" in your mail. To be quite frank, we little thought two months ago that publication would continue. But we were greatly encouraged by the views of many long-established readers of the IRN and took yet another look at the position. Thankfully, we have overcome the difficulties which seemed then (and some of which still seem!) to be insuperable.

More than we could ever have assessed ourselves, the comments of readers clearly demonstrated that the IRN has played and should continue to play a vital part in keeping interested people fully supplied with accurate and topical information on current railway developments in Ireland. For this we are very grateful indeed.

As the whole process of compilation and production of the IRN was under review, we have taken advantage of the situation to give our readers an even better service by incorporating some improvements. In this issue, for example, we include an expanded "Station Survey", a feature of which is the excellent station plan contributed by the author, Mr P. O'Cuimin. In future issues we look forward to improving our other features, all of which we hope to continue. As further improvements are introduced, whether with editorial comment or otherwise, we would very much welcome the views of our readers.

While we will be constantly on the look-out for ways to give an even better service, we know that without the continued support of all our readers it will not be possible to make many innovations. We would appeal to our readers to help us by sending us any items of news they may have, and by telling interested friends of the existence of the IRN. We are enclosing with this issue a leaflet detailing the many advantages of IRN readership.

In our October issue the relative positions of the Irish Railway Record Society and "The Irish Railfans' News" were discussed. While it is a fact that the membership of the IRRS corresponds very closely with our readership, it is also true that for 12 years both the IRRS and the IRN have co-existed in harmony - each benefitting from the other. This has been pointed out by various IRN readers (who are also members of the IRRS) who feel, as we do, that there is a definite need for an independent news magazine which can offer both accurate information and balanced editorial analyses of current developments. The provision of the latter, at any rate, is not, we feel, a primary function of the Journal of a learned society such as the IRRS. Also, the discontinuation of the IRN would mean the disappearance of the feature articles which, we are assured, are found to be both useful and informative. We are confident that those interested in Irish railways will appreciate the need for both the IRRS and the IRN and, for our part, we look forward to the continued goodwill and cooperation of the IRRS.

Finally, we apologise for any inconvenience caused by the apparent discontinuity of "The Irish

Railfans' News" and we trust that the prompt reappearance of the magazine is sufficient compensation.

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We wish all our readers, old and new, a Happy New Year.

SOME ARTICLES OF IRISH RAILWAY INTEREST

Railway Magazine

December "The Other James Bond" (LLSR article)
Railway Preservation (A photograph)
Last Steam Train on the GN (Paragraph)

Modern Tramway

December Hill of Howth Tram in US (Article)

BOOK REVIEWS

"The Listowel & Ballybunion Railway" By A.T. Newham (Oakwood Press)

The "Listowel & Ballybunion" is Mr Newham's latest book and his best to date. In it he describes that "Cinderella" of Irish railways which passed into history forty-two years ago. With its weird "siamese-twin" engines and rolling stock, and its complicated array of trackwork, the L&BR was obviously too far removed from normal railway practice to satisfy the desires of those who in 1924 were planning the amalgamation of the independent Irish railways into the GSR. No doubt the deficit on working also loomed large.

Oddly for a short-lived railway (even if of a highly unusual nature) in one of the more remote parts of Ireland, the L&BR was very well photographed, notably by Lawrence. As a result of this early attention perhaps the chief delight of this book is the excellent range of illustrations. Of special interest is a line drawing illustrating the Lartigue Railway method of shunting with curved turntables! The book is a useful addition to our railway literature.

"Steaming Through a Century - The 101 Class Locomotives of the GS&WR" (IRRS)

This is the first special publication of the IRRS to be produced by the parent body of the Society. Pleasingly turned out and well illustrated, the book is a fitting tribute to Ireland's most remarkable locomotive class. The text does full justice to the fascinating story of the "J15s" - as the class was alternately known - and all aspects of the engines (design, modifications, utilisation, etc.) are well covered. A valuable contribution of social interest is the biographical sketch of Alexander McDonnell, under whose auspices the class was introduced. Those who delight in locomotive statistics will find their needs well catered for, as one of the most useful features of the publication is an exhaustive table giving full information on building dates, alterations, re-buildings, etc. This is essential reading for all locomotive enthusiasts.

News Section

CIÉ GENERAL NEWS REPORT

Limerick Area Developments

Since our last report, developments have been continuing at a fast pace in the Limerick area. For clarity

we are covering the news under three headings:

Silvermines Branch: On 31 October Mr Frank Lemass, General Manager of CIÉ, visited the site of the new line. At that time, the earthworks had been completed and some of the track laid. Work continued very speedily and the line was ready by mid-December. It is reported that a trial train ran on the line in the week before Christmas while latest reports would indicate that the line will be officially regarded as open for traffic on and from 1 January.

Castlemungret Branch: The new line between Carey's Road Yard and Rosbrien, the site of the original junction off the North Kerry road, was brought into use in mid-December. The new line is parallel to the Kerry line and it may be entered from Carey's Road or from a new facing crossover on the Kerry line at MP 1¼. The subsidiary ETS instrument from Rosbrien has been moved to a hut which contains the ground frame for the new crossover. While the crossover is of GSR bull-head rails, the line itself is laid with MGWR 45' flat-bottomed rails with sole-plates only at joints and on every fourth sleeper. Ballast is an unusual type of coarse gravel which is being loaded at Birdhill. The entire line presents a marked contrast to the Kerry line which has 30' flat-bottomed rails and is fully ballasted and sole-plated.

Limerick Junction: Progress here is somewhat slower, although all the platforms, except the Cork-Dublin, have been raised. The facing crossover at the south end from the Up Main line into the Straight Siding has been installed but is not yet in use, while another crossover lies at the North Cabin awaiting installation. The Down Branch Starting signal to Waterford has been dispensed with and the Down Branch Inner Homes (a 3-arm bracket) have been moved out almost to Keane's Points Junction. Dumping of earth for the embankment of the new Dublin-Limerick curve has started, the lorries reaching the site by way of Milltown level crossing beyond Keane's Points Junction. On 26 December the formation extended about 30 yards.

Rolling Stock Developments

Up to the time of writing, none of the new coaches have appeared in traffic. Likewise, no existing coaches have been fitted with the B4-type bogies.

Side-corridor bogie first 225N reappeared in traffic recently after a 6-month refit at Inchicore. It replaced 1146 on the "Enterprise" set. A welcome improvement is the fully-fitted carpets in the compartments, corridors and vestibules but a retrograde step is the removal of the heating regulators from the compartments, especially as the coach is unusually well heated and is marshalled next to the HV.

The spray painting of coaches is now in progress, the 'production' rate being very fast. Former tri-compo brake 105N has been painted "black and tan" following a repaint in unlined green during last summer.

Among the coaches recently scrapped are compo 2095 and Radio Train studio coach RS20 (formerly 875).

An interesting development in the freight stock is the extensive re-fitting of 20-ton brake van 23578 and its subsequent display at various centres for inspection by staff. The van is fitted with upholstered seats, vacuum brakes, draught-proof doors, a clip for an electric hand lamp and a new turf-burning stove which has an automatic ash-disposal system and a cowled chimney. A composition floor is provided and the interior is finished in pastel colours.

An experimental 10-ton open wagon for barytes and concentrates traffic to Foynes has been observed. It has low drop sides, one of which can be dropped onto a bank, forming a ramp. Thus, a bulldozer can mount the ramp and push the contents of the wagon over the opposite side into a chute which leads to a conveyor belt loading directly into the ship.

Several standard open wagons with corrugated sides and ends have been rebuilt to carry bulk fertiliser. Steel floors have been fitted and the entire wagons painted with no fewer than five compounds to give protection against the highly corrosive load. The finish is matt black.

News From Ardfert

Either Ardfert has an assiduous correspondent or CIÉ developments are of national interest. It was reported in the main news bulletin from Radio Éireann at 18:30 on 22 December that the beet loading facilities at Ardfert are to be improved!

Signalling Developments

New automatic half barrier level crossings were brought into use at Ardrahan on 24 October and Bellacagher (MP 106 Mayo line) on 5 December. A new up advanced starting signal has been provided at Ardrahan. Poles level crossing on the Kingscourt Branch became unstaffed in mid-November; the gates are now unlocked by train crews.

Catering Notes

The headquarters of Ostlanna Iompair Éireann (CIÉ's catering subsidiary) were transferred from 141 Thomas Street to Hume House, Ballsbridge, on 26 September. The cellars and stores remain at Thomas Street but the offices are for sale. The premises were inherited from a German wine merchant and catering contractor named Koenig who held the contract for train and station catering prior to 1916. It is still possible to find cutlery in several CIÉ stations marked "K", frequently in elaborate Gothic style.

Restaurant Car 2092 was transferred to the "Enterprise" run on 10 December, as the regular car 2402 needed repairs. Twelve-wheeler 353 took over 2092's duties on the Mayo line.

Cheap Weekends

In addition to the "Cheap Weekends" listed in the last issue, CIÉ issued such fares on 13 and 27 November. However, the concession did not extend to cross-border trains. This was the first occasion on which there were five consecutive cheap weekends, and contrary to some expectations it did not appear to cause any great reduction of traffic on any one weekend.

Kingsbridge Cleaning

The stonework of the main office block at Kingsbridge is at present being cleaned by International Contract Cleaners Ltd. The work is slow but very rewarding for it is revealing many hidden beauties in the carved granite. The building was sand-blasted some years ago but the result was less successful. CIÉ are to be commended for their example.

Sandycove Shop

The shop in the station building at Sandycove has been extended but the space was gained at the expense of part of the booking hall.

Christmas Eve Breakdown

On 24 December the 13:45 special Christmas train to Wexford, which was being worked by a 6-coach railcar set, failed at the old station at Sidney Parade at 13:54. The cars which failed were 2641 and 2654. A relief loco, B147, was sent from Grand Canal Street Depot and it worked wrong-road to Merrion where it traversed the seldom-used crossover and returned to the disabled train. The loco was attached to the railcar set and the train continued to Wexford at 14:47. As a result of the mishap, the 13:40 local from Amiens Street to Bray was stopped at Sandymount from 13:54, not continuing on its way till 15:27. The small number of passengers on this train had meanwhile been transferred to buses for the rest of their journey.

Rambler Fares Increase

The fares for CIÉ's popular "Rambler" tickets are to be increased on and from 1 January 1967. They had remained unaltered at the last general fares increase as large quantities of tourist publicity material bearing the old prices had been distributed. The following are the revised fares:

	Standard Class		First Class	
	Rail	Rail & Bus	Rail	Rail & Bus
Adults	£7-5-0	£9-5-0	£11	£13
Children (under 16)	£3-12-6	£4-12-6	£5-10-0	£6-10-0
Family & Party	£6-5-0	£8-5-0	£9	£11

"Rail only" tickets are available for 15 days unlimited travel on all CIÉ scheduled trains, except cross-border services. "Rail-Road" tickets are available as above and on CIÉ Provincial Bus services. They are not valid for travel on City or cross-border buses or coach trips. "Family and Party" fares apply to a husband and wife with at least one child or to Groups of at least 6 adults, 2 children counting as one adult. On the same date the fares for the 15-day "Overlander" tickets covering all CIÉ and UTA scheduled rail and provincial bus Services are being raised to £12 (Standard Class rail) and £16-10-0 (First Class rail) with children under 15 half fare.

Visitors to Ireland are strongly recommended to avail of these tickets. Even at the revised rates, they are exceptionally good value even for use during short visits. It is interesting to note the unlikely places they have so far been in use.

Prize Stations

The results of CIÉ's annual prize scheme for the best-kept stations were recently announced. The stations are divided into three groups for the purpose of the competition and marks are allocated as follows: waiting rooms and toilets 40; windows, lamps and timetable displays 30; goods stores, platforms and lines 30; offices 25; station plant 25; appearance of staff 25; floral arrangement and general appearance 25. Winners were:

	Group A	Group B	Group C
1 st prize & diploma	Mallow Tullamore	Athenry	Malahide
2 nd prize & diploma	-	Ballybrophy	Cappagh
3 rd prize & diploma	Limerick Chg	Bagenalstown Collooney Gort	Little Island Adare Dalkey
4 th prize & diploma (Gp.A)	Portlaoise	-	-
Diplomas	Dun Laoghaire Cork	Thomastown Rathluirc	Carrigtwohill Killiney

Traffic Notes

While speaking recently at a Top Consultative Group Meeting between CIÉ officials and representatives of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, Mr Frank Lemass announced that long-distance livestock traffic had increased somewhat during the last few months. But because of internal and external labour disputes passenger and freight traffic did not come up to expectations.

Meanwhile, a new "Package Deal" has been made with Gouldings Fertilisers Ltd for the coming season. The anticipated reduction in fertiliser tonnage carried, resulting from the development of more concentrated products, will be offset by the tonnage for Donegal, formerly conveyed by sea, but now to

be sent to Derry by rail.

Speed Trial

Yet another high-speed trial train ran to Cork from Kingsbridge on Sunday, 11 December. Locos B147 and B142 hauled the 10-bogie train each way. The performance of the train, which included a buffet car, was widely reported by press, radio and TV. The first radio report came only 65 minutes after the arrival at Cork. The down run took 2 hours 40 minutes non-stop while the return trip took 2 hours 43 minutes with a stop at the Junction. One report stated that all 20 officials on board were on the engine!

“Messiah” Special

On Sunday, 18 December a special train was operated from Dublin to Enniscorthy where Our Lady’s Choral Society gave a performance of the “Messiah”. The train of 5 bogies, HV and LV, was worked by B146 and B158 and it included kitchen car 2403. Departure from Amiens Street was at 12:35 and the return train arrived back at 23:00, running non-stop in each direction.

Kingsbridge Wagon Fire

An observant inspector at Kingsbridge Goods saved a goods train from serious damage on the night of 20 December. He noticed a wagon smouldering and summoned the Fire Brigade, isolating the wagon as he waited. The wagon and its load of Christmas foodstuffs and spirits were destroyed.

A Trio Of Derailments

The rear van of the 08:05 Waterford-Dublin passenger train became derailed 2¼ miles south of Athy on 17 November. Unfortunately the mishap was not noticed until the train reached Athy station and considerable damage was caused to the permanent way. According to one report some 2,500 sleepers were broken. While repairs to the line were being carried out passengers were conveyed by bus from Athy to Carlow and goods trains were diverted.

The loco of a cattle special was derailed while shunting at Ballybrophy on 7 December. Main line passenger trains were delayed for up to 90 minutes as a result.

Three ballast wagons were derailed at the Boston Sidings at Westland Row station on 21 December. Damage was confined to some broken sleepers and sole-plates.

Improved Staff Exchangers

Fitted to B125, the modified Manson-Guthrie staff exchanger has the standard type head on an “indirect” arm. Owing to the unusual height of these locos’ cabs, the “snatcher men” experienced considerable difficulty and some danger in reversing the staffs in the apparatus. The latter has now been raised to a position just below the window and is easily reached, while the bend in the arm ensures that when the snatcher is in the “out” position it is still in alignment with those on the ground.

Vintage Stock

In order to release the “Park Royals” for main line duties, the vintage non-corridor stock mentioned in our last issue reappeared on the Bray line local trains on 22 December. Most of these coaches are gas-lit and one emitted a strong odour of scorching paint on its first evening trip. It was missing from its train the next day!

Malahide Viaduct

The report in the last issue was in error in stating that Cementation Ltd are supplying the new spans for this reconstruction work. The spans are being made at Inchicore, the contractors being engaged to work on the piers. Some difficulty arises from a lack of storage space at Inchicore for the finished spans. These must be used regularly and thus the work will proceed at intervals. A 5 mph speed limit will be

in force while work is actually in progress - otherwise the usual 50 mph will apply. Some serious delays have been experienced with some of the local trains while Sunday work was in progress. All trains terminated at Malahide and buses worked northwards. To reach Donabate - a 5 minute train trip - involved a 25 minute detour via Swords. Buses to and from Rush and points north were thus badly delayed if they had to call at Donabate.

Flashing Tail Lamps

Eight new electric flashing tail lamps are in use. They are powered by 6V batteries and two bulbs are fitted and wired to flash alternately. For the present, the use of those lamps is strictly confined to the workings listed below and they are stored in the stationmasters' offices and not in the usual lamp rooms. The trains involved are: 08:45 and 18:30 to Cork, 17:45 to Limerick, 18:15 to Waterford, 18:45 to Tralee, 18:15 to Sligo, 18:25 to Rosslare, 18:50 to Galway, and the corresponding up services. An ordinary oil lamp will be used if an extra lamp is needed to indicate a following special.

New Gantries

Fifteen-ton gantry cranes for container traffic, etc., have been installed at Nenagh, Thurles, Dromod and Ballina. A gantry of 7½ tons capacity has been installed at Westport station.

Redundant Turntables

A further 17 locomotive turntables have been declared redundant, and have been or are to be scrapped. Their locations are as follows:

Navan Junction	Rathluirc	Farranfore	Fenit
Bagenalstown	Clonmel	Fermoy	Roscrea
Listowel	Nenagh	Ennis	Ballingrane
Manulla Junction	Clara	Sallins	Abbey Junction, Waterford
Birr (!)			

In some cases, the turntables have been isolated by the removal of the approach tracks, often for considerable periods.

The GAA Versus CIÉ

In mid-October last a dispute between officials of the Gaelic Athletic Association in Cork and CIÉ attracted much attention in the newspapers. It arose out of a protest by the GAA against their supporters being charged a day return fare of 39/- for tickets to Dublin for a Sunday match, when Dublin Soccer fans had only been charged 20/- to a match in Cork the previous Sunday. CIÉ in reply stated that 39/- was the normal "Special Day Excursion" fare between Dublin and Cork. The Soccer fans had been lucky in that the date of their match coincided with that of a CIÉ "Cheap Weekend Sunday" on which the 20/- fares were available. CIÉ refused to grant the 20/- fares and as a result the Cork County Board of the GAA decided to boycott CIÉ services for players and officials and called on their supporters to do likewise.

However, the boycott was short-lived. A Cork team was again playing in Dublin on Sunday, 13 November - a date which in the intervening period had been added to CIÉ's "Cheap Weekend" list and a 20/- fare was available. Heavy advance bookings from both GAA and Soccer enthusiasts caused three special trains to be arranged. Unfortunately, the number of last-minute bookings more than doubled the demand for seats and two additional specials had to be requisitioned. Even so, all trains were hopelessly overcrowded and the last one was so late that it had to run into Kingsbridge rather than Amiens Street and a special bus service took the passengers to their matches.

To relieve the situation on the return journey both Amiens Street and Westland Row provided an extra train, making a total of seven specials and the regular train. The first four trains got away smoothly but

there was an unfortunate 58 minute delay with the fifth. Because of a misunderstanding, the drivers of two trains presented themselves for duty at Amiens Street whereas their trains were at Westland Row. Because of the large crowds considerable difficulty was experienced in sending the men to Westland Row. A further problem for the station staff was the great length of some of the trains. Eventually all the passengers were safely dispatched in spite of what was almost a state of siege at Amiens Street!

New Locos For CIÉ

Twelve new 1,100 hp diesel-electric locomotives from the General Motors Corporation of America were unloaded at North Wall, Dublin, on 7 and 8 November last. After trials which commenced on 11 November, the locos entered regular service. A most welcome addition to the CIÉ fleet, they are fully described in the Feature article in this issue.

UTA GENERAL NEWS REPORT

Railcar Developments

New DE power car 75 was reported running in on 10 December, on which date No.71 suffered some damage to its bodywork when another train struck its side at Belfast Loco Shed Yard. Although all the windows in the left-hand side of the engine room were broken and the panelling crushed in, the car made its usual two runs to Derry.

A number of multi-purpose power units have had AEC engines fitted in place of the original Leyland engines. The cars so altered include 36, 37, 39 and 55, as well as 56 on which this type of engine was first tried. It is understood that the new engines give improved performance. They can be distinguished from the Leyland type by their separated cylinder covers and large expansion boxes on the exhaust pipes.

Multi-engined cars 16 and 17 on the Bangor line have been fitted with Wilson 4-speed gearboxes instead of the original torque converters for which spare parts are difficult to obtain. They made their first appearance in public service on Saturday, 17 December, beginning with the 06:45 Empty Coaches to Bangor, but have not been seen since. The controls have been altered slightly and all the drivers will have to be specially instructed before the cars go into general use. The existing driving trailers may not be coupled to these cars but any non-driving trailers may be used.

Multi-purpose cars made their first regular appearance on the GN section on 1 November when three cars were transferred to work ballast trains, Derry line lifting trains and for shunting.

Derry Line Lifting

The contractor is presently at work in the Dungannon area. It appears that some of the recovered materials are being dumped at the former Portadown Goods Yard.

Bo-Bos On the NCC?

A number of drivers from Ballymena, Coleraine and Derry have been trained to drive CIÉ diesel locos of the B141 class. A loco inspector has also been trained but so far no men from the GN line or from York Road have received instruction. This development is apparently intended to relieve CIÉ drivers from covering excessive mileages when CIÉ trains work through to the NCC section.

“Muck” Trains

The most important development in recent times has been the commencement of the “Muck” Trains. These are to convey spoil from the quarry at the Magheramorne Cement Factory to the site of a new motorway between Greencastle and Belfast on the NCC line. A special series of side-discharging hopper wagons, numbered M1 upwards, is being supplied by Messrs Cravens of Sheffield. Two long high-level loading banks have been constructed at Magheramorne Loop where the spoil will be tipped

into the wagons from dumper trucks.

The trains will be steam-operated by WT class 2-6-4Ts. It is intended to run the trains in 20-wagon lots with an engine at each end. Eight locos will be required for this duty, with six in use at any one time and two spare. A new water supply is being provided at Magheramorne Loop. The present unloading points, three in number, are known as Fortwilliam Sidings, each being a siding interlaced with the up main line. As dumping proceeds, the sidings will be moved gradually away from the main line to provide a clear fall for the spoil. This will reduce to a minimum the necessity for levelling by bulldozers. Each train will be stopped by a flagman at a siding chosen jointly by the UTA and the Ministry of Finance. When empty the trains will proceed to Belfast Goods Yard to turn.

Although the above outlines the anticipated procedure when the traffic is at its height, some trains are at present running. They commenced on Friday, 11 November, there being 2 each way a day (Saturdays excepted). However, on Saturdays there has been one empty train from Belfast and one loaded one from Magheramorne to Greenisland only, the loco working light to Belfast. The loaded train was worked from Greenisland to Fortwilliam on Sunday morning and discharged. The empty train returned to Magheramorne only if an additional run was required, otherwise it stabled overnight at Belfast.

For the time being the trains comprise 10 wagons and a goods brake van, the latter being at the rear of loaded trains and next the engine on empty workings. Great importance is being placed on punctuality, even to the extent of starting the trains from Magheramorne on time, whether fully loaded or not. Twenty minutes are allowed for unloading at Fortwilliam. The special wagons in use are described below.

New Wagons For “Muck”

These are massive 20-ton 4-wheelers of all-metal construction. They are fully vacuum-braked and have hydraulic buffers. The inside contains a steel chute sharply angled towards one side, the greater part of which comprises a large door which is held closed by its own weight and which is opened by a hydraulic jack mechanism affording an almost instantaneous discharge.

Rugby Specials

International Rugby matches will take place in Dublin on 21 January (Australia), 11 February (England) and 15 April (France). On each date excursions will run from Belfast to Dublin and back, leaving Belfast at 09:25 and 11:40. It is probable that the earlier train will be worked by BUT railcars, but the 11:40, which is “all-in” and works through to Lansdowne Road, must be worked by loco-hauled stock. Since there are no UTA locos on the GN section it seems likely that a CIÉ diesel loco will be hired for those occasions.

Coaching Developments

The fitting of fluorescent lights to railcars and trailers is continuing, but so far none of the steam stock has been so fitted. N180 remains the only coach painted in the all-over maroon livery. It has been decided to abandon the distinction between main line and suburban liveries on railcar stock. When the new liveries were adopted, the secondary colour was applied for the full depth of the windows on main line stock only. On suburban stock only a 21” band was used but as the main line style looks so much better it has been extended to all stock.

Driving trailer 504 on the Bangor line is the subject of the latest experiments with seat layouts. Two of the seats on each side have been turned to provide bays of facing seats in both of the centre sections. The seats in the end sections remain unaltered. The new arrangement has been described as “a disaster of discomfort”.

“Unilok” Shunter

The “Unilok” shunting unit was observed at work at Great Victoria Street station on 8 October. It was seen struggling up the yard slipping wildly with an AEC railcar in tow.

LOOSE LINKS

- Deutz locos G611 and G614 have been alternating on the Shelton Abbey pilot duties, and as yet no “C” class loco has been reported there.
- Guinness traffic between Kingsbridge and Limerick is now being carried on the new “Lancashire Flats” mentioned in our last issue.
- Sulzer diesel B109 was reported operating Lisduff No.2 Ballast train on the DSE section recently, one of the rare visits of these particular locos to this section.
- Some of the B141 class locos have very recently emerged into service with a “Broken Wheel” emblem on either side.
- The speed limit between Grand Canal Street Shed, near Westland Row, and Dun Laoghaire has been raised to 60 mph in each direction.

JOURNEY JOTTINGS

11 December 1966: Limerick - Limerick Junction - Dublin

On 4 April 1964 the 19:30 Limerick-Dublin (Sundays only) was put on to relieve the 18:30 ex Cork. With the growth of the 5-day week, the traffic at weekends grew to such an extent that the Cork train was overcrowded and frequently late. With the introduction of the Limerick train, that from Cork was re-timed and it gained a name for punctuality. Not so, however, the Limerick train! It was claimed that the time allowed at the Junction (9 minutes) was inadequate - a not unreasonable claim, as the engine must run round not only its train but also the Limerick Junction station buildings!

Thus, hopes were high on the date of our journey when the train consisted of new GM B191 (described in our feature article) at the head of 7 bogies and a HV. The departure was only 22 seconds late but the 31 minutes booking to the Junction was exceeded by nearly 6 minutes because of a PW slack at Dromkeen. Running round took 10 minutes while reversing onto the main road claimed a further 2 minutes.

But from then on, matters quickly improved and the loco performance was reminiscent of the days when A class power was readily available. Reaching 61½ mph after 3½ miles, the train then cruised through Dundrum and Goold’s Cross at 75 mph, gaining 3 minutes to Thurles. There, some smart station work gained a few seconds and another half-minute was clipped off the 11 minute section to Templemore. After a further 75 mph sprint past Lisduff the well-filled train gained further time at the Ballybrophy stop.

Sustained fast running right up to the approach to Portlaoise meant the recovery of 1½ minutes and at the platform the 2 minutes allowed was cut to 1. The passengers joining here had to wander along the corridors seeking the odd vacant seat - evidence that weekend traffic has been maintained.

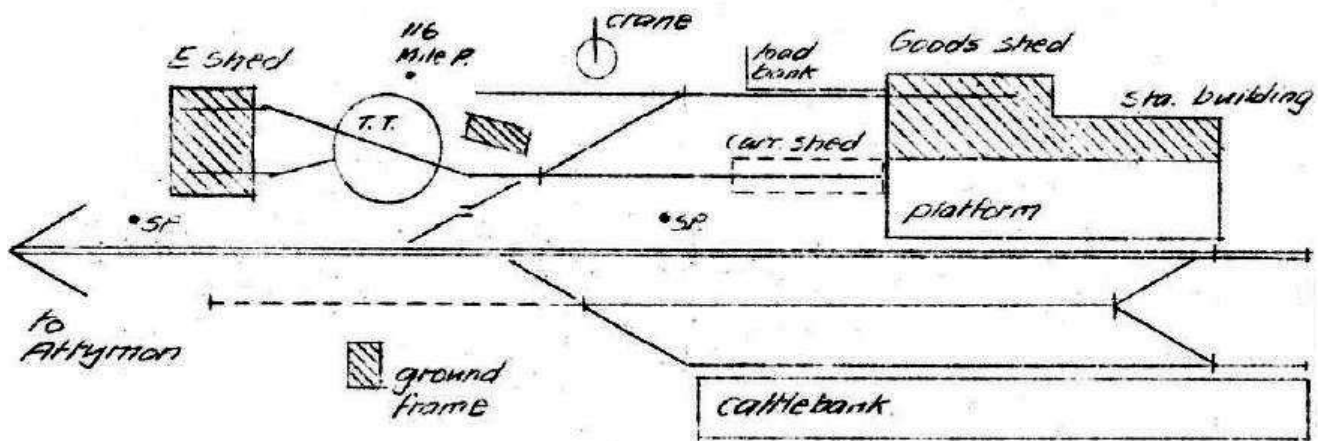
Departures from Portarlinton and Kildare were both 1½ minutes late but once more the driver kept up a very smart pace till he came to Clondalkin. With time in hand, he could now relax and run quietly over the 30 mph line from Islandbridge to Amiens Street. The approach to Amiens Street was leisurely, but there was no hurry - the arrival was a half minute early - a fine feat for the 19:30 from Limerick!

STATION SURVEY

Loughrea (Padraig O'Cuimin)

Loughrea station, terminus of the branch from the MGWR main line at Attymon Junction, was opened to traffic on 1 December 1890. This 9-mile long branch, together with that from Claremorris to Ballinrobe, initiated the last phase of constructed extensions to the MGWR system in the years 1890-95. It remains unique today as a fully operational branch feeder and has added interest inasmuch as little of the physical make-up has changed since the Grouping. This is particularly true of Loughrea station itself, where the track layout is as it was in 1907.

Compared with many of the stations surveyed in this series Loughrea is modern - some local inhabitants still remember its construction. However, attempts to provide the town with a rail link precede the opening date by almost 20 years. The first concrete proposal was made to the MGWR in 1874 by a group of townspeople and local land owners. A Bill for the construction of a line was introduced in Parliament in 1881; it called for a baronial guarantee. But it was 1885 before the Grand Jury of Co. Galway gave the required guarantee to the "Loughrea & Attymon Light Railway Company". Royal Assent followed on 4 June 1886. Further preparatory work to secure approval under the Tramway Acts delayed the obtaining of an Order in Council until 1888. Sometime during that year Robert Worthington commenced work, the line being opened for traffic in 1890.



The track plan as it exists is shown in the accompanying sketch (which is not to scale). An extension to the siding accommodation (put in during 1907) is shown in dotted line. The terminus is approached on a straight road which falls slightly to the town. A long headshunt on the west side commences shortly beyond the home signal. This was added in 1907 to increase accommodation for cattle wagons on fair days when a complete train was stabled overnight, in addition to wagons already at the cattle bank.

The stone-built standard-pattern engine shed on the east side has accommodation for two locomotives and is the first building met with on entering the station proper.

A crossover, followed by a right-hand turnout gives access to the cattle bank, while a left-hand turn-out serves the goods siding, carriage shed road and loco shed (via the turntable). The running road terminates at a now disused carriage dock. The release road is shared with that from the cattle bank; it regains the running road by the turnout and crossover already mentioned.

Reverting to the goods yard, the first siding is still known as the carriage shed road although the 107' long shed was removed in the mid-1930s. The goods shed is entered by way of a further left-hand turnout with a siding extension served by a three-ton hand crane for wagon loads. A 15 cwt. crane was formerly situated in the goods shed. The shed is 30' wide inside by 105' long outside and has an 18' wide loading platform with three arched vehicle loading bays. It is of stone construction as are all the

buildings except the ground frame cabin.

The two-storey stationmaster's house and adjacent single-storey offices are separated from the goods shed by a men's lavatory. The small ground frame cabin is on the west side opposite the turntable. The Saxby & Farmer frame has 11 levers with 4 spare and 1 missing. It is said to have come originally from Liffey Junction. The ETS instrument is in the stationmaster's office. The ground frame controls the entrance crossover and the turnouts to the cattle and carriage shed roads as well as the signalling, and the remaining switches are tumbler-worked, with the exception of the release turnout from the cattle bank which retains its original vertical lever with the crank protected by a 'top-hat' cast iron box.

The 42' Cowans Sheldon turntable is almost exactly in alignment with MP 116 from the Broadstone. The water tank and coal store are just to the south of the turntable while nearby is an ash pit. The inner home signal (of GSR concrete type) adjoins the north wall of the loco shed while the starter is some 150' out from the platform end and is of GS&WR lattice construction.

The line was originally ballasted with gravel from Dunsandle Pit and this is still very much in evidence. The rails, though moved around periodically to adjust wear, are still mainly of MGWR 1875-88 vintage. In 1966 the station buildings were repainted and various repairs were carried out, while the station staff made improvements to the general appearance.

In 1925 there were three trains each way a day: 1 mixed and 2 passenger ex Loughrea, with 2 mixed and 1 passenger ex Attymon. All connected with the main line trains. At present there are 4 scheduled workings each weekday in each direction, giving similar connections.

Whatever locomotives initiated services on the branch, the E class 0-6-0Ts introduced in 1891 quickly took over the normal workings in MGWR days. In GSR times W&LR 2-4-0s, 101s, rebuilt MGWR 0-6-0 standard goods and MGWR 2-4-0s all saw service on the line. Although the ex-SL&NCR railcar B (CIÉ 2509) was tried on the line, the present arrangement of G class Deutz 150 hp diesel-mechanical loco with brake-compo 1910 and a goods brake for mixed traffic has been standard for the last 2½-3 years. It works well but the lack of power imposes load limitations for mixed trains.

The opening of the Tynagh mines has favoured the line in two ways: first, much of the mines' inward traffic goes by rail, and second, the enhanced prosperity of Loughrea has generated extra goods traffic. Also, a change in the rates for wagons of cattle has led to a revival of this once-flourishing business and in this connection both A and B class diesels visit Loughrea on special workings. C Class locos are seen on relief or football specials.

May we hope that the branch to Loughrea may long continue to prosper, all the more so as it alone stays to give us some idea of what branch line life was like on the MGWR long ago.

Feature Section

"THE NEWCOMERS"

Twelve new diesel-electric locomotives have recently been delivered to CIÉ, the order being placed because of greatly increased motive power requirements due to the sharp increase in freight traffic. Numbered B181 - B192, the new engines were supplied by the General Motors Corporation of America at a cost of £800,000. They are double-ended (type JL18) and are very similar in appearance to the B141 class of 1963 (type JL8). The previous class were 950 hp while the new arrivals are 1,100 hp.

They are finished in the black, golden brown and white livery of the B141 class, but have an emblem

added on either side. The only external distinguishing features are seven small louvres under the headlights at each end.

Delivery took place on 7 and 8 November 1966, six of the class coming on the MV “Irish Alder” and the others on the MV “Irish Oak”, both of which are owned by Irish Shipping Ltd. The loco bodies came as deck cargo, the hatch covers of the ships having been specially strengthened for the purpose. To provide protection against corrosion from flying spray, the bodies were enshrouded in sacking with polythene sheeting underneath.

The task of unloading was unusually troublesome as some of the bogies on the “Irish Alder” had been loaded in the ‘tween’ decks. A large cargo of bulk grain had to be discharged at a different berth before these bogies could be reached. An added difficulty arose from the ship being too deep for the berth at the 100-ton crane when the tide was low and consequently a deal of “shunting” was necessary.

B186 was the first to be placed on bogies, one of which had been intended by the manufacturers for B184! At 17:45 on the 7th the CIÉ fitters had secured the bogies and fitted buffers and draw-gear. Then a Dublin Port & Docks Board shunting tractor hauled B186 along the quayside to the dock gates where a CIÉ tractor took over and continued the haul across the road and into the yard beside the North Wall Point Store. On entering the yard the leading bogie of the engine became derailed at the first facing points. After a delay of about 2 hours the engine was successfully re-railed with the help of some German hydraulic jacks from Inchicore.

All the engines in turn were hauled to Inchicore where some modifications were made to the draw-gear before trials were commenced on 11 November. Since then, the engines appeared in traffic as soon as drivers had been instructed.

The technical specifications and dimensions of the new class are as follows:

General

Wheel Type	Bo-Bo	Length over buffers	44’0½”
Model	JL18	Width over handrails	9’6”
Gross hp	1,100	Total wheel base	30’6”
Continuous TE (lbs) at 11 mph	26,300	Bogie centres	22’6”
Starting TE (lbs) at 25% adhesion	37,500	Bogie wheel base	8’0”
Total weight (in working order)	67 tons	Maximum height	13’1½”

Engine Details

Type	8-645E
Horse Power at 900 rpm	1,100
Fuel Consumption	0.396 lbs/BHP/hour
Cylinders (8)	230mm bore x 254mm stroke, 4-stroke, 2-cycle

Generator

Type	I25E Self-ventilated
Efficiency	88.4%
Rating	Continuous. 439V, 1,500A, 900 rpm

Traction Motors (4)

Type	D77 Axle-hung. Roller bearings; forced ventilation
Efficiency at continuous rating	84%
Continuous rating at full field	232 hp
Gear ratio	58:19

In common with the other General Motors engines on CIÉ, those of the new fleet have four driving

positions, each of which has a fully-adjustable seat and a sun visor. The other fittings include the usual high-intensity headlights, cab heaters, speedometers and, for emergency use, fire extinguishers. The engines are fitted for multiple unit operation, not only with the other General Motors locos, but also with the modified C class engines, Nos. 233 and 234.

The principal trains to be worked by the new engines are the 09:00 “Fáilte” ex Cork and the 08:30 “Enterprise” to Belfast. In the case of the latter train the engines have returned on the 11:30 and completed their day by working a goods train to Dundalk (14:55 from the North Wall) and finally returning to Dublin with the 20:30 goods from Barrack Street, Dundalk.

As mentioned elsewhere in this issue, there have been dramatic increases in the freight carried by CIÉ and with the current trends in Irish mining developments, there will be further growth in rail freight traffic, particularly with specific commodities. This latest class of loco should play a vital part in ensuring that CIÉ can speedily and efficiently handle tonnages which were not at all envisaged even a few years ago.

NEWS EXTRA

Farewell To The County Donegal

Seven years after the cessation of its rail operations, the end of the CDRJC is in sight. Following the retirement of CDR Manager and Secretary, Mr B.L. Curran, a number of CIÉ officials have been appointed to the Boards of the CDRJC and the Strabane & Letterkenny Railway Company. The new appointments are a temporary measure while negotiations leading to the dissolution of both companies are completed.

It will be appreciated by readers of “The Dundalk, Newry & Greenore Railway” by D.S.M. Barrie that protracted negotiations must be involved and special legislation in two or three Parliaments may be required as in the case of the DN&GR.

For all practical purposes, the CDR road passenger and freight services are now under the direct control of the Area Manager, CIÉ Galway. However, other Area officials, notably the Area Civil Engineer, are also involved.

The present Donegal fleet consists of 6 buses, 34 lorries, 15 tractors and 35 trailers and containers. Four additional buses are provided by CIÉ. These come from the Sligo sub-shed of the Ballina district. The staff consists of 25 supervisory and clerical, 18 road passenger, 53 road freight and 12 maintenance men (including a mason), a total of 108.

The new CDRJC appointments are as follows:

Secretary:	Mr M.J. Hayes, Secretary, CIÉ
Accountant:	Mr R.G. Watt, Accountant, CIÉ
Manager:	Mr E. Fitzgerald, Area Manager, CIÉ Galway

Messrs Hayes and Watt hold similar positions in respect of the Strabane & Letterkenny company but no Manager has been appointed.

The recent announcement in the 23 December issue of “Nuacht CIÉ” does not refer to the railway rolling stock stored by the CDR at several stations on behalf of Dr Cox who had planned to export these items to the USA and lay a special 3'-gauge railway, using CDR materials, on which to run them. It has been stated in the past that transport problems delayed the move. This is indeed a pity as the passage of time has not improved any of the items.