

THE

# **IRISH RAILFANS' NEWS**

Volume 13

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No.3

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### **EDITORIAL**

The official announcement by CIÉ of their goal of 160 minutes non-stop trains from Dublin to Cork came just too late for our last issue. Since then, the summer timetable has revealed that for the present the schedule will be 170 minutes. There must have been a great temptation to put CIÉ into the exclusive "60 Club", yet this caution must be commended. The present acceleration can be traced back to the trial runs of October and November 1960. Since then the standard of riding on the Cork, and indeed on most other CIÉ lines, has been progressively improved by unobtrusive raising of permanent way standards during routine renewals. The CIÉ budget for improvements is very tight and cannot be properly compared with BR's vast expenditure on the London - Crewe section.

The CIÉ approach to acceleration of services is fundamentally different to that of the UTA prior to their ill-fated 60 mph timetable of 3 February 1958. While the Multi-Purpose Diesels could undoubtedly maintain the 60 mph schedules, if not delayed, the merest delay by signals or by an unexpected load of parcels at a station made punctuality impossible if the speed limits were to be observed. Instead, CIÉ are making the higher speeds permissible before cutting the timings and thus punctuality should be ensured. We do not doubt for a moment that CIÉ's locos can run fast enough to keep the new times and we look forward to the day when the 60 mph barrier is broken.

In stark contrast to the overall picture on CIÉ is the situation on the railways of the North. While the proposal to single the Portadown - Meigh section of the Belfast - Dublin line has apparently been shelved, the morale of Ulster's railway workers was again rocked by the dismissal of the General Manager, Mr John Coulthard. The unprecedented protest which followed points to the phenomenal reputation which Mr Coulthard earned during his short term of office. Members have been making close enquiries into this and other matters affecting railways in the Northern Ireland Parliament and it has become clear that the state of the railways is causing quite some anxiety. It is to be hoped that very quickly the future of Ulster's railways will be covered by a firm policy, and that the unease over the situation may be assuaged.

### **SOME RECENT ARTICLES OF IRISH RAILWAY INTEREST**

#### **Railway Magazine**

January An Irish Farewell to Steam

#### **Modern Tramway**

February A New Irish Tramway? (Paragraph)

June Sale of County Donegal Stock (Paragraph)

#### **Railway World**

February Irish Railways 100 Years Ago

## **Modern Railways**

February Irish Sea Tunnel (Paragraph)

## **Journal Of The Irish Railway Record Society**

February Rosslare Harbour  
BCDR Recollections  
His Majesty, the Driver  
Rails to Lough Gowna  
Beyer Engines in Ireland

## **BOOK REVIEWS**

### **“Transport of the Forties - Irish Locomotives” (Ian Allan)**

Turned out with an attractive cover, and priced at 5/-, this is an exact reproduction of the 1949 “ABC of Irish Locomotives”. While the text is useful, the loss of detail in the illustrations diminishes the value of the booklet.

### **“Twentieth Century Irish Locomotives” By W.E. Shepherd (Union Publications)**

The second edition of the “ABC” (mentioned above) was in fact a locomotive stock list, correct to the date of writing. The book under review has the considerable advantage of including locomotives which had been scrapped by 1949, and it also gives former owners’ numbers (and names) in respect of engines taken over by the GSR in the Amalgamation of 1925 and subsequently renumbered. Also included are the locos of the GNR, NCC, B&CDR and, indeed, those of practically all of the smaller companies, both standard and narrow gauge. The various renumberings of the UTA are also clearly indicated. The statistical information throughout the book is well tabulated and includes details of wheel formation, class, builder, dates of introduction and withdrawal and, where relevant, the previous owners and numbers.

The CIÉ diesel fleet is included although one feels that the amount of space allocated to it - less than one third of a page for the entire fleet of some 200 locos - could have been somewhat greater. There are 23 photographs and, while a few of them have not survived the reproduction process too well, they cover a wide range of subjects. Again, the lack of even one illustration of a diesel locomotive might be felt. Essentially a work of reference, much work has gone into its compilation and it should certainly find its way onto the bookshelf of anyone interested in the Irish steam locomotive - past or present.

### **“Coastal Passenger Steamers and Inland Navigations in the South of Ireland” By D.B. McNeill (Belfast Transport Museum)**

Among the many interesting aspects of the book is the wealth of information on those steamers which were operated by railway companies, in particular the Cork, Blackrock & Passage Railway. There is much valuable material, too, on both major canals, the Grand and the Royal, which was acquired by the MGWR at a very early stage. This book, the third of the Museum Handbooks to come from the pen of Dr McNeill, is of great value to the serious enthusiast and, even for the excellent pictures alone, is well worth its very modest price of 3/6<sup>d</sup>.

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# News Section

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## CIÉ GENERAL NEWS REPORT

### **Summer Timetable**

The CIÉ summer rail timetable, which came into force on 12 June, shows a number of important changes from previous years. The most notable of these is the adoption of the “24-hour” clock. Another welcome improvement is the inclusion of a folding map of the railway system with the relevant page numbers shown after the place names on the map. The train services follow the usual pattern of recent years but with a number of notable improvements. The most important of these has been referred to in our editorial - the acceleration of the 08:45, 14:25 and 18:35 Dublin - Cork, and 09:10 and 18:00 Cork - Dublin which now complete their journeys in 2 hours 50 minutes.

The 10:45 to and 15:30 from Cork have also had their timings reduced by 5 minutes. Inexplicably, the 11:30 Cork - Dublin, with only three stops, still takes 3 hours 40 minutes. The timetable also includes the alternative services between Cork and Rosslare Harbour, via Limerick Junction, consequent on the closing of the Mallow - Fermoy - Waterford line. Another improvement is the provision of an extra Sunday train on the Dublin - Waterford line during July and August, 09:30 ex Waterford, returning from Dublin at 18:45. It seems a pity, however, that in changing to the 24-hour clock the opportunity was not availed of to adopt a somewhat different timetable layout. Many of the pages in the present issue give the appearance of being very much cluttered. This is not helped by the profusion of “notes” under the various tables. In particular, the Dublin - Belfast section takes some working out, and on Page 11 is a mysterious entry referring to the 12:15 Limerick - Waterford - Rosslare Harbour train. It indicates - opposite Waterford only - “Change at Limerick Junction”, despite this being a through train. The lack of an evening service on the Dublin - Bray line is very noticeable; there is no train from Dublin between 18:25 and 20:40, this being the easiest part of the table to read as a result. Finally, it should not really be necessary to turn the timetable in three different directions to study the Northern Suburban section.

### **Through Workings**

On and from 13 March the 07:30 from Drogheda to Connolly Station was worked through to Bray and from the same date the 17:00 from Bray went on through to Howth. Although advertised in the press, the service is not mentioned in the summer timetable and some reports would indicate that the 17:00 no longer goes through.

### **Special Report: Station Developments**

Over 10 stations and depots are at present undergoing alteration and in some cases these are of a major nature.

*Pearse Station:* The escalator was installed on 29 April but it remained out of use until 3 June, as the platform at the top was being resurfaced in black and white tiles. A large area of No.4 platform, which formerly sloped away steeply from the rail edge, has been levelled. The improvements include electric underfloor heating, while new protective walls have been built where old and new levels meet. These are connected by two sets of steps. There are three new shops and a Tourist Information Centre is being provided. There is also a portable information desk at the end of Platforms 1 and 2, for the benefit of Pier Train passengers. No.5 Platform road has been shortened by about 20' and a temporary buffer stop has been installed. Excavations were made behind Cumberland Street Bridge retaining wall, in connection with a new subway. This will replace the footbridge which is inconveniently situated at the

Tara Street end of the station. A new waiting room for Midland passengers will be provided on No.3 Platform where the Signal and Electrical Department's workshop is at present.

Tara Street: The cavernous entrance through a long archway is being renovated and new doors will be installed later.

Connolly Station: The lengthy renewal of the roof timbers has been completed and the station is being repainted. A new central postal sorting office has been built behind the station. All Dublin post will be handled there and a mail-bag conveyor is being built to No.2 Platform. No opening date has been announced nor have details of CIÉ's future mail-train services. The plaques commemorating last year's change of name have not yet been erected.

Heuston Station: The up platform has been resurfaced with tiles similar to those already on the down side. The car park in front of the office block has recently been covered with tarmacadam.

Kilbarry: A high-level loading bank has been provided for Messrs Gouldings' bulk fertiliser traffic. This had previously been handled at the old Cork-Bandon station at Albert Quay.

Cabra: Another 1,000 ton bulk cement silo is to be erected. A third series of bulk cement wagons is entering service at present. These are 20 ton capacity; the previous ones were 21 ton.

Tralee: A stationary boiler for pre-heating trains is to be provided.

Waterford: The old station has been completely demolished and some foundations for the new building have been dug. The loco maintenance department closed on 25 March; only fuel and water facilities for railcars are retained. Any failed unit must be hauled to Dublin, Cork or Limerick for repairs or, in the case of A class locos, be repaired on the spot by a fitter from one of those depots.

Clonmel: Two-way signalling was brought into use on 4 April.

Ballingrane: The loop was extended by 100 yards on 7 May to allow 25-wagon block trains to cross here.

Rosslare Harbour: The refitted SS "Duke of Rothesay" made a trial run on 8 May and entered regular service on the 02:15 ex Fishguard on 13 May. The former "car dock" siding at Ballygeary was lifted during May. The once brisk container traffic has almost disappeared and all cargo services were scheduled to cease in mid-June. The traffic has been diverted to the cargo-only Waterford - Fishguard service.

### **The Aftermath Of Closure**

ETS working on the Croom Branch was discontinued on 3 April and Croom and Bruree cabins were disconnected. The unusual divisible manual staff is retained at Charleville for Engineer's Specials. An advertisement for tenders for the lifting of the line appeared on 9 May.

On the Clonmel Branch, Laffan's Bridge and Fethard cabins were also dispensed with on 3 April. Thurles Junction south crossover and the junction points were disconnected and spiked on 28 March and subsequently removed.

On 28 April CIÉ announced their intention to make an abandonment order for that part of the Mallow - Waterford line from Mallow to 16 miles 1,657 yards "where it joins the line of the Fishguard & Rosslare Railways & Harbours Company", at Fermoy. No lifting has taken place as yet.

### **Dromod Revisited**

As from 30 April the 19:10 Sunday evening train from Sligo to Dublin again stops at Dromod. The restoration of the stop came about after representations by both members of the public and railwaymen. It is not to the credit of those concerned that the stop was omitted from schedules in the first place; Dromod is the station for quite a large area in central Leitrim and, whenever possible, is used on

Sunday nights by a considerable number of passengers. Just what economy was anticipated is hard to imagine, as at no stage did the handling of Sunday night passengers involve the use of staff other than the signalman, who is of necessity on duty whether or not the train stops. Likewise, the couple of minutes involved - on a line where station work is smart - is surely insignificant. Timings on the Sligo road are not so tight as all that!

### **Knock Pilgrimages**

The season commenced on Sunday, 23 April, when a special 6-coach Radio Train ran from Dublin, bringing members of An Realt. Four C class buses completed the journey to Knock from Claremorris station.

### **Catering Notes**

Sweeping changes in CIÉ's train and station catering services will take effect in the near future. Some of the existing buffet cars will have larger kitchens fitted to provide 40 meals at a sitting, compared with 20 at present. The first of these "super buffets" is expected next spring. "Mini buffets" are to be provided for secondary services where a full service is not justified. The latter will be conversions from ordinary coaches and will provide a counter service of snacks and beverages. No indication of the future of ex-GS&WR restaurant cars 353, 2092 and 2093 has been given. Station buffets are also being altered. At Dun Laoghaire a self-service restaurant is being developed and a licence for a lounge bar has been obtained. The facilities at Rosslare Harbour are being improved in view of the expansion of the ferry traffic.

### **Conference Special**

A special Radio Train ran from Heuston Station to Killarney on 2 May, conveying delegates to an insurance company's convention. The smart appearance of the station and train drew many favourable comments from the passengers who were especially impressed by the immaculate luncheon table, which were a credit to CIÉ.

### **Fertiliser Containers**

Two experimental fertiliser containers are on trial. Each has three compartments on either side to take wooden pallets loaded with fertiliser in polyethylene bags. The floors of the compartments are suitably angled to keep the pallets in place.

The fleet of 42 zinc concentrate wagons mentioned in our last issue is in store at Thurles Beet Factory Siding as this traffic from Silvermines has not yet commenced. A modified "Lancashire flat" container with much higher sides than usual has been observed with a load of Guinness casks. It is painted a dull maroon colour, not the usual wagon grey. Trials with an experimental 30' covered wagon were reported in late March but so far no details have been obtained.

### **Locomotive Department**

Two A class locos are being fitted with 1,325 hp diesel engines to replace the present Crossley 1,200 hp type, for which spare parts have been difficult to obtain since the manufacturers went into liquidation. According to a report reaching us, the new engines are of General Motors make and destined for A58 and A59.

Most of the B121 class have been repainted in black, golden brown and white, complete with the emblem and red buffer beams. While the net result conforms with the CIÉ standard livery, it does not particularly suit this class. On at least two occasions, experienced observers have taken repainted B121 class locos as shunting engines! Locos of the A, B101, C, D, E and G classes on being repainted do not receive the golden brown, but are otherwise turned out in the standard colours. It is understood that K801, the ex-GNR MAK loco, has been repainted but it is out of service at Inchicore.

## **The Bowater Blue Train**

Former Radio Train Studio coach RS20 is at present touring the CIÉ system as a mobile display unit for Bowaters Irish Wallboards Mills Ltd. It was adapted for its present role at the RDS Siding, Ballsbridge, and went on display at Connolly Station from 30 March. It is hauled from place to place by regular trains. Its “Blue Train” livery is a light blue with a white band at waist level and the lettering is in black. Its whereabouts have been well advertised and among the publicity material are posters bearing an outline drawing of the vehicle.

## **Carriage Notes**

Apart from a few vans, green coaches had virtually disappeared at the end of the winter season. The suburban veterans have reappeared on the Bray line and numerous other secondary coaches have been refurbished for summer service. Many of these are still gas-lit and although all the catering vehicles have been converted to Kosangas operation the oil-gas plant at Inchicore must remain in use to supply these coaches, certain vans and the cooking rings in the TPOs. A few coaches have been refitted with fluorescent lights; in some cases the old filament fittings remain although out of use. Suburban Park Royal Standard 1417 has ordinary domestic fluorescent fittings with a mixture of Irish and Dutch-made tubes. The conversion gives a much improved standard of lighting but it is very crudely executed. The fittings are screwed to unplanned laths on the ceiling and large circular patches cover the spaces formerly occupied by the old globes.

The Craven-type coaches under construction at Inchicore are still delayed by a serious shortage of skilled tradesmen. A recruiting drive, including a series of advertisements in buses, was unsuccessful and the existing staff have rejected a CIÉ proposal to train semi-skilled men to fill the vacancies. As a result some components had to be purchased from Britain. Nineteen new B4 type bogies had been made by April but none have been observed in use.

## **Quotations From Chairman Mao!**

Speaking at a Conference of the Irish Management Institute, Mr Frank Lemass, Director and General Manager of CIÉ, made a strongly-worded appeal for a more definite Government policy regarding the railway system. At present, policy is reviewed at five-year intervals and this surely acts as a deterrent to imaginative long-term planning by the Board and its officials. Having quoted from the 1958 Transport Act the Board’s obligation to “provide reasonable, efficient and economical transport facilities,” Mr Lemass remarked that “these brave words are no doubt intended to be read and cherished by the management of CIÉ in the manner of the publications of Chairman Mao, and to serve as a source of inspiration towards greater efforts on all fronts.” However, he continued by saying: “Lest enthusiasm be unrestrained” the Board is reminded that expenditure must match the revenue and subsidy.

## **Railcar Developments**

Railcar 2509 failed shortly after arrival in Waterford for the Kilmokea service and was returned to Inchicore for repairs. It was replaced by BUT car 716N which also failed and the service is now operated by a spare loco, and a coach. Only three BUTs based on Fairview have been running for a considerable time. These now include 706N which appeared in May with an odd-looking end livery. It has a large white patch from above cab window to roof level at both ends and a white band above the golden brown; this latter is likewise at the ends only. It was observed on 4 June with a UTR green and yellow dummy door on the end gangway.

## **Guide To Inchicore**

A two-colour illustrated guide to Inchicore Works for VIP visitors has been produced. Brief details are given of the processes in various departments and also of a representative selection of locomotives and rolling stock. A sketch map and an aerial photograph ensure that visitors can keep their bearings. The

emphasis of the guide is naturally on the present day, but the great tradition of this works from 1846 onwards has not been overlooked. There is a brief historical sketch of the works and an excellent photograph of 4-6-0 No.800 is included. The last page has the CIÉ emblem flanked by the crests of the GSR, GS&WR, GNR and MGWR.

### **Idea Borrowed**

Cheap weekend fares have proved a remarkable source of extra revenue for CIÉ's railways and the idea has now been adopted by the Road Passenger section. For the last four "weekends" of the season, concession fares were available on eleven of the Provincial bus routes. Few of the places served have rail services. The fares offered were somewhat higher than those available to rail passengers.

### **The UTR Strike**

The strike on UTR on 12 May upset cross-border services considerably. The 14:30 Dublin - Belfast, B171, HV and 6 bogies, was the last train to reach Belfast before the strike took effect. It arrived at 16:49 and was not shunted until 18:46. Thus, the 17:30 to Dublin was delayed until 19:14. The Down 17:30, a UTR railcar set, was removed from the platform at Connolly Station at 17:30. It returned at 18:45 and departed at 18:56. It was blocked at Rush and Drogheda and arrived at Belfast at 21:21, 101 minutes late.

### **Malahide Viaduct**

The two north-end spans were renewed on 9 and 16 April. On each day the lines were blocked for a time during the afternoon while the Inchicore and Grand Canal Street breakdown cranes removed the old spans and laid in the new pre-stressed concrete beams. Each span consists of four main beams with parapet units each side. Two further spans were renewed at the south end on 11 and 18 June. As a full Sunday service of local trains had been introduced, the work had to be done in the early morning. The Inchicore 35 ton crane was again used and the UTR 36 ton crane was borrowed on each date. The latter was resplendent in its new livery of maroon with black underframes and silver mountings; it is lettered "N.I.R.". While it was on loan to CIÉ, the Grand Canal Street 20 ton crane was placed in Portadown. This was probably the first visit of a crane to the north, although the UTR crane came south of the border on 23 July 1963, to the scene of the Portmarnock derailment.

### **Automatic Crossings**

Kiltartan Level Crossing, at MP 44 $\frac{3}{4}$  between Gort and Ardrahan on the Limerick - Sligo line, was converted to automatic half-barrier operation from 19 June. Wexford County Council have decided to replace the notorious Tinnock Bridge with a new stretch of road, which will cross the railway on the level nearby. Tinnock Bridge, No.278 at MP 56 $\frac{1}{2}$ , just north of Gorey, has been the scene of many road accidents due to the very dangerous S-bend. The County Engineer estimated that a new road with a bridge would cost £67,000 while the use of the automatic crossing would reduce the cost to £45,000. The entire cost of the crossing, including operating and maintaining it, will have to be borne by the County Council as they would be diverting the road from its present site. There is no indication when the work will be carried out.

### **Airport Branch?**

A Dublin County Councillor has had provision for a railway link to Dublin Airport included in the draft County Development Plan. He has suggested that the idea be given further study as the building of a railway would considerably ease traffic congestion on the roads. Any branch to the Airport would have to take a circuitous route, most likely from a point near Portmarnock on the Dublin - Belfast main line, but unless land is acquired soon, housing development will block any routes which at present lend themselves to serious consideration.

## **Balbriggan Derailment**

The engine of the 13:25 Dundalk - North Wall goods became derailed on the south crossover during shunting at Balbriggan on 31 May. Both lines were blocked until the engine was re-railed with hydraulic jacks. In the meantime, a shuttle service of buses was operated between Skerries and Gormanston.

## **Weed Spraying**

The annual tour of the system by the weed-spraying train commenced on 8 May. The train was observed in the yard at Limerick on 5 June.

## **Broad And Narrow**

A large tower crane, supplied by Liebherr (Ireland) Ltd of Killarney, has been installed to facilitate the movement of sleepers at the North Wall yard and “Tanalith” plant. Bearing the CIÉ emblem on the cabin sides, it is mounted on rails laid to a gauge of 14'10". These weave a serpentine course about the yard and are in remarkable contrast to the 5'3" gauge lines, not to mention the 3' gauge tracks on which small bogies run.

## **CDRJC**

### **The Final Disposal**

The rolling stock and equipment stored on behalf of Dr Ralph Cox, of New Jersey, has been offered for sale as it appears that his scheme to transport the items to the USA for preservation and operation has fallen through. Scrap value is estimated at £10,000 but it is hoped to find buyers who will use the rolling stock on museum lines. Among those interested is Lord O'Neill, patron of the Railway Preservation Society of Ireland. He has already submitted outline plans to Antrim County Council for the development of a holiday centre on part of his estate on the shore of Lough Neagh. Included in the proposals is a railway on which the CDR stock could be used. The principal items now in store are:

Strabane: Locos 4 “Meenglas”, 5 “Drumboe” (2-6-4T). Coaches 12, 15, 16, 17, 23, 30, 40, 47, 53, 56.

Stranorlar: Loco 6 “Columbkille” (2-6-4T). Railcars 12, 16, 18. Coach 14.

Letterkenny: Loco 11 “Erne” (4-6-4T, painted green).

In addition, a number of wagons are stored at old stations.

## **UTR GENERAL NEWS REPORT**

### **A Time Of Confusion**

Recent developments in Ulster have been very confusing indeed and there would seem to be a definite lack of policy with regard to the future of the railways. On one occasion this resulted in amazing action by the railwaymen. In accordance with a recent decision, the train and bus services operated together under UTA auspices are to be separated, the responsibility for each going to different concerns. The original intention was to transfer the railway working to “Northern Ireland Railways Co Ltd” (a wholly-owned subsidiary of the UTA) on 17 April. However, this move was deferred pending settlement of a labour dispute although “Ulsterbus Ltd” took over the Authority’s road services on the same date, as planned.

That all was not well was dramatically revealed on 12 May when it became known that Mr John Coulthard, the railway’s General Manager, had been dismissed with 6 months’ salary in lieu of notice. The letter of dismissal alleged that he had “committed such breaches of the express and implied terms

of (his) service contract" that the Authority was entitled to terminate his employment. It further referred to the "lack of compatibility and confidence" between the Railways Board and Mr Coulthard.

The railway staff, shocked and disgusted by this action, staged a token strike from 16:45 to 18:45 to make known their reactions. Mr Coulthard has protested vigorously that he was wrongfully dismissed. Whatever the outcome of this sorry affair, there can be no doubt that the confidence of the staff in the management - so vital to any successful concern - has been seriously undermined.

### **Spoil Trains**

A revised schedule of 10 trains each way on Mondays to Fridays, with 4 each way on Saturdays, was introduced on 15 May, all to be 20 wagons "with banking engine". However, variations such as one engine and 10 wagons and the odd double-headed train run from time to time. Three basic 20-wagon trains have been in use with only two brake vans, some trains running without one. The last two wagons, M69 and M70, were delivered on 9 May. M65 was overturned and damaged in the Ballycarry derailment on 5 April and has since been fitted with parts taken from the prototype M1. Loaded spoil trains are limited to 40 mph; empty trains to 30 mph.

### **New General Manager**

The appointment of Mr Hugh Waring to the post of Chief Executive and General Manager was announced on 16 June. Mr Waring joined the BCDR as a boy porter in 1929. He became a fulltime officer of the National Association of Transport Employees in 1953 and later served as chairman of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions. He returned to the UTA as personnel officer in 1964 and was appointed Central Area Manager of Ulsterbus when that company was formed. Mr Waring has already said that he "will not be a party to the running down of the railways". Previously the Ministry of Development had reiterated the Government's policy not to close the remaining railways. It was stated at the same time that £3/4m would be spent on modernising railway equipment. Some MPs have raised objections to the appointment being made without the post being advertised. No indication has been given of the future of Mr Irvine, the temporary Chief Executive.

### **Loco Notes**

No.10 was repaired in the shops in mid-March and again in June, while No.3 received attention in May. The numberplates have been removed from No.9 and its bogie and smokebox have been removed to repair No.56 which is still at Ballymena. No.54 has been stopped with serious defects in the firebox. Another engine to lose its plates is No.26 "Lough Melvin".

### **Railcar Developments**

No.124 was the first red and grey unit to appear on the "Enterprise" set on 23 March, one day after diner 552 reappeared. Nos. 127 and 134 have since been repainted, the latter getting an attractive V-shaped grey patch on the end. The top headlamps have been removed from 124 and 127.

MEDs 16 and 17 on the Bangor line have become very popular with the public. Their timekeeping is exemplary and the objectionable vibration, smells and noise, hitherto associated with those units have been almost completely eliminated. Only two MED sets were running on the NCC section in mid-May: Nos. 12, 10 and 11 on the Larne line and Nos. 18 and 21 to and from Ballymena; both sets were without trailers. Nos. 13, 19, 20 and 22 are in store and 8 and 9 are being refitted at York Road Works with 4-speed gearboxes. DE No.77 was completed on April 3 and there is no sign yet of No.78 or of the four new trailers due to be built.

### **Maze Crossing**

Automatic half barriers have been erected at Maze Station, MP 102½ on the Belfast - Dublin line. They were intended for operation from 1 May but the gates and signals were still in use in mid-May. It is

understood that Damhead Station Crossing will be the next altered. Following a failure of Lissie barriers in late May, the driver of a passing train was surprised to be hand-signalled through the crossing by a policeman!

### **Signalling Notes**

Ballyclare Junction temporary signal cabin was closed on 16 April when the new overbridge was opened to road traffic. The former down inner home at Ballyclare Junction has become the down distant signal for Kingsbog Junction and is fitted with the motor from the former Larne down distant. The track circuit beginning at the up advanced starter has been extended back to the corresponding signal at Kingsbog Junction, and the section is now Kingsbog Junction - Greenisland.

Another new cabin on the down side of the NCC main line is being erected at Greencastle emergency crossover at MP 2½. Like Port Arthur, it will control entry to the spoil sidings and it will slot the adjacent up and down automatic signals.

Mount Cabin, between Greenisland and Carrickfergus, was closed in May. Since the withdrawal of rail traffic from Courtaulds sidings nearby, this cabin has been of little use.

### **Sidings Axed**

The removal of sidings continues. The former NCC Whitla Street goods yard has been cut back on a line with No.5 platform in York Road station, except for the line to the Quays which is still required for loco coal specials worked by Loco 27. Belfast is now so short of sidings that an 8-coach set had to be taken to Antrim on 10 May to make room for a 7-coach GN set required for a special on 13 May! At Larne, rail access to the Stranraer steamer berth has been cut. Buffer stops have been installed at the former level crossing on both platform lines at Larne Harbour Station. Run-round facilities are now confined to lines opposite the signal cabin where it is possible only to handle trains of 5 coaches or less. One long siding still wanders through the yard to the Preston Ferry berth and was used for the delivery of the spoil wagons. A short section is still mixed 3' and 5'3" gauge.

### **Portadown Area**

Lifting of the Derry road was completed in mid-March and the contractor's railcars, formerly UTA Nos. 101 and 104, have been stored in the carriage sidings since then. An auction of sleepers, rails, etc., including the line to Brownstown Siding on the former Armagh line, was advertised for 15 April and two months later lifting was completed. The Junction signal cabin, disused since 26 September 1966, was partly demolished in late March, while the South Cabin was closed on 26 March and its few remaining functions transferred to the North Cabin where 18 extra levers were installed to give a total of 59, 6 spare.

Track alterations include the removal of the crossover south of the Bann Bridge and the moving of the turnouts at the south end and the remaining crossover a short distance towards the North Cabin. The Up starters are now under the platform canopies and access to the former goods yard is controlled by a 3-lever ground frame released by a "King" lever in the cabin. The Bann Siding has been removed and the Dublin ends of Platforms 1 and 4 have been moved outwards to reach the lines on their new alignments.

While these works were being completed it was announced that the Craigavon Development Commission had appointed a firm of consultants to design a new station on the site of the now-disused goods station in Woodhouse Street. The present station in Watson Street dates from 1 July 1863 and not 1842 as widely quoted. The original (1842) station on the present site was replaced in 1848 by another, fronting on Woodhouse Street. If this project is proceeded with, it will provide Portadown with a much more convenient station. We hope that at least one platform will be of sufficient length to accommodate long cross-border trains, as these are delayed even now by re-pulling for Customs

examination of the rear van. It might also be borne in mind by the planners that Portadown is already a large town and Craigavon will be much larger, so provision ought to be made for cross-border goods traffic, if only of the unit-load type.

### **Summer Timetable**

Operative from 26 June, the new summer timetable will, as on CIÉ, feature the 24-hour clock notation throughout.

### **Off The Road**

During April and May there was a spate of derailments of railcars, a 2-6-4T, wagons and a crane.

## **JOURNEY JOTTINGS**

### **11 May 1967: Belfast - Coleraine - Derry; The New DE Railcars**

When the diesel-electric railcars were introduced on this line in 1966 they soon became noted for remarkably gentle starts, followed by a very rapid acceleration once 20 mph or so had been attained. While their hill-climbing ability far outstripped that of the MP railcars, the high gearing on the latter gave them a higher maximum speed. It seems from the performance of the train under review that some modifications have been carried out and these, combined with the experience gained by the drivers, rewarded our reporter with his best ever run to Derry.

The 5-car set forming the 11:25 from Belfast was encumbered not only with an ex-GNR "P" van for Derry but also with an ex-NCC bogie brake loaded with copious quantities of parcels for Coleraine. Departure was almost 4 minutes late but no time was lost, MP 1 being passed in exactly 2 minutes. The 50 mph limit as far as Bleach Green, 4 $\frac{3}{4}$  miles, spoils most present-day runs and only the most skilful drivers can run up the 1:75 bank to Ballyclare Junction as fast as before. On this run, a 42 was recorded at Monkstown and a minimum of 39 before Ballyclare Junction, where a 5 mph restriction still applied under the new bridge. Kingsbog Junction was passed at a modest 42 but the falling gradients towards Antrim raised the speed to 60 at Doagh and 70 before Templepatrick.

After a 1 minute stop at Antrim there was further brisk running to Ballymena, the maximum being 67 before Kellswater. At Ballymena there was very heavy parcels traffic. The former GNR weed-sprayer was noted with two MPDs in charge. Continuing, there was a maximum of 46 before Cullybackey and later a spirited dash at close to 70 past Ballyboyland Box. At Coleraine, the rear van was detached and then a smart run towards Limavady Junction was ruined by the seemingly inevitable slow gatekeeper. All the same, a speed of 68 mph was noted before the Junction where the 12:45 fitted train from Derry was crossed, drivers changing their trains. Round the bend from the Junction, the Ballykelly Aerodrome runway signals were on! Visualising the approach of an aircraft, our reporter reached for a camera but, alas, the signals came off and the train continued to reach a maximum of 66 at Lisahally Loop. Arrival at Derry, with a good complement of passengers, was only 1 $\frac{1}{2}$  minutes late - the staff's efforts at timekeeping paying off.

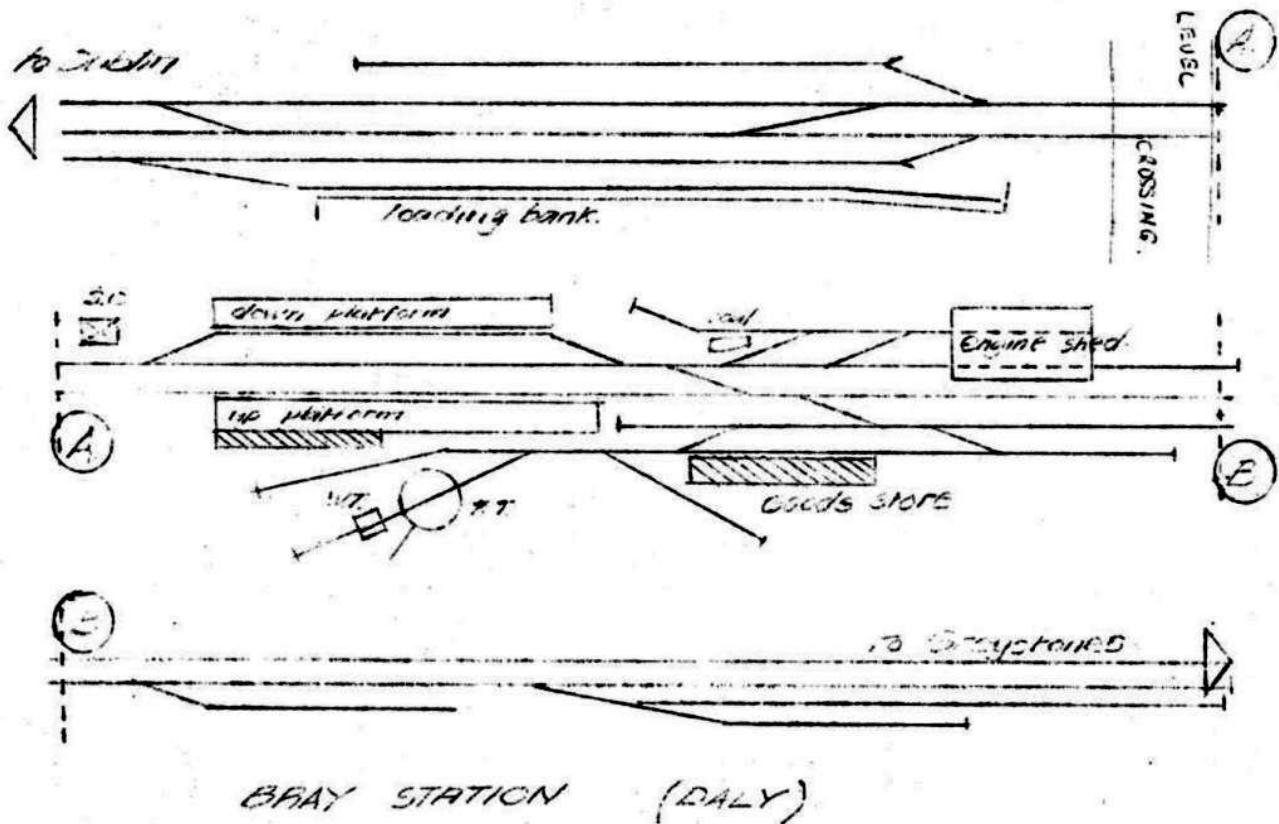
## **STATION SURVEY**

### **Bray (H. Fogarty, C.Eng)**

Bray Station was opened on 10 July 1854, when the first portion of the Dublin & Wicklow Railway commenced services. The coming of the railway gave a definite stimulus to the development of the area - a fact revealed by the election of Bray's first Town Commissioners in 1858. Since then, the town has developed until today it is important both as a residential area and a popular resort.

The original station built to serve Bray had only one platform, and it is still possible to envisage the

station in early days as the present up platform and buildings are those of the Dublin & Wicklow. In 1927 the newly-formed GSR constructed a second platform on the down side and provided a connecting footbridge. In addition, one large signal cabin was erected to replace two earlier ones. Between the platform roads is a third running line, over which it is possible to signal passenger trains in either direction. At the time of the GSR alterations railings on the old platform (similar to those on Howth station platform today) were removed and the barrier was changed to the parcels office. The present booking office and barrier were constructed in 1962, an awkward fact being that there is no way of separating passengers entering from those leaving the platform and, as a result, both streams interfere with queues at the booking office window.



The signal cabin has a frame of 63 levers with 4 spare, a gate wheel for the level crossing at the Dublin end of the station, and the Electric Train Staff instruments for the single-line section on to Greystones and Wicklow. Up to the advent of diesel traction there was a special banking staff for engines assisting heavy trains southward-bound. The most recent alteration to the signalling has been the removal of the gantry carrying the up starting signals from the down platform and the middle road; the latter now has a ground disc signal. Bray station is very well signalled and thus quite a variety of passenger train manoeuvres are possible. Of extra assistance in bringing down passenger trains safely into the up platform is the 40 mph facing crossover just north of the level crossing.

Prior to 1916 Bray was approached from the north by three tracks, one from Westland Row and two from Harcourt Street. These ran together from the old Shanganagh Junction to a point just north of the level crossing. The abutments for the Westland Row line are still in site in places, but the line itself was threatened by the sea and was moved inland in 1916, the approach to Bray from Shanganagh being reduced to 2 lines. Otherwise, Bray layout was not altered then and a feature of the station, rather reminiscent of Waterford, was the scissors crossing at the mid-point of the single platform. The very comprehensive signalling arrangements could allow a train, for example, from Westland Row to arrive at either half of the platform. This was, of course, in the time of the two cabins. The North Cabin was

on the Up side just beside the Dublin end of the level crossing, while the South Cabin was on the down side, on a site just at the Greystones end of the present down platform.

While the running shed of steam days was on the down side at the southern end of the station, the turntable site was in behind the south end of the original platform, on the up side. Near it, and on the same side, were placed the goods store and sidings, one of which served the depot of the Irish American Oil Company. Strangely, the cattle bank, while also on the up side, was placed on the far side of the level crossing.

Bray, Daly Station (as it has recently been additionally named) is the main terminus for the Eastern suburban service, only two trains being extended to Greystones at the morning and evening peak hours. Four railcar sets remain overnight at Bray, receiving daily checks there. As only three sets are required for the lunch-hour trains, each set goes in turn to Fairview Depot for its weekly check. In winter, the Monday-Friday service consists of some 15 trains. There are many gaps and it is felt that the last train at 18:25 from Connolly Station is too early. This is all the more true as recent rush hour traffic delays have tended to disrupt the Bray bus services until after 21:00.

This worsening congestion on the roads is proving beneficial to the railway; on one week in January the greatest number of weekly tickets for over 2 years was issued. But it is not merely from the buses that the trains are gaining - up to 30 cars may at times be observed awaiting their owners' return ... by train! Long may this be so.

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## Feature Section

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### THE DALRIADA RAILTOUR - 13 MAY 1967

The most ambitious tour so far organised by the Railway Preservation Society of Ireland took place on Saturday, 13 May. A special 8-coach train ran from Belfast to Coleraine and Portrush. Steam reigned supreme, UTR loco No.55 yielding pride of place to the Society's own locomotive, ex-Great Southern & Western '101' class 0-6-0 No.186. The occasion was unique in Ireland in that the special train, on arriving at Coleraine, was divided into two four-coach units, each of which was then steam-hauled to and fro over the Portrush branch. The special tickets issued were valid for unlimited travel on the branch, but most of the passengers only used the trains to travel from one photographic vantage point to another!

A great deal of effort went into the preparations for this ambitious venture. The "scholars" did their homework and produced an excellent itinerary while those of a more mechanical mind looked after the motive power. A considerable amount of work was done on No.186 at Belfast in the weeks before the tour and she was used on light shunting duties from time to time for various tests. On 11 May, she ventured as far as Ballycarry to work a ballast train. Apart from a leaky tender she performed very well, and the NCC drivers - a conservative lot - were unanimous in their praise for her. "Jeep" No.4 was stopped on 11 May for cleaning and made a fine spectacle beside 186's shiny black paint, but regrettably at the last moment No.4 failed and was replaced by a rather grimy 55.

It was the latter engine which headed the "Dalriada" out of York Road at 09:07, 2 minutes late. Speeds of 45 mph at Whitehouse, 25 near Ballyclare Junction, and 60 mph beyond Doagh culminated in a maximum of 70 at Dunadry. A smart ascent through Cookstown Junction was spoiled by a signal check but there was a compensating 64 mph at Kellswater. The special was shunted to the Up platform at Ballymena to allow the 09:25 Belfast - Coleraine to overtake it. Before, the 08:35 from Derry had gone

through on its way to Belfast. The “Dalriada” passengers had another opportunity for photographs as the 09:25 was followed by the 09:35 Sunday School Excursion to Portrush - a 10-coach train with train engine No.10 and No.53 as pilot to Ballymena. No.10 made a stirring start for Portrush from Ballymena with the heavy train.

It was also at Ballymena that No.186 joined the tour, as pilot for the run to Coleraine. At 10:41 the train re-started and ran gently up the bank to Cullybackey. Here there was an 8-minute delay caused by the 09:35. Police were on duty at the remains of the level crossing which had been smashed by a car a short time previously! Also noted was a goods train in the loop at Dunloy; it was later worked on to Derry by No.53.

Speeds recorded by the timekeepers were 46½ mph before Glarryford, 47 at Dunloy and 36 at Ballymoney. Shortly before Macfin 52 mph was reached. It was followed by a stop for photography while 186 was also examined. After a further maximum of 52 mph, Coleraine was reached just 7 minutes late at 11:37.

Then the branch service commenced. Altogether, No.55 made 4 return trips with a short working from Portrush to Portstewart and back, while her partner 186 made 3 round trips and one from Coleraine to Portstewart. In addition, the excursion engine, No.10, made one trip from Portrush to Coleraine with four coaches from its train. It was a novel day - and a busy one - for the Portrush Branch, and one thoroughly recorded in notebook and even more so on film.

On the return journey from Coleraine, with the two trains reunited, another broken set of crossing gates was observed, while the run was enlivened by the dropping of the tablet at Dunloy. But little time was lost; the train set back smartly and the tablet was collected. At Cullybackey the last pictures of 55 and 186 together were taken, for at Ballymena 186 went for a well-earned breather. As No.55 took water, 53 arrived light from Derry after her goods trip and, to the delight of the passengers, she was added as a pilot to 55. But any prospect of a fast run was spoiled by the tardy opening of the gates at Cookstown Junction which necessitated a reduction to 36 mph. Still, Antrim was passed at 67 and the two engines raced up the bank at close to 60, except for the stretch from Doagh to Kingsbog Junction where speed fell to 51.

This was a most enjoyable railtour; it was adjudged a huge success by all on board. We look forward to the next RPSI venture and hope that “S” class 171 will be around.

## NEWS EXTRA

### **Echoes From The Past - “Lady Edith” Works Again**

On the closure of the Cavan & Leitrim section of CIÉ in 1959 most of the engines on the line were cut up. There were three exceptions - “foreigner” 5T from the Tralee & Dingle and two of the 1887 Stephenson 4-4-0Ts of the C&L escaped the torches of the wrecker. No.2 went to the Belfast Transport Museum where she has a place in august company. Her sister, No.3, was shipped to the USA by the Lady Edith Society - a group named after the engine it had just acquired.

A vast amount of work has been done on the engine, including a thorough research job for details of alterations and especially reboilerings, all to satisfy the stringent American safety regulations. We are delighted to report that all the effort has been rewarded - No.3 is again at work. She runs under the auspices of the Pine Creek Railroad Division of the New Jersey Museum of Transportation Inc., whose track is at Allaire State Park. The “Pine Creek Railroad” carried its 100,000<sup>th</sup> passenger early this summer, just as No.3 was having her first outing. Her driver was George Robertson who had put in many hard hours on the engine as an eager volunteer. “Lady Edith” - the old C&L name has been restored to No.3 - is now making regular weekend runs, looking much as she did in Leitrim, the one major difference being the absence of her cowcatcher.

## **End of a Centenarian**

A correspondent's letter and the activities of the lifting gangs remind us again of a branch which had at one time a traffic seldom found on rural lines - that line made by the MGWR right into GS&WR territory, the Clara-Streamstown. The one intermediate station, Horseleap, was the station handling the whiskey traffic from Locke's Distillery at Kilbeggan. This traffic ceased in the early 1940s and from 1947 the whole branch was moribund, existing as a grassy retreat for condemned wagons and only rarely disturbed by special trains. By the end of last September, the line had been lifted. Also removed was the bridge outside Clara although a little track remains as jute sidings. The line opened in 1863; Clara MGWR was closed in 1925.