

THE

IRISH RAILFANS' NEWS

Volume 14

April 1968

No.2

Managing Committee:

C.D. Seymour

B.J. Pender

P.J. Flanagan

R.C. Flewitt

EDITORIAL

Our thoughts on the CIÉ, or, rather, OIÉ, train catering service were crystallised recently on reading an "open letter" by a contributor in the Irish Times. In the course of that epistle various aspects of meals on wheels received some rather caustic comments. We cannot agree with all the points made; for instance, it would require kitchens with more elaborate equipment and far, far more space than exists in most of the CIÉ buffet and dining cars to produce some of the alternatives suggested for the menu cards. Nor would it be very practical to provide a very extensive selection of lunch or dinner courses, as suggested. Quite apart from storage problems, there is the drawback that very few CIÉ trains travel at times when many people would require vast meals. There are, of course, notable exceptions such as the 18:30 to Cork or the 11:30 and 18:00 from Cork.

But there is no doubt that some criticisms are valid. Butter does tend to arrive on the liquid side (yet the cars have refrigerators) and one can have great difficulty in "guiding the food into your mouth", to paraphrase the writer. The riding on those cars not fitted with modern bogies is often very bad, a factor not helped by the use of resilient tubular steel seats. The two main points we would make concern service and seating. The Times man liked the tray service; we disagree. Despite the poorer riding, there is much more atmosphere of dining (as distinct from merely eating) in cars such as 2092, where the tables have linen, are properly set, and have adequate supplies of salt, pepper, bread, butter and sugar. There is much more room, or at least the appearance of it, and it is a pleasure to while away the journey over a good meal. As regards seating, the total of 19 seats in the dining section of the standard buffets is seriously inadequate at times and we are glad to note that it is intended to remedy this. A welcome start has been made on the 13:30 to Cork, on which a tabled coach is specially set aside for diners.

With regard to the menu, we accept that severe limitations are imposed by space considerations and we rarely have found the food lacking either in quantity and quality. Prices and value vary considerably - in our opinion, the dearer items represent the best value. A mixed grill at 12/- or so seems very much better value than coffee and scones at 4/-, especially as the 'trimmings' (tea, bread, etc.) are included. How often does the mid-morning passenger really want the full pot of coffee that he receives and has to pay for? One final plea: will it ever be possible to introduce some degree of standardisation in the actual menu cards? Some of the large selection at present in use are confusing to a degree and do not even include such staples as bacon, egg, etc., which seem to be available always. We raise these points in the hope that when the present system is revised and the cars altered the catering service may retain and enhance its previous good reputation.

REVIEW**Narrow Gauge Wagon Drawings, Wimbledon Model Railway Club**

This interesting set of 3ft gauge drawings comprises one C&L, two CB&PR (as running on C&L) and four WCR wagons, all drawn to 1/4-inch scale. The drawings, which have been neatly executed, are

reproduced by the dyeline system. Each contains side and end elevations but, unfortunately, no underframe plan. Minor points to be noted are the length over headstocks given as 15'8" on drawing N-3; this should be 15'2". Again, the prototype of drawing N-2 is doubtful, as wagon 189L was originally a cattle truck. Since the CB&PR was not re-gauged until 1900 it is more likely that the drawing represents the type 195L-203L (ex CB&PR 27P-34P) built 1909/16. The publishers should identify themselves on each drawing as there is no indication of the source on the reproductions. These drawings are recommended to the model maker, being very reasonably priced. **HR**

-o-O-o-o-O-o-

Acknowledgment: The Committee are indebted to Messrs Richards, O'Cuimin and "Fidelio" for their contributions.

News Section

CÓRAS IOMPAIR ÉIREANN

Loco Notes

A58, now fitted with a 1,325 hp General Motors engine, was fuelled for the first time on 29 February and soon afterwards began trials. Twice during the week ending on 16 March it ran non-stop trial trains to Cork at express speeds. A few teething troubles have been experienced but the loco will shortly take up duty. Work is still in progress on A59. C206 is also being prepared for the installation of a General Motors engine, as it would appear that the installation of Maybach 980 hp engines in C233 and C234 (now B233 and B234) has not proved too successful. On 20 February B114 went to Limerick on a trial, the first time one of these locos was permitted to work away from the Connolly/Heuston stations to Cork line (apart from some work in the North Wall yards). As a result B113 and B114 will now be permitted to work to Limerick via Nenagh, subject to a speed limit of 25 mph.

Preserved Locos

No.90 at Mallow and No.36 at Cork have both been repainted, the former for the second time in a year. A much lighter shade of green has been used. At Inchicore Works three other locos are receiving attention. GNR No.131 has been painted in full blue livery, lined black and white, with a crest and the letters "GN" on the tender. This is the first time ever that this engine has been painted blue, an innovation also being the white side walled wheels. No.461 is being restored to D&SER livery of lined black and we understand that crests will be applied to the cab sides. The GS&WR 0-6-0 No.184 has been given an appropriate small tender in place of the large one with which it last ran. The last three locos mentioned will be put on exhibition at Dundalk, Wexford and Inchicore, respectively. For ease of reference, a summary table detailing the locos preserved by CIÉ is given latter in this issue. It does not include CIÉ locos preserved elsewhere.

Railcar News

By March, railcars had almost disappeared from long-distance workings. Only the Dublin - Rosslare Harbour, Limerick - Rosslare Harbour and Portarlinton - Athlone - Westport trains were so worked, apart from Dublin and Cork local services and those to Drogheda and Dundalk. Railcars had been withdrawn from the "Cu na Mara" and Sligo - Dublin trains as they were below the required standard of cleanliness, but some units are being repainted and otherwise refurbished at Inchicore for further work on these services.

Line Lifting

Apart from the Mallow - Waterford line (mentioned below), lifting has continued on other lines.

Charleville - Patrickswell: The branch has been completely removed.

Thurles - Clonmel: Work began at Horse & Jockey in November, when a gang commenced demolition, working towards Thurles Junction using a rail tractor and trolleys. By mid-March Thurles Junction had not been reached. The road overbridge (on the main Dublin-Cork road) at Horse & Jockey, which was a severe hazard, has been completely demolished. In connection with the removal of the bridge the southern limb was cut back a little to make way for a bypass road but otherwise the rails remain intact to Clonmel.

Guinness Tramway: In Dublin, the Tramway along St. John's Road has not yet been touched and the roadway is in a highly dangerous state. It was announced at a meeting of Dublin Corporation on 8 January that a contract for road works was being produced, with a view to commencement of work in about 12 months. Meanwhile part of the line at the Junction of Steeven's Lane has been resurfaced in concrete, leaving the rails exposed.

Camping Coaches

It was stated in "Nuacht CIÉ" on 2 February that the holiday camping coaches had been withdrawn. However, they are likely to be used as staff sleeping cars for some time. Two were at Tuam during the beet campaign. As mentioned elsewhere, HC7 has been renumbered 529A and is located presently at Dungarvan. Another, 528A (ex HC6) was observed at Limerick Junction on 18 March. The roof boards reading "Holiday Camping Coach" were intact on 529A but had been painted out on the other vehicle. Both retain the distinctive red and cream camping coach livery.

IRN Special Report: News From Dungarvan

In our July 1967 issue we reported the CIÉ intention to abandon part of the Mallow-Waterford line from the station at Mallow to a point at Fermoy, 16 miles 1,657 yards away. At the latter point the CIÉ line met, end-on, the rails of the Fishguard & Rosslare Railways & Harbours Company. The line continued to lie idle, however, until 11 January this year, when a temporary lifting headquarters was established at Dungarvan. Lifting has since taken place, not of the Fermoy-Mallow segment, but eastwards from a point to the east of Lismore, 32 miles 790 yards from Mallow. Demolition commenced at the point where the flat-bottomed rails used through Lismore gave way to chaired bullhead track - 70 yards east of Ballysaggertbeg No.1 gates.

The work has been carried out very quickly and by 16 March the rails had been removed to a point a few hundred yards short of Ballyhane No.1 crossing, exactly at the 38¼ milepost. At that date none of the sleepers had been removed while the chairs were still in situ from the loop at Cappoquin eastwards (from the 36 milepost). We understand that the sleepers will later be recovered by CIÉ for possible sale to the County Council for use in coastal defence works. Coincidentally, the section lifted up to 16 March was the complete stretch of bullhead track - the rails remaining at either end were flat-bottom.

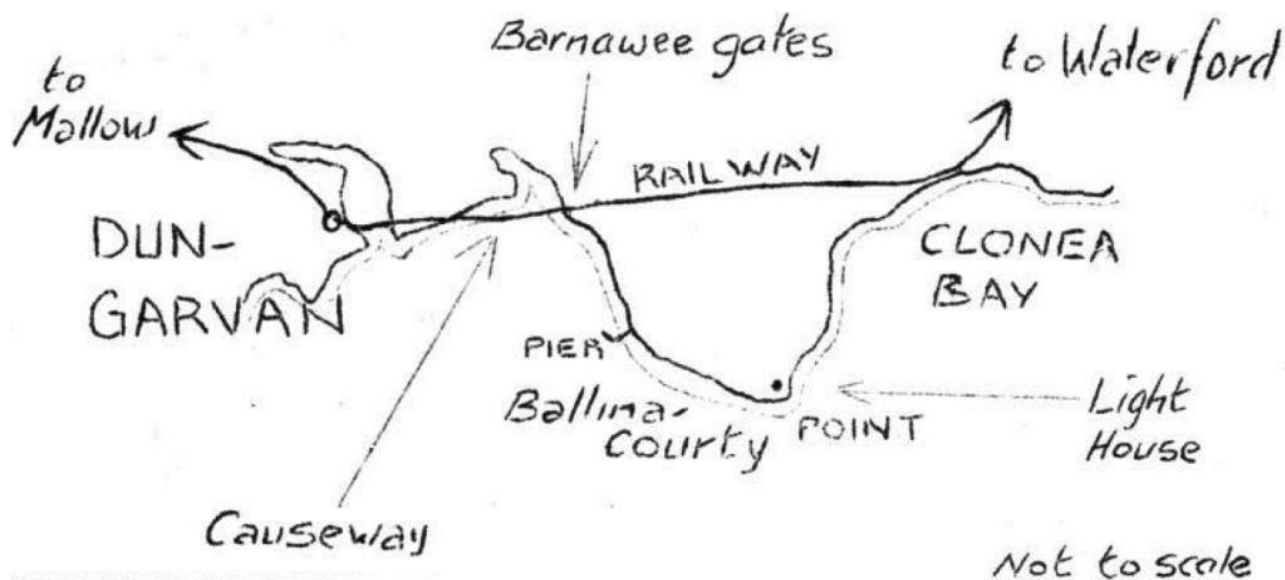
Meanwhile on 4 March the F&RR&HCo announced that an Extraordinary General Meeting would be held in Paddington Station, London, on 4 April to make an Abandonment Order for the portion of their line from 16 miles 1,657 yards to the 45¾ milepost, and also to direct that all necessary steps be taken to effect the abandonment and to appoint CIÉ agents for this purpose.

The section to be abandoned, and already being lifted, is bounded by the CIÉ line in the townland of Carrignagroghera, Parish of Fermoy, and by the meeting of the townlands of Ballynamuck East and Shandon, Parishes of Kilrush and Dungarvan. The latter point is located some 1,060 yards west of Dungarvan Signal Cabin, and thus the station will be completely excluded from the Abandonment proceedings.

Dungarvan is the headquarters for the demolition gang, the staff residing in ex-Camping Coach HC7 (formerly coach 832 and now Departmental vehicle 529A). Loco C208 has been allocated to the lifting work and it is stabled at Dungarvan, being fuelled from oil tanker 333A which has been fitted with a handpump and fuel delivery hose. Although C208 has been in constant use from Dungarvan to the lifting point, it makes only infrequent trips out to Waterford, remaining on demolition work for periods of at least a fortnight at a time. When it does make a trip eastwards, its driver and guard are responsible for unlocking and closing the level crossing gates - contrary to some reports, the crossing keepers are no longer on duty.

The rails have been lifted with the aid of winch wagon 504A (formerly GS&WR covered wagon 1704) which was stored over the St. Patrick's Holiday weekend at Cappagh, along with bogie rail wagons 8229 and 1107M. The remainder of the wagons were at Dungarvan where the recovered materials were being stacked and sorted, in readiness for dispatch to other points on the CIÉ system. Recently introduced on the lifting are several very low steel trolleys for carrying rails. These are painted a bright yellow and it is understood that it is the intention that they be used for manual propulsion of rails at times when a locomotive is not available.

Interest in developments in the Dungarvan area has been heightened by the announcement that the mineral dolomite - a double carbonate of calcium and magnesium - has been found at Bennett's Bridge and at Lombardstown. Quite detailed reports in the national press last autumn implied that it had been decided to work both deposits, using the entire Mallow/Waterford section to rail the ore from either end to a processing plant near Dungarvan. Despite the apparent wealth of information, no further announcement has been made but we understand from reliable sources that definite plans have been prepared for the building and equipping of a processing plant on the coast near Dungarvan. The severing of the western segment of the railway would of course preclude rail transport of dolomite from Lombardstown, but it seems very likely that rail transport will be used from Bennett's Bridge to the sea. One of the strongest indications is the fact that the F&RR&H abandonment is to Dungarvan only.



Reliable reports also indicated that a spur railway would be built to link the Dungarvan/Waterford line with the plant which it is proposed to site at Ballinacourty. As may be seen from the map, there is a pier in existence at Ballinacourty, on the western side of the headland. This is reached by a narrow road which crosses the railway at Barnawee Gates, immediately on the east side of the railway causeway, and such a route - or, indeed, the pier itself - would not suit the construction of a railway or the export of the finished ore. Accordingly, the site chosen for the plant is near the lighthouse at Ballinacourty

Point, on the other side of the headland.

The construction of a new line would not be made any easier by the fact that immediately beyond Barnawee (48 miles 530 yards) the Waterford line climbs for half a mile at 1:60 and, after a ¼ mile level stretch, falls for nearly a mile at 1:79, 1:264 and 1:80. The Ballinacourty headland is by no means flat and it seems likely that geographical considerations would make a site near the Point the only suitable one. To reach this site a new railway would have to run from Clonea Bay, along the eastern shore of the headland. Local opinion is that such a line would suffer greatly from the sea, being very difficult to keep in order.

Such is the position at present: an extremely convenient rail link, marred only by the problems of a new line. Even if it proved necessary to bring ore from Dungarvan to the plant by lorry, the Mallow/Waterford line would have done its part well. We trust that trains will soon be running regularly into Dungarvan once more.

Station And Line Improvements

Pearse Station: The lengthy renovation programme is almost completed, apart from the installation of the shelter on the Up platform. The extra buffet has not yet been opened. A new left luggage office is being built on the site of the former Midland section booking office.

Connolly Station: The Up platform is now fully tiled from the footbridge to the barrier and work is now in progress on the concourse. A Marryat-Scott escalator was delivered on 2 March and it has been installed in place of the original (1844) steps into the station. The delivery was a delicate operation requiring the assistance of two Gardaí to direct road traffic. The Customs Coach, 363A, was removed in early January when the new Customs office was opened. Most of the examination of baggage is still done at portable tables on the platform. A railing is to be erected to separate No.2 platform from the adjacent carriage road, formerly used as a taxi stand. When the new waiting room is ready, the Road Fleet Manager is to take over the present one, thereby allowing the Stationmaster to return to his original (GNR) office which has direct access to the broadcasting room.

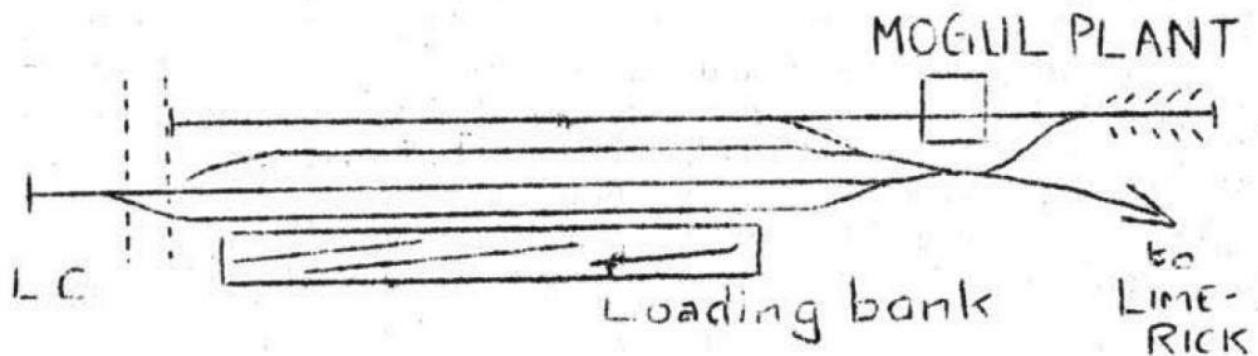
Heuston Station: A 30-ton gantry crane is being erected at the Guinness sidings so that the extensive traffic can be handled entirely in containers. At present most of it has to be transhipped manually from lorry to wagon.

Foynes: The new double line onto the pier for the zinc concentrates traffic is complete. A shed is being built around the wagon tippler to prevent the zinc dust from being blown around. The laden wagons will be propelled into the tippler by a "Beetle" made by Strachan & Henshaw Ltd of Bristol. This is a heavy platform running on 4ft gauge rails between the running rails. It is chain hauled, the chains being wound around an electrically powered drum. Retractable arms will bear on the wheel treads of the wagons to propel them along. Each wagon will push out the previous one which will run up a sharp gradient to a buffer stop and thence to a spring point to the other line where a second "Beetle" will reassemble the train. The barytes traffic continues to flow once daily. The tractor unloading system is efficient, each wagon taking 5-7 minutes to clear completely.

Silvermines: All trackwork is now complete in readiness for the zinc concentrates traffic. The layout is shown in the diagram below. An unusual form of winch and cable arrangement has been installed to draw the wagons through the Mogul loading hopper. The winding drum is located at first-floor level in the hopper building whence the cable is taken a considerable distance to a drum at rail level and then back along the siding to the hopper.

Limerick Junction: The cramped temporary "Automatic Buffet" has been replaced by a similar permanent set-up. On 11 February the diamond crossing, at the North Cabin, where the Waterford line crosses the main line, was replaced. Keane's Points Junction was renewed on 25 February.

Cork: Work has commenced on tiling the Up platform. A 30-ton container gantry is being erected beside the loco shed. Despite the provision of a new siding for Gouldings' fertiliser traffic, the City Railway to Albert Quay is still in constant use. Both the lifting bridges on this line are scheduled for renewal under a new city road plan announced in March.



Panic On The 08:10!

With this banner headline a minor mishap to the 07:45 ex Bray on 19 February was magnified into a major incident by an evening newspaper. As the train entered Pearse Station it struck an open door on the 09:00 Rosslare Harbour train on No.4 platform road. A few windows in railcar 2649 and coach 1331 were broken but nobody was hurt. As a result the Rosslare train was taken out of service and replaced by a 5-coach BUT set hurriedly summoned from Connolly Station. It left 15 minutes late.

Rolling Stock Developments

A new type of fluorescent lighting is being fitted to certain first class compartments as they pass through the works. An attractive hoop-shaped tube mounted on a chromium base is fitted in place of the original pair of ceiling lights. The reading lamps under the racks are removed. Filament lamps are retained in the corridors and in the standard class sections. Fitted carpets, similar to those in 225N bogie first are now standard for all main line first class accommodation. The first example observed was 2151, and a surprise has been the fitting of BUT railcar C906N. A row of these new lights has been fitted to Park Royal bogie standard 1401, now on the Bray locals. Brake compo 2490 has been fully re-upholstered and repainted.

An improved type of heater is being fitted to the Craven coaches. Four large fans mounted below the seats draw air from the coach into the heating ducts along each side. These are switched on from the vestibule and may be operated at half power if desired. They will not work unless there is adequate pressure on the existing steam heating system. The new coaches, 1544 upwards, have their dynamos mounted on the outer end of a bogie and not suspended below the frame as heretofore. The drive is by four narrow belts over an end-mounted pulley, instead of the traditional wide (single) belt which tended to break or slip off on sharp curves.

Owing to a shortage of staff in Dublin some heavy carriage cleaning is being done in Limerick. A number of luggage vans have had smaller dynamos fitted at Cork as the original ones were too powerful. These are being fitted to coaches in the 1356 series which have suffered from flat batteries due to their too small dynamos.

Accidental And Deliberate

Accidental damage was caused when a heavy lorry partially fell through the wooden deck of Wexford Quay on 11 February. The railway was blocked for some time and the 15:10 ex Rosslare Harbour reached Dublin 33 minutes late. Four days later a large stone was dropped onto the down Cork Night Mail from an overbridge near Ballybrophy. It fell through a perspex roof light in Sorting Van 1963 and

resulted in injuries to two of the Post Office sorting crew. Fortunately, they were not seriously injured and were able to continue the journey after treatment.

Signalling Alterations

The power points at Collooney Junction which were operated from Ballysodare Cabin were removed on 30 January and the main line trap points disconnected and spiked prior to removal. All relevant signals except the Up branch Home have been dispensed with. The junction points and the remaining signal are now worked by a ground frame. Trains proceeding from Ballysodare to the Claremorris line must now carry two ETS staffs: the Ballysodare - Tubbercurry staff is carried throughout and the Ballysodare - Ballymote staff as far as Collooney Junction only. There the latter is used to release the ground frame and lock the train onto the branch after which it is disposed of in a subsidiary instrument. In the reverse direction, a Ballysodare - Ballymote staff must be obtained at the junction to gain access to the main line; it is carried to Ballysodare.

At Limerick Junction the first phase of the signalling for the new Dublin-Limerick direct curve was introduced on 24 March. It comprises the power operated facing crossover at MP 106¼ and the loop points and trap points, as well as the following signals: Down Distant (jointly for Limerick Junction North and Kyle Crossing), Down Homes (two), Up Main Starter and Up Starter from Loop. All are three-aspect, including the distant which has two amber and one green aspect. A single amber will indicate that the Down (outer) Home is on, while a double amber signifies that the outer Home is off but that the inner signal is at danger. This is the first such signal in Ireland. Single-aspect subsidiary signals are bracketed on both the home signals reading respectively to the Limerick Loop and to the North Platform (No.1).

A new Down outer Home signal was provided at Arklow from 20 February. As a result the Down Distant was moved out and a new Up "Limit of Shunt" notice erected 150 yards past the Down inner Home signal. Other signalling work at present in hand includes the provision of Manson-Guthrie mechanical staff exchangers at block posts between Athlone and Galway.

Gauge Adjustment

During February a ridge was cut in the undersides of Bridges Nos. 110 and 112 at Dalkey. This was to adjust the loading gauge to allow British Rail Freightliner and other similar containers to be carried on the Wexford line.

Rosslare Changes

With customary lateness, CIÉ announced on 28 March that the 18:00 ex Rosslare Harbour and the corresponding working from Cork at 18:30 would run on every weekday (instead of just Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday) from 1 April. This amends the information given in the feature article on Rosslare in this issue.

Clondalkin Revival

The long-disused siding serving the premises of Messrs Weatherwell Ltd at Clondalkin Station was again in use in mid-March. Only the facing siding is in use; the second line remains unused.

News Of Dolomite

Speaking in New York on 27 March, Mr Colley, Minister for Industry & Commerce announced that the dolomite processing plant at Ballinacourty, near Dungarvan, will be built. This is the first definite indication that the project, dealt with above, will come to fruition. The end product will be magnesite, formed from dolomite (to be mined at Bennett's Bridge) and magnesium (obtained from the sea). The plant will be commissioned by the Irish company Quigley Magnesite Ltd, an amalgam of the Quigley Company Inc, New York, and Roofchrome Ltd, Cork. A prime mover in the venture is Mr John P.

Mulcahy, a native Dungarvan man who has considerable business interests in the USA. It is anticipated that the plant will give employment to up to 300 people. However, no confirmation has yet come regarding the provision of a rail link to Ballinacourty.

Rugby Internationals

It is 6 years since the IRN carried a detailed account of special trains to Dublin for International Rugby matches and we remedy this by giving details of some 1968 specials. The matches were held on 24 February (Ireland v Scotland) and 9 March (Ireland v Wales). Unfortunately the Irish team had lost one and drawn one away match so that there was little incentive for Irish spectators to travel, the trains being comparatively poorly patronised as a result.

24 February: Scotland match. The specials operated were as follows:

Time	Routing	Remarks
08:15	Belfast/Dublin	8-coach BUT railcar (NIR set)
18:30	Dublin/Belfast	8-coach BUT railcar (NIR set)
09:25	Belfast/Dublin	B172 + 9 bogies + CIÉ HV (NIR set with diner 164)
18:20	Dublin/Belfast	B188 + 9 bogies + CIÉ HV (NIR set with diner 164)
11:40	Belfast/Lansdowne Road	B156, HV, 8 bogies + HV (CIÉ set, NIR diner 554, kitchen car 166)*
18:00	Dublin/Belfast	B156, HV, 8 bogies + HV (CIÉ set, NIR diner 554, kitchen car 166)*

* This was the first time CIÉ coaches were hired for the “all-in” special

10:20	Cork/Lansdowne Road	B174, LV, 6 bogies + HV (including 2400 and 2403)
17:20	Pearse/Cork	B184, LV, 6 bogies + HV (including 2400 and 2403)
11:05	Limerick/Lansdowne Road	B184, LV, 4 bogies + HV (including 353 and 1130)*
17:40	Pearse/Limerick	B174, LV, 4 bogies + HV (including 353 and 1130)*

* Operated via Limerick Junction

For local passengers the 12:52, 13:10, 13:20 and 13:40 called at Lansdowne Road to set down. These were followed by specials:

Schedule	Train	Actual	Remarks
13:50	B183, HV, 6 bogies	13:52	Loop Line set
14:05	B166, LV, HV, 5 bogies	14:09	Howth train
14:10	B142, 5 bogies	14:14	Pier train
14:21	B147, 5 bogies	14:29	Pier train
14:33	B183, 5 bogies	14:40	Pier train

Two additional trains were provided for the return traffic: B146, LV, 5 bogies, HV and B172, 6 bogies. A special also ran from Greystones (B146, LV, 5 bogies, HV) at 13:25, returning at 17:10. A 4-coach railcar left for Bray at 16:55.

“Why Not Go By Train?”

With this query the Irish Press headed its leading article on the subject of the survey presently being carried out for CIÉ. Independent research consultants were engaged during the last week in March in recording the registration numbers of cars going between Dublin, Cork, Limerick and Waterford. All the many figures will be passed through a computer and subsequently some of the drivers will be interviewed to find out why they drove rather than take the train. Welcoming what is certainly a novel approach, the Press commented that one of the reasons militating against larger rail passenger returns was the lack of interest shown by CIÉ in its own suburban services. Nonetheless the present survey is worthwhile in its approach - previous surveys were confined to questioning people who were already travelling by train.

Kilmokea Halt

The special service from Waterford to Kilmokea for construction workers at the Great Island power station was withdrawn at the end of January. It had been worked intermittently by railcar 2509 and also by loco-hauled trains which used to run to Campile to turn.

Lansdowne Road Halt

Following the erection of several office blocks in the vicinity, a demand has arisen for an improved service. At one stage there were only two trains each way daily. There are now 11 down and 12 up trains on Mondays to Fridays and, since 2 March, 6 down and 7 up services on Saturdays. These yield an increasing number of passengers.

Automatic Crossings

Ballyreddin Level Crossing, near MP 33¾ on the Kilkenny/Waterford line, was converted to automatic half-barrier operation from 28 February. A similar installation is proposed to protect an extension of Castlebar Airport runway across a main road. A proposal by CIÉ to install remote controlled barriers at Sydney Parade crossing on the Dublin suburban line to Bray is meeting stiff opposition in the locality. The proposal is to close the adjacent signal cabin and work the barriers from Merrion Cabin, 750 yards away. The existing stop signals would be retained and the barriers would have skirts to keep children from passing under them. Closed circuit television would ensure that passing traffic was not caught between the barriers.

Compensation Claim

In the Dublin Circuit Court on 5 March a CIÉ loco driver from Connolly Station depot claimed compensation from the company. A former fireman on the Cavan & Leitrim line, he claimed that because of the closure of Ballinamore Shed and later Broadstone Depot he was transferred to his present shed, losing his rights of transfer and return to his home shed and also seniority rights, due to dieselisation and reorganisation within CIÉ. In a reserved judgment he was awarded £333-13-6 compensation and costs.

INDUSTRIAL LOCO NEWS

The Courtauld's 0-4-0ST locos "Wilfred" and "Patricia" were brought by road to Eastwood's scrap yard at Andersonstown, Belfast, on 27 January. It was stated that they had been bought "as an investment" and that they will be on show for a couple of years.

NORTHERN IRELAND RAILWAYS

Locos And Railcars

The process of cannibalisation of the stored "Jeeps" continues. No.52 was brought to Belfast from Ballymena in January, and No.1 in March, leaving only Nos. 7 and 57 outside Belfast. No.52, like 8 and 9, has been reduced to an "0-6-0T". Some parts have been removed from 2 and 54. The collision damage to 53 has been repaired in the shops and 10 is now receiving attention. The locos now in use are: 3, 4, 5, 6, 50, 51, 53, 55, 56 (2-6-4T) and 27 (0-6-4T). RPSI loco 186 was driven to Whitehead on 24 February for storage in the Society's shed. No.171 has been moved up to York Road shed yard in her place and the stolen fittings have been replaced.

MPD cars 60, 61 and 62 have been fitted with Rolls Royce engines and 45 is now undergoing conversion. Nos. 46 and 52 which had lain derelict at Great Victoria Street since the autumn are now in York Road shed, partially stripped. This leaves 53 and 47 and trailers 533 (red), 536 and 538 at Great Victoria Street.

MED units 10 and 11 are out of the shops with 4-speed gearboxes and 12, 13 and 19 are being converted, leaving only 18 and 23 in store. Trailer 526 is ready at last and it is to be followed by 515 (once the trailer for Ganz railcar 5) and 519 (stored at Greenisland since 1966). On the Bangor line, the conversion of 24 and 25 is complete. After trials on 18 and 19 March they entered service on the 20th with trailer 511. The next pair to be converted are 34 and 35. No.24 is the first of the three single-unit cars to be converted but it has not yet re-entered service.

DE railcar 72 suffered a fire in its motor bogie in January but the body was undamaged. A spare bogie, stored at Queen's Quay, was fitted. Nos. 75 and 76 went to Dublin on 19 March for wheel-turning; they returned on 22 March. No.76 was derailed at York Road shed on 23 March. Trailer 724 was badly damaged in a shunting accident in January. No.703 has been repainted. There is no immediate sign of the new car and trailers but the body of coach 272 has been scrapped and 395 may follow, to provide underframes for the trailers.

Van 614

NCC bogie brake No.614 has been completely refitted and repainted plain maroon. It bears the NIR monogram and numbers in gold. In the course of refitting the corridor gangways were removed.

GN Section Railcars

On the Southern Region AEC trailers 580, 581 and 582 have been repainted, the interiors being an unrelieved grey. None of the units have been painted since 1966 and the remaining green ones are very shabby. BUT car No.125 was repainted in January and 132 is almost finished. First-brake trailer 572 has also been painted red. Its passenger doors are lettered "FIRST CLASS" instead of the usual numeral "1". Wooden strips have been added on the sides at the van doors to prevent damage to the panelling from porters' barrows. All vehicles recently painted at Great Victoria Street have the numbers on the grey band where they are almost illegible.

Level Crossings

Work is in progress at Trummery and Drumbane crossings, respectively north and south of Moira station, on the installation of automatic half barrier equipment. The road over Seagoe crossing north of Portadown is now the main approach from Portadown to the M1 motorway and so carries a greatly increased volume of traffic. In addition to the normal gates worked from the adjacent block cabin a pair of flashing red lights and a warning bell have been erected on each side. There is also an advance warning sign about 100 yards away on either side; that on the west side, on a blind corner, has two flashing amber lights.

Portrush Branch

The Portrush branch will be open only from 24 June to 1 September. In addition, it will be opened in May and September for "large" excursion parties. Afternoon fares of 7/6 from Belfast and 5/- from Ballymena and Derry have been announced. The opening next September of the new University of Ulster may give the line a new lease of life. As it passes the entrance gates, a new halt could easily be provided for students, many of whom will be in lodgings in Portrush. This possibility has no support from official planners who have proposed the removal of the enormous embankment at Portrush to provide a car park and improved access to the promenade.

New Badges

A new cap and lapel badge bearing the Company's monogram is being issued to loco and traffic staff. The most recent issues of overalls to staff have had the letters "NIR" on the lapels in maroon, where formerly "UTA" appeared in green. The new badges are rather pleasing in appearance and show the monogram rather more favourably than do vehicle sides.

Ballast Work

Vigorous efforts are being made to make up the arrears of ballasting and other permanent way work which had the track in a decidedly run-down state. To help cope with the demands on the fleet of ballast wagons, a train of up to ten spoil wagons has been loaded with ballast at Magheramorne each Saturday and discharged on Sunday on the Larne or Shore lines. As these wagons normally discharge on the Up side only, a number have been turned. Some of the second-hand British Rail 60ft rails have already been laid on the Larne line. In addition to the Plasser & Theurer 05 ballast tamper purchased in December, there is also an AL203 lining machine by the same makers. On 24 March this was at work on the Up Dublin line about 2 miles south of Portadown, its efforts greatly improving the track. On the same day, CIÉ's Plasser & Theurer 06-32 tamper No.515 was working on the Down line near Wellington Summit and was observed at Portadown that evening.

Station Reconstruction

The new bookstall and tobacconist's shop at York Road are in use and the new booking office is almost ready. It has four ordinary booking windows and two others. One is for the collection of excess fares and fares from those passengers boarding at unstaffed halts; it faces in towards the platforms. The other, awkwardly situated inside No.1 barrier, will be for the issue of season tickets. There is an adjoining enquiry office with one window. The four new barriers are grouped together at platforms 2 and 3, similar to Great Victoria Street. Sliding glazed doors are provided instead of the traditional gates. There are upholstered seats for the ticket collectors. An information board will be provided at the new inspectors' office, but it would appear to be unsuited for busy days because of its size and position. An attractive colour scheme of two shades of blue and cream is being used to banish the drab grey and green previously used. There is no further news about the reconstruction of Great Victoria Street, while at Queen's Quay the old booking office has been demolished.

Spoil Trains

A revised timetable for the specials from Magheramorne took effect on 7 February. The service, however, remains at 9 trains each way daily (with 4 on Saturdays). For the first time Greencastle Box is in regular use. A speed limit of 5 mph is in force over the crossover and the points off the main line.

Steam On The GN

Semi-regular steam working was resumed on the Southern Region - the former GN lines - on 6 February. Since then a steam ballast train has run on most Tuesdays, Thursdays and Sundays. In each case the loco left York Road at 06:30 and ran light to Antrim where it usually picked up a 10-wagon ballast train. The crew comprised two drivers (there are no firemen on the Southern Region) accompanied by a Midland Region driver as pilot. Most of the work has been done by No.3 but 55 has also appeared a few times. So far, MP 67 is the farthest point south to which these trains have worked. The engines have also visited Belfast to shunt coaches prior to the Rugby specials to Dublin. These were steam-heated to air them after months of disuse. On 8 March No.3 worked a special of 28 condemned wagons from Antrim to Adelaide. This was the first time for a considerable period that a train used the "Third line" from Grosvenor Road Goods Yard to Adelaide. The wagons, of GNR, NCC and B&CDR origin, included the former NCC bogie transporter wagon for narrow gauge coaches, No.3096. It is not known how long these workings will continue.

Railtour To Larne

The RPSI organised a railtour to Larne on 23 March. It was worked by NIR 0-6-4T loco 27 "Lough Erne", and comprised four bogies. On returning to Belfast, the large party was conveyed round the Belfast Docks in a train of three brake vans, and six open wagons. This part of the tour was worked by Guinness loco No.3 which has been repainted and has had its brasswork polished. The tramway-type

side skirts have been removed.

Football Vandalism

There were two outbreaks of vandalism on football specials on 18 March. A 10-bogie special hauled by No.6 ran from Belfast to Ballymena at 18:00. On the return journey 75 (!) windows and several toilets were smashed. On the same day the 18:30 ex Dublin was extended from Dundalk to Belfast for supporters of Glasgow Celtic and the CIÉ train suffered much delay and damage, reaching Belfast 2½ hours late. In contrast, there was no trouble on a Bangor line special on 9 March, when adequate supervision by uniformed staff and a small (6-car set) train kept troublemakers in check.

Feature Section

SPOTLIGHT ON THE OPERA TRAIN

By Fidelio

Each year, the Wexford Festival is marked by the running of special trains from Dublin for performances of the opera, and these specials have become an accepted and welcome part of autumnal life. For many, the combination of a fast and comfortable train journey with, of course, a meal en route, and an evening at the opera is too much to resist. Besides, one is sure to meet friends on the train and the bar service provided helps to speed the trip.

The 1967 season saw the running of two Opera Trains. One was organised under the auspices of the St. James' Gate Musical Society while the second, on which I travelled, was run by Messrs McCulloughs of Dublin. Departure was scheduled from Pearse Station at 17:30 on 26 October. The station took on some of the character of a theatre foyer as dress-suited and long-eared couples gathered for a memorable evening. Nor were all Dubliners - one eminent traveller had come from Belmullet to participate.

The special train was provided by Heuston Station and it was shunted into bay platform No.5 at Pearse Station on arrival there. It consisted of loco B176, HV 3150, LV 2755, Diner 2400, Standards 1502, 1500 and 1499, Kitchen Car 2403 and LV 3110. The entraining passengers found their seats with the aid of special gilded three-part souvenir tickets. The train left sharp on time and at 17:44 was passing Dun Laoghaire; Bray was reached at 18:01.

The catering staff had begun serving dinner almost immediately after departure - a wise move, as no one would wish to rush through an excellently prepared and served 6-course meal. The catering staff of 16 were kept busy as the train passed Greystones (18:11), Wicklow (18:28) and Shelton Abbey (18:59). By now a continuous, anticipatory hum of conversation had spread through the train as minds turned gradually from food to music. Queries were dealt with by a special hostess - one of McCulloughs staff who ensured that her passengers were well looked after.

And so we continued, past Gorey (19:16) and Ferns (19:29). By Enniscorthy (19:38) we were well past the coffee and petits-fours, and all tables had been cleared and the meal a pleasant memory as we reached Wexford at 19:58. We detrained to music from a Wexford Boys' Band, and hasted through the damp air to waiting CIÉ buses (in my case C200) for the last stage of the journey to the Theatre Royal. Curtain-up was at 20:30 for an excellent performance of Rossini's "Otello", featuring Nicola Tagger, Walter Gullino, Pietro Battazzo and Renza Joti.

The satisfied patrons returned by bus to the station and the return Opera Train departed at 00:28. By

this stage of the evening interest in the performance of the train had given way to a discussion of that on the stage, attention naturally also being paid to the excellent bar service. So, who can blame me if I conclude by saying that we finally reached Pearse Station at 02:45 (approximately)!

ROSSLARE REVISITED: 22 FEBRUARY 1968

For the Fishguard & Rosslare Railways & Harbours Co 1967 was undoubtedly a year of note. The withdrawal of services on 25 March on the Mallow-Waterford section (mentioned in the news pages of this issue) resulted in the re-routing of the Cork-Rosslare expresses via Limerick Junction after a period of 61 years. With the commencement of the 1967 winter sailings regular freight traffic between Fishguard and Rosslare was ended in favour of the direct route to Waterford. This, in turn, made the Rosslare Harbour pilot engine redundant and it was withdrawn in October.

In addition to these changes, a new steamer timetable was announced to replace the existing thrice-weekly winter schedule from 1 January 1968. Departures ex Fishguard were retimed from 02:15 to 14:00 and from Rosslare 23:15 to 23:30 on the same days. With virtually no cargo to be handled, substantial savings have been effected in labour and customs charges at Rosslare, while the quicker turn-round of the ship results in additional economies.

As against this CIÉ must now run an evening express each way between Rosslare and Cork on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, with a crossing at Tipperary. Hitherto only one train was required. On the South Eastern section no connecting train runs north of Wexford from the incoming sailing. Even the summer connection is poorly patronised. One local railwayman suggested that “they are trying to do away with the winter sailings.” He may be right; if so, the prospects for passenger trains in the area are bleak - few people travel to Rosslare other than to sail.

A visit to the “Harbour” on Thursday, 22 February, showed that work was well in hand on the new end-loading ramp on the site of No.3 berth. The ramp is being built to handle the new Rosslare - Le Havre (once weekly) ferry service due to commence in May. Bookings are already very heavy indeed, and in addition to carrying passengers and cars the ferry may also handle containers, thereby providing additional traffic for the railways. By the time this service is in operation work should be in progress on a new hotel to be built by OIÉ to cater for the influx of visitors; it will be sited on the headland above the harbour.

At 17:05 on the date of our report, the familiar SS “St. David” rounded the end of the pier and tied up on time. Eighty passengers disembarked and were quickly screened for foot-and-mouth disease infection, as well as customs examination. Meanwhile a number of containers were unloaded from the ship - making BR freight policy a little confusing to the onlooker! At the platform, loco B160, bogie van 2540, compo 2144, buffet 2410, standard 1490 and HV 3129 made up the 18:00 and the train was soon loaded with 70 ex-ship passengers, many of whom went immediately for a meal. The booking clerk was kept busy with his Almex machine issuing tickets marked West/South and coded mysteriously - even the checker at the barrier was baffled.

Departure was a matter of seconds late, the train continuing non-stop to Waterford. Re-sleeping was in progress between MP 97¼ and 96¼ but in spite of the slack and an unhurried run, Wellington Bridge was passed at 18:30:30 - 90 seconds early. AEC railcars 2608/2621 with LV 2750 were standing in the loop, working the 17:45 all stations ex Waterford. This train, formerly loco-hauled and originating in Cork, now commences its journey as the 12:15 Limerick - Waterford passenger.

Waterford was reached 27 seconds before time - 18:54 - and here the passenger complement was reduced to 47 on departure. But in spite of the relatively light load the buffet car was still busy. Departure from Waterford at 19:00 was 2 minutes late but this was all but regained on arrival at Tipperary at 20:19, thanks to quick station work at Carrick-on-Suir, Clonmel and Cahir. The down

express was waiting in the loop at Tipperary. On schedule, it comprised loco B163, EV 3111, buffet 2407, compo 2161, standard 1436 and bogie van 2556.

The down train for Rosslare left Tipperary 4 minutes late at 20:24 but after the three scheduled stops Waterford was reached just before 21:35, some 5 seconds early. It had crossed the Limerick Night Mail (headed by loco B110) at Carrick-on-Suir. The number of passengers rose from 37 at Carrick to 88 on leaving Waterford at 21:40. The remainder of the journey was uneventful, although a signal check at Ballygeary resulted in a 3 minute late arrival at 22:38. One hour later, the shunting had been completed and, with the “St. David” on its way back to Fishguard, Rosslare returned to its slumbers.

REPORT FROM LOUGHREA

Padraig O’Cuimin

The Attymon Junction to Loughrea branch has been in the news lately, national and local papers have noted the extra traffic generated by the Tynagh mines and the activities of the company engaged in shooting the film “Alfred the Great” at Roxboro’, some 4 miles from the town. A television team has filmed the line in detail, including in its coverage the permanent way renewals which have been carried on for some time past. Rarely is a railway highlighted so much these days.

And, indeed, traffic has been building up steadily in the last 4 years, due in no small measure to the efforts of the stationmaster, Mr Mullen. Cattle traffic has increased notably, while fertiliser traffic is also considerable, and especially worthy of mention as it has been largely won from road transport. These welcome trends are reflected in the numbers of wagons to be seen in Loughrea; on Saturday, 17 February, there were no fewer than 56 wagons in the station. The passenger figures are also up on previous years, although it must be noted that much of the additional traffic is due to the recent School Transport scheme.

The permanent way alterations mentioned include the replacement of the crossover from the running road to the release road, the turnout to the carriage shed road, and the crossing between the latter and the goods shed road. (These may be located on the diagram in the January 1967 issue of the IRN.) All the new crossings are constructed of chaired bullhead track and they mark the first major innovation in Loughrea since 1890. The long siding at the Attymon end of the station has been dismantled and its rails replaced with some from the “main line”.

The new trackwork was assembled on a grid near the ground frame, and the main crossing and turnout were placed in position on Sunday, 11 February. As power lines cross the station yard at this point it was not possible to use a crane and the assembled track was slewed into position using the branch loco, G613. This activity was filmed by the Radio Telefís Éireann crew. The remaining work was completed in the week following. Much ballast has been laid between Attymon and Loughrea, restoring to the branch something of its original appearance.

Fair Day At Loughrea: 7 March 1968

The largest of the Loughrea fairs is normally held in February but this year the foot-and-mouth restrictions resulted in fairs being arranged for 7 and 27 March instead. Even in these days of declining cattle traffic on the railways, the Loughrea fairs are important. They usually begin around midnight, when the first cattle are driven into the town and they are held principally in three streets which form a “U”. Conveniently, the station is near one end of the “U”. The day before, temporary barricades are erected to prevent damage to houses and shop fronts from the milling cattle. Meanwhile, at the loading bank the wagons requested for the anticipated traffic have been stabled. Also arranged, is the attendance of a traffic inspector and his assistant, as well as a carriage and wagon examiner, on the day of the fair. To ensure that no chance of attracting customers to the railway is lost, the Stationmaster, in uniform, also attends the fair. He will be occupied in fixing loading arrangements with his regular

customers and by his presence will attract other dealers to the railway. He can, on the spot, quote the relevant rates and allocate wagons to their needs.

On 7 March, the first of the cattle were driven to the loading bank at 03:30, and by 04:00 the loading was in full swing. The loaders endeavour to allocate wagons in accordance with the correct marshalling of the train - North Wall wagons at the rear, and so on. But as more and more cattle arrive it is not possible to adhere strictly to this plan. By 06:00 it was clear that extra wagons would be required - 32 had already been allocated. The stationmaster requested that 24 extra wagons which he had on standby call be brought into Loughrea by the special loco, due in about 10:00 from Athlone.

Later, knots of farmers began to assemble outside the banks, much more business being transacted by cheques than in former years. Breakfasts had been served in the Railway Hotel since 03:00, and the numerous tea and sandwich stalls were doing a steady trade. It had been a night of hard frost which persisted well into the morning, and the thin sun was bright but with little heat in it.

In the midst of animated scenes at the station, the regular passenger train left at 07:50, the compo 1910 being hauled by C226, still in green livery. The regular engine, G613, had succumbed with a broken spring shortly before the fair day. By 09:22 the train had returned and had been placed in the carriage shed road, clearing the way for the special. A46 arrived at 10:05 with the 24 extra wagons, the train being examined in the release road before being divided with the assistance of C226. The compo was replaced at the platform and 10 of the wagons were put in the carriage shed road to await cattle shipments of the next day. The other 14 wagons were then pulled clear of the release road and A46 was freed to commence the prolonged series of shunts required to marshal the train correctly. C226 returned to the platform to couple up to its one-coach train for the 10:45 passenger to Attymon. In its absence A46 continued to arrange the wagons of the special - a task completed at 12:10. Ten minutes later, C226 had returned and the section was clear. A few final checks, a careful start, and at 12:33 the Loughrea Fair Special was on its way.

Although the driver, Mickey Bartley, could easily remember the days when “you could have ten locomotives in steam on a Sunday night and the town full of railwaymen”, nonetheless the Loughrea Fair of 1968 is a heartening sight and an occasion full of interest to the enthusiast. True, there may be far fewer cattle, but the work is still onerous, calling for the ability to ensure that there are no delays and that wagons are neither in short supply nor in great excess, and calling for a great amount of energy. Along with the cattlemen, the stationmaster had no sleep that night, while the loaders came on duty at 03:00. Inspector Tighe and Mr Newman (who travels from fair to fair, devoting himself exclusively to this work) likewise put in a very hard day.

Loughrea is now the sole surviving example of a MGWR branch terminus. Although the line retains its undoubted charm, it is still very much a vital railway. Long may it continue to resist - and even conquer - the encroaching road traffic. That it does so is in large measure to the enthusiasm of the railwaymen to work it.

INTERESTING INFORMATION

Locomotives Preserved By CIÉ

In response to requests for information on locos to be retained by CIÉ we have pleasure in giving the following table:

Number	Wheels	Railway	Location
5	0-6-2T	West Clare	Outside Ennis station
36	2-2-2T	GS&WR	Inside Cork station
90	0-6-0T	GS&WR	At Mallow station

131	4-4-0	GNR	To be preserved at Dundalk
184	0-6-0	GS&WR	To be preserved at Inchicore
461	2-6-0	D&SER	To be preserved at Wexford