

THE

# **IRISH RAILFANS' NEWS**

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**EDITORIAL**

At the end of the 1960s it is, perhaps, inevitable that we should follow the current newspaper fashion and review the highlights of the previous decade on the CIÉ system. But this is no idle exercise, for the period in question was one of the most important in the history of the railways in the country and it saw many far-reaching changes. Things will, indeed, never be the same again!

Many familiar features of the CIÉ railway scene disappeared for ever in the 1960s. After a long struggle the steam loco finally disappeared from even the most humble services, and the sole surviving narrow-gauge line in the south - the West Clare - was closed. That stalwart of many a mixed (and local, in earlier years) the "six-wheeler" was banished for good, although at times its place was taken by decidedly venerable bogie vehicles. The final round of closures took place and the branch line, for long so characteristic of our railway outings, virtually ceased to exist. Now only at Attymon do passengers trudge across the platform from the main line train to the waiting "mixed" for Loughrea.

Second class became standard; the long familiar green livery was replaced by varieties of "black-and-tan"; some imaginative excursions were conceived, operated and then, sadly, forgotten. The AEC railcars which, in the previous decade, had saved the railways began to show signs of age, while the slightly newer diesel-electrics of the A and C classes began to suffer from increasing debility. The staples of the traditional goods train - "tranships and sundries" - began to disappear as wagon loads and containers (and at times road competition) all played a part in changing the scene.

But not all was on the negative side. Indeed, the 1960s saw a revival in the spirit of CIÉ which would have been inconceivable in earlier times. Vastly improved Sunday train services were introduced; a whole new range of fares was announced, showing that some imaginative people were at work behind the scenes; there was a dramatic upsurge in first class travel, due very largely to the provision of some excellent vehicles. Traffic on the suburban section increased substantially, and a feature was the reopening of the very convenient Murrough Station in Wicklow. Three series of very fine locomotives were obtained from General Motors, while engines from the same manufacturers were obtained for installation in A class engines. A range of heating vans, standard class coaches and sorting vans appeared, their quality surpassing that of vehicles previously in use.

But most of all the 1960s were the decade of freight. Bulk traffic - cement, oil, fertiliser, barytes and zinc concentrates - began to dominate the freight traffic returns; the Foynes branch was revitalised; a new railway was built to Silvermines. The container revolution came to CIÉ. There is every indication that the picture for the future is equally happy. Mineral traffic seems very likely to increase; indeed, traffic will soon start to Ballinacourty while the forward attitude of CIÉ is now such that other new lines seem virtual certainties.

A welcome feature has been the maturing of official attitudes to CIÉ. The value of the railway system

is becoming ever more apparent and, happily, appreciated. In the scope of such a short review it is only possible to pick some of the past highlights and to make a few forecasts for the future. But before long there may be trains once more to Naas and to Maynooth for commuters, while the competition between rail and air will be whetted by an even faster timing on the Cork line. Doubtless, too, there will be further improvements in the Dublin main line terminals. The actual list of improvements will doubtless be much, much longer, and we look forward to reporting further developments as they occur. We finish by congratulating those in CIÉ who have made CIÉ vital and progressive and we wish them continuing success in the 1970s.

**-o-O-o-o-O-o-**

We thank Messrs R.F. Whitford and H. Cunningham for valuable assistance in the preparation of the NIR Special Review.

**BOOK REVIEWS**

**“Portrait Of The Grand Canal”, Gerard D’Arcy (Transport Research Associates), 112pp + map.**

This book covers an aspect of transport the importance of which many may tend to overlook. In its day the Grand Canal carried a considerable amount of varied traffic, as will be noted from the well laid out tables in the book. While the goods services on the canal have ceased the increasing use of it by pleasure boats would seem to ensure its continued life. The book, doubtless with this in mind, concentrates on the more interesting aspects of day-to-day operations and on a description of the routes, dealing only very briefly with history. The route details, along with lists of locks and bridges, will be of inestimable value to anyone navigating this waterway. An aspect often overlooked is the “rolling stock” - the barges themselves. Detailed lists are included and are most interesting, although there are some ‘loose ends’ in the list of privately owned boats. There are useful appendices, a fine reproduction of a Grand Canal Company map, and 26 good half-tone illustrations. Strongly recommended for the person interested in canals or transport in general.

**“Railway History in Pictures Volume 1, Ireland”, Alan McCutcheon (David & Charles), 112pp.**

With the completion of this book - the first of two volumes - Dr McCutcheon has moved from fields of earlier interests (waterways and industrial archaeology) into that of railways, and it must be said that he is very much at home in his new sphere. His book, as the title indicates, consists very largely of pictures, the text being limited to some introductory passages and some rather longer than usual captions. Twelve chapters cover the Irish scene from the beginning up to around 1900, sample headings being: “The Advent of Narrow-Gauge Railways”, “Accidents” and “The Dublin-Belfast Link”. The author has chosen his pictures well, paying proper respect to some of the “founding fathers” and also to notable structures and locomotive classes. Some of his pictures have been published elsewhere but they seem to fit nicely with the many unpublished ones. Of particular interest are the fascinating views of railway construction in the north and west, while the view of Glenariff showing the old Iron Ore Co. line is a nice find. Some of the prints might have been better, and the captions less conservative, but these points do not take from the book’s value and charm.

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# News Section

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## CIÉ

### **Transport Act, 1969**

On 1 January 1970 Córas Iompair Éireann celebrated the Silver Jubilee of its inception. A short while previously, almost by way of being a suitable “present” from the Dáil, the Transport Act 1969 became law. The purpose of this Act is to provide for further capital advances to CIÉ in respect of its yearly operations and to grant £542,640 to cover the amount by which the company’s total deficit in the 5 years ending on 31 March 1969 had exceeded the amount provided for by the Transport Act of 1964. The latter authorised the payment to CIÉ of an annual grant or subvention of £2 million, commencing from 1 April 1964 and with its help CIÉ was required to break even. In addition £6 million had been allowed by way of capital advances, and the Act was subject to review after the 5-year period. As it turned out the total deficit over that time was £10,542,640.

In the debate on the 1969 Bill the progress of CIÉ was described, details being quoted of many of the features touched on in our editorial and previously dealt with in our news columns. The Minister for Transport & Power also stated that in the 1964-69 period the total capital expenditure by CIÉ exceeded the £6 million provided for by the 1964 Act by no less than £11,850,000. Much of this had been incurred in connection with the School Bus programme, but £250,000 had been spent on new facilities at Rosslare Harbour.

The Minister noted that the railways could not be operated without State assistance and that the network had been pruned to optimum size. In view of this the new Act would permit an annual grant of £2,650,000 in the 5-year period commencing 1 April 1969 and again the company would be expected to “live” within this amount. It was stated that further improvements would be carried out and in the debate deputies commented favourably on what had already been done. But they criticised the closing of the Harcourt Street line and the siting of Ballymun new town away from the railways. Still, the good work of CIÉ was recognised.

### **Trouble At Dromin**

On 12 December the 07:30 train from Connolly Station to Dundalk, which consisted of a three-piece railcar set, 2636/1351/2643, was derailed at the junction points at Dromin, on the Belfast line (43½ miles). The train had stopped at Dunleer, where most of its complement had got out, and it had a mere handful of passengers on the last stage of its journey. Derailed at the point of divergence of the Ardee Branch the leading railcar - 2636 - ran up onto the Down Main platform and then toppled over on its side. It was badly damaged while the intermediate coach was damaged to a lesser extent. The rear railcar was also derailed but was not seriously damaged. One of the passengers was slightly injured.

Both main running lines were blocked and buses were called out to bridge the gap between Dunleer and Dundalk. A45R, with the Inchicore crane, left Connolly Station for the scene at 11:50 and later the NIR crane arrived, hauled by a B141 class loco. Single-line working over the Up road was introduced in the early hours of the following morning, while the Down line was reopened by the 11:00 from Connolly Station to Belfast later that day (13 December).

### **Coach Notes**

The following vehicles, badly damaged in the fire at Limerick in May last, have been withdrawn: Buffet Car 2411, Standards (Cravens) 1537 and 1538 and Standard/Brake 1912. Also withdrawn are 4010 (ex 1127), 4023 (ex 1305), 4041 (ex 2104) and 4022 (ex 1304). Of these latter the first three were

also burned at the Limerick fire.

### **West Clare Farewell**

The three F class locos (F501-503) which became redundant on the closure of the West Clare Section in 1961 but which lay at the works in Inchicore were scrapped in the last financial year. This move reduced the CIÉ locomotive fleet to 177 diesel-electric and 44 diesel-hydraulic locos - a total of 221.

### **Livery Changes**

Re-engined loco B233 (formerly C233) has been repainted recently in full "black and tan". Another loco to receive attention is A40R, which is painted in the variation of "black and tan" carried by A51R and A58R. At present the finishing touches are being put to the re-engining of B222 (ex C222) but it is not yet known just which of the various liveries will be applied to it!

### **Loco News**

Re-engined A class locos now in service comprise the following: A34R, A35R, A36R, A39R, A40R, A41R, A42R, A45R, A47R, A48R, A49R, A51R, A52R, A56R, A58R and A59R. A40R has been working from Grand Canal Street since early December and its duties have included heading the 21:50 Wexford Goods on a number of occasions as well as acting as pilot at Pearse Station. B206 was noted with a very heavy load on the 11:30 ex Cork on 29 November. Unassisted, it headed a train of 10 bogies and HV. A56R has been temporarily uprated to 1,600 hp but it is understood that this move has not been entirely successful. E405, which had been laid up for a long time, is now back in service, and D303 is now working. D304 has been withdrawn for overhaul and D305 is now being repaired after a long delay.

### **Some New Sleepers**

A section of the Up Cork main line, between Hazelhatch and Lucan (MP 8¾ to 8¼) was re-sleepered with a new type of concrete sleeper on 18 January. Flat, like the wooden version, the new sleepers are not quite as wide and have rounded ends. As the work was proceeding all up and down morning trains used the Down line and Lucan Cabin was specially switched in.

### **Pallets To Shelton**

In recent weeks a substantial number of pallets have been conveyed to the N.E.T. factory at Shelton Abbey by both ordinary goods trains and fertiliser specials. It appears that trains of fertiliser on pallets will shortly start operation and that this is a preliminary to the introduction of the service.

### **Tivoli Progress**

The temporary level crossing on the public road leading to the B+I Ferryport has been removed and a permanent crossing will soon be installed. The siding is completed but the Roofchrome installations are still under construction. The preliminary timetable for the Ballinacourty-Tivoli trains has been prepared and it allows for one return working a day on six days a week. Departure from Ballinacourty will be at 05:30 and the train, of 12 magnesite hopper wagons and six empty oil tankers, will arrive at Tivoli at 11:45. Departure of the return train will be at 13:40 (Cork depart 14:00), and this time the oil tankers will be laden. An interesting point is that the Up Cobh line will be track-circuited from Little Island to Cork, thereby enabling the Tivoli trains to run in the Up line in both directions. There is no date yet for the commencement of traffic from Ballinacourty.

### **Bridge At Howth Junction**

The long-delayed renewal of underbridge No.17 at Howth Junction took place on 9 and 16 November. Steel girders and decking previously fabricated at the station were used. It had originally been intended to use the Inchicore 35-ton and NIR 36-ton steam cranes but the latter was not available and its place was taken by a hired road crane which was driven onto the railway each night through a special gap in

the fence. To enable it to move safely over the points and crossings of the actual junction, temporary paving of old sleepers and extra ballast up to rail level was provided. Elsewhere it was driven with its wheels straddling the rails.

### **Connolly Relaying**

On Sunday, 23 November, some points and crossings adjacent to the Central Cabin were relaid with the aid of the 35-ton crane. For the duration of the work local trains had to use Platforms 5, 6 and 7, while the Down and Up Belfast trains were specially worked from and to Platform 2. The crane was attended by A26, while A40R worked the rail train.

### **Confusion Continues**

A CIÉ spokesman on the RTÉ radio programme "Music on the Move" on 30 December commented on the continuing confusion among passengers over the renaming of 15 stations in April 1966. For those who were puzzled by the position in Dublin, which is the only place where it can matter, he suggested as a mnemonic:

- Pearse Station (Westland Row) is near Pearse Street.
- Connolly Station (Amiens Street) is near the trade union centre, Liberty Hall (associated with Connolly).
- Heuston Station (Kingsbridge) is the only one left. This is the position after, it should be noted, no less than three and a half years!

### **Easier To Handle**

To simplify the loading and unloading of rails ex-MGWR 20-ton rail wagon No.3402M has been fitted with two transverse gantries. Each has an electric "GIS" hoist, of 1,000 kilogram capacity, and together they are capable of lifting a length of rail on or off the wagon on either side. Power for the hoists is provided by a small diesel-driven generator mounted below the frame of the wagon.

### **Oola Work**

The realignment work at Oola, described in our last issue, is still in progress.

### **Bogie HVs**

As a postscript to our report, the tare weight of these massive new heating vans has been revised to 38 tons. Each vehicle bears an engraved brass plate with the details shown:

Made for CIÉ  
by  
D.E.W. Ltd.  
A Subsidiary of S&S Corrugated  
Paper Machinery Co. Inc.  
Brooklyn New York  
1969

An unusual feature of the vans is the 110 Volt DC lighting which is not of the now very popular fluorescent type.

### **Victims Of The Flu**

The recent flu epidemic caused much disruption of CIÉ bus services, especially in Cork, but despite many railwaymen being affected the rail services were not so badly hit. On 29 December, however, it proved necessary to send a crew from Limerick to Waterford for a beet special as no local crew could be mustered.

## **Minor Troubles**

Both sets of level crossing gates at Sydney Parade, on the Bray line, were broken by a motor car about 17:35 on 29 October. The 17:34 down local was the first train affected and thereafter trains ran about 10 minutes late, having to pass the scene under caution until the gates could be repaired. A delay of a different kind was caused to a 20-wagon bulk cement train from Drogheda to Cabra on 2 January. It had been routed via the North Wall and on its way up the steep gradient leading to North Strand Junction it stalled. When observed the efforts of the train engine B146 were being supplemented by the combined exertions of E433 and E419!

## **New Track Machines**

A new Plasser & Theurer 06-16 "Mainliner SC" ballast-packing machine arrived on 29 October and travelled to Sutton under its own power, following the 18:45 local. On 8 November it was observed on trials on the Howth Branch. It has since entered normal service. Two new ultrasonic flaw detectors have also been acquired.

## **Wanted!**

In November CIÉ invited tenders for the construction of "40 complete railway steam heating boiler vans of up-to-date design". The closing date was 14 January last. In a somewhat different vein a CIÉ advertisement of 4 December sought a Railway Transportation Consultant to study the potential of the railway system in Dublin for the transport of commuter traffic. The closing date for applications was 31 January.

## **Problems With Beet**

The very serious autumn drought caused great disruption of the annual beet campaign. The Cómhlucht Siúicre Éireann factory at Thurles was due to open on 16 October but it had to remain closed until 12 November because of the water shortage. Later on, the flu epidemic caused further problems. Instead of being finished around New Year's Day beet specials were still travelling in mid-January.

## **Magician Retires**

Mr Harry Pobjoy has retired from the post of stationmaster at Drogheda. He was very well known for his cheery good humour not only by railway enthusiasts but by many of the people who travelled on the Northern Line for some decades past. In his spare time Mr Pobjoy has built up a deserved reputation as an accomplished conjuror, while he has also given great encouragement to first-aid training.

## **Signal Notes**

Several more signal cabins between Dublin and Cork have had electric colour-light distant signals erected. Among those recently converted was the Newbridge Up Distant, where a three-aspect signal has been provided. The red aspect protects the trailing siding into Newbridge Ballast Pit and it is interlocked with the adjacent ground frame for the siding points. The remote-controlled intermediate semaphore signals at Caragh - between Sallins and Newbridge - are being replaced by colour light signals at the same locations.

At Connolly Station several more semaphore signals and discs have been replaced by brilliantly-lit electric signals. The new facing crossover, No.37, between the Up Main line and No.1 Platform line has been equipped for pneumatic operation but, despite some contradictory reports, it is not yet in use.

## **Heavy Cleaning**

During the severe, frosty weather in early January the carriage washing plant at Pearse Station became frozen up and afterwards its brushes had to be renewed. As a result, most of the suburban railcar sets became progressively more filthy until it was found necessary to arrange special manual cleaning for Sunday, 18 January, at Connolly Station. It was arranged that all the suburban sets, including the four

based in Bray, would be brought in for attention. Although the frozen plant cannot be blamed for the interior uncleanliness, it too was in need of a remedy.

### **Christmas Services**

The unusually long Christmas holiday period in 1969 - it effectively ran from the 19<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> to the 28<sup>th</sup>/29<sup>th</sup> December - upset the now traditional travel patterns, and the special services provided showed many interesting contrasts with a previous “long” Christmas when no trains at all ran on Christmas or St. Stephen’s Days. This time the full Sunday service ran on St. Stephen’s Day and, indeed, it was augmented by several specials. It is encouraging to observe that on Christmas Eve afternoon trains were provided from Bray to Dublin and back, and that they were all well patronised.

The most unusual workings, however, were in connection with the Fishguard - Rosslare Harbour shipping services. In addition to specials to Dublin via Wexford, and to Cork, specials ran on several days to or from Dublin via Waterford and Kilkenny. The most unusual service of all ran on Sunday 28 December, when the 16:30 special from Rosslare to Cork had advertised connections to Dublin at Waterford (wait of 62 minutes) and at Limerick Junction (delay of only 5 minutes). The connections were due to reach Dublin at 21:45 and 21:30, respectively. The direct train from Rosslare, via Wexford, to Dublin at 18:45 was due at Pearse Station at 22:00 hours. Truly an ingenious arrangement of services, to say the least! In the down direction there was a direct special from Pearse Station at 18:25 (due Rosslare Harbour at 21:45), while the 18:55 regular train from Dublin to Waterford was extended to Rosslare Harbour, due at 22:50.

### **Goods Trains**

The practice of having a loco lying at Arklow all day ceased from 20 October, when the goods train schedules were reorganised. The down night goods on the South-Eastern section (22:45 ex North Wall) was retimed to 21:50 and the loco returns on the corresponding up goods of the following night as usual. The loco of the down “Day Goods” to Arklow now returns from Arklow at 07:25 instead of remaining in Arklow all day. The arrangement whereby a loco lay idle all day was undesirable. Last summer the loco in question was (on alternate days) one of the AR class, of which few were then in service. A new goods train has been provided at 15:25 from Cabra to Shelton Abbey, near Arklow. The train returns from Arklow at 20:20 and the loco of it (and, of course, the 15:25) is usually that which has worked the 07:25 from Arklow the same day.

### **Rugby Trains**

The controversial International Rugby football match between Ireland and South Africa took place as intended on Saturday, 10 January. Despite a directive from the Irish Congress of Trade unions not to provide any services in connection with the match (which was the subject of much anti-apartheid objection) all pre-arranged services (rail and bus) were operated as planned. The only omission was the “All-in” special from Cork (and a connection from Limerick) which was cancelled due to lack of support; for the same reason one of the six return local specials was not required.

The greatest surprises, however, were provided by the NIR which organised two specials from Belfast. One consisted of B127, bogie van, LV, 7 bogies and HV (all belonging to CIÉ); it departed at 09:20. The other NIR special was an “All-in” train at 11:40. It comprised a seven-coach BUT railcar set: cars 135, 126, 595, 552, 123, 592 and 125. Of these vehicles, 135, 592 and 125 were entirely empty. As far as is known this was the first occasion on which BUT railcars worked any “All-In” special - a duty for which their unpredictable bucking motion makes them altogether unsuitable.

### **Unwelcome Interruption**

On 12 December the goods checkers at Heuston Station staged a strike over the deduction of a half-day’s pay from their wages in respect of a half day spent on strike on the 5<sup>th</sup>. The strikers picketed as

many CIÉ installations as their number allowed; places picketed included Heuston Station and the bus garages at Conyngham Road (Dublin City Services) and the Broadstone (Provincial Services). As a result the 06:30 "Day Mail" train from Heuston Station to Cork was cancelled, as were all goods trains. Some bus services, both provincial and Dublin city, were also affected. During the course of the day, however, Post Office and other workers began to pass the unofficial pickets and the strike virtually collapsed.

### **Shed Stripes**

Black and orange stripes have been painted on the back door of the running shed at Grand Canal Street and on the doors at either end of the railcar shed at Fairview. The result is effective as a warning and the job was completed early in October. Both sheds are busy and see much shunting, the former being a loco depot of prime importance.

### **Around Rosslare**

To enable Rosslare Harbour to cope with the expected increase in traffic over the next few years CIÉ has announced plans to spend £230,000 on the improvement of facilities there. The work to be carried out will include the provision of new waiting rooms, better customs facilities and a better access road. Work will start early this year and is expected to continue for five years. Another item of news in this region is the raising (in November last) of the 50 mph speed limit between Wexford South and Rosslare Strand to 60 mph.

### **Barytes Trains**

From November it has been permissible to work trains consisting of fully vacuum-braked wagons without a brake van between Silvermines and Foynes. Trains must consist entirely of the specially designed concentrates/barytes wagons. Traffic from the mining region of Silvermines could be in for a further boost if the performance of the shares of "Silvermines Limited" in recent weeks is any indicator. After a long period at 'intermediate' prices these shares suddenly improved on the release of details of further test borings in the area held by the company.

### **Westport Extra**

From 16 November last a new regular Sunday train at 11:05 from Pearse Station to Westport has been provided. It replaces the connection to Westport off the 10:30 train to Galway, which connection had run on "Cheap Weekend" Sundays only. The new train returns to Dublin at 18:50 and its operation makes it possible to take a day excursion trip from Dublin to Clara or Tullamore, as well as providing a much needed Sunday night service from these two important Midland towns to Dublin. The Up train from Westport also provides a connection from the Mayo line into the 18:40 train from Pearse Station to Galway, Athlone being the interchange point. CIÉ deserve commendation for providing this extra connection, as journeys other than to and from Dublin (or stations en route thereto) are very difficult to make at the best of times without long delays.

### **Welcome!**

Both the "Craven" first class coaches, 1147/8, are now in service, 1147 on the Northern line. They have airline-type seats (first class too!) and are very spacious. The grey and maroon carpet is attractive and the sound-proofing is good. A slight slope to the tables (trays can tend to slide) is a small drawback.

## **NORTHERN IRELAND RAILWAYS**

### **A Point To Note**

As usual this section of the IRN deals with developments on NIR but in this issue we present a special review article dealing with the railways in the north, and which contains details of importance. It

appears later and it should be read in conjunction with the following.

### **Around Coleraine**

The locomotive coaling plant at Coleraine has been demolished for scrapping. Nearby, on the Portrush Branch, nameboards have at long last been provided at Dhu Varren halt. On one board only (!) the name is hyphenated; possibly it was forgotten on the second board. The nameboards at the intermediate station on the branch - formerly Portstewart - have been repainted to read "CROMORE".

### **Alterations At Greenisland**

The effects of the track alterations at Greenisland are that the loop serving No.1 Platform is slightly shortened and the trailing connection into the West Siding (which wanders around the back of the station) has been removed. It can now only be reached by the connection off the sidings beside the "Back Line" at the other end of the station yard. As the necessary signal alterations have not been completed it is not possible to run round a train at Greenisland. For the same reasons the crossover at the East end cannot be used, and in the case of a breakdown it is necessary to go as far as Carrickfergus to run round.

### **On the Bangor Line**

The painting of the station nameboards in the new red, black and white colours, which was started last year, is still incomplete. The boards at Marino and Craigavon are all red, with no lettering, but Holywood is a little better as its nameboards are lettered - in black! The result is almost illegible and the addition in the near future, one hopes, of white edging is essential. There is no name at all on the Down side of Helen's Bay station. With the exception of Bangor, all the stations on the line require repairs and repainting.

### **MED**

All the MED railcars are now fitted with the 4-speed gearboxes. The last of the lot to be so fitted was No.15 (standard class type; converted to a railcar in 1953) and the provision of the new box took place in December last.

### **NCC Railcars**

No.4, which had been lying at York Road "dump siding" for a long time, was badly burned on 18 December and it is a write-off. It is believed that children were responsible. The AEC-engined car, No.7, met a similar fate a few weeks previously.

### **Whitehead Footbridge**

A new deck and girders have been provided on the original piers of the station footbridge at Whitehead. The bridge is outside the platform barriers as it must be used when the gates of the pedestrian level crossing are closed for passing trains.

### **An Increase In Fares**

A raised fares list took effect on and from 4 January. Many season ticket rates were left unchanged - a good incentive to their holders to continue to use the railway. The increases are modest, ranging from 1<sup>d</sup> to 1/- on NIR itself. Cross-border fares also went up on the same day and were rounded off to the even shilling. Thus the greatest increase shown in the fares list published is 3/7 (Belfast to Skerries and Howth) . All fares are "dual-priced" in anticipation of decimalisation and NIR is the first transport concern to make such a move.

### **Steam Again**

One of the rare instances of a diesel-electric railcar failing occurred on 17 January. The 3-car set for the 10:20 Larne Harbour to Belfast failed, so loco 4 (taken off a spoil train) was brought from

Magheramorne as a relief. It was observed making a rousing departure from Greenisland. As the DE trains are air-braked, the steam brake on the locomotive was the sole brake power available.

### **Coulthard Postscript**

Settlements for more than £6,000 have been announced in two legal actions taken by Mr John Coulthard, who was dismissed from the position of Managing Director of NIR on 12 May 1967. He had sued the Northern Ireland Transport Holding Co., as successor to the UTA, alleging wrongful dismissal, and certain individuals for alleged libel.

### **Once More In Harness**

Mr Hugh Waring has returned to his duties as Managing Director and Chief Executive of NIR. He had been incapacitated by a serious illness and his place was temporarily taken by Mr John Irvine.

### **Coaches Scrapped**

On 14 December it was observed that numerous coaches at Antrim were being scrapped or had been marked for imminent demolition and it has become evident that all remaining non-corridor stock is being withdrawn. Many of these vehicles were derelict and few had been used in recent years. The full list of those at present being scrapped is as follows:

No.	Remarks			No.	Remarks		
162	NCC	89	1924	462	NCC	63	1924
252	NCC	37	1938*	235	GNR	45	1930
375	NCC	179	Note A	378	GNR	329	1930
383	NCC	194	Note A	386	GNR	182	1930
385	NCC	184	Note A	390	GNR	295	1930
387	NCC	196	Note A	483	GNR	377	1920
389	NCC	197	Note A	291	BCDR	120	1930
391	NCC	185	Note A				

\* GNR frame.

Note A: These coaches were built for the LMS in 1930-36 and were transferred to the NCC in 1941-42.

The underframes of Nos. 162 and 389 were marked "To be kept" presumably for conversion into bogie flat wagons. Many other coaches now in store at Antrim are likely to meet a similar fate later, for they are in a dreadful state of disrepair.

### **Steam Locos**

The latest news is that Nos. 4, 5, 6, 50, 51, 53 and 55 are working, and No.10 is stopped. Nos. 3, 54 and 56 are definitely withdrawn. No.27, the 0-6-4T which retired when diesel loco 2 arrived (see review article), however, has not been withdrawn yet, and it is not possible to forecast just how much longer steam working will continue. But the remaining locos are almost worn out and they are unlikely to be overhauled.

### **MPD Railcars**

All Leyland engines have now been eliminated, car 46 being the last to have one before its rebuild. Nos. 48 and 49 are still non-corridor. The former is awaiting works attention at York Road, while the latter shunts at Derry. It occasionally turns up on a passenger train in emergencies, but it is unsuitable for conductor operation. Trailer 541 has been fitted with a "Dragonair" heater, and it left the works for service on 25 November.

## **Portadown New Station**

The attempt to prohibit photography at the new station site in Portadown results from an order of the Craigavon Development Commission and not NIR. The step, while regrettable, is perhaps understandable in view of recent unsettled times in the North of Ireland when public property was destroyed. On 12 January the Commission sought tenders for the demolition of the former GNR loco roundhouse. This very substantial ferro-concrete structure has already withstood an attempt at demolition by explosives by British Army personnel, so the new contractors will face a really formidable task.

## **Seagoe**

The signal cabin and level crossing at Seagoe, just north of Portadown, have been abandoned. A flyover bridge - part of the M1 approach network - has replaced the crossing.

## **Track Diversion**

Between MP 88 $\frac{1}{4}$  and Kernan Crossing (MP 88 $\frac{3}{4}$ ), north of Portadown, the Belfast-Dublin line is to be diverted to a new site on the down side. The new formation is complete and track-laying began in the new year. The original site is required to complete the motorway approach from Portadown town centre. Two other flyover bridges are presently under construction: at MP 91 $\frac{1}{4}$  on the Belfast-Dublin line (near the Goodyear tyre plant) and at MP 24 $\frac{1}{2}$  on the Derry line.

## **York Road Alterations**

Following the removal of No.1 Siding between Platforms 1 and 2, No.2 platform track has been removed temporarily to allow the platform to be straightened. It is reported that extensions to platforms 2/3 and 4/5 are to be removed, thereby restoring them to their original lengths. Nos. 2, 3 and 4 will then take 8 bogies, as compared with 10 at present. While No.2 is out of use No.5 is being used at times for passenger trains after a lapse of several years.

A prefabricated building, apparently intended as a temporary parcels office and staff room, has been built on the former taxi rank at No.4 platform. The adjacent station wall has been demolished.

## **Transfers**

Coaches 248 and 250 were transferred by road to Queen's Quay Works during last summer. No reason for the move is known but a consequence is that the ex-GNR 15-ton breakdown crane and its van are in the open.

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## **Feature Section**

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### **COMMENTS ON CATERING**

As will be noticed from the interesting details given below, in the Summer 1969 weekday roster, the CIÉ fleet of catering vehicles was very fully utilised indeed. Few spare cars were available to cover mishaps and it is not at all surprising that tenders have been invited for additional restaurant cars.

The standard of service and quality of food is still generally very high throughout the system but we must note that some small details are tending to mar the otherwise praiseworthy effect. There is still much confusion among menus, while the meal prices, waiter service and service charge are not really set off by the increasing use of plastic teaspoons, which smack of the self-service cafes. One could fault, too, the details of those trains which have catering services, as given in the front of the public

timetable. The list in its present form fails to differentiate between services with snack cars only and those with full facilities. Rather more important, however, is the failure to state that several cars were not open for the entire duration of a journey, for example, the 09:10 Heuston Station/Waterford, the snack car of which does not open until Kildare is reached. Queues, confusion and delays are the result.

The design of the snack cars and the service offered in them unfortunately leaves much to be desired. The inadequate space in the vicinity of the service hatch is - in theory - meant to be complemented by some bays of seats with tables, but little if any effort is made to persuade ordinary passengers to leave these seats free for actual patrons of the service. CIÉ could do better.

In the following table are given all the weekday workings for each of the vehicles of the catering department.

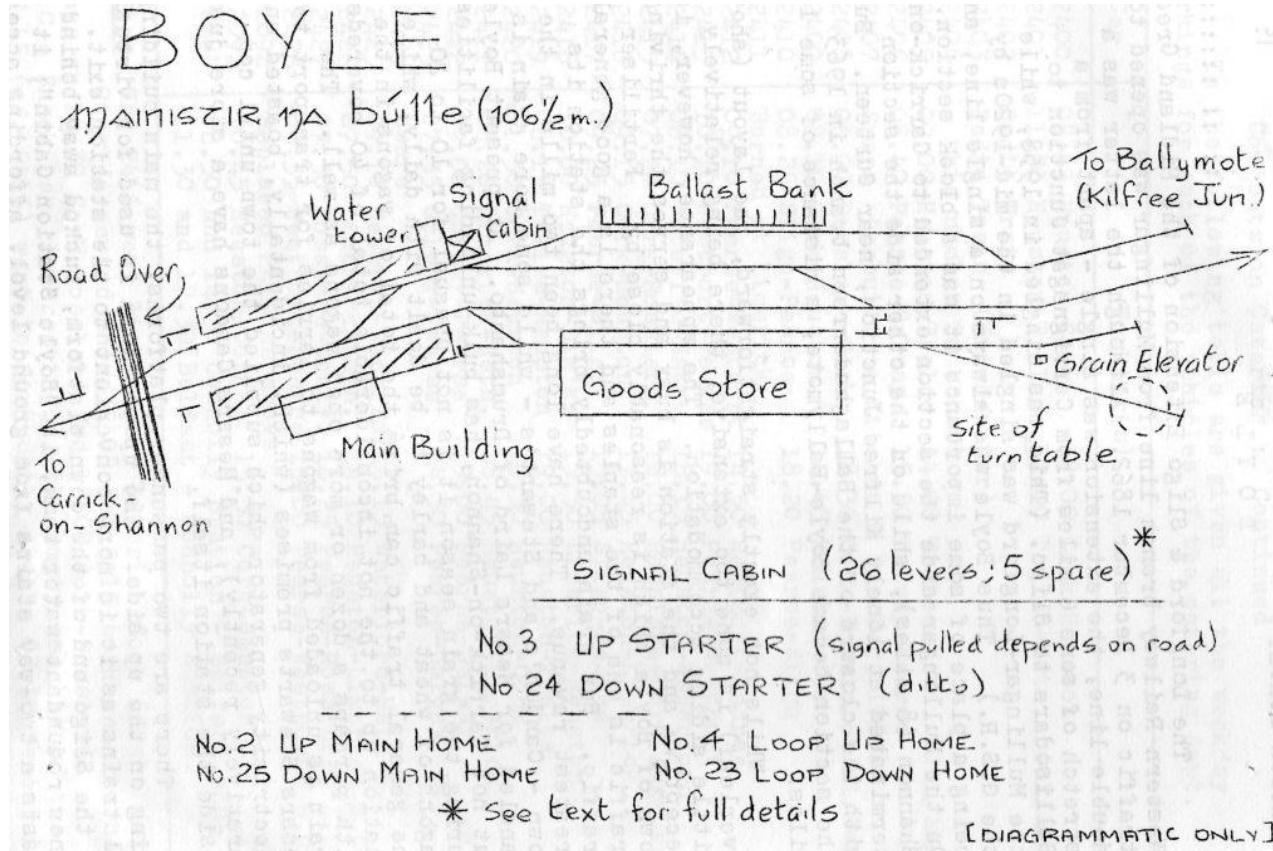
Car	Working(s)	
2400	08:45 Heuston-Cork	18:00 Cork-Heuston
2401	11:30 Heuston-Tralee	17:00 Tralee-Heuston (July/August)
2402	Radio Train	
2403	Radio Train (Kitchen Car)	
2404	This number is vacant	
2405	09:00 Heuston-Tralee	14:00 Tralee-Heuston (July/August)
2406	08:0 Pearse-Galway	15:50 Galway-Pearse
2407	Spare (rebuilt to Kitchen & Bar Car, 1969)	
2408	06:00 Rosslare-Cork	18:30 Cork-Rosslare (July/September)
2409	08:10 Cork-Heuston	14:45 Heuston-Cork
2410	08:25 Sligo-Pearse	18:20 Pearse-Sligo
2411	Burned at Limerick	
2412	09:10 Pearse-Westport	14:50 Westport-Pearse
2413	10:10 Westport-Pearse	19:00 Pearse-Westport
2414	08:10 Waterford-Heuston	18:15 Heuston-Waterford
2415	07:20 Cork-Rosslare	18:00 Rosslare-Cork (August/September)
2416	09:15 Cork-Heuston	17:45 Heuston-Limerick
2417	09:25 Pearse-Sligo	15:05 Sligo-Pearse
2418	10:00 Heuston-Limerick	15:30 Limerick-Heuston
2419	08:15 Tralee-Heuston	19:00 Heuston-Tralee
2420	11:30 Cork-Heuston	18:30 Heuston-Cork
2421	08:20 Limerick-Heuston	18:45 Heuston-Limerick
2422	09:00 Galway-Pearse	19:00 Pearse-Galway
2423	07:35 Galway-Pearse	14:30 Pearse-Galway SC
2424	Spare	SC
2425	09:10 Heuston-Waterford	16:15 Waterford-Heuston SC
2426	07:50 Limerick-Heuston	14:10 Heuston-Limerick SC
2427	07:30 Rosslare-Connolly	18:25 Pearse-Rosslare SC
2428	08:35 Westport-Pearse	15:00 Pearse-Westport SC
2092	Replaced 2419 as above	
2093	10:45 Heuston-Cork	15:30 Cork-Heuston
268N	08:30 Connolly-Belfast	11:30 Belfast-Connolly
	14:30 Connolly-Belfast	17:30 Belfast-Connolly

Notes: Car 2416 went light daily Limerick-Cork (Night Mail). Outside period shown 2408 and 2415 work on alternate days on 18:30 Cork-Rosslare and 18:00 Cork-Rosslare. SC= Snack car. Interestingly, the empty coaches of the 17:45 (cf. 2416) went to Cork daily on the 03:10 cement train.

## STATION SURVEY

### Boyle

The Longford & Sligo Extension of the Midland Great Western Railway branch line from Mullingar was opened to traffic on 3 December 1862. Although the latter was a double line, the extension was single - apart from a stretch of some 6 miles from Carrignagat Junction to Ballisodare to Sligo. (This was singled in 1958, while the Mullingar-Longford was singled in the mid-1920s by the GSR.) Thus Boyle was always on a single line, and being a place of some importance it was a block section. On the Mullingar side the section extended to Carrick-on-Shannon (8 miles), while on the other side the section terminated at lonely Kilfree Junction, near Gurteen. But with the closure of the Ballaghaderreen branch in 1963 the section became Boyle-Ballymote, a distance of some 14 miles.



While not exactly straightforward, the layout is none too extensive, there being relatively little siding accommodation. The appearance, however, is deceptive and the station is busy and serves the thriving town of Boyle which is reasonably close by. Fertiliser traffic is one of the staples and there is a good general traffic. But grain undoubtedly brings the station its greatest revenue. There have long been two mills in the town - Candon's and Stewart's - while some more grain is handled for Messrs Laird of Drumshanbo. At present Boyle, but not Carrick-on-Shannon, has bulk unloading facilities. During the grain season it is not unusual for 10 to 20 wagons of wheat and barley to be dealt with daily, while the general traffic can bring the total of wagons in the station up to the not inconsiderable total of 40 covered, with perhaps a dozen or more open wagons as well. The grain is unloaded from wagons to lorries for transport to Messrs Stewarts premises (which, incidentally, boasted an electricity generator which supplied the town until comparatively recently), and Messrs Candons have a store just beside the station itself.

There are two passenger platforms, the main buildings being on the up side. The up platform is used for virtually all trains as it is more convenient to the station exit. At the Sligo end of the down platform,

tucked away behind a now redundant water tank, is “Boyle Station Cabin”; it boasts a two-way stairs from ground level, affording access from either side. The frame has 26 levers and below is a list of them

No.	Description	Requires
1	Spare	
2	Up Main Home signal	8
3	Up Starting signal (Main or Loop)	19 or nil
4	Loop Up Home signal	9, 8
5	Spare	
6	Disc signal from North Siding	10
7	Spare	
8	FP lock on No.9 Points	
9	Loop North crossover	
10	North Siding trap points	
11	Spare	
12	Spare	
13	Disc signal from Goods Store	14, 18
14	Goods Store points	
15	Disc signal from Cattle Bank	16
16	Cattle Bank points	
17	FP lock on No.16 and No.18 points	
18	Platform crossover	19
19	Loop South points	
20	FP lock on No.19 points	
21	Disc signal to North Siding	10
22	Signal Main to Goods Store or Loop	14 or 17
23	Loop Down Home signal	17, 20
24	Down Starting signals (Main or Loop)	nil or 9
25	Main Down Home signal	19, 20
26	Main to Goods Store or Loop	19, 20, 22

From the traffic point of view Boyle is very interesting in that it has its own ballast train. The wagons are based in Boyle while Sligo shed provides the motive power. Stone ballast is provided at the Roadstone Quarry at Tawnytaskin, near Lough Key, on the Boyle/Sligo road, and it is brought to the station in railway lorries and stockpiled on the “ballast bank” (the cattle bank). Messrs Roadstone provide a loader as required to transfer the ballast from bank to train. This train supplements the efforts of the well-known Lecarrow train, and its activities are confined to the Mullingar-Sligo section. Its existence, however, merely adds to the interest of Boyle as a busy provincial station.

### **NORTHERN IRELAND RAILWAYS - A RESURRECTION**

The story of the railways in Northern Ireland over most of this century has been none too happy. Since the early 1930s - despite the efforts of so many dedicated men - the railways have been the poor relations of road transport. The establishment in 1935 of the NIRTB (Northern Ireland Road Transport Board) was intended to stop the wasteful competition between road and rail but, in the event, this competition was enhanced if anything. The new concern was completely road-minded and saw its function not as a supplement to the main arteries of the railway system, but as a primary transport network in its own right. Attempts at integration of services were half-hearted, to say the least. Then came the War and for a time the railways came into their own once more. Good profits were made and

vast traffic was carried but at the cost of incurring a massive backlog of repairs and renewals to be carried out at inflated prices.

In 1948 the example of Britain was followed and the railways and road services were nationalised, though the scheme left untouched the Great Northern Railway services along with those of Belfast Corporation Transport. The myth of a unified, integrated, rationalised transport system was once again resurrected - the new Ulster Transport Authority would end transport competition for good!! It did, too, in certain areas - by the expedient of closing most of the former Belfast & County Down company's lines. But some good resulted in the early stages as well. The Bangor Line was dieselised; new locos ("Jeeps" ordered before nationalisation by the NCC) came, as did some excellent coaches.

However, before long the pendulum once again swung the other way, and more closures were the order of the day. Lines which disappeared included much of the old GNR system in the North, which had been absorbed by the UTA in 1958. Finally all that remained were the Larne, Derry and Portrush lines (ex-NCC); the Bangor line (ex-BCDR) and the "Border" line - the Northern Ireland segment of the Belfast-Dublin main line of the GNR. The Antrim line of the GNR was retained as a freight link. But lines, locos and rolling stock were in very poor shape.

Then it was decided to wind up the UTA and the future for the few remaining railways looked bleak. The Government statements as they came were not too encouraging. On the railway itself there were increasing problems with railcars, while the cumulative effect of years of improvised permanent way maintenance caused the imposition of a 50 miles per hour limit on the Larne line and on most of the Derry line, which had hitherto been noted for brisk running. And then, when all seemed lost, the Government came to the rescue. Despite the completion of the first stretches of motorway and their extension road congestion was worsening, and the value of the railways was everyday becoming more apparent. The railways, now under the aegis of Northern Ireland Railways (the bus operations having been hived off to Ulsterbus), were given a long overdue injection of capital for improvements.

But this is very recent history indeed, and the money granted is at present being spent to revitalise the truncated rail network. Before long there will be a continuous welded rail depot at Larne, and a new concrete sleeper plant at Ballymena. For the last two years at least three steam ballast trains have been at work, making up past neglect, particularly on the Dublin line. As we have previously reported new Plasser & Theurer packing and lining machines have been obtained, and their efforts (at times supplemented by those of equipment loaned by CIÉ) have resulted in a marked improvement of track quality.

An improvement which has not yet been realised to the full (because of a labour dispute over single manning) is the delivery of diesel-hydraulic shunting locos, Nos. 1-3 (English Electric, Newton-le-Willows; works numbers 1266-8 in order). The delivery dates were 31 July (at Belfast) and 27 September and 4 October (both at Larne). Since No.2 arrived the ex-SL&NCR 0-6-4T, No.27, has not been used on shunting duties at York Road.

For main line use three new express locos were ordered from English Electric, who sub-contracted the work to the Hunslet Engine Co. However, as Hunslet has no workshop space available the locos are being built at the British Rail loco works at Doncaster! They will be 1,350 hp Bo-Bo diesel-electrics with English Electric type 8C3VT engines and the delivery date is mid-1970. One will be used on the Belfast-Dublin "Enterprise", for which a new train is on order. An unusual feature is the provision of buckeye couplers.

The new coaches are being built in the British Rail works at Derby, renewing the long-standing connections between that works and Northern Ireland. Only the dining car, of which a description has not yet been released, is being completely finished at Derby, the remaining seven vehicles being sent to NIR in shell form; they will be finished in the former BCDR Works at Queen's Quay. The first was

delivered on 18 November, and the others are following at intervals. They are reported to be 63ft long, double glazed and fitted with buckeye couplers. In addition there is provision for coupling to a normal vehicle with a screw coupling. The shells are stated to have cost £15,000 each and a further £13,000 would apparently be charged were British Rail to finish them completely. At present the Queen's Quay shops are isolated from the rest of the railway system as a result of the closure of the Belfast Central Railway, so all the vehicles have to be brought to and fro by road - a costly and inconvenient exercise.

Until very recently, it seemed completely impossible - despite official statements implying the contrary - that the Belfast Central Railway would ever be restored. But on 29 September, Messrs Glover Site Investigations Limited, of Balnamore, Ballymoney, made some trial borings of the bed of the River Lagan, using the old Lagan Viaduct as a working platform. This bridge - never very strong - is in a poor condition and would probably have to be replaced to allow the railway to re-open. The 'missing' bridge over Middlepath Street would also have to be replaced by another, high enough to allow double-deck buses to pass underneath, and thereby causing an awkward gradient from it to the site of the former Ballymacarrett Junction. A disagreeable feature of the scheme, in so far as it has been revealed, is the proposition to replace Great Victoria Street station by one on the Central Line at Maysfields. This would be an adverse step in view of the ever-increasing number of commuters who are using the present station. The benefits to the Bangor Line would be immense if it were once again joined to the 'outer world', so to speak. But it must be recorded that its period of isolation has at times been a blessing in disguise, as its rolling stock could not be pillaged to help out on the often-short NCC lines!

The Bangor line is to be re-signalled, too. It was the first in Ireland to have automatic signals but the equipment is life-expired. No details of the replacement apparatus, nor of the date of commencement of its installation, have yet been released.

Finally, construction work is well advanced on the new station at Portadown, although security restrictions are quite severe and only those details which can be noted from a passing train are available. So far, an island platform, about 10 coaches long, has been built, together with a shorter single platform likely to be on a loop on the up side. There is no sign yet of a signal cabin, sidings or other facilities, and because of construction work all around the site it is impossible to forecast the eventual track layout. The long platform is a praiseworthy effort, for the UTA tendency was to skimp on this vital detail and cause untold confusion and delays as a result.

Thus it is obvious the phoenix has arisen from the ashes, more or less, and the future looks distinctly rosier on NIR. We look forward to reporting further progress on these new facilities and to announcing further innovations which will revitalise the North's railways.

### **COMPLETING COOK'S COVERAGE**

Cook's Continental Timetable, that monthly which is an invaluable guide to the European (mainland) railways, has - from the January 1970 issue - had its coverage increased to include the main lines of Ireland and Britain. Appearing monthly, the timetable can incorporate recent changes and in this way it can be often more useful than the railway administrations' own timetables. While the coverage of British Rail is quite extensive, the Irish services are accommodated on two pages and consequently the tables are rather lacking in detail. For instance, the Dublin-Cork table shows only Portlaoise, Limerick Junction and Mallow, omitting such important stations as Thurles and Portlaoise, while Dublin-Galway shows only Athlone and Mullingar and omits Athenry. It is to be hoped that more detail can be added in a later issue, but meanwhile the timetable as a whole is still good value at 15/- per issue, giving as it does services for virtually the entire continent of Europe, including most shipping services.