

THE

# **IRISH RAILFANS' NEWS**

Volume 16

May 1970

No.2

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### EDITORIAL

In this issue of the IRN we have given the feature section a rather different slant than usual though, as it happens, demands for news space have made it smaller than in most issues. Many of our readers live in Britain and can only sample the delights (or otherwise!) of Irish railways during the brief course of a holiday. They are, of course, aware of the "rambler" type tickets available throughout the country but perhaps, as they ponder on our truncated railway system, they may think that to spend a holiday armed with a rambler ticket would be to waste time, money and effort. This is indeed not so, and to help any reader who may be at the stage of filling in the details of his 1970 holiday programme, we print an article recounting a trip made with a runabout ticket last summer on NIR. This will also interest the amasser of railway detail, and it was with difficulty that we restrained ourselves sufficiently to retain the article until now!

Other articles touch on the activities of the societies and on the Irish railway preservation scene, while there is a brief account (again of last year's event) which may stimulate readers into seeking tickets to CIÉ's "Open Day" at Inchicore Works - a day when the carnival atmosphere hits the normally staid atmosphere of the engineering "nerve centre" of CIÉ. In sum, there is plenty to see and do in the Irish railway sphere, even in the 1970s.

Still on the subject of service to our readers, we have pleasure in making two further announcements. First, in our news columns mention is made of the CIÉ fares booklet which has been very widely circulated among the public. By courtesy of the Public Relations Department of CIÉ we have the opportunity to widen the booklet's circulation (though ever so slightly compared with the company's efforts!) and we enclose a complimentary copy with this issue. This is a very useful little document and we wish readers many hours of happy travelling at the many excellent bargain rates described in its pages. Second, at the back of this issue will be found an advertising supplement. The suggestion that the IRN run a small advertisements service has long been considered by the committee and recent repeated requests have spurred us into action. As from this issue, each issue of the IRN will have a "small ad" page at the back. This will be printed on coloured paper and may be discarded if a reader wishes when having his copies bound. The ad page will not be numbered and will be additional to the now standard 25 editorial pages of the IRN.

It is our intention not to eat into the editorial space of the magazine, but to offer the reader something extra - without charge. Advertisers will find details of rates and conditions on the first such page (following Page 25 of this issue). It is our hope that the service will be utilised by those with material for sale, or with railway "wants", or who are soliciting information for their research, and who wish to have access to the many people who are deeply interested in Irish railways and who naturally read the IRN. We say this in all humility - our subscription lists are a concrete proof of the value of our magazine.

## SOME ARTICLES OF IRISH INTEREST

### **Modern Railways**

September 1969      New Minister for Transport (Paragraph)

### **Railway World**

August 1969      CIÉ Summer Dublin Suburban Timetable (Paragraph)

January 1970      50<sup>th</sup> Issue of IRRS Journal (Paragraph)

February 1970      Cork to Belfast With Diesel Traction (Article)

Ballykelly Rail/Air Crossing (Article)

17:52 from Connolly Station (Pictures)

Irish Miscellany (Pictures)

Irish Railways in 1869 (Article)

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We thank Brian Hughes for the Article on NIR/Summer 1969.

## BOOK REVIEWS

### **“Sligo, Leitrim and Northern Counties Railway”, N.W. Sprinks, (IRRIS, London Area)**

To the railway enthusiast who travelled on or knew the “Sligo-Leitrim” line it hardly seems thirteen years since this independent standard-gauge railway (Ireland’s last such line) closed. This gap has now been well filled by the publication by the London Area of the IRRS of a complete history of the line, and it must be said straight away that Mr Sprinks has done full justice to a most interesting subject.

The book deals with the line in ten chapters covering such items as history, description of the line, locos, rolling stock, road services, etc. In particular the chapters on locos and rolling stock are to be highly commended. The detailed information is well laid out and is complemented by a well-chosen selection of half-tone illustrations. The chapter dealing with the day-to-day working of the line includes a treatment of such detailed points as services, tickets, fares, etc.

Totalling 154 pages in all the book has over thirty pages’ equivalent of illustrative matter, line and half-tone. Many of the latter are exceptionally interesting. The line blocks include reproductions of notices of closure and services and also a number of station layout diagrams. Some of the latter are rather small, even if well drawn and printed. There is a map and a very fine frontispiece illustration but no drawings of rolling stock. This book certainly captures the feeling of the Sligo-Leitrim and can be strongly recommended as excellent value to both those who knew the line and those who may not have had that pleasure.

### **“Steam Over Belfast Lough”, R.M. Arnold (Oakwood Press)**

This illustrated book of 84 pages (plus 5 pages of appendix) deals with locomotive working and performance on the railways running along the shores of Belfast Lough - the old NCC Larne line and the B&CDR Bangor branch. The text is liberally interspersed with details of logs, and there is much interesting comment on various drivers and their styles of driving. The photographs cover a wide range of locos which operated on these lines. The text also deals with coaching stock used on the Lough lines. The production is good, even if rather on the spartan side.

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# News Section

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## CÓRAS IOMPAIR ÉIREANN

### **Start Of A Scheme**

The latest developments in the Ballinacourty scheme are covered in a special news feature article in the following pages, but one item of news deserves pride of place: the operation of dolomite specials has commenced. On and from Monday, 6 April, two trains a day have run from Bennettsbridge to Waterford and on to Ballinacourty. The factory will not be in commission for some time yet, and the purpose is to stockpile a supply of dolomite at the site. For the same reasons, occasional oil trains have run from Cork to Ballinacourty, where there is storage capacity for a large supply.

### **News Of Loughrea**

Recent changes at Loughrea include the removal of one release turnout at the carriage-dock end, and the relaying of the remaining turnout in bull-head rail. The single remaining "top-hat" point lever was also removed and new steel gates to a car unloading area (the old carriage dock) and to the cattle bank approach have been provided. There is a steady inwards sundries traffic to Loughrea - rather a rarity in these days of containers and bulk traffic - about 6 laden wagons a day. In 1964 the daily average was only a third of that number. The branch has been provided with the new concrete "whistle" boards. The track between Dunsandle and Loughrea is very well ballasted, while the other section is also in quite good condition. All switches and crossings in Loughrea station are now in bull-head rail - a far cry from Midland branch line days!

G Class locos are not used on the line now - the line at present is worked by C202 (with "composite" 1910, as usual, for passengers). The old GS&WR brake van (which was labelled for use on the Castleisland branch) has been sent to Mullingar for scrapping; a GSR 20-ton van is in its place. Although Dunsandle recently dispatched 10 wagons of cattle this traffic is down a little, though there are new competitive rates for direct shipments to Glasgow.

### **A Wave Of Publicity**

Various aspects of CIÉ's advertisings and publicity have from time to time been criticised in these pages, and it is pleasant to be able to praise heartily an aggressive publicity move by the company. Last year a booklet was produced, detailing the wide range of fares and concession tickets available to rail travellers. Now, a second and more polished edition has been produced and, instead of as with many other pieces of literature being left for interested people (the more or less converted) to collect, the company has carried out a massive "mail shot", a copy being posted to each household in the country at large (the nine counties of Ulster excepted). Thus very many people who rarely if ever enter a station or CIÉ office were suddenly made aware of the often very attractive rates available. Initial comment from recipients has been favourable and it is to be hoped that traffic will show a corresponding increase.

### **Off The Road**

On 17 February the 15:25 Cabra to Arklow goods became derailed in Pearse Station. Nine wagons came off, blocking the down line. Single line working between the station and Grand Canal Street was in force from 16:00 to 20:00 causing a good deal of disruption to both Northern and South-Eastern suburban trains. The line was reopened by the 15:50 Galway to Dun Laoghaire Pier (B188 + 6 bogies + HV) which left Pearse Station at 20:10. Shunting in the station yard was interfered with until the morning of 19 February, points having been damaged by the derailment.

## **Crane Crash**

On 26 March the Easter rush to the West was disrupted when the jib of a road crane tangled with the railway bridge across Amiens Street. The force of the collision damaged the advertisement hoarding on the bridge and the crane collided with one of the pillars. The incident occurred at 18:45 and a detailed examination of the bridge was very promptly carried out, after which the “all-clear” was given for the resumption of traffic. The 18:45 to Galway (altered to 18:55 for that day), B174 + B153 + 10 bogies, was blocked in Tara Street and did not pass Connolly Station until 19:40. The 19:00 to Westport (19:10 that day), B127 + LV + 9 bogies + HV, left Pearse Station at 19:45. The 14:50 ex Westport terminated at Connolly Station, while the 18:35 ex Bray ended its journey at Pearse Station, as did the 18:55 ex Dalkey. The set of the latter formed the 19:00 to Bray which, however, started from Pearse Station at 19:30.

## **Yellow Notice**

Since February an additional notice has been appearing on all coaching stock. It bears in prominent black letters on a yellow background the legend “Must Not Run in Vacuum Braked Train after This Date”, and is followed by an additional sticker reading, for example, “Aug. 1970”. The purpose is to ensure that all vacuum-braked stock has its brake gear overhauled and adjusted at the necessary intervals. Hitherto this was attended to by “Brake Gangs” who travelled throughout the system accompanied by large tool vans. They adjusted brakes on all vehicles they encountered and code-marked them accordingly. These gangs are now dispersed, many of their members being appointed train examiner at various stations.

## **Bridge At Portarlington**

Overbridge 119 at Portarlington (which carries Station Road across the railway) has been demolished, the work starting in mid-February. The object of the work is to provide a much wider span to the bridge, for which purpose the new down side abutment is being set back considerably. When the new bridge is in place it will be possible to realign the tracks through the station and raise the speed limit above the present 50 mph - admittedly at the expense of sacrificing part of the very wide down platform.

## **Hard At It**

Three steam breakdown cranes were in action on Sunday, 8 February, though happily none was on breakdown duty. The Athlone crane was at Portarlington to relay some pointwork on the down side. The Limerick crane, at present on loan to Cork, (the crane from Cork is still under repair), was near Cherryville Junction, renewing underbridge 93 on the main line. On the same day the 35-ton Inchicore crane was observed at Athy returning from duties near Mullinavat, on the Waterford line.

## **Some Good Notices**

Several periodicals have recently published articles heaping long overdue praise on CIÉ’s efforts. These reflect the greatly improved image of CIÉ (in the railway sphere, at least; the tone of comment on the city bus services is quite understandably not anything like so favourable). For years CIÉ was the “whipping boy” of many writers with grudges to work off. Suddenly the gripes have receded and the good points of the CIÉ services are being emphasised. All this must be a source of considerable gratification to the CIÉ officials. We refer readers particularly to an article in the 13 March issue of Business and Finance.

## **A Little Too Late**

At a meeting of the economics society at University College, Dublin, at the end of February, the Assistant General Manager (Research and Development) of CIÉ advanced the suggestion that the railway network in the West of Ireland be “developed with cheap transportation costs so as to

encourage industry there.” The speaker, Dr Noel Whelan, remarked that “it was a pity that the railway had not been regarded in a different light over the years.” This suggestion that the railways play an integral part of the social and economic development of what is largely a depressed region is interesting coming as it does from an officer of CIÉ, but one cannot help observing that CIÉ, given any amount of hard effort, is in no position to help any region with a subsidy in the form of reduced transport rates. Such a policy must originate with the Government which, at the time the railway system was very largely intact and could have helped in the development of much wider areas, unfortunately showed no signs that it regarded the railway system as anything other than something which must be made to operate at a profit, irrespective of the cost in social terms. However, times have changed and Dr Whelan’s ideas may be given some deserved thought, but degradations such as the closing of the Harcourt Street line (to cite the prime example) cannot, unfortunately, be undone.

### **Concrete Sleepers**

Further stretches of the Up Main Cork-Dublin line between Hazelhatch and Lucan South have been relaid with concrete sleepers and flat-bottomed rails. All the work has been carried out on Sundays, the Civil Engineer having full possession of the line for the purpose. Regular trains were passed over the down line, over which single-line working was in force.

### **Cork City Railways**

Further relaying of the Cork City Railways is taking place, this time within the gate of Cork Goods Yard. Several accidents to road vehicles, fortunately none serious, have taken place recently despite the use of two flagmen instead of one as heretofore. Large quantities of fertiliser traffic is still handled at the Albert Quay depot, and to transfer it to road transport at some other point would throw a large volume of heavy traffic onto streets already seriously congested. A fully satisfactory alternative will be very hard to find. In the meantime, however, from the enthusiast’s point of view, a fascinating anachronism survives.

### **Loco News**

B222 - formerly C222 - the second C class loco to be fitted with a General Motors engine, has gone into service, as have A30R, A32R, A33R, A37R, A57R and A60R. The present total of re-engined A class locomotives in service is 22. Locos at present receiving attention in the shops are A22, A28, A29, A44 and A46; the last-mentioned is virtually ready to enter traffic. These re-engined units are being used on very varied duties. Regular passenger turns include the “Enterprise” expresses, the 07:20, 17:07 and 17:26 to Bray, the 08:35 ex Westport and the 11:30 ex Cork. The “AR” locos are regularly seen on the 19:50 goods from Houston Station to Cork, and the 21:50, 19:30 and 20:20 goods trains to Wexford, Sligo and Westport, respectively.

Sulzer B class locos are being fitted with vigilance equipment similar to that provided in A class locos. B110 has been reported painted in the variation of black-and-tan livery which is currently being applied to the “AR” locos. On 28 January B112 worked a ballast train to Skerries, the working being the first of a Sulzer B on the Northern line.

### **New Trains**

On 1 March CIÉ introduced a new Sunday train from Sligo at 09:50, arriving at Pearse Station at 13:25. It serves all stations and makes the crossing with the established 10:30 down Sunday train at Multyfarnham. The return working leaves Pearse Station at 18:20; the crossing point is Longford and Sligo is reached at 21:50. This very commendable move was complemented by improvements in the service to Ballina. A train is provided from there on weekdays at 08:15, connecting at Claremorris with the 08:35 Westport-Dublin train. In the reverse direction a train at 22:30 ex Claremorris provides a Ballina connection out of the 19:00 Pearse Station - Westport.

## New Locos In Trouble

On at least two occasions there have been rather troublesome failures of the "AR" locos. On 4 February A60R failed at Lurgan on the Up 17:30 "Enterprise" from Belfast. A long delay occurred before a loco was sent from Dundalk (after the Down 17:30 "Enterprise" had passed) to retrieve the train. The duty fell to B142, which brought the train south, arriving at Connolly Station some two hours late. Less than a fortnight later there was a second "AR" failure, this time on a goods working. A59R - one of the first re-engined locos to appear - failed on a special for Shelton Abbey and again a relief loco had to be found. A8 was given the task. But it must be remarked that failures are still relatively rare phenomenon.

## Limerick Junction

This station is still in the news. An Up Main Advanced Starting signal has been in use since 24 February. It is situated almost a quarter-mile in advance of the direct Limerick Loop Points and it is to permit an up train from Limerick to stand on the main line rather than on the loop, thereby blocking it to a down Limerick-bound train. Railcar operation of the Limerick - Limerick Junction - Waterford - Rosslare Harbour service finally ceased in the New Year. To permit locomotives to run round trains from Limerick more conveniently, a new crossover connecting the Limerick Bay Platform line with the adjacent middle siding has been provided.

## Interference With Signals

During the week ending 21 February, trains on the East Wall Junction to Howth Junction section of the Northern main line were seriously delayed by vandalism. Signal cables were interfered with, putting some of the automatic signals out of order, and absolute block working had to be resorted to. Work is now in progress to put the cables underground, thereby making them less conspicuous.

## AnCo At Inchicore

In co-operation with AnCo (An Chomhairle Oiliúna - The Industrial Training Organisation), CIÉ has established an impressive apprentice training centre at Inchicore Works. Two modern buildings have been erected behind the Diesel 1 Shop to house the centre, which was officially opened in March by the Minister for Labour.

## Railcar B (2509)

On 3 February railcar 2509 (ex SL&NCR "B") travelled from its base, Rosslare, to Dublin.

## Coaching Stock

Former suburban composite coaches in the number series 2162-2171 have been renumbered in the series 1601-1610. As the renumbering was apparently random we give the details in the table:

Old No.	New No.	Old No.	New No.
2162	1604	2167	1607
2163	1605	2168	1603
2164	1601	2169	1608
2165	1602	2170	1609
2166	1606	2171	1610

Composite coaches Nos. 2172, 2175 and 2177 have been altered. The first class has been put in the open part of the coach, the standard class accommodation being transferred to the compartments. The open saloon now has 17 first class seats, formerly used in the front compartments of the railcars. The standard class seats are covered in imitation leather; as they are in compartments designed for first class there is rather more leg room than usual.

Craven first No.1148 has entered service. It is similar to 1147, and another, 1149, is in course of

conversion. Standard compartment/brake No.2490 has been repainted. At present alterations are being carried out to the 4-wheeled luggage vans in the 2700 series. The windows beside the doors on 2701 have been replaced by panels while there are only two windows in each side of 2747 - giving a much better exterior appearance. No.2748 has been repainted but not otherwise altered, while 2741 has had its sides coated with compressed cork from floor level up to the bottom of the windows. Bogie coaches withdrawn include 4008 (ex 1123), 4011 (ex 1129), 4014 (ex 1290), 4016 (ex 1294), C66N and 47N.

### **Station Agitation**

Residents' Associations at Shankill and Clontarf are pressing CIÉ to provide railway halts in their areas. The former would be an entirely new stopping place, although for long there was a junction at nearby Shanganagh, and it seems likely to be needed sooner or later, to judge from the great housing development in the region. There was a halt at Clontarf until 1957, when it was closed by the GNR due to an alleged lack of support. It was a simple affair with timber platforms on both sides and timber structures and nowadays virtually no trace of the halt remains. With the integration of Northern and South-Eastern section suburban services it may well be that sufficient traffic would now exist to justify the provision of a new halt.

### **PW Works**

For some time Dublin Corporation workmen have been engaged in laying a large drain on the Up side of the railway between Ballsbridge and Sydney Parade, the work involving the severing of the Ballsbridge Siding for a short time. In addition all buildings on the Up platform of the closed Sandymount station have been demolished but, oddly, when the excavations at that point had been completed the hole was filled in and given a covering of tarmacadam. A little beyond MP 1 $\frac{3}{4}$  the drain burrowed under the line. Up and Down trains were subject to a 10 mph speed restriction.

On 25 January the girders of underbridge 121, near Killiney, were replaced by concrete beams. A17 with the Inchicore crane was present there and at the renewal of overbridge 95 - a footbridge across the line just north of Sandycove.

## **NORTHERN IRELAND RAILWAYS**

### **Bangor Tailboards**

Following tests during December last, tailboards have replaced oil tail lamps on all the Bangor Line trains. The boards are white squares with a central circle of red glass. They are mounted so that the latter is in line with the off-side head lamp. After dark the lamp, which is individually dip-switched, is switched to dip at the rear end, thus ensuring the regulation red light. This ingenious idea has entirely displaced the dirty and troublesome oil lamps.

### **Central Railway**

The Minister for Development, during a debate on the accounts of the Transport Holding Company on 26 March, said that he expected a report "soon" about the proposal to re-open the Belfast Central Railway. Most observers now agree that the line will be reinstated but reservations are being expressed about the merits of the proposed Central Station at Maysfields compared with the present location at Great Victoria Street.

### **Spoil Trains**

It had been forecast that the contract would be fulfilled by the end of last February, but a shortage of suitable spoil caused a temporary reduction in the number of trains during January and February. In one week only 13 of the scheduled 54 trains ran. It is now expected that the operation will cease at the end of April.

## New Rails

A consignment of new 95lb bullhead rails was delivered at Larne Harbour on 16 February. The rails are marked "Workington - 95 BA 1970" but omit the usual initial letters of the railway company. The manufacture of bullhead rails in 1970 must come as a considerable surprise as the flat-bottomed pattern has virtually ousted bullhead and the latter is hardly suitable for the proposed adoption by the NIR of continuous rail welding. Some of the new rails have already been laid at Ballyclare Junction. It is understood that a total of 30 miles of new rails will be delivered over a period.

## Seagoe Deviation

The new track deviation near Seagoe (mentioned in our last issue) was brought into use on Sunday, 25 January. Lifting of the rails on the original route was completed on 19 February.

## Barrier Crossings

Automatic barriers are being installed at Trooperslane to replace the present manual level crossing gates. This is the first new set to be installed since the Hixon disaster, the first in Northern Ireland in a built-up area, and the first on the former NCC lines. The installation does not seem to have been mentioned to the public as yet and it may well arouse local hostility, in view of the apparently underhand approach taken by the company. Although apparently complete for a lengthy period neither Drumbane nor Trummery Crossings near Moira, on the Dublin line, have been brought into use.

## Service Cut

On and from 7 March the 12:35 Belfast to Bangor and return working at 13:15 from Bangor were cancelled on Saturdays only. Those trains have been poorly patronised since the advent of the 5-day week.

## Portrush Branch

A visit on 17 March found MPD cars 63 and 47 at work on the branch, and for part of the previous university term a three-piece set was on duty. On the above date the 11:51 ex Portrush had 30 passengers, of whom 27 alighted at the new University Halt. All the evidence is that the revival of the line has been a success.

## Carriage Stock

Nos. 340, 342, 392 and 472 have been repainted in all-over maroon, complete with monograms and a 4" grey band along the waists. Nos. 360, 274 and 352 are to follow; 198 was considered but it is to be scrapped instead. It is the unique ex-NCC first/brake, latterly relegated to ballast trains. The repainted coaches are all ex-NCC, 392 and 472 being survivors of the famous "North Atlantic Express"; the others are Derby-built coaches with aluminium panels. Unfortunately the paint has been applied over rotten woodwork, this and other blemishes destroying a superficially excellent image. It is understood that up to 20 coaches will receive this treatment, mainly for use as extra trailers behind diesel sets during the summer. A carriage underframe, newly converted to a rail wagon and renumbered C302 was observed at Antrim on 22 February. There was no trace of its original number.

## A Note On Portadown

There has been little change in appearance but track-laying commenced on 16 March. The final layout is still uncertain. Notices on the site state that the works are costing £140,000, this being met by the Craigavon Development Commission. The station opens in June.

## Station Alterations

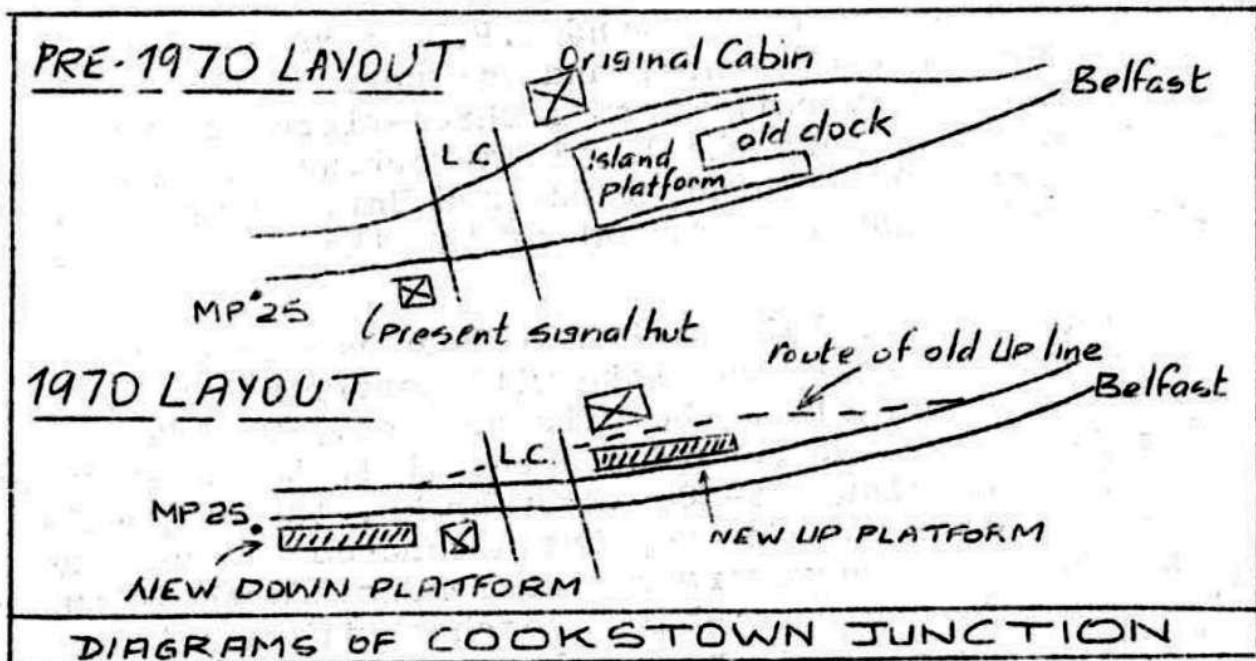
Bellarena: The refuge siding on the Up side has been lifted.

Coleraine: The tip head siding at the Derry end has been lifted out of the long grass. It was formerly

used for dumping wagons of sand taken off the track at Downhill where the line runs along the edge of the beach. The headshunt in the former goods yard has also been cut.

Cookstown Junction: The proposal to close this remote halt has been dropped. Two 30ft long wooden platforms have been built to replace the former island platform and the Up line has been diverted to pass over the site of the former down platform, without disturbing the Down main line track.

The new platforms have ramps at one end only and are so short that it is possible to stop a train so that no door is at the platform! Many railcars and trailers have their doors more than 30ft apart, so the driver's judgement when stopping will be of even more critical importance than usual. The new Up platform was first used on 9 March.



Craigavon: There is no sign of the promised new station and it would appear that it may have become confused with the new station at Portadown.

Castlerock: The manual barrier installation here comprises four half barriers, complete with flashing markers and also large red flashers at the roadside.

Derry: The station was painted during February in colours similar to those previously used at York Road - cream roof and walls, with blue pillars, doors, etc. It is a very refreshing change from the gloomy grey and green adopted by the UTA.

Antrim: A handsome new signal cabin is being built beside the level crossing, on the down side. It is a red-brick structure with a slightly pitched roof and is a remarkable contrast with the corrugated-iron shacks which have been made to suffice at Meigh, Cookstown Junction and other places in recent times. There is already a fine modern cabin in Antrim, but it was built at the junction between the GNR and NCC lines to control both yards. With the GNR line and yard now little used - apart from the two nightly goods trains each way - the station can be better controlled from the new site. An economy move made possible by the change will be the withdrawal of the gatekeeper, the gates being in future under the control of the signalman.

Portadown: The old loco roundhouse has still not been demolished.

York Road: Platform No.2 has been restored to use following the straightening operation mentioned in our last issue. It has only been shortened by about 30 feet, not as much as previously anticipated. Since

then, platform No.1, its track and most of the adjacent walls, have been razed to clear the site of the new diesel running shed. A new boiler house - to supply steam for heating purposes to the station - is being built nearby, as the present one, adjacent to Duncrue Street Factory, must be demolished. (The new boiler house will also supply the York Road Works and, very probably, the adjacent Midland Hotel.)

The "East Siding" has been cut off at the station end and the sidings outside the works have been lifted. As a temporary measure the former No.1 platform track has been slewed to connect with the works turntable. An extension to the workshops is also under construction, east of the present buildings. It is understood that the traverser from the Duncrue Street factory will be installed here and also that the vacuum-operated turntable from the steam loco running shed will also be brought over to the station proper. The turntable will still find uses after the final demise of the steam locos, as railcars and their control trailers will occasionally need turning.

### **Loco News**

The remaining steam locos, Nos. 4, 5, 6, 51, 53 and 55, seem to be living on in borrowed time. The late finish of the spoil train contract (mentioned earlier) has kept them at work but all are in poor condition with various knocks and unevenly set valves. It is suggested that two of them will be overhauled when the contract ends and be stored for use on special trains. Nos. 10 and 50 are presently stopped with defects but may not be repaired. Nos. 3 and 56 are to be sold for scrap. No.54 was scrapped at York Road during March; its wheels have been acquired by the Railway Preservation Society of Ireland, whose chairman, Mr Roy Grayson, has purchased ex SL&NCR 0-6-4T No.27. It is now stored at Carrickfergus. The remaining ex-GNR locos, Nos. 37 and 49, which have lain at Grosvenor Road goods yard since Adelaide loco depot closed have been moved back up the third line to Adelaide for scrapping.

### **Diesel Locos**

No.28, the "Harlandic" 1-A-A-1, which has shunted at Grosvenor Road and Great Victoria Street for many years failed and was replaced by diesel-hydraulic loco No.2 on 14 March. Nos. 1 and 3 remain at York Road and are employed on shunting duties and other "odd jobs". The 0-6-0 "Harlandic" diesel-mechanical loco, No.17, has been sold for scrap after years out of use.

### **Railcar Notes**

MPD: Conversion of non-corridor to corridor units continues. No.47 finally appeared on 7 March and No.48 is now being done. No.49, the last of the non-corridor units in use, has retired and is now awaiting conversion. No.36 returned to service following an overhaul on 7 March. The remains of No.37 - a fire victim - have been sold for scrap. Non-corridor trailer No.537 has also been converted. Recent journeys on these trains have revealed the disquieting fact that their performance is often very poor indeed - even on sets unencumbered by trailers.

MED: No.8 is being overhauled and repainted.

NCC: Nos. 4, 6, and 7 are now all burnt out and are lying behind the loco shed at York Road. The fire-raising activities of children have wrought havoc with railcars in the north recently. Railcar No.1 and trailer No.545 are still lying at Ballymena and it is learned that the former vehicle is to be disposed of. In view of its great importance as an historic unit it is hoped that it will be preserved and not scrapped.

### **SPECIAL NEWS FEATURE - PROJECT DOLOMITE**

To follow up the often extensive coverage given in earlier issues of The Irish Railfans' News we have pleasure in devoting a special article to the very important dolomite/magnesite which is resulting in the creation of new centres of prime railway interest at Bennettsbridge, Ballinacourty and Tivoli. Since our

last report preparations have been proceeding apace and below we report on the position as it was at the beginning of April. Works are very nearly complete and, indeed, the first trial trains have been run. A trial dolomite train was operated on 10 March, and there has also been a trial oil train. To deal with the subject we report on developments under the headings of the different sites. A map and track diagram of Ballinacourty also follows.

### **Bennettsbridge**

A lengthy loop has been installed on the Up side of the line immediately north of Upper Dunbell level crossing (MP 32¾). Three overhead bunkers straddle the loop and the dolomite will be dropped from those into special hopper wagons, three at a time. Initially, we understand, there will be two 18-wagon trains daily to Ballinacourty on six days a week, probably worked by "AR" class locomotives.

### **Ballinacourty**

As shown in the diagram the layout consists of a loop and three terminal sidings, separated by a level crossing. The oil terminal facilities will allow simultaneous discharge of six 20-ton tank wagons. On the occasion of our visit tankers 26573/70/71/74/72/76 were on site as a guide to proper spacing of the necessary pipework. These were originally built for oil traffic from Foynes to the cement factories at Limerick and Drogheda. Only one magnesite wagon may be loaded at a time, using the centre siding, while the hoppers of dolomite will discharge onto a conveyor belt system to a storage area.

A spacious hut has been provided for the signalling equipment. It houses a "B" type miniature ETS instrument with 24 staffs, some of which are marked "Dungarvan" and "Durrow". There are also repeater lights and a switch for the signals, which latter are two-aspect colour lights, designated "Home" and "Up Loop Starter" respectively. One shows red and green and the other red and yellow lights.

The arrangements at the remaining stations (some facilities of which will be required) on the Waterford to Dungarvan line are as follows:

### **Kilmeaden**

All equipment stripped from the signal cabin except for the lever frame. The signals remain in position but the arms have been cut off at the pivots.

### **Carroll's Cross**

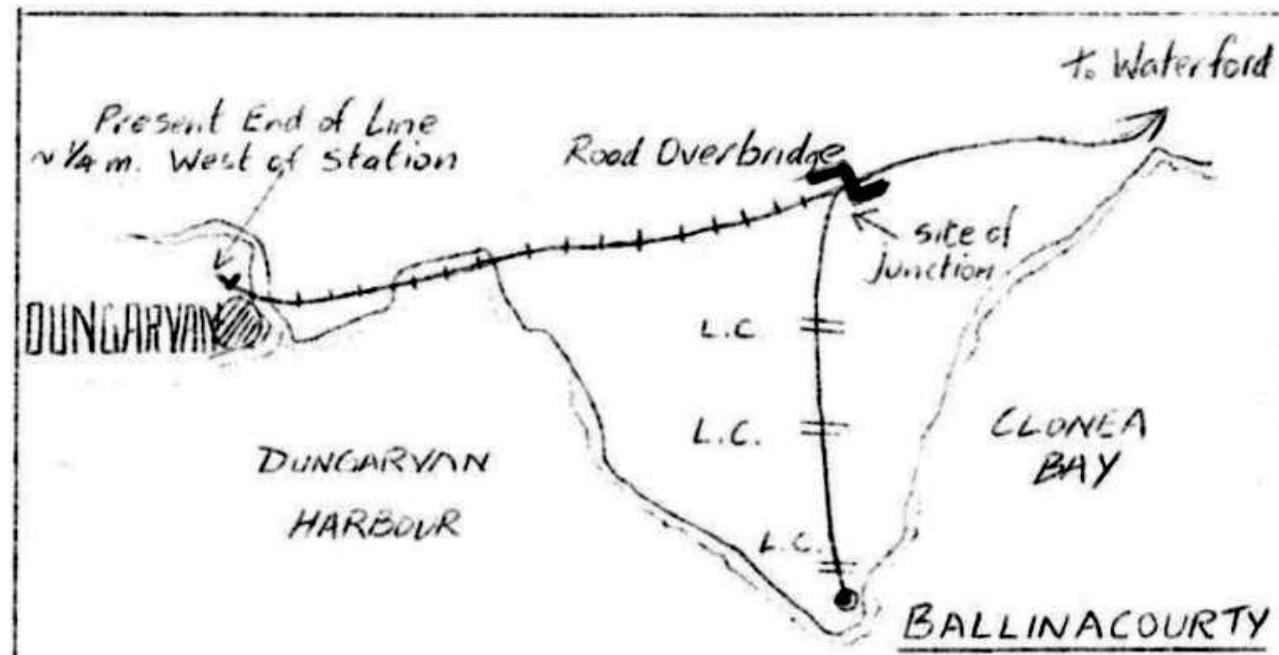
All signal arms, except for the distants, have been cut short. The distants have been newly painted as they will be required to protect the level crossing gates. (Gate warning targets and signals have generally received necessary attention as adequate safety precautions are essential with such heavy trains.)

### **Kilmacthomas**

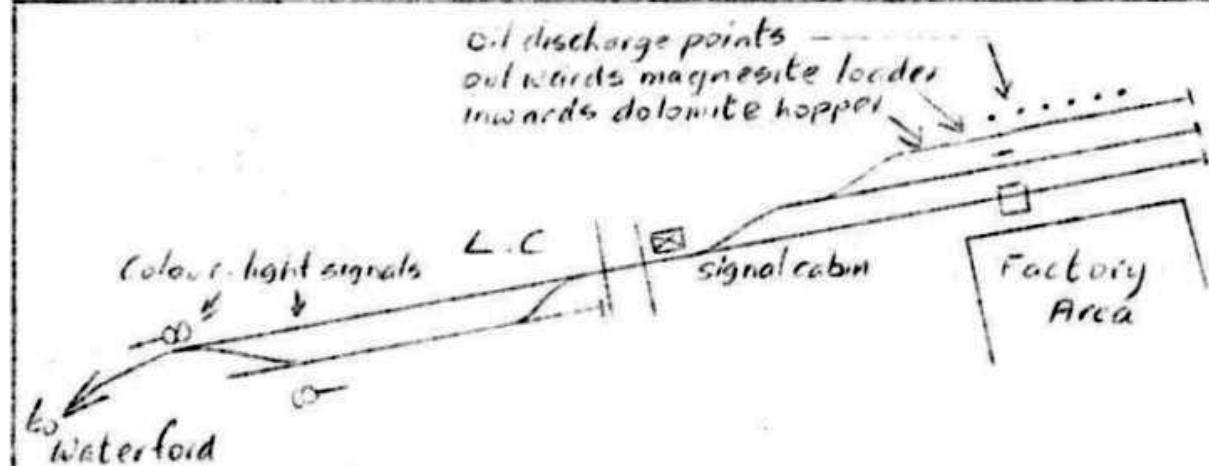
The signal cabin has been renovated, receiving new stairs and a complete repaint. The lever frame, 20 levers (7 spare), has been painted and fitted with new plastic labels on the working levers. There is a new track diagram showing the distant signals fixed at "caution", and there are two miniature ETS instruments, "A" to Waterford and "B" to Ballinacourty; each has 2 staffs.

### **Durrow & Stradbally**

All signalling equipment is being removed, except for the wires (being renewed) for the distant signal for the nearby Shanacoole (or Durrow) level crossing gates.



SKETCH MAP OF RAILWAYS AT  
DUNGARVAN & BALLINACOURTY  
( + + + denotes extant line not to be retained )



TRACK DIAGRAM OF BALLINACOURTY

## **Dungarvan**

The station now presents a really woebegone appearance. All signals, etc., and the footbridge have been removed and all track lifted, except for the loop and the points to the cattle bank and turntable sidings. (The sidings at the other stations are still intact.) The huge gates at the Abbeyside level crossing have been removed and in their place have been provided small gates which close across the railway line only.

## **Tivoli**

Arrangements for the reception of the finished magnesite at the Roofchrome factory at Tivoli were mentioned in our last issue, but since then some additional signalling information has become available.

Access to the Roofchrome factory and the oil depot will be via the Up line from Cork. An ETS instrument will control such movements and the withdrawal of a staff will lock the Little Island Up Starter and release the signal from Cork Carriage Sidings to the Up Main Line.

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## **Feature Section**

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### **INDUSTRIAL LOCOMOTIVES**

Unlike the railway scene in Britain, that in Ireland was relatively rarely frequented by the industrial locomotive - the engine (on its own or part of a fleet) employed by a brewery or a contractor to handle shunting and other duties in premises often quite extensive. Twenty years ago the industrial locos mentioned in the "Irish ABC" totalled only 37. Of these, no fewer than 20 belonged to the Guinness Brewery in Dublin, while the four factories of Cómhlucht Siúicre Éireann (at Mallow, Carlow, Thurles and Tuam) accounted for another dozen. True, since the ABC was published other locos have come on the scene, but there have been withdrawals too, and the total has remained low. (Perhaps unjustifiedly, we ignore the vast Bord na Mona fleet of small diesel locos, and deal with bigger locos.)

It is thus a little surprising (and not a little agreeable) to find that preservationists have managed to ensure that a very respectable percentage of Ireland's industrial loco fleet will remain intact and, in cases, in working condition. Guinness locos - of 3ft and 5ft 3in gauges - have been preserved for some time, while all three of the Bord na Mona turf-burners off the Clonsast system have also been saved. Now Lord O'Neill, who is building a 1 3/4 mile, 3ft gauge line through his demesne at Shane's Castle, Antrim, has acquired Peckett 0-4-0T No.1 of the British Aluminium Co. of Larne (Works No.1026). It is at present being overhauled at Queen's Quay Works and it will run on the new line in company with Bord na Mona No.3 (Barclay's No.2265 of 1949), at present being stored by the Irish Steam Preservation Society. The new line is to open next July. Other welcome news is that No.3 "R.H. Smyth", the last remaining loco of the Londonderry Port & Harbour Commissioners (Avonside 2021 of 1928), has been purchased privately for preservation.

### **HINTS FOR YOUR HOLIDAY - (I)**

#### **A Look At The Preservation Scene**

Pride of place for the lover of relics of the past is undoubtedly the Belfast Transport Museum. Still located at Witham Street, the Museum has now passed under the auspices of the Ulster Museum and is being financed by the Northern Ireland Government. The priceless collection of exhibits - of all sizes and types - eventually will be rehoused in spacious new premises at Cultra, Co. Down. The site is near

the existing Ulster Folk Museum and adjoins the closed Cultra Station on the Bangor line. There will in the future be provision for working some of the exhibits. Meanwhile, at Witham Street, restoration of some of the items continues. County Donegal railcar 10 with coach 1 have been beautifully repainted, while the restoration of the dilapidated Cavan & Leitrim coach 5 is well in hand.

Still in the north, another site of importance is Whitehead, where the former NCC loco shed and excursion platforms are the base of the RPSI. The society owns three locos, while (as mentioned earlier) its chairman now owns Lough Erne, lately NIR No.27. It is at present endeavouring to raise funds to purchase and overhaul a "Jeep" 2-6-4T. Little attention, however, has been paid to rolling stock.

In Dublin, preservation activities are the sphere of the IRRS which has confined its aims to the collection and care of small relics, books, journals, periodicals, etc. Since the New Year the collection has been housed in the society's new premises on the site of the long-closed station at Drumcondra on Dublin's north side. The collection is incredibly comprehensive and, even though full cataloguing will be a mammoth task, enough material has appeared on the library's shelves to make the researcher's mouth water.

Further south, at Stradbally, work on the development of the Irish Steam Preservation Society's railway has re-commenced after the winter and doubtless the August Bank Holiday Rally will again be a memorable occasion.

In the wider field of transport the museum of the Transport Museum Society of Ireland at Castleruddery, near Donard in County Wicklow, is only under construction, but one may be sure that in future seasons a visit there will be mandatory for the serious student of Irish transport.

## **HINTS FOR YOUR HOLIDAY - (II)**

### **Rambling Around The North (Brian Hughes)**

Last August, from the 6<sup>th</sup> to the 12<sup>th</sup> inclusive, I "rambled" over the railways operated by NIR using one of their reasonably-priced Rail Runabout tickets. But before I started my travelling I did my "homework", so to speak, and visited the Belfast termini to bring myself up to date with developments on the ground. My "HQ" was at Holywood, on the Bangor line, and I noted that all railcars were in service, apart from Nos. 14 and 15. Punctual running was the order of the day, the latest train I saw being a mere 4 minutes behind schedule.

At Great Victoria Street work was well under way on the construction of the new hotel beside the station. Part of the original station front had been demolished and more of it refurbished. As regards livery, all units of the railcar fleet were in the NIR standard maroon and grey, only two cars, AECs 111 and 115, retaining the blue and white colours.

Over at York Road one of the new 0-6-0 diesel locos was on shunting duties, but 0-6-4T No.27 was still employed in the yard. Railcars were both under repair in the shops and lying derelict. On one or two days an alarming number of "Jeeps" were out of action - on one occasion only five were in use, four on spoil trains and one spare. Out at Fortwilliam the spoil siding had been cut to make way for a bridge, work on which had not then begun.

After a spell of observation of service trains and spoil trains I began travelling in earnest on Wednesday, 6 August, heading for the Larne Line. There were two pairs of "Jeeps" on the spoil trains, and Nos. 50 and 53 passed us at one stage. The local services were operated by a diesel-electric railcar set: car 71 with trailers 703 and 713. Cars 72 and 75 were at work on the Derry line services. Steam power was used for the 17:30 to Larne Harbour - one of the day's important trains. The load consisted of six bogie carriages and a bogie van, and the train quickly headed off behind No.53, which had been

taken off its spoil train duties.

Next day I travelled to Derry on the 11:45 from York Road. The train was a six-piece diesel-electric railcar set, the power units being the same as on the previous day, 72 and 75. The start was late - the train arrived at the platform at 11:47 and left 8 minutes late at 11:53 - not a bad turn-round. It was blocked at milepost 4 and made an unscheduled stop at Whiteabbey to pick up two boxes of what appeared to be fruit! By Antrim the train was 13 minutes late and by the departure time at Ballymena another minute had been lost. At Cullybackey 2-6-4T No.10 with one brake van was in the loop as we flashed past and the driver pulled up a little time before arriving at Coleraine 10 minutes late. However, we lost the three minutes again at Coleraine, where I observed the Portrush branch train - a four-piece MPD set, 45, 57, 540 and 534.

The 12:30 ex Derry was crossed at Castlerock - it was another four-piece MPD set (42, 532, 38, 63 and 2 vans) - and we dropped another 2 minutes, making 15 late in all. Our second unscheduled stop was at Bellarena where we crossed a special consisting of a four-piece diesel-electric set (76, 74, 352 and N374). Leaving Limavady Junction we were 17 minutes late but this had been restored to 15 minutes down by the time we reached Derry at 14:10.

My return train was the 15:00 from Derry - the same set but with two bogies tagged on behind. Although they were not advertised in the timetable as such these were through coaches to Portrush (and were among the very rare through coach workings on Irish railways nowadays). The run was uneventful, the main points of note being the 9-minute late departure from Ballymoney at 16:11, and the final arrival at York Road, 10 minutes behind time. The delay at Ballymoney was caused by the 14:50 from Belfast to Derry, which was 13 minutes late itself and thus blocked us. It consisted of a 5-piece MPD set: power units 51, 43, 52 and 40, with parcels van 616.

Steam was again to be seen that day on the 17:30 boat train to Larne Harbour. No.10 was in steam at York Road but evidently none too well, as No.50 was taken off a spoil train to go to Larne and No.10 took the less immediately important duty on the spoil train. But No.50 was not behaving any too well either, for, with a six-bogie load (five coaches and a van), it managed to convert an 8-minute loss (departure was at 17:38) into a deficit of 17 minutes when Carrickfergus was reached, after a non-stop run! No.50's return train was the 19:15 from Larne Harbour and once again there was a late departure. Virtually all the down trains were seriously delayed and this, of course, had repercussions in the opposite direction. The 17:55 to Larne Harbour (MPD set 44, 41, 530 and 542) arrived 35 minutes behind time, and the following 18:10 (MED 18, 527 and 23) did not reach the Harbour until 19:28 - 23 minutes down. A minute later, however, No.50 headed off towards Belfast which was reached after a run in which the grand total of 2 minutes was pulled up!

On Friday, the 8<sup>th</sup>, it was the turn of the Northern (ex GNR) section, for a short trip to Lisburn on the 14:45, a three-piece BUT set. Cars 132 and 122 were the power units, and the latter was having engine trouble. While at Lisburn I saw the 15:00 to Dublin passing through to time - B166 with five bogies and luggage van. An interesting point about this train was that its loco started its day by heading the 06:25 to and 07:50 from Wicklow (Murrough Station). After returning to Belfast on the 15:15, I headed again to York Road ... and the 17:30 to Larne! Although the load was a bogie heavier than on the previous day No.53 did not have too much difficulty with it and the loss of time at the Harbour arrival was only three minutes.

Having passed by previously I now thought it was time to go down the Portrush Branch and I boarded the 16:00 to Coleraine at York Road. It was held there for 7 minutes, to make a connection with the Up Larne boat train. The 16:00 set comprised MED cars 19 and 20, with trailer 523 in between. The schedule is none too tight and the driver had little difficulty in picking up 5 minutes on his way to Coleraine, reached at 17:29. The train continued as a through working down the branch, though, it should be noted, no such through working (nor, indeed, even a connection) was advertised in the

timetable.

Departure from Coleraine was at 17:31 and Portrush was reached at 17:43, no stops being made. The station at the terminus had been refurbished somewhat, to cater for the increased traffic. The frontage had been given the maroon and grey treatment and it boasted a large NIR monogram, having quite an attractive appearance. Notable on the branch were the new halts of Dhu Varren and University and the reopened halt at Portstewart, now named Cromore.

The 17:50 from Portrush was an eight-piece MPD - power units being 59, 55, 42 and 64 - and was well filled. It stopped at Dhu Varren and was blocked just past University for nearly 2 minutes. The train was advertised as connecting into the 17:20 ex Derry, but this day it followed the 17:20 as a through train to Belfast. Not relishing the thought of a trip to Belfast in an MPD I waited for the 17:40 from Derry, which was a nine-piece DE set with power cars 71, 74 and 76. The run was an exasperating series of delays, recoveries by fast running on unsteady permanent way, and more delays, Belfast not being reached until 20:19 - a total of 24 minutes late. This sort of thing proved to me that the block sections on the NCC main line are in places far too long. It cannot be too long before people decide that the express bus, even if dearer, is quicker and more comfortable. This should not be the case, but the permanent way makes for anything but a comfortable ride.

Sunday is not the brightest of days in the north of Ireland and to try to offset the quietness I had to do some travelling - to Lisburn again, sampling on the way the AEC railcars. York Road, later in the afternoon, was quite abounding with steam locos. No.27 and Jeeps 4, 5, 10, 51 and 53 were all in steam. Out of action were 3, 6, 55 and 56 - though as it happened, Nos. 6 and 55 were shortly to return to traffic. Monday was a day for photography on the GNR section and then on the Larne line. For a change the 17:30 to the Harbour was worked by a diesel-electric set - cars 74 and 76 with three trailers.

The last day of my ticket was 12 August - the day on which much of the serious trouble which has racked Northern Ireland began. The weather was dull and mostly wet and there was relatively little activity of interest. No spoil trains were operating, though 2-6-4Ts 4 and 55 were at work on special trains. I paid my last visit for a while to the Larne line, on which train operation is so very interesting. To sum up, one could certainly see the important changes for the better since the UTA days - the management appears to be enthusiastic, and that counts for a lot. The problems of long block sections I have mentioned, and also the condition of the permanent way\*. There are other shortcomings but at least an effort is being made to overcome them and to restore the lines of the NIR to a little of their earlier glory.

\* Since the author wrote his account of his 1969 holiday much work has been carried out by the NIR and various improvements are either in hand or are planned. Details of permanent way improvements will be found in the news pages of this issue.

### **HINTS FOR YOUR HOLIDAY - (III)**

#### **Open Day At Inchicore, 13 July 1969**

The large crowd enjoyed themselves hugely - there were many attractions. The Works fire brigade put on a show, and the ex-GNR bus rambled round from time to time. Bands played, dancing exhibitions were held, and a traction engine from Stradbally was in attendance. The star attraction was J15 No.184 which spent the afternoon shuttling up and down the yard with an often crammed coach, 1906. CIÉ had a display of old photographs - there were some new ones as well - and the army had personnel and equipment present, both being put through their paces! There was a large model railway exhibition over near the wagon shop.

For the more serious railway student the occasion was an excellent opportunity to note the progress in the loco and other departments. In Diesel Shop I the re-engining of the A class locos could be

examined. A42R was ready for the road; A35 was well on the way to becoming A35R, while A47, A48, A49 and A51 were awaiting their new power units. A2 and A30 were in for normal overhaul, and the latter's body was being used to demonstrate how the overhead gantry worked. (Judging by the way it was zooming up and down, to the delight of all, the gantry racked up a fair mileage during the afternoon!) B and C class locos were also in evidence, for the recorder's notebook.

For the coach enthusiast there was also plenty to see. In the carriage shop State Coach 351 was on exhibition, while buffet car 2092 was being extensively renovated. Also on exhibition - in gleaming new paint - were railcar 2646 and Craven 1558. In various stages of repair were 1357 and 1368, with declassified compo 2168, and visitors could see the stages in the transition from fairly shabby to "as good as new".

Those interested in locos in actual service (though, of course, idle on "Open Day") could inspect the splendid display of four locos at "the ramps". B107, B234, E427 and B142 were lined up, and in sparkling condition. Railcars were to be found of various kinds in different places. There were the ex-GNR BUT cars of both the 700 and 900 series; there was No.600N - the first of the AEC railcars which later were to become so common; there was car 2600 - the first of the CIÉ cars. A galaxy of railcars, locos and coaches was on view, enough to satisfy the most searching enthusiast!