

THE

# IRISH RAILFANS' NEWS

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**EDITORIAL**

Two serious cases of wanton hooliganism and destruction on Irish trains are reported elsewhere in this issue. Both cases involved special trains run for supporters of Association Football, but it should not be thought that followers of this particular form of sport are the only passengers who maliciously damage trains on both CIÉ and NIR. The most regrettable feature of this problem is that it is most likely to reach serious proportions on excursion trains operated at a low fare structure. Certain such trains, however, are notably free from trouble. One is - what is arguably the best value of all - the Saturday excursion to Belfast. Although less extensively patronised now than in the past, the only problems with which the CIÉ staff have had to cope are attempted fare-dodging and congestion at the buffet car.

A study of the varying forms of patronage of rail excursions suggests that those which attract a high proportion of family groups will generally operate smoothly, whereas trouble may be expected where large "good humoured" parties of, for example, the followers of some sports are involved. This was the case, too, when vandals virtually took over the once very popular and well-ordered "Mystery Trains" from Dublin. It takes a good deal of vigilance by CIÉ to prevent this trouble from recurring but sadly the popularity of the "Mysteries" had been irrevocably damaged before the stern action of CIÉ took effect.

It is difficult indeed to see what measures could be adopted to deal effectively with the problem. The running of such trains could be abandoned altogether, or the fares could be raised considerably - though the latter is hardly an effective deterrent nowadays. Stopping the trains would undoubtedly cure the vandal problem, but the revenue obtained from those which operate smoothly is no doubt very welcome. Furthermore, the hordes of private bus operators would be only too delighted to snap up the traffic if CIÉ were to abandon it.

It would seem that closer supervision of the trains by uniformed CIÉ rail staff could be the most effective answer. Security specialists might also be employed, but these might look rather too much like a private army and, besides, who could be better than a railwayman to sense that a cord had been pulled? We are not impressed at all by the seeming total inability of the Gardaí to subdue those on the Cork train, the progress of which we report, and the lack of arrests on that occasion is - to put it very mildly - not a little surprising. It might also ease the difficulties for those on the train if the Board's existing byelaws regarding drunkenness were to be more diligently enforced both by refusing admission at the barrier to anyone apparently drunk and, if found necessary, by putting drunken passengers off the train at pre-arranged points where Gardaí could be on call to receive them. In such cases tickets would, of course, be forfeit.

No matter what measures are adopted the expenses involved in the running of such trains are bound to rise, for inevitably a greater number of supervisors will have to be paid for, whether these may be railway staff, security specialists or policemen. This will of course eat into the profits from such

specials, but we are confident that an effective and lasting solution will be found and that the trains will continue to run for the benefit of the respectable majority of their patrons.

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By way of a postscript (although on a completely different subject) we must refer to newspaper reports which occupied many column inches in mid-April. The subject was the long-suggested central Dublin rail terminus and the papers waxed eloquent, each claiming credit for being first to mention the scheme. Plans mentioned were grandiose and costly and were being “actively considered” by the CIÉ board. When similar consideration has been given to the many millions required (or, rather, the raising of the money) we will then have pleasure in discussing them at length in our columns. Something tells us it may be just little premature to do so at present.

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## News Section

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### **SEANAD ÉIREANN - TRANSPORT (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) BILL, 1971**

The text of a Bill introduced in Seanad Éireann (the Irish Senate) was published in mid-February, with the above heading. The main purpose of the Bill concerns the County Donegal Railways Joint Committee (see “News Extra” for the details) but, according to its title, it is also “to make further provision in relation to transport”. The miscellaneous provisions under this general heading are both varied and interesting in that some of them relate to Acts as early as 1845 and 1868. Perhaps the most notable change is that introduced in Section 36 of the Bill which alters the Regulation of Railways Act, 1868, by changing the penalty for misuse of the communication cord from £5 to £25. An interesting legal angle on this could arise in the vicinity of the border with Northern Ireland as the penalty there is still £5!

Section 37 of the Bill revokes sections of the Railway Clauses Consolidation Act, 1845, which requires trains to reduce speed to four miles an hour before passing over certain level crossings - those on turnpike roads. Surely, this is done tongue in cheek as the requirement has not been taken too seriously for quite some time!

Other sections of the Bill are designed to relieve CIÉ of certain obligations in regard to maintenance of road surfaces at bridges, approach roads and level crossings. An interesting move is the proposed transfer of Float Bridge over the River Inny to Westmeath County Council. The history of this legacy to CIÉ from the MGWR was recounted in our article “Westmeath Memories” in the May 1969 IRN. Still on the subject of bridges, the Bill also alters a section of the Waterford & Limerick Railway (Deviations) Act of 1851 by enabling CIÉ to treat the tolls of the bridge across both channels of the River Suir at Fiddown - another unwelcome legacy - as “charges” as defined by the 1958 Transport Act. CIÉ would thus be empowered to alter the tolls as is the case for fares and rates on other sections of its network. A final section of interest increases the fine for leaving open gates onto the railway at accommodation crossings to £25.

Only one section of the Bill has met with any opposition; it refers to the requirement that engine drivers pass medical examinations held by the Chief Medical Officer of CIÉ. Some railway union members threatened strike action in opposition to certain aspects of this section but assurances were forthcoming that it would be altered in order to protect the interests of the men concerned. Accordingly, the Bill as a whole should be passed fairly soon.

## CÓRAS IOMPAIR ÉIREANN

### **Changes At Portarlinton**

The former double line junction off the Cork Main Line to the Athlone Branch at Portarlinton has been replaced, by a facing crossover from Down to Up side and then a single junction off the Up line. Both platforms have been cut back a little and they have been raised to the standard height, though not for their full depth as there are steps leading down to the buildings. The trackwork has been altered resulting in an even, smooth curve through the station.

### **Signalling Matters**

Various additional electric signals have been installed. On 26 January the Up Distant at Charleville became a 3-aspect colour light to include the function of the Up Home signal for Ballyhay Crossing. The latter's Up Distant is now also electric, showing green and yellow. On 22 February a 2-aspect repeater was provided in advance of the Down Home at Hazelhatch. It is marked by a letter "R" to show that it is not a stop signal. At Lucan (South) the crossover and sidings have been disconnected and spiked. The cabin is normally switched out and its signals left in the "off" position. Boyle Cabin was reported to be under reconstruction in March. The long-section working from Limerick Check to Ballingrane, mentioned in our last issue, was not introduced until 15 February and then normally only at night. Some Portarlinton signals have been re-sited following the track alterations above.

### **New Halt**

It was announced on 24 February that the proposed new station near the  $\frac{3}{4}$  milepost on the Howth line is definitely to be built. It will serve the area of the Bayside Estate, but the actual name has yet to be mentioned.

### **Farranfore**

The station crossing at Farranfore was converted to automatic half-barrier operation with the usual road signs and signals on 14 April. As it is within the area of Farranfore Station special measures have to be adopted with stopping trains.

### **Cork News**

Work started early in the new year on the Tivoli oil installations heating arrangements. Then the big oil trains ran from Cork to Ballinacourty every Saturday and Sunday, leaving at 12:15. However, on Sundays the trains could be hours late as on occasion the empty train from Saturday's run was only back in Cork at 12:30 on Sunday. Trouble was also experienced at Ballinacourty due to the cold and it was necessary to bring some of the tanks back to Waterford to be heated. Brake trouble was experienced on 21 February. The train did not leave for Ballinacourty until 17:30 and it was probably the only one to have a brake van, as they could not get a brake in the normal way. At Charleville the train let the 18:00 and 18:15 passenger trains pass and then there was engine trouble. It was necessary to replace the locos at Waterford and the train left there at 23:35 with B161 and B164, arriving in Ballinacourty about 1½ hours later. It appears that it was nearly lunchtime on Monday before the empty train was on its way back to Waterford.

On Sunday, 21 February a Sulzer DE loco hauled 5 rail trucks carrying the new parts for Killeagh Bridge from Dublin to Cobh Junction. Next morning it continued to Midleton, the Inchicore crane going to Killeagh itself. Road traffic was diverted between Sunday night and Friday evening, most vehicles going via Mogeely. On Monday the road surface was removed and on the following day the old girders were taken out. The five new sections were put in place on Wednesday but then the County Council took two days to get it ready for road traffic again.

## **In Brief**

The crossing keepers on the Dungarvan-Waterford section refuse to tend gates after midnight, causing delays to trains. At Kilbarry lifting gear for wagon axle inspection is being installed.

## **Crash At 46 Mile Box**

On 12 February a number of wagons on the 19:30 goods (Sligo, ex North Wall) were derailed. They piled up just on the Mullingar side of the cabin completely blocking the line. It appears that a wagon in the middle of the train was derailed some distance on the Dublin side of the cabin and that the following wagons came off the road at the level crossing. Trains were diverted via Portarlinton and buses were called in until the following evening, when the siding was slewed into the running line to allow trains to pass the scene. A44R went down with the Inchicore crane, leaving North Wall around 03:00 on the 13<sup>th</sup>. A51R attended with 2M, the Athlone crane. Three oil tankers - 1720, 1726 and 1732 - had run down the bank on the down side and two were upside down in a stream. The line was cleared by the evening of the 14<sup>th</sup> when A44R, etc., returned to Dublin around 21:00.

## **Landslip At Killiney**

Early on the morning of 19 March a combination of extremely heavy rain and high winds caused a landslip onto the railway at White Rock, near MP 9¼. Both lines were blocked for a time and the 06:37 and 07:10 ex Bray were unable to pass. As a result there was no train to form the 08:20 ex Howth. Thus the 08:11 ex Howth was held and it ran in the path of the 08:20. The Down line was quickly opened and the up line was cleared by 08:00 resulting in delays of only 10 minutes in the morning rush hour services.

## **Loco Notes**

By the end of March A1R, A3R, A4R, A11R, A13R, A14R and A21R had entered service after re-engining, bringing the total number of “transplants” in service up to 45. At the end of March also A38R was out on trial while A5, A7, A12, A15 and A23 were in various stages of the re-engining process. A18, A26, A31, A53 and A54 were waiting to enter the shops, leaving A6, A24, A43 and A50 as the last “pure” A class locos in traffic. It was intended that these would be taken out of use by 31 March but A6 was seen at work on 6 April. B107 has been painted in black and tan and B230 is in service. C210 is next for treatment.

## **Railcar Progress**

Nos. 2609 and 2625 have been overhauled and fitted with bus-type seats. Cars 2621 and 2645, which have been out of service for a long time, are at last receiving attention at Inchicore Works. Several railcars, including 609N, 613N, 616N, 2660 and 2664 are lying out of use at the sidings at Sallins.

## **Dundalk Sidings**

The private siding to the brewery of Messrs Macardle Moore & Company, at Cambrieville, was lifted in mid-January, having been disused for some ten years. The adjacent siding outside the Dundalk Engineering Works fence was lifted immediately afterwards.

## **Mishap at Heuston Station**

Two luggage vans, 2733 and 2761, and bogie Mails Tender 850 were buffer-locked and otherwise damaged by a shunting mishap at the Down platform at Heuston Station on 3 February. These were the last vehicles of the Night Mail and they were struck by another portion of the same train which was being placed in position.

## **Hooligans At Large**

Two serious cases of hooliganism on trains carrying Association Football “supporters” home from

matches have occurred recently. On 7 February there was a special train from Dundalk to Cork and back for some 680 people. The locos from Dublin southwards were B157 and B167 and the load comprised: HV, 13 bogies and HV. Trouble broke out on the return journey and a special stop was made at Templemore to pick up a party of police. The train was two hours late leaving Dublin and there was a further delay when the communication cord was pulled at Malahide, despite the presence of the Gardaí. The latter were brought back to Dublin in the empty train and, after having had a meal in a hotel, they returned to Templemore by special bus.

A much more serious case occurred on 28 March on the last of three specials returning from Dublin to Cork. The first two trains ran without incident but some of the 457 passengers on the third indulged in uncontrolled vandalism on a scale which, happily, is quite rare in this part of the world. Only 6 miles from Dublin the train was stopped for 69 minutes by repeated cord pulling and there was more of the same near Kildare. The Up Cork train had to be stopped and cautioned as the precise state and location of the special was unknown! Gardaí were put on board the latter train but proved incapable of dealing with such a wild mob. After several more stops for cord pulling the train finally reached Cork at 03:00 hours after having spent no less than seven and a half hours on the 165 mile journey! CIÉ stated later, after an inspection had been made of the wanton damage to the rolling stock on the train, that repairs would need £1,000.

### **A Shadow Of Its Former Self**

It is an unhappy sign of troubled times when it is possible to report that the Dublin-Belfast excursion on 17 March, Saint Patrick's Day, traditionally a day of mass northwards exodus, was badly supported. The 17:30 from Belfast had less than 150 passengers while the following 18:15 special was virtually empty. The time is not long past when 5 or 6 trains could barely accommodate the crowds.

An unusual excursion run on 17 March was from Ennis to Dublin and back. The 08:20 "Sáirséal" express started rather earlier from Ennis at 07:30, while the corresponding down train - the 19:00 - was timed to finish at Ennis at 22:15.

### **Bomb Scare**

A quantity of wire was found at Reilly's Bridge near the 6¼ milepost on the Belfast line, between Howth Junction and Portmarnock, on 26 January. It was thought to be the fuse wire of a bomb and trains were somewhat delayed until it was established that the wire was in fact ... just wire.

### **Excursions To Newry**

Commencing on 27 March an attractive day excursion fare of only 75p has been offered from Dublin to Newry. Transport is by the 09:15 train to Dundalk, thence by bus; travel homewards is by 17:45 bus which connects with the 19:05 and 20:05 trains to Dublin. Newry has to a considerable extent taken the place of Belfast as the principal venue for Saturday shopping excursions from Dublin, and a considerable number of private buses have been making the journey. It will be interesting to see how the traffic develops for CIÉ.

### **Bridge Mishap**

On 31 March a Dublin Corporation refuse collection truck became partially tipped and stuck beneath East Wall Bridge in Dublin. The five occupants were injured. No damage was done to the railway but the bridge carries the scars of several such incidents. In view of the continuing increase in the incidence of such mishaps, stern action will have to be taken against lorry operators to make them far more cautious at bridges.

## Unusual Special

An unusual special goods train ran southwards from Clondalkin on 18 March, bearing a load of paper cement sacks made nearby. These are used at Drogheda and Limerick. Specials operate as required.

## Strange - A Cow on the Line

On 6 March a bullock escaped from the North Wall and made his way up to Connolly Station where there was a good deal of consternation before recapture was effected. This was a curtain-raiser for a more spectacular journey on 9 March when what is believed to be the same bullock escaped again, this time thundering up to Connolly Station by Newcomen Junction. The beast passed through Platform 6 road around 17:45 and continued on towards Tara Street. There he allowed the empty train for the 18:02 Pearse Station/Howth to pass, as also the 17:27 ex Dalkey. The 17:52 to Bray left Connolly Station at 18:02 and the bullock let it pass too, though at slow speed. A sudden change of mind followed and he set off after the train, catching up with it just as it was passing over Custom House Quay. He succeeded in getting tangled up between the bridge and 2622, the rear railcar. This disturbed him not a little (and possibly the railwayman even a bit more) and after much thrashing around a quietening injection was given to him as he lay enmeshed with 2622. That vehicle was shed by the 17:52 which continued as a 5-piece set to Tara Street which it left at 19:03. The 18:25 to Greystones left Pearse Station at 19:33 after having come wrong road from Connolly Station, while the 19:00 to Bray did not run at all. To fill the gap in the service passengers for Dun Laoghaire, Bray and Greystones left Pearse on the 18:25 to Rosslare while C225 and a Pier set left Pearse at 18:50 for all stations. As for the main line trains ... be sure to read the next IRN (and also learn of the fate of the cause)!

## TRAFFIC DEVELOPMENT WEEKS

During February two week-long experiments were tried in an effort to solve the Dublin traffic problem. During the first of these the innovation consisted merely of a strict enforcement of parking and other traffic regulations, while effort during the second week was confined to the north side of the city. The latter involved the reservation of the traffic lane nearer the kerb for buses only, beginning at Griffith Avenue on the Malahide Road, Clontarf Station on the Howth Road and Hollybrook Road on the Clontarf Road and extending inwards as far as the "Five Lamps" at North Strand. During this second week all bus fares on the large numbers of routes using the bus lane were reduced by 1p for journeys into the city between 08:00 and 10:00 and for outward journeys between 17:00 and 19:00. Single rail fares were also reduced by 1p between the same hours on Northern Suburban trains but this concession did not apply to journeys beyond Pearse Station.

During Week 1 extra trains were provided on both Northern and South-Eastern sections. On the Bray line the following extra trains ran during the week ending 26 February only:

Connolly Station to Bray	09:55	10:55	14:13	14:45	19:30	20:15
Connolly Station to Greystones	15:10					
Connolly Station to Dalkey	18:00					
Connolly Station from Bray	07:30	10:46	11:46	15:10	17:25	
Connolly Station from Greystones	16:20					
Connolly Station from Dun Laoghaire	08:20*	09:05	09:50			

\* Operated to Pearse Station only.

In addition, other trains were strengthened or consisted of loco-hauled sets instead of railcars. The 09:05 and 09:50 ex Dun Laoghaire were the return workings of the 07:20 ex Balbriggan and 07:25 ex Dundalk which normally return empty to Dublin. The 08:20 was a 4-coach railcar set provided by

Bray. On the Northern section the extra trains were (all to/from Connolly Station except \* Pearse):

Donabate	To 09:45	13:50	From 10:45	14:37
Drogheda	To 11:20		From 12:50	
Howth	To 19:30	20:15	From 18:15 (usually empty)	
Howth Junction	To 18:20		From 08:02	09:00*

These extra services were only advertised at short notice and as a result many of them were not well patronised. Ironically the Northern extras were withdrawn just before the start of the national bus strike and there was very considerable inconvenience and overcrowding for the duration of the strike which, very likely, nullified the efforts made shortly before to lure more people onto the railways and buses.

A signal failure between Connolly Station and East Wall on 3 March during a “Week” was to have quite far-reaching consequences. Trains operated normally until the 17:52 which was delayed until 18:18 giving rise to the rare spectacle of the 17:52, 18:00 and 18:10 trains at Platforms 5, 6 and 7. These were followed by the 18:20 extra to Howth Junction, 18:30 to Dundalk and the 18:35 to Skerries, which last train was only 5 minutes late. The up line was also affected, the 16:45 ex Dundalk being held up at East Wall. It was 33 minutes late on arrival and was closely followed by a batch of locals.

### **DEMOLITION DETAILS**

Under the dateline “Railcar 104, Clonmel 8/4/1971” our reporter has sent us the following interesting account (which we quote as received) of the resumption of the lifting of the remaining segment of the Clonmel line:

“Mr McGurk is back and the end of the line tonight is MP 16½. Monday, 29 March: he sent four men to get the railcar etc., ready and last Monday, 5 April, another four men and Mr McGurk himself arrived. Thursday, 1 April: a ballast train brought back his two sleeper trucks which had been in use as rail trucks on the Dungarvan area lifting. The engine cleared the wagons from in front of his railcar which then shunted over the running line to its working area on the Thurles-Clonmel branch. Last Saturday (3 April) they ran to Fethard and back to cut down the farmers’ fences which were all back again - around MP 21 the farmer put hay on the line to feed his cattle! The road bridge at Fethard Station is removed and the road is now only a few feet higher than the old track. Mr Ryan, who lives in the stationhouse, has filled in between the platforms with earth and has even covered a portion of track at the Clonmel end where Mr McGurk finished lifting last October.

“On Monday evening last (5 April) the first lifting train ran out and stayed overnight. The men started their usual job of handling sleepers first on Tuesday morning, going as far as the bridge over the Clonmel road. The rails were collected that evening. Wednesday: two loads of sleepers and the same for today (Thursday); they will keep on at sleepers only until they reach the chairs at MP 17. By that time they will have their tractor repaired and will pull all the rails along to MP 17 for loading. CIÉ loaded sleepers from the big pile in Clonmel on most Sundays during the winter using McGurk’s crane. Last Sunday (4 April) 12 coal trucks with 74 sleepers in each were loaded for Cork. I would say that when they get going they will ‘fly’ with the lifting - they intended doing three loads of sleepers today but ran into a delay with their crane. CIÉ ran a ballast train up to Fethard on a Sunday a week after Mr McGurk finished in October, to collect the turnouts and rails from the station area.”

The above invaluable report rather knocks on the head any theories - discussed on page 4 of our last issue - that the branch will be reinstated for either coal or dolomite trains.

## **NORTHERN IRELAND RAILWAYS**

### **Spoil Wagons**

The Ministry of Development has given no information on the disposal of its 70 spoil wagons but some are now in regular NIR use for ballast. At Easter they were located: Magheramorne, 42; York Road, 3 (loaded); Antrim, 8 (loaded with limestone grit); Coleraine, 9 (all loaded bar one); and Lisburn, 8 (empty). They are thus to be seen in many places from which they were previously banned due to loading gauge difficulties which have now been overcome. Following the latter alterations the ban on the running of 8ft high ISO containers to Derry has been removed. The 8ft 6in high variety cannot be taken anywhere on the Irish railway system.

### **Humpbacked**

Bridge No.230, over the old Newry Canal on the Dublin line near Tanderagee is at last being replaced. It has been in poor condition for many years and has been subject to a 45 mph limit which made timekeeping in the Portadown-Poyntzpass section rather difficult. The bridge is being replaced by a large-bore corrugated culvert like the road bridge at Madam's Height on the Tralee line. The new culvert was prefabricated at the old Tanderagee station. For the duration of the work single-line running will apply, first on the Down line, from 14 April. Rather surprisingly a pilotman is on duty, as for previous works of such magnitude token working was adopted.

### **Sidings At Adelaide**

The laying of the sidings for the new Guinness terminal at Adelaide is in progress. They commence at the end of the former "Third Line" from Belfast Central Junction (now merely a long siding from Grosvenor Road Goods Yard) beneath Tate's Avenue bridge. There is one siding next to the Down running line, an extension of the "Third Line" where it was not before. Next comes the Guinness fence and inside that are at least three sidings laid on concrete sleepers.

### **Bangor Signals**

Only one of the new two-aspect signals for the Bangor line is working as yet. It has replaced the Down advanced starting signal for Queen's Quay Station. This was previously the Down starting signal for the former Ballymacarrett Junction. The "P" sign by which signalmen could authorise a driver to proceed if the signal failed, or if the section ahead was obstructed, is still on the old signalpost.

### **Greencastle**

The emergency crossover at Greencastle, MP 2½ on the Derry line, has been removed. The temporary cabin there is still in place but appears to be out of use.

### **Tokenless Block**

The new tokenless block equipment in the Ballymena-Cullybackey-Dunloy-Ballymoney sections is almost ready and some trials have been made of it and the associated new electric two-aspect signals. In general those will replace the existing distant and advance starting signals, but the Up fast and Up loop starters at Ballymoney will also be electric. These are fixed on the same poles as the existing somersault signals. It is very strange that the opportunity has not been taken to move the distant out to give earlier warning than the present semaphores, especially with the higher train speeds now being planned.

### **Antrim Ballast**

The high loading bank at Antrim (NCC side) for tipping ballast into wagons from lorries has been raised and widened by encroaching across the adjacent siding. The new height is sufficient to accommodate the Spoil wagons.

## Track Machines

Two new Plasser & Theurer machines have been acquired. They are a lining machine (type AL 204, works number 413 of 1970) and a ballast packing machine (type 06-16, works number U2105 of 1970). Both are of Austrian manufacture and so far have been used mainly on the Larne line. The original pair, which can presently be distinguished by their NIR emblems, work very largely on the Dublin line.

## Larne Notes

A new Ulsterbus terminal and depot has been built on part of the goods yard site behind the former bay platform at Larne Station. It was opened in November and it replaces the earlier depot at the old Ballymena & Larne narrow-gauge station. While work on alterations to the vehicle loading ramps is in progress the Stranraer steamers are using the original Preston Ferry berth. The track to this berth is thus in use again.

## Notes On The Bangor Line

The deviation at Holywood was brought into use on 27/28 March, the first train being a ballast train; it was followed by the 08:35 passenger ex Bangor. All the old track has already been lifted. Two banner signals have been erected to replace the old Marino Down and Holywood Up Distant signals.

## Railcar Report

Diesel-Electric: 71 resumed service in January but 74 was damaged at Lock Level Crossing, near Eglinton, in a collision with a cattle lorry. It is now in the shops undergoing repairs.

MPD: Considerable progress has been made with the rehabilitation and rebuilding of these cars and their trailers. 49 - the last non-corridor unit - reappeared in January as a centre-corridor type. The rebuilding of trailer 535 (paint date 23/3/1971) has resulted in another permutation. It now has a centre corridor with 64 seats recovered from ex-GNR K15 type coaches and it has two toilets at one end. Most surprising, it is non-driving. Hitherto all MPD trailers had a full set of controls (buffets excepted). The interior finish and new upholstery give 535 a most attractive appearance.

AEC: Driving trailer 585, ex GNR coach 8 (and one of the last two new coaches - BUT cars excepted - built in Dundalk in 1954), has been broken up at Grosvenor Road. It had retained the green UTA livery.

BUT: No.127 is resplendent in a new coat of paint.

## Railcar Names

There has been great confusion arising out of an exchange of names between DE cars 72 and 74. Our list gave the original position; it now is:

71 R Bush	73 R Roe	75 R Maine	77 R Braid
72 R Foyle	74 R Lagan	76 R Inver	78 R Bann

(R = River in each case)

## Short-Lived!

The short facing siding off the Down (No.3) line at Portadown new station has already been lifted, having been unused since its installation.

## New Rails

Two shiploads of new rails (of a total of ten) have been delivered at Larne Harbour. This brought about the use of the near-derelict spur line out to the old Preston Ferry berth. It is understood that the total quantity involved will amount to some 50 miles. The new rails are very heavy flat-bottomed type and are marked: BSC WORKINGTON 70 BA 50KG. Some have already been moved to the

Coleraine/Derry section and more are stacked behind Adelaide down platform, together with a large quantity of unused BR 1970 soleplates and other PW materials.

### **Steam Locos**

“Jeep” No.51 was cut up at York Road during March. This leaves only two in existence - 4 and 53, in store at Carrickfergus. At Easter the RPSI locos were based: No.171 at Carrickfergus and No.27, No.186 and the Guinness at Whitehead.

### **Bogie Vans**

Bogie Vans 613 and 615 have been overhauled and repainted in the maroon livery already carried by 614. They are dual fitted for air and vacuum brakes and each carries a notice reading “Couple Vac and Air Not to run with MED trains”. Both are now on roller-bearing equipped bogies - 613 has SKF pattern (like the MPD trailers) while 615 has Hoffman (like the MED trailers.) No.614 remains complete with original bogies and it is vacuum-fitted only.

### **Cookstown Junction**

Progress, albeit slower than at Cullybackey (see below), is also reported on the extensions to the replacement platforms at Cookstown Junction. However, little change in the November 1970 position was noted in mid-March.

### **Failure At Greencastle**

A breakdown which occurred on 17 March was one of the exceedingly rare instances when a failure occurred to a diesel-electric railcar set. This was at Greencastle, when the 09:05 to Larne Harbour failed near the site of the station. Relief was provided in the form of a 3-car MED set from Belfast which propelled the “dead” set as far as Greenisland. There the replacement train took over the running of the 09:05. A consequence of the breakdown was that the 3-car set on the 09:45 to Derry (MPD cars) was delayed in starting until 09:52. This train, however, ran so poorly that the preceding cavalcade was out of sight beyond Jordanstown before the Derry train had laboured onto the Bleach Green Viaduct.

### **Cromore Report**

Both level crossing gates at Cromore Halt - formerly Portstewart Station - were smashed by the branch train on 16 March during very thick fog. Damage to the train was confined to the windscreen and some windows. Nobody was injured in the incident. At present the signal cabin here is (surprisingly) being repainted.

### **A Problem Of Vandalism**

There has been some trouble in recent months on the Bangor line near Holywood Station. Unwittingly, the firm of contractors engaged on building the new by-pass road near the station have provided local vandals with a vast supply of stones ideally suited for throwing at passing trains - and the odd bus as well. The position is not helped by the fact that the station is unstaffed for most of the day.

### **Portadown Old And New**

The new station layout at Portadown (or Craigavon West) has revealed some very serious shortcomings since the station was opened. The Up Main (No.1) platform is all too frequently cluttered with the copious quantities of parcels traffic dealt with normally, while the handling of the northbound goods trains - which must be Customs sealed - is quite a problem as there is only room for some 19 wagons. In addition, on Saturdays if there is an 09:30 special from Belfast to Dublin, either it or the 08:30 Down “Enterprise” from Dublin must be delayed, as the latter train has to cross over to the Up side (No.1 Platform) to permit passengers to alight under Customs supervision. If the special is calling to pick up passengers then it, too, must use this same platform. As the paths for both trains have almost identical Portadown timings confusion is thus inevitable. However, on the credit side, there is no doubt that the

new station site is proving most attractive to the public and there has been an encouraging increase in traffic since it was opened.

At the site of the old Portadown station the entire Up (No.1) platform and all its buildings have been razed to make way for the new road, but its disconnected track still remains in situ. Most of the other trackwork and buildings remain intact but all the connections of both Up and Down main running lines have been removed.

### **Another Revival?**

The Minister of State at the Ministry of Home Affairs disclosed at the Stormont Parliament on 25 February that the NIR is presently investigating the costs of upgrading the Knockmore Junction to Antrim line to the standard required for high speed trains to Derry and also for commuter traffic. The line was closed to passengers in 1960 and was never considered to have been a "high speed" route. It includes many sharp curves, a quite formidable gradient at either end, and - possibly worst of all - the aged Crumlin Bridge, which has had a ban on double-heading of trains across it for many years past. The line does, however, pass the perimeter of Aldergrove Airport and it could therefore be utilised for a most attractive alternative means of transit to Belfast for air passengers who now go by bus. Of course, a suitable spur line would have to be provided. There has been no substantiation of the rumour that a "triangle" would be formed at Knockmore for non-stop Dublin-Derry trains.

### **Drivers' Strike**

All NIR loco drivers took part in the one-day strike called in protest against the British Industrial Relations Bill now going through Parliament. No NIR trains ran that day though CIÉ services to Portadown and Belfast operated normally as traffic staff remained on duty. It seemed a rather pointless exercise, to say the least, as the Act (if adopted) will not apply in Northern Ireland and, besides, all services on British Rail operated as usual that day. A similar strike was staged on 18 March (the first was on 1 March) but the NIR drivers were magnanimously "exempted" by their union - the Amalgamated Engineering Union - and trains ran normally.

### **Some Train Alterations**

Revised passenger schedules were introduced on 15 March on the Midland and North-Western regions (former NCC lines). On the main line to Derry there are widespread cuts in the service, leaving little more than the basic through service unscathed. Several locals to Ballymena and Cullybackey have been axed, or cut short at the former, and the 22:30 (Mondays-Fridays) Derry-Portrush has also gone. A number of stations and halts have suffered badly; Doagh and Kellswater have disappeared entirely from the timetables, Glarryford has only one call (up, on Mondays only); Killagan is the same but the call this time is on Sundays; Downhill has one call (down) on Sundays only; Eglinton and Culmore are still mentioned in the list of stations but have no calls! Slight detail changes have been made to the Portrush Branch service.

The Larne Line is relatively unaltered. The 12:35 to Carrickfergus and return at 13:20 is withdrawn as are the 20:45 to Carrickfergus and 21:30 return. The 22:20 to Whitehead and 23:20 to Larne Harbour are replaced by a 22:15 to Larne Harbour and a 23:00 to Carrickfergus. Certain trains which operated empty from Larne to Larne Harbour and back on Sundays are now shown to the public. The effect of the series of alterations on all lines is to render the timetable of 29 June last useless. One must now consult four separate leaflets to obtain the entire NIR service, an intolerable state of affairs which promptly deserves remedy.

### **Cullybackey**

Work on reconstructing the down platform was almost complete on 17 March, when a tarmac surface was being laid by roadworks-type machinery.

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# Feature Section

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## INDUSTRIAL RAILWAY NEWS

While most of the developments we report occur usually on the lines of the two principal transport companies there is often quite a lot of interesting news on minor railways throughout the country. We have pleasure in devoting a special section of this issue to these lesser but fascinating lines.

### **Bord Na Mona**

An order has been placed with the Hunslet Engine Company of Leeds for a further 25 “Wagonmaster” diesel locomotives, to the Board’s own design. There are already 53 in service. Owing to the abandonment of the locomotive side of their business by Ruston & Hornsby Limited there is increasing difficulty over spare parts for the fleet of 166 Ruston locos of various types which operate on the different BNM systems. Some are to be fitted with Gardner 4LW engines, the first noted being LM54. (type 40DL, works number 259198 of 1948) at Coolnamona. It retains its original gearbox and transmission but obtaining spares for these is becoming a serious problem and an alternative may have to be sought. In addition to its new engine, LM54 sports an elegant new radiator, designed and manufactured by Bord na Mona.

At Timahoe Works LM22 (Ruston type 13DL, works number 243395 of 1946) which was previously converted to a railcar by the fitting of a suitable body over the loco frame, has been fitted with a 2-cylinder Deutz engine in place of the original. A further oddity observed at Coolnamona was LM76 (Ruston 48DL, works number 326048 of 1952). It has been fitted with four separate vertical exhaust pipes in place of the original horizontal ones. These were found to be a fire hazard and, in addition, they created an unnecessary health hazard for the driver.

An extension of the Coolnamona system to include a third bog is likely to be opened later during this year. Railcar C39 (Wickham 6861) has been acquired by the Irish Steam Preservation Society. After restoration to working order it is hoped to transfer it to the Society’s line at Stradbally.

*Thanks:* For information for this section we are indebted to Messrs M. Kennard and A.J. Wilson and also to “Narrow Gauge News”.

### **Irish Shell**

This company has withdrawn from service its unique Planet diesel locomotive. No.23 (works number 3509 of 1951). It has been replaced by a Muir-Hill shunting tractor. It was the last 5ft 3in gauge industrial loco in constant use in Ireland. The only remaining ones - those at the four factories of Comhlucht Siúicre Éireann - work on a seasonal basis only.

### **Erin Peat Products Ltd**

A newcomer to the Irish industrial railway scene this Birr company in December 1970 acquired an entire 2ft gauge railway “kit” from ME Engineering Limited, London. It comprises one loco, wagons and track. The loco is Planet 2306, a Simplex-type 4-wheeler. It lacks the original maker’s plate and bonnet covers. To make the discovery of its identity even more difficult the locomotive has been fitted with bonnet covers from a Motor Rail loco - complete with a Motor Rail maker’s plate!

### **“The Railway Nobody Knew”**

Our article under this heading in the November 1970 issue (it described the Celbridge pylon railway) provoked much comment and correspondence, all of which was very much appreciated. It has been suggested that the locomotives are the property of the Electricity Supply Board and not of the Irish

Engineering & Harbour Construction Company. The Line has since been dismantled.

### **Irish Peat Development Company**

Two bogie turf wagons and a quantity of spares have been acquired by the Irish Steam Preservation Society for conversion into passenger rolling stock.

### **Pope's Railway**

This fascinating industrial line is the subject of a special feature article in the present issue of the IRN.

### **Shane's Castle Railway**

The official opening of Shane's Castle Railway and Nature Reserve at the seat of Lord O'Neill is scheduled for 30 April, the ceremony to be performed by the Governor of Northern Ireland, HE The Lord Grey of Naunton. It is reported that the railway will be in use, however, on Saturday 24 April for a pre-opening trial. Lord O'Neill owns the following locomotives: Bord na Mona No.3 (Barclay 2265 of 1949, British Aluminium Company (Larne) No.1 (Peckett 1026 of 1904) - both are 0-4-0Ts - and a Simplex diesel loco.

## **NEWS EXTRA: DEATH OF A SHADOW**

Most of our readers would be forgiven for thinking that the dissolution of September 1958 marked the demise of the short-lived Great Northern Railway Board, evidence supporting this contention being the quick apportionment of the old GNRB assets among the heirs - CIÉ and the then UTA. Before too long every item of Northern rolling stock had a stencilled identification of its new owners. But, the GNRB was not killed then; rather was it relegated to a state of suspended animation. It continued in existence for one purpose only, succinctly explained in the schedule to the Transport (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill, 1971) mentioned in our news pages.

The GNRB continued to exist to discharge the responsibilities of the GNR(I) in the County Donegal Railways Joint Committee (and through it the Strabane & Letterkenny Railway), the other partner in which concern being the British Railways Board (as successors to the Midland Railway of England). Neither CIÉ nor the UTA were concerned with the Donegal for some years. The position changed in 1967 when, for a consideration of £57,742 paid by CIÉ to BR, CIÉ took over the BR share of the undertaking entering into partnership with the GNRB. Now, under the terms of the Bill, both the CDRJC and the S&L (and hence the GNRB) will be dissolved and all assets, contracts and liabilities of the companies will be transferred to CIÉ which, however, is exempted from statutory obligation on the CDRJC to provide road services. Thus, in one fell swoop, would three quite well-known companies pass finally into the realms of history.

## **POPE'S RAILWAY**

**(C.D. Seymour)**

Turf - as peat is invariably referred to in this country - is an unchanging part of the Irish scene. From time immemorial it has served as the fuel of the peasantry and even today there are many, many people of county areas who own a small portion of bog and annually harvest their own supply of turf for the winter months. To the railway student turf is immediately identified with the operations of Bord na Mona, the semi-state body which since the last war has undertaken a massive development of Irish bogs. Specially designed machinery (quite fascinating to watch) is widely used and the produce is carried away along a network of over 500 miles of narrow-gauge railway. The details of Bord na Mona railway operation have been recorded many times, in these pages and elsewhere, and for some reason or other most railway enthusiasts take them for granted. Perhaps because of this few people if any have

investigated the growth and history of the only private bog railway in the southern half of the country.\*\*

Nationally, Bord na Mona means “turf”; in Cork, however, “Pope’s” means the same thing. For Messrs Pope Brothers, motor engineers in Cork and Mallow, are also well known as fuel merchants and, indeed, at one time they were probably better known as such than BNM. At first Pope’s were fuel distributors in the usual sense of the term; then they specialised in turf and for some years worked a bog in County Kerry. In 1958 the firm moved north and became the owners of a bog of some 800 acres in extent at Longfordpass in County Tipperary. To work this efficiently the firm purchased at auction the materials and rolling stock of the contractor’s railway previously used in the mid 1950s on the building of the River Lee hydro-electric scheme. The railway was relaid at Longfordpass and it was first operational in August 1959.

Longfordpass is situated just north of Littleton village, on the main Dublin-Cork road, and it is equidistant from both those cities. The total length of Pope’s railway lies between two and three miles and the line follows the run of the bog which lies generally in a south-east to north-west direction. The track is laid to a gauge of 2ft and most of the permanent way consists of contractor’s rail in 16ft 6in lengths laid on steel sleepers 46in long. Standard gauge wooden sleepers are laid in between at intervals, particularly on curves to give additional stability at important places.

Most of the curves are laid with strait lengths of track, distorted at the joints, but there is at least one curve laid with the properly bent rail more usual in such situations. A number of trenches are crossed by means of short pole bridges.

The motive power at the outset consisted of four Simplex diesel locomotives, fitted with 15 hp Dorman engines. These came to Longfordpass from the Lee scheme but they may not have originated there. An Electricity Supply Board official familiar with the Lee hydro-electric scheme suggested that these locomotives may have been used earlier on the similar electrification scheme carried out on the River Erne (Cliff and Cathleen’s Fall, above Ballyshannon). Whatever their origins, the four engines hauled turf trains on Pope’s Railway for some six years, after which they were re-engined at Longfordpass with 32 hp Fordson Major diesel tractor engines. The new power units were placed in a transverse position, resulting in an overhang beyond the existing 8ft by 4ft underframe.

The locomotives are chain driven and are numbered 1-4. No.1 is unique in that it also boasts an uncovered seat for passengers located behind the engine. Loco No.2 has been cannibalised to provide spare parts and only the underframe remains extant today. Nos. 3 and 4 - both cableless - are in regular use and of the pair the former is regarded as the favourite runner.

The only other loco recorded as having worked on the system is No.5. This is a four-wheeled Hunslet loco dating from 1942. It is painted blue and bears the maker’s number 2659. It has a cab and sliding doors and was bought at a Dublin auction. No further information has so far come to hand as to the origins of this locomotive, despite much inquiry. No.5 has been out of use for quite some time.

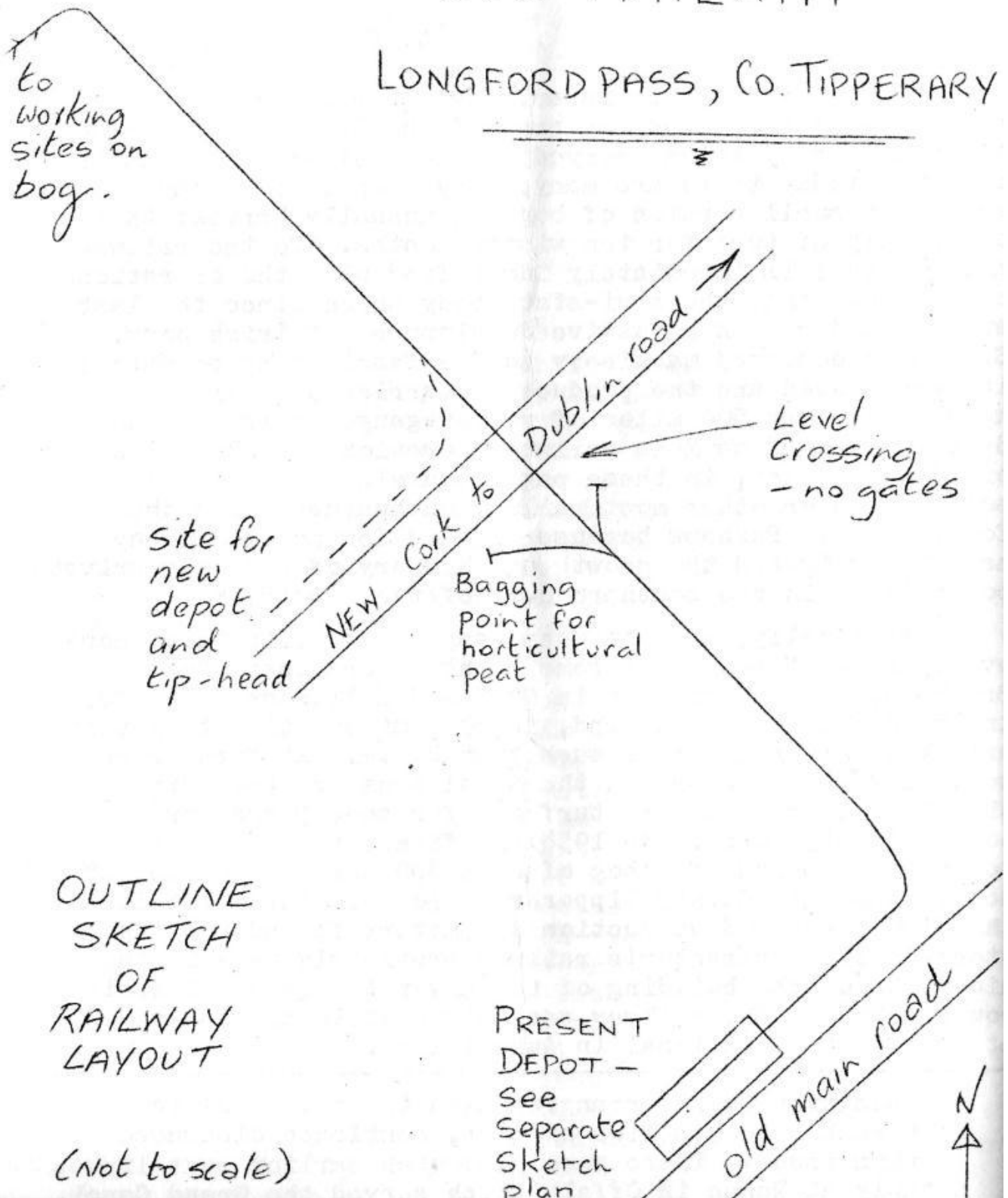
The rolling stock comprises 46 high-sided end-opening wagons running on four-wheeled underframes. These wagons vary in size but the newer vehicles are the largest, measuring 7ft 4in by 4ft 9½in by 4ft 9½in. The earlier models were almost entirely of timber construction while the more recent ones are almost all metal. They are built at the Company’s works at Victoria Cross in Cork. In addition to the above vehicles at least two four-wheeled flat wagons are in use for conveying horticultural peat (turf mould) from the bagging point to the depot. The remains of a twin hopper wagon are also in evidence today.

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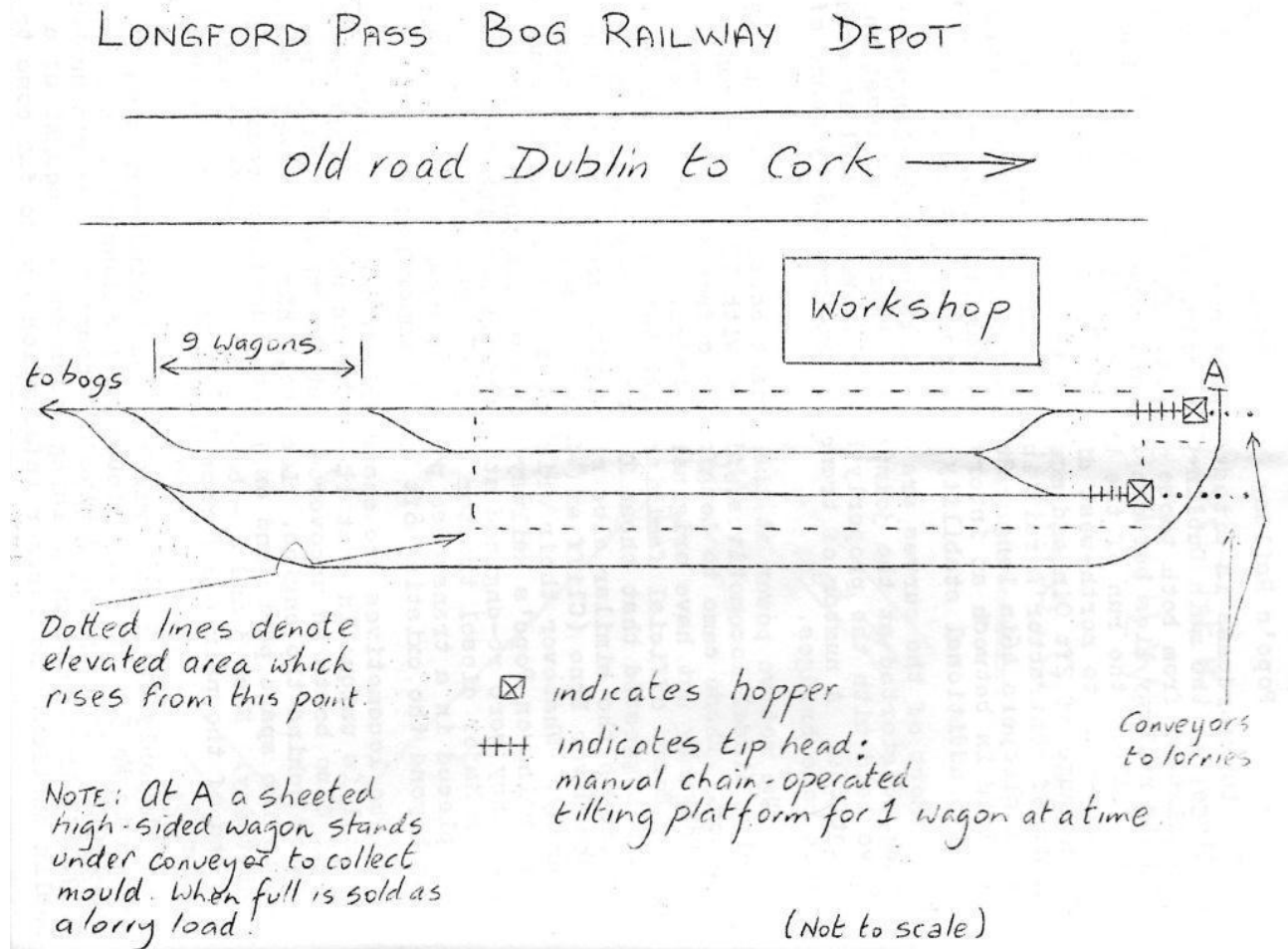
\*\* The position is now changing with the advent of the Erin Peat Products line at Birr, mentioned elsewhere in this issue. There were also much earlier peat lines, notably at Rahan in Offaly which served the Grand Canal.

# POPE BROTHERS LTD. BOG RAILWAY

LONGFORD PASS, CO. TIPPERARY



On the bog itself the machinery is sophisticated and generally similar to that in use on the bogs worked by Bord na Mona. The railway is therefore kept quite busy serving the main working points. At present the train mileage is high as the depot is more than two miles from the bog cutters. However, as will be seen from the sketch map of the system, a new stretch of road now separates these two points and in March work commenced on clearing a site for the new tip-heads and depot. When this work has been completed that section of the railway lying to the south-east of the new main Cork road will be lifted and work will be abandoned on the portion of the bog served by it.



Pending the completion of the new depot the railway crosses the new part of the main road on the level. The rails are set neatly into the road surface and warning notices have been erected, announcing to motorists that they can expect to find "turf wagons crossing". This present temporary arrangement is very interesting indeed and it is almost unique on a minor industrial line. \*\* Although it will soon disappear Pope's Railway will continue to function quietly and efficiently under the guidance of Messrs Bernie Pope and Mick Mahony, without whose help this article could not have been written and to whom grateful acknowledgment is made.

\*\* A much lesser example of a similar arrangement can be found near Arigna, where a very short line from Noone's Aughabehy mine crosses the Arigna-Geevagh road.