

THE

# **IRISH RAILFANS' NEWS**

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**EDITORIAL**

One of the rare items of good news to come from the North of Ireland in recent times was the announcement by the Stormont Minister of Development of a new plan for the railway system in the area. At a time of great strife - laced with immeasurable suffering - such news will hardly bring great cheer to or evoke comment from the ordinary citizen. In the long term, however, the news must be welcomed as the plans are imaginative and of great potential benefit to the Northern community. The virtual rebuilding of the old Belfast Central Railway and, indeed, of the former GNR Antrim branch, together with the construction of a new central station in Belfast will give much needed employment, albeit short-term, as well as a big boost in morale to NIR. The result could bring a considerable growth in rail traffic on a day-to-day basis, not to mention revitalised excursion traffic to Bangor from many points, including some south of the border.

Criticism is inevitable, no matter how good a scheme is, but there are one or two points which demand attention. For instance, just how does one upgrade the Antrim branch sufficiently to make the present York Road - Antrim timings attainable on the new route? Should the Bleach Green Junction - Antrim section (one of the fastest rail stretches in Ireland) be downgraded to a single-line goods loop? Will Maysfields be acceptable as a location for a "central" station? And a further query - which was put to Mr Hugh Waring, NIR manager, on Ulster Television - what about Ballymacarrett Junction - Comber, the Harcourt Street line of Belfast?

But, even with such questions unanswered, the plan is basically sound, and the money - £1.2 million - has been made available by the Government. It seems likely that this sum will be augmented at a later date. The plan, coming as it did from an administration which in recent years closed some of Ireland's finest rail sections, must be lauded. As recently as June 1970 the Stormont-commissioned Macrory Report suggested the closure of the Derry/Coleraine section within five years. We note gladly that this proposal is no longer mentioned. In fact, with the possible future development of the "Back Line" at Greenisland and the rumoured installation of a new junction at Knockmore, freight traffic in containers could well be in mind for Derry (that is, traffic besides that originating on CIÉ).

One item which should not be overlooked during the reorganisation and, indeed, one which could well receive immediate attention is the catering service on trains and stations. These passenger facilities are now in the hands of contractors and are thus outside the direct control of NIR staff. Catering at the Belfast station buffets is at best mediocre, while facilities aboard NCC line trains are pathetic. They bear no comparison with those on CIÉ, BR or even the 1'11½" gauge Ffestiniog Railway in Wales! Have not these Belfast caterers heard of such none-too-rare items as fresh filled rolls, fresh pastries, chocolate biscuits, hot soup, sausage rolls, etcetera, etcetera - all of which are simply prepared for consumption.

Readers may imagine at times that we have an undue occupation with food and catering, as we

regularly touch on these matters. We are not in fact obsessed with the topic of food but we do realise the importance of train refreshment facilities, especially on longer journeys. It is noticeable that in recent months one of the mammoth airlines is stressing the quality of its catering in its very extensive and expensive advertising. The provision of even relatively simple catering facilities on a train is a definite amenity and one likely to attract the attention of the long-distance traveller.

Finally, to round off the projected improvement of railways in the north, might we suggest that thought be given to the restoration of the rail link to Newry, even if it is as elemental as a “railway station and town” service from some point on the main line near Bessbrook. At the very least it would surely be worthwhile to carry out a little market research in Newry itself.

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## News Section

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### CÓRAS IOMPAIR ÉIREANN

#### **DSE Line Developments**

Due to an unfortunate set of circumstances there was a collision between two news items in our last issue which resulted in severe telescoping and their appearance as a single item. The items concerned the quite separate track re-alignment at Ballygannon and a bridge renewal at Greystones. To set the record straight we give full details below.

First, in the weekend 6/7 November 1971 the track at Ballygannon between MP 18 and MP 19 was moved inland. In the weeks prior to the actual job work had been in progress on the construction and fencing of the new alignment. On 6 November B163 + 6 bogies + HV worked the 07:48 ex Wicklow, gaining the distinction of being the last passenger train to use the old formation. After it passed, A56R and the Athlone crane began working from the Wicklow end, while A50R with the 35-ton Inchicore crane worked at the other end. First of all the track was lifted on the old line and new track put in place on the new formation. The latter was then ballasted and all was ready in time for the passage of the 19:20 ex Wexford (B141 + 5 bogies + HV + 2 LV) on 7 November. Two ballast trains were involved. One, B101, van, 14 ballast wagons and van, ran from Lisduff via Waterford, while the other was worked to Wicklow on 5 November by B109 which returned light engine. B101 was in charge of the ballast train workings to and from Wicklow and it also worked the two empty ballast trains to Lisduff via Dublin.

In the second major work, the two cranes were - on 14 November - once again in the Greystones area, this time to renew Bridge No.150 which crosses the road near the Ormonde Cinema in Greystones itself. This job was completed very expeditiously. One incidental effect of the renewal was that the presently rather limited number of Dublin City Services bus routes worked regularly by single-deck vehicles was reduced as CIÉ altered the Route 84 workings to double-deck operation by buses of the D class.

#### **Loco News**

In November work was completed on the re-engining of the A class. The last four locos to be so treated were A31R, A6R, A54R and A26R. A54R had last worked as an A class loco in May 1964, when it was damaged in the Millstreet accident. A26 had been out of service for some time before re-engining. A42R, A48R and A59R, which were among the earlier locos to be re-engined, carried the original version of the black-and-tan livery but they have now acquired the standard “dipped” version.

On the C class re-engining front, things were moving slowly while the A class units were being dealt

with. B215 entered service towards the end of July last, B224 followed in September, B227 in October, and B216, B217 and B221 towards the end of the year. This year, B225, B213 and B229 entered service, B203 and B207 were on trial at the end of March, and it was reported around the same time that B206 had entered service on the Loughrea Branch, one of this class being now permanently allocated to this line in place of the G class loco normally there. C202, C212, C209, C211 and C226 are presently being put through the works. C203 is believed to have been the last unaltered C class loco in service; it was noted in Limerick on 11 December but was withdrawn from duty a few days later. C202 was at work in the Dublin area in November.

D304 is still at work. It has been overhauled and fitted with electric head and tail lights and given a cab heater similar to those in the General Motors locomotives.

### **Bridge Mishaps**

There have been two more cases of road vehicles becoming stuck under railway bridges in Dublin. At 17:30 on 9 March a truck conveying an excavator got jammed under Amiens Street bridge near Connolly Station, while on the morning of 16 March another truck carrying a very large tank stuck beneath the Loop Line bridge at the Custom House Quay. Neither bridge was damaged although the effects on traffic were severe.

### **Navan Mines**

Exploration continues at Nevinstown, just north of Navan. It is suggested that mining will lead to the export of concentrates from a new port to be established at Mornington, Co Louth, near the mouth of the Boyne estuary. If this development takes place no doubt CIÉ will build another mineral railway off the Dublin/Drogheda line to Mornington.

### **New Rolling Stock**

British Rail adopted a novel method for delivering new rolling stock to CIÉ when the train ferry "Cambridge Ferry" sailed from Harwich to Dublin on 11 January with 10 reconditioned coaches which had been converted to steam-heating vans. The same vessel sailed again on 6 March and this time had a lively trip during which it had to shelter for 12 hours from a storm in St. Ives Bay in Cornwall. Its load was as before, with the addition of a new dining car. Both cargoes were unloaded on arrival by the 100 ton crane.

The bogie heating vans were delivered in a grey undercoat and will be finished in CIÉ livery at Inchicore before entering service. Four were quickly painted and noted in service on 9 February on the 08:45 and 14:45 to Cork, 09:20 to Waterford and 10:00 to Limerick. A few others are to be seen at Inchicore in full livery but may not now enter service until the autumn. They differ from the previous bogie heating vans, 3157-66, in having only one Spanner boiler. Power for the various fuel and water pumps and also for the combustion system is provided by a diesel-electric generator set mounted in the boiler room. It comprises a Lister 2-cylinder diesel engine giving 21.5 hp at 1,500 rpm. It is permanently coupled to a generator by BKB Electric Motors Ltd, type GP, which gives 380/220 volts AC, 25-8 amps, 3-phase current. Interior lighting is by unshaded domestic-size tungsten lamps.

All the vans are 63'5" long and 9'3" wide - the standard BR dimensions adopted in 1951. The body sides curve in sharply to the gutters and so add yet another body profile to CIÉ's extensive range, and one which is noticeably narrower than most others which are at least 9'6" wide. The tare weight is 37t 3c 2q, according to the number plates on the ends of some of them. (The plates also state most helpfully "Seating 00 First 00 Second!") The bogies are BR type B5, fitted in place of the old ones.

The main interior fittings comprise a large water tank over each bogie and the boiler generator set near the centre. The guard's compartment is palatial compared with any previous CIÉ brakes. There is a typical BR revolving armchair and also an auxiliary tip-up seat. The steam heat radiator can be turned

off if desired, and there is also a food warmer - a luxury previously confined to CIÉ locos. All the various gauges - steam and vacuum - are marked either "BR" or "LMR" and there is a lift-up type vacuum brake valve, previously found only on the AEC railcars. There is a cabinet of emergency tools and a spare screw coupling. Apart from the guard's compartment there is no interior panelling at all on either sides or roof - a crude-looking arrangement.

It is most unfortunate that these otherwise fine vans should have a very high noise level. The diesel engines make enough noise on their own and those vans already in service blow off steam at frequent intervals. The net effect is rather unpleasant to staff and passengers alike in a roofed-over station.

To determine the previous identity of these vehicles has called for considerable ingenuity, the detective work being hampered by several inaccurate theories circulated by too-enthusiastic enthusiasts. All identity plates have been removed and new ones reading "BREL, Derby 1971, Litchurch Lane Works" fitted to some instead. A further complication arose when it was noticed that there are two different batches - previously second/brakes, and previously brake/composites, built about 1955. So far we have been able to positively identify four:

CIÉ	BR	Builder	Lot	Type	Last No.
3174	W21143	C. Roberts & Co	30187	Brake/Compo	M21143
3175	M21196	Metro Cammell	30425	Brake/Compo	
3187	M34012	BR, Derby Works	30003	Brake/Second	
3190	S34262	BR, Eastleigh Works	30021	Brake/Second	M34262

In addition, 3186 was a brake/second type, old identity unknown. From studies so far it has emerged that the vans will occupy the number series 3171-90, but this is not officially confirmed.

Some of the vans, still in grey paint, were pressed into service from 12 April to provide emergency power for electric signalling during the power dispute. Strategically parked, the vans feed signals through temporary cables. In addition to those at Heuston and Pearse station cabins, vans on this duty are:

- 3181 Connolly Loco Shed
- 3185 Fairview Railcar Depot
- 3190 Dun Laoghaire

Of these, only 3185 is in its final black-tan livery.

## No.5401

The "odd" vehicle in the BR consignments was No.5401 - a buffet car and the first of the coaches to the BR Mark II<sup>d</sup> pattern which are now due for delivery. It was in a light green undercoat.

## Container Terminal

It was expected that regular operation to and from the B+I terminal would commence on 17 April.

It will not be possible to serve the BR terminal by rail it until further land reclamation has taken place.

## Signalling Developments

Killinick cabin, on the South Wexford line, was closed on 11 March and all points are presently spiked; all signal arms have been taken down. It is not yet known what arrangements will be made for the beet season. The block section is now Rosslare Strand/Bridgetown.

Crusheen cabin, on the Limerick/Sligo line, was closed on 21 February. The new block section is Ennis (North Cabin) to Gort.

The arrangement for running Up trains from East Wall to Connolly Station Central Cabin on the Down line was fully implemented on 11 February.

## CIÉ CTC

CIÉ has advertised for tenders for the supply of Centralised Traffic Control equipment for the lines from Dublin to Ballybroy (103km) and from Dublin to Mullingar (80km). There are two branch lines totalling 46km included in the Dublin/Ballybroy scheme, most probably Cherryville Junction/Athy and Portarlington/Tullamore. So far no other details of the scheme have been released nor has money been made available to pay the very large capital sums involved. The proposals have great attractions from the point of view of improving line capacity and of reducing manpower. It would seem from the appearance of the advertisement that the idea of installing tokenless block equipment has been shelved.

## Well Off The Road

Late on Sunday, 16 January, loco B171 was proceeding to Connolly loco shed after working the 19:30 ex Dundalk. In the shunting involved, it entered the headshunt of the former Sherriff Street goods yard, failed to stop and crashed through the stopper. A few feet beyond, it went over the end of the embankment and fell across the little-used sidings on the southern bank of the old Royal Canal. The loco ended up with its north-end buffers embedded in a grassy bank and its other end propped up at a steep angle by the retaining wall of the bank over which it had fallen. The loco suffered surprisingly little damage and, happily, the driver (in the south-end cab) was not seriously injured.

Little recovery work was done on the 17<sup>th</sup>, apart from the erection of a crib of sleepers below the south bogie which was then detached from the loco. On the afternoon of the 18<sup>th</sup>, the 20-ton Athlone steam crane was placed on the headshunt which had been specially extended to the edge of the bank. The 35-ton Inchicore crane was placed on the Up main line, carefully positioned above one pier of the bridge over the canal - not over a span. When the 14:00 from Howth had passed both lines were blocked and recovery proceeded. Passengers from the 13:15 ex Dundalk and 14:35 ex Howth were brought from Killester to the city by bus, but those in the 15:15 ex Howth were somehow overlooked, and so were treated to an hour-long study of the refuse tip at Fairview.

In the down direction the 15:35 to Howth was delayed until 16:10, followed closely by the 15:45 to Drogheda. For some inexplicable reason the recovery operations were not stopped once B171 had been placed on temporary bogies on the up line about 16:30. Instead, this line remained blocked for considerably longer while the Inchicore crane fished for B171's bogies. Inevitably, the down line was also blocked at intervals while this was going on, for each time the crane swung laterally its superstructure fouled the running line. The net result was the most serious disruption to the Dublin suburban rail services for a long time. Because of the interworking of Northern and South-Eastern services the trains on both lines were hopelessly disrupted and there was very little in the way of helpful information on the situation available to intending passengers.

Some of the delays to trains were very severe, for example, the 16:05 ex Howth which arrived at 17:39 - 70 minutes late - and the 17:45 ex Howth which was 45 minutes late when it arrived at 18:54. Most affected was the 18:00 to Dundalk. Normally this is the return working of the 16:45 Connolly to Dalkey but it was delayed so badly on its outward run that it was unable to leave Connolly Station for Dundalk until 19:40! Admittedly it was preceded by the 18:30 from Connolly Station (which left at 18:47) but this was of little use to those at stations between Dalkey and Tara Street. In all, the occasion was not a particularly happy one.

Rather the opposite was the case on 16 March when there was a derailment at Athlone. The loco and four wagons of the 06:25 goods from Portarlington were derailed at the loop points in the Midland station, just west of the bridge, blocking both roads. Buses were used to bring passengers from the up Westport to Dublin and those on the morning passenger from Portarlington (which was blocked at Clara) on to Athlone. The latter train later went empty to Athlone. There was no crane at Athlone that day (it was in Dublin) and it was decided to re-rail the loco with the hydraulic equipment which was

also in Dublin. However, this was speedily despatched to Athlone by road and the lines were cleared in time to pass the down 14:30, which was only 13 minutes late leaving Athlone. This was a very smart piece of recovery work, especially when one remembers the unfortunate chance absence of breakdown equipment at Athlone that day.

### **Bus Versus Train**

CIÉ has introduced a limited-stop bus from Wicklow to Dublin, the service stopping to pick up only from Wicklow to Jameson's Corner, south of Bray. It then runs non-stop to Ballsbridge, and from there to the city terminal, Busaras, it sets down as required. Departure time from Wicklow is 33 minutes before the 07:48 suburban train but the arrival at Busaras is a mere one minute ahead of the train's scheduled arrival at Pearse Station. It is hardly a rival to the train.

### **Preserved**

Ex-D&SER loco No.15 (2-6-0 No.461) has been extensively cleaned at Inchicore. West Clare 0-6-2T No.5 has again been painted in an unlikely livery of light green with very heavy red lines, edged in yellow.

### **Withdrawn**

As from 1 April 1972 first class accommodation was withdrawn from the following trains, having previously been withdrawn on the Loughrea line and on Night Mail trains:

06:30	Heuston/Cork	07:15	Rosslare/Limerick Junction
13:10	Heuston/Cork	13:21	Limerick Junction/Rosslare
07:20	Cork/Heuston	09:50	Ballina/Limerick
13:30	Cork/Mallow	15:40	Limerick/Ballina
17:10	Cork/Mallow	08:35	Limerick/Limerick Junction
08:05	Mallow/Cork	09:25	Limerick Junction/Limerick
12:15	Mallow/Cork	07:50	Limerick/Ballybrophy
08:40	Waterford/Heuston	19:20	Ballybrophy/Limerick
18:15	Heuston/Waterford		

Most of the above trains would have had relatively little need for first-class seating, with the possible exception of the 08:35 Limerick/Limerick Junction and its return, which connect into and out of the important up "Seandún" express from Cork.

### **Suburban Tickets**

The first of the self-service barriers was tested at Harmonstown on 24 March and fixed in place the following week. Another was placed at the Irish Sweeps entrance to Lansdowne Road from 4 April. The equipment consists of a turnstile which is released by a ticket canceller. A ticket vending machine was noted at Sandycove on 27 March. It sells 70p and 35p ten-trip tickets and 10p single-trip tickets and will accept any combination of 5p, 10p and 50p coins up to the required amount but it will not give change. When sufficient coins have been inserted a green light shows and a button is pressed to release the ticket. A red light indicates that the particular value has been sold out. Most of the instructions are bilingual and are shown in red. A similar machine was noticed under installation at Harmonstown on 9 April; it will sell 6p, 4p and 3p single-trip tickets and will accept 1p, 2p and 5p coins.

With effect from 1 April the monthly rail and bus commuter tickets were made available by train from Balbriggan. Previously they were valid only as far as Skerries by train but they could be used by bus to Balbriggan. A further concession, so far advertised only by individual letters to holders of monthly commuter tickets, will be the issue from 1 May of one-year tickets at £53 (10 times the monthly cost). This is a generous concession which deserves widespread support.

## **“Train Divided”**

Recently two trains have become divided on the Cork/Dublin main line. On 23 January the 18:15 ex Cork was stopped at Kilbarry as a result of a malicious pulling of the cord and as it attempted to restart the train became divided and a passenger was injured by escaping steam. The train, with a large complement of unruly football supporters, was some 2 hours late reaching Heuston Station. The 09:15 ex Cork divided near Portarlington on 28 March while restarting after a signal check.

## **Push And Pull**

Several trials of push-and-pull suburban trains from Inchicore have been noted since mid-February. The first railcar to have its controls adapted to control a B201 class loco is, as expected, 2646, more recently numbered 6101 in a new coaching series. A second railcar, minus controls, is now 6301 (possibly ex 2647).

## **Railcar Developments**

In September/October last loco-hauled trains took over a number of railcar workings, principally the following:

- 06:25\* to Howth and its return to Dalkey at 06:51
- 06:10\* to Balbriggan and its return to Dun Laoghaire at 07:20
- 07:32 to Donabate and its return at 08:20 to Bray
- 17:34 to Dalkey and its return working at 18:55

Early in March rosters were again revised, resulting in the elimination of further railcar workings, as follows:

- 05:05 to Drogheda and its return at 06:20 to Dalkey
- 07:10 Bray to Howth and subsequent workings (Bray set)

At this time, too, the services marked \* above became railcars again.

All the ex-GNR 600 class railcars are now out of service and all except 600N are stored at Sallins, as are the 9 powered intermediates, 2660-8. The last two PI units, 2663 and 2668, went out of service towards the end of November. Some railcars have been overhauled, repainted and fitted with bus-type seats: 2603 (91 seats), 2615 (83 seats), 2616 (70 seats), 2622 (78 seats) and 2641 (91 seats). Also overhauled and repainted was 2648, while car 2634 has been fitted with 70 bus-type seats but has not been repainted. Cars 2615, 2616 and 2634 have retained their toilet accommodation. Car 2605 has had its engines and cab removed in connection with the push-and-pull working mentioned above. Cars 2606 and 2639 are presently receiving attention at Inchicore. The latter has had its van portion removed and proper windows have been fitted along the extra passenger seating space thereby provided. Yet another unit, 2646, is also at Inchicore Works. It has been adapted to control the loco of a push-and-pull train (see above) and is the first of the driving trailers for this mode of working.

## **Wagon Notes**

Eight of the 30000 series of bogie conflats have been completed with floors and side pockets for slings and chains. These are intended for the Cork/Dublin steel traffic for Irish Steel Holdings Ltd of Haulbowline.

30-ton brake van 23680 has been extensively renovated and equipped with roller-bearing axleboxes - this latter move should be a great boon as these vans have often suffered from hot boxes.

Yet another Esso 20-ton oil tank wagon No.992 has been transferred from Britain to Ireland; it was seen at Inchicore on 29 March. It is reported to be painted black, whereas the previous ones are grey.

Messrs C & A Parsons of Howth have recently supplied some hopper wagon bodies to Inchicore Works

where they are to be fixed on underframes. They are expected to number 25 in all and to be used for ferrying gypsum.

CIÉ invited tenders, due on 18 February, for the supply of 100 freight wagon bogies.

Some of an additional batch of 40 bulk cement hoppers are now under construction.

### **Successful Campaigns**

The “Great Train Robbery” reduction in fares ended on 20 March. On the last weekend - which included St. Patrick’s Day - a record number of people travelled. The crowds travelling from Dublin on 16 March necessitated an extra train to the south at 19:55: A3R + 7 bogies + HV, and an extra train to the Midlands at 19:57: A33R + 5 bogies + HV; these were in addition to the normal holiday weekend services which were packed to capacity. On 19 March, when the great rush back to Dublin took place, the normal Sunday services ran, with the following extras:

From	Train	To	Arrived
Ballinasloe	A60R + 6-piece rail car	Connolly Station	22.43
Castlerea *	A30R + HV + 12 bogies + HV	Connolly Station	23:34
Carrick-on-Shannon	A39R + 8 bogies + HV	Connolly Station	22:05
Portlaoise #	B184 + 6-piece railcar	Connolly Station	
Kilkenny	A34R + 8 bogies + HV	pass Clondalkin	21:38
Cork (i)	AR loco + 7 bogies + HV	pass Clondalkin	20:28
Cork (ii)	2 GM + 2 HV + 11 bogies	pass Clondalkin	21:48
Cork (iii)	B133 + HV + 7 bogies + HV	pass Clondalkin	22:45

\* via Portarlington

# direct to Connolly Station

On the South-Eastern the situation was complicated by the Wexford “Pop” festival. In addition to the 19:20 ex Wexford extras ran from Enniscorthy and Arklow.

In the down direction a relief to the 19:05 to Cork left Heuston at 18:50. Needless to remark, the trains ex Tralee and Limerick (via Nenagh) which were to connect into the Cork-Dublin workings ran through to Dublin. This weekend was a fitting climax to the CIÉ fare reduction campaign, the only blemish on which was another increase in train catering rates.

With effect from 21 March CIÉ introduced its Spring Promotion - advertised as the “Great Spring Double” - as a successor to the “Great Train Robbery”. Under the scheme there are two types of return fare. One is valid for three days, while the other is current for a month. By comparison with the standard rates charged for single journeys these fares are also very reasonable. For example, the fares for the 160-odd mile journey to Ballina are: £3.40 for the 3-day return and £4.20 for the monthly return ticket.

### **Loughrea Locos**

Notwithstanding our report above, there has been quite a variety of locos at work on this branch recently. The following locos have been seen: B184 on 14 February; G616 on 19 February (last reported as on loan to the Thurles Sugar Factory); A39R was seen on 4 April with a cattle special at Attymon Junction, while G613 was on the turntable facing towards Loughrea.

### **Goods**

With effect from 1 April only vacuum-braked wagons have been permitted to work on the goods trains running between Dundalk and Belfast.

## **Blocked**

Goods or bulk cement trains have on occasion to be blocked on the climb up to East Wall Junction. If the train is very heavy and the line anyway greasy an E class loco may have to be called upon to assist in the restart. Another hazard noted lately is that some of the children resident in the East Wall area have been removing the tail lamps from the rear of blocked bulk cement trains which have no van and, accordingly, no guard at the rear to keep a lookout. While this trouble has been spotted and rectified on a number of occasions before the train resumed its journey, there have been times when the opposite has been the case, leading to unwanted delays.

## **Developments At Stations**

Just before Easter the new track along the entire length of No.3 platform at Limerick was connected up and part of the original line went out of use; its capacity is now 12 bogies. Nos. 1 and 2 will take 10 each, while No.4 will now take 7 and a van. It is noted that under the present temporary signalling arrangements the down starter for No.3 platform is the former one for No.4 platform.

A few surveyor's pegs have appeared on the Howth branch, just beyond MP ¾ where the new station is to be built shortly to serve the Bayside area. One report suggests that there will be a single island platform here, but this awaits confirmation. At Sydney Parade, which is to be reopened shortly, the down platform was resurfaced in tarmac on April 4-7 and the up platform had also been prepared for the same treatment. On 9 April there were signs, including a contractor's excavator, that a similar job is about to be done to the up main and down branch platforms at Howth Junction.

At Rosslare Harbour extensive alterations are in progress to cater for stern-loading vessels on the Fishguard steamer service. The old goods store is being refurbished as a terminal for foot passengers. The old bay platform has been removed altogether but its site is being used to extend No.1 platform by some 4 bogie lengths to about 1,225 feet in all. A new store and office for the lifeboat service has been provided right at the end of the pier and it has been noted that GS&WR rowing boat No.4 was repainted in November 1971. At nearby Ballygeary a new bonded store for parcels traffic is being built. Parcels from the ship will be brought there in "Brutes" to await customs clearance. A section of the wall behind Ballygeary platform has been removed to provide direct access from the store to trains. There is still no shelter or even a platform canopy at this bleak station.

## **Unusual Robbery**

The two 6-coach carriage sets (comprising two non-corridor brake/standards and 4 Park Royals each) are usually kept when not in use in the sidings just west of the single line from Newcomen Junction at Connolly Station. When one was retrieved for its usual suburban work on Monday, 1 November, it was discovered that only the frames remained of some of the seats in Park Royal 1414!

## **INDUSTRIAL RAILWAY ROUND-UP**

### **Bord Na Mona**

Delivery has taken place of many of the 25 new "Wagonmaster" locomotives from the Hunslet Engine Company of Leeds. Their numbers are expected to be LM266 to LM290 (Hunslet numbers 7230-7254 of 1972), but this fact still awaits confirmation. The first unit reported was LM275 (Hunslet number 7240), while another - not identified - was at Coolnamona Works on 5 February. On the 19<sup>th</sup> of that month Hunslet numbers 7242-3 were seen at Blackwater Works; number plates had not been fitted but they are expected to be LM277-8. More recently, LM271 has been seen at Allenwood Power Station, based either at Ballydermot or Timahoe Works. Two others arrived in Dublin on 6 March.

We understand that two more units are to go to Coolnamona and ten to Blackwater. These locos look similar to the two previous batches, apart from the livery which has a deeper shade of cream with the

chocolate brown. Mechanically, they differ in having a five-speed rather than a three-speed transmission to improve performance at low speeds. Cab heaters and window demisters are fitted but there are no cab doors!

A batch of new railcars is being built at Blackwater works. Both C63 and C64 were finished by 19 February and seven others were under construction. There were also two more underframes awaiting attention. The total order was stated to be both fifteen and eighteen! These railcars are also similar to previous batches, but they have a longer wheelbase to improve riding. The engines and gearboxes are of Ford "Escort" type. The same works also has railcar C43 (Wickham No.7130 of 1955) which has been fitted with a Morris "1000" engine and transmission instead of the original 600 c.v. engine. This modification has resulted in a machine which is stated to be capable of attaining very high speeds, and the mind boggles at the thought! A similar engine is on hand to be fitted to C58 (Wickham No.8730 of 1960).

A considerable number of ex LMS NCC and West Clare wagons were acquired by Bord na Mona for use on its very extensive system. Of these, only covered wagon No.20C is in good order, as a shelter and mess room. Former passenger brakes, Nos. 17C and 18C, bodies only, are used for similar purposes, though of course static, as are several other covered wagons, none readily identifiable. The only LMS NCC vehicle seen was in very poor condition and could not be identified.

The Blackwater system serves a very extensive area on both sides of the River Shannon. On the western bank a long stretch of railway - over 3½ miles - has been laid on the bed of the now-abandoned Ballinasloe Branch of the Grand Canal! In 1966 Bord na Mona rebuilt Clonfert Bridge and it now crosses both tracks of a loop, with piers between the tracks. More recently, the line has reached Kylemore Bridge, further towards Ballinasloe; here the original bridge remains along with a new one built by Galway County Council. There was a lock at Kylemore (one of two on the Shannon Harbour - Ballinasloe line of the canal) and now the railway is being extended through the lock chamber, where two of the old lock gates remain in place! There is a remarkable selection of ballast in this region - it ranges from grass on the older track to broken concrete piping through the lock to polyethylene sheeting beyond.

### **A Mystery Railway**

Our reporters set out to follow up reports of this railway on 19 February and ruefully discovered that it had disappeared! The line had run along the west bank of the Shannon just south of the very remote and inaccessible Meelick Lock, and it had been used in connection with flood defence works, necessary in such very flat and low-lying terrain. According to local information the two locomotives used have been taken to Portumna for another job there. It is thought that the line used the same equipment as the "Celbridge Pylons Railway", described in an IRN feature article, and that the two Orenstein & Koppel locos involved are the property of the Electricity Supply Board.

### **The Guinness Railway**

The remnants of the 22 inch gauge system around the upper Brewery were involved in a minor sensation on 15 February. A loco traversing a passage beside St. James' Catholic Church became derailed at the bottom of the steep incline and ran out through an adjacent doorway into James's Street. Unfortunately, it did not wait for the doors to be opened first and hurled them against three cars parked outside. Nobody was injured.

### **Irish CECA Ltd**

This company, based at Allenwood, County Kildare, has purchased another loco, Hunslet 6075 of 1961, from S. McCormack & Company, Jamestown Road, Dublin. This latter firm also has Hunslets 5400, 5522 and 5526 in stock, having bought them with 6075 from St. Patrick's Copper Mines, Avoca.

Irish CECA have had Hunslet 2280 of 1941 since 1965 but it is now not powerful enough for its work - hauling wagons of Bord na Mona turf into the company's private siding. Its future is uncertain.

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

The 1972 season will extend from Easter to 15 October; Easter weekend and Sundays only in April and October and Wednesdays/Saturdays/Sundays from May to September. In addition, it will operate throughout the July holiday fortnight. The Wednesday services are new this year and except in July they will be diesel-worked. It is hoped to work the Saturday service with No.1 "Tyrone" and the Sunday trains with No.3 "Shane". Two steam locos will be used on days when large crowds are expected.

After a considerable amount of work No.1 has been put into reliable working order. The repairs included new pistons and valves and the cylinders were re-bored. The entire motion and axleboxes have been re-bushed and a damper and ashpan have been fitted. It was found necessary to redesign the valve gear and this work cured the troubles experienced previously.

Some alterations have been made to the track layout at Antrim Station, including an extra siding with a spur leading to the ex-Larne Harbour wagon turntable. This is 3ft gauge only - not one of the mixed gauge variety also found there. A toilet block, some platform seats and lamp standards have also been provided. At Shane's Castle station the loop has been slightly extended.

On the rolling stock front, the projected two new closed passenger coaches have been built while another important work has been the fitting of a new body onto open brake van No.5. All twelve passenger-carrying vehicles now carry the railway's coat of arms. An addition to the miscellaneous rolling stock list is a weed-killing wagon.

## **NORTHERN IRELAND RAILWAYS**

### **Blueprint For NIR**

The long-awaited decision as to the future of the Belfast Central Railway came on 10 February last when the Minister for Development at Stormont, Mr Bradford, announced a comprehensive new package for the north's rail system. It included:

- the reopening of the Belfast Central line
- building a new central station at Maysfields
- the rerouting of Belfast/Derry trains via Lisburn
- a new rolling stock building programme

The BCR line was last used on 29 July 1965 and is now derelict, having been disconnected at either end and split into two sections; it will now become the virtual centre of the new rail system. The site of the former GNR Maysfields goods depot will be used for a new terminus and a halt will be built at Shaftesbury Square. The line, which was formerly double track from Central Junction to Maysfields and thence single to Ballymacarrett Junction, will be reopened as double track throughout, as Bangor and Portadown trains will run through to Maysfields. The work will entail the replacement of the single-width Lagan Viaduct by a new structure, while the crossing of Middlepath Street will require considerable alterations. The removal of the old bridge at this point was carried out in 1965 to give road traffic on the Sydenham bypass the standard 16ft headroom. To maintain this clearance the new line will have to rise from Ballymacarrett Junction to Middlepath Street without fouling the adjacent road overpass – a gradient of possibly 1:60 being necessary.

With the opening of the new "airport-style" Maysfields the existing termini at Great Victoria Street and Queen's Quay will be demolished and the sites disposed of to defray the very heavy cost of the new development. Ironically, both of these stations have suffered considerable bomb damage recently.

NIR



In connection with the closure of Queen's Quay it is possible that a new halt will be provided at Bridge End, near Middlepath Street, to cater for the many workers in this area.

Concurrently with these developments the Knockmore Junction/Antrim section is to be upgraded from "goods only" to main line standards. This former GNR 18½ mile branch lost its passenger traffic on 12 September 1960 and is now used mainly by the Dublin/Derry CIÉ fitted freight services. Under the new plan it seems likely that Knockmore Junction will be given a connection facing Dublin, making a triangular layout and doing away with the troublesome business of reversing trains. Much work will be needed to improve the Antrim branch for Maysfields/Derry express trains. Intermediate stations which once had loops will have to be reinstated and some sharp curves dealt with. The ailing Crumlin Viaduct will also require some surgery to enable it take higher speed trains. But even with such improvements there will be disadvantages with the rerouting of the Derry and Portrush trains, notably the increasing of the rail distance between Antrim and Belfast from 19¼ to 28½ miles.

Some stations on the Antrim branch may be resurrected for stopping trains while one, Aldergrove, is part of the blueprint. It is adjacent to the civil airport for Belfast and its development as an airport link seems certain. It is suggested that the railway might even be rerouted towards the airport precincts and become the main passenger connection with the city. Such a plan was mooted when the airport was being developed and a trial train actually ran from Belfast to Aldergrove and back in November 1959.

When all these moves have taken place the Bleach Green Junction/Antrim section is to become a single line "branch" and York Road's main concern will then be the Larne line traffic. Through trains from there to Derry are expected to disappear, although one report suggests that the "back line" at Greenisland will be reinstated. Such a move could mean the future exploitation of the considerable container traffic at Larne Harbour - something long overdue - even through CIÉ traffic to and from Larne Harbour should not be discounted.

The plans will cost much money and initially £1.2 million is being made available. A further sum of £1.5 million is to be spent on rolling stock developments. New equipment is needed to replace the aged railcars on the GN section and suburban diesel-electric trains are already anticipated. No date has been announced for the completion of the plans but 2 years should see much progress, hopefully unhampered by political activity.

### **Bomb Scare**

Because of a bomb alert at Portadown on 23 March the 14:30 Belfast/Dublin had to be cancelled there. As a result CIÉ had to provide a train to work the 17:30 Dublin/Belfast. The delay also affected the 17:30 up which was some 20 minutes late.

### **New Coaches**

A special freight train left the Derby Works of British Rail Engineering Limited on 16 March. It comprised 5 new bogie coaches for NIR and some open wagons carrying their 5ft 3in bogies. The train arrived at Ardrossan early next day, from where the coaches were to be transported on special road bogies to NIR by the MV Lion.

The coaches comprise four open seconds with 62 seats, Nos. 825-8, and one brake/first driving trailer, with 24 seats, No.813. Unlike the previous 1970 batch all these coaches were complete apart from brake gear, control wires and public address equipment. Transfers were also to be applied in Belfast. Their appearance is rather a mystery as no order has been mentioned, nor is their purpose known as yet. While new rolling stock has been promised as part of the re-equipment programme this was expected to be new diesel-electric railcars for suburban work.

Two new goods brake vans have been observed but the numbers are not yet known; they resemble the UTA goods brake vans, which had a distinctive short body on a longer underframe. It is thought that

the new vans have been built on underframes from former spoil wagons; they have roller bearing axleboxes. MED trailer 515 was overhauled during March and spoil wagon M62 was still at CIÉ's Inchicore Works at Easter.

### **Newry Trains**

Yet another group - the Newry and District Community Service Council - added its voice to claims for a rail service to the area on 28 February. It would seem too much to hope that the Goraghwood/Newry branch would be restored, even in the improved climate of opinion regarding railways in the north, but there could be little to prevent the former Bessbrook station being reopened.

### **Platforms**

The raising of the Down platform mentioned in the last issue as at Helen's Bay is in fact at Holywood, where the Up platform is also being done. The tiny Up platform at Clipperstown is being extended.

### **Inspecting Officer**

The recent alteration in the Northern Ireland parliamentary scene has raised the question as to who will act as Inspecting Officer of Railways. While the Northern Ireland Ministry of Development had such an official though, he was rarely heard of. The services of an inspector will be of paramount importance while the Belfast Central line is being rebuilt. Possibly an Inspector from the London Department of the Environment will be assigned to the task.

### **Services Interrupted**

An interruption to services on the Northern section to Portadown on 3 March was another result of the recent campaign of violence in the north. All trains stopped between 12:00 and 17:00 on that day as railway colleagues attended the funeral of Driver Sam Dixon of Portadown. He had been a member of the part-time Ulster Defence Regiment and had been shot dead at his home in Lurgan. There were no trains at all in the north after 10:00 on 27 March or at any time on the following day as railwaymen joined in a strike which was widespread throughout the north.

### **Larne Line**

The building of the new Ulster Polytechnic close to Jordanstown station is expected to bring considerable traffic to the railway. A new halt is to be built some 500-600 yards beyond the existing station to serve the Polytechnic, but the present station will be retained for normal traffic. At Greenisland and Carrickfergus there may be considerable changes to the stations caused by the necessity to make room for the Carrickfergus section of the new M2 motorway.

### **Bangor Line Signalling**

The new automatic signals on the Down Bangor line were brought into use on 5 March; those on the Up line came into use on 8 March. The old signals no longer used are (Down line):

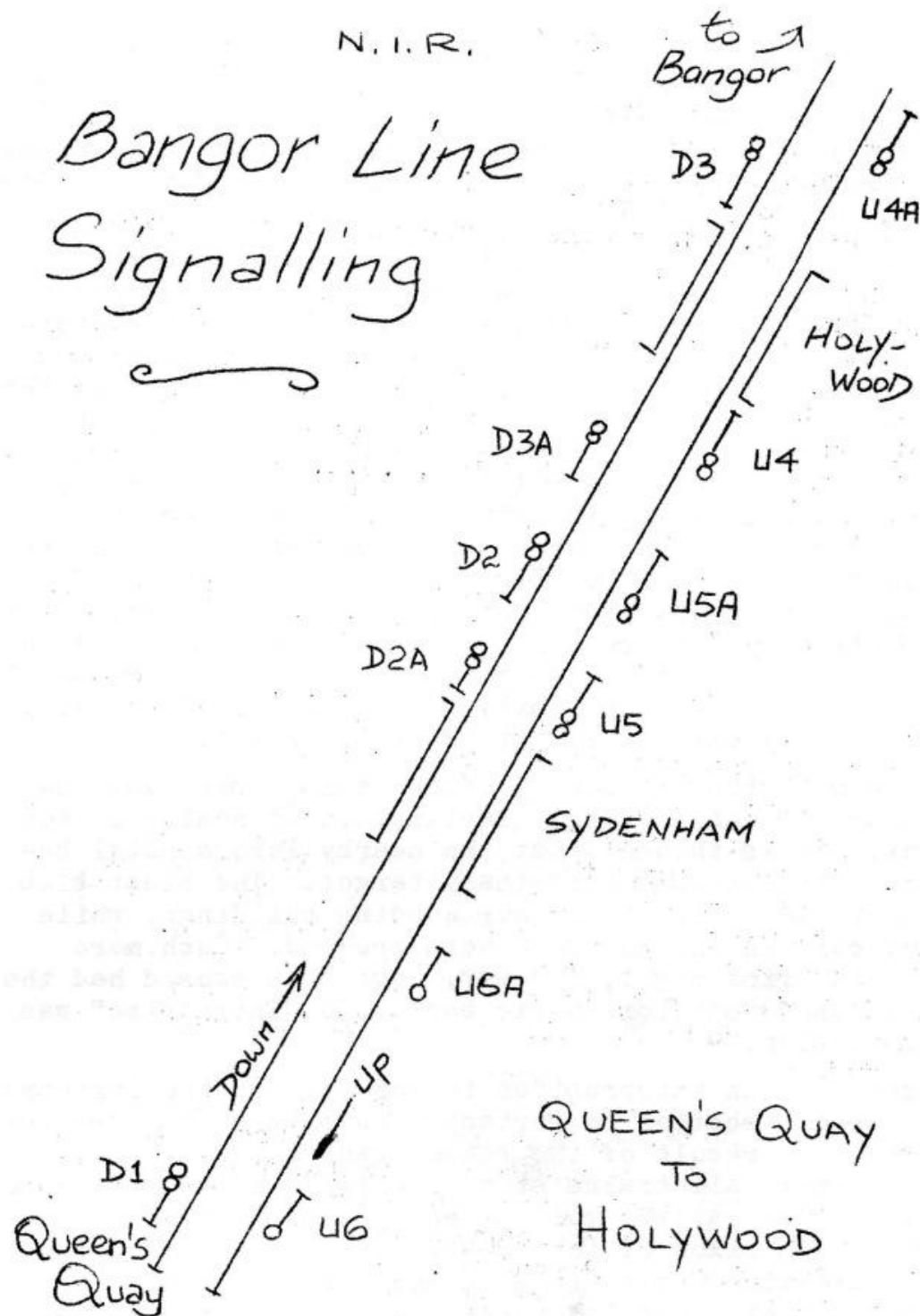
D1 & D1A	Sydenham
D2 & D2A	Tillysburn
D3 & D3A	Kinnegar
D4, D4A & D5	Holywood

Those on the Up line which are out of commission are:

U7A, U7 & U8	Holywood
U9 & U9A	Kinnegar
U10 & U10A	Tillysburn
U11 & U11A	Sydenham

The new signals are shown on the map below. All are 2-aspect except U6 and U6A which are single-

aspect and were previously in use. D1 was also in use as the Down Advanced Starter for Queen's Quay for some time. All the signals have telephones on their posts but the emergency "P" Signs have not been put up. These were used when it was necessary for the signalman to instruct a driver to pass a signal showing danger and were introduced as an additional safety feature following the Ballymacarrett Accident in 1945.



## **Drumnagoon**

The automatic half-barriers which had been installed at this crossing (at MP 89½ between Portadown and Lurgan) were brought into use on 19 March.

## **Bomb Damage**

Derry Waterside Station was damaged by a bomb on 21 March; it was planted in the Parcels Office which was demolished. The adjoining waiting room was also wrecked and the stationmaster's quarters above were severely damaged. Nobody was injured and there was no damage to trains although some of the debris fell onto some CIÉ wagons in the nearby goods yard.

A much more serious incident occurred at Great Victoria Street in Belfast on the following day. At about 15:00 a bomb in a road vehicle parked in the station exploded. It made a large crater in the ground and blew a considerable amount of glass and timber out of the roof, although the girders were not seriously damaged. Two trains were affected this time: BUT railcar 133 (in No.4 Platform) took the full force of the blast and was severely damaged - all the windows being smashed and the panelling stove in. Further damage was caused by roofing materials falling on it. Its trailers had their windows smashed but were worthy of repair but it is not yet known if 133 will be worth repairing. A strange feature of the incident was the fate which befell a CIÉ luggage van in No.3 Platform. Although partly sheltered by 133 its body was completely smashed and its roof collapsed.

This bombing caused no fewer than 71 personal injuries and it was amazingly fortunate that none were too serious. It is thought that the nearby Europa Hotel beside the station was the primary target. The blast blew out every window in it and surrounding buildings, while some 70 cars in the car park were wrecked. Much more serious injuries might, however, have been caused had the blast occurred earlier, while the 14:30 "Enterprise" was in the station.

## **Bangor Service**

The train service on the Bangor line was revised from 24 January, the net effect being the reduction of the service to one train each way per hour. On Mondays to Fridays the evening service (to which the changes referred only) is now as follows:

Depart Queen's Quay	18:45	19:30	20:30	21:30	22:40
Depart Bangor	18:50	19:45	20:45	22:00	

The Saturday down service is the same but the up trains are:

18:30	19:00	19:45	20:45	22:00
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The Sunday evening service is 18:20, 19:00 and then hourly to 22:00 (down); up trains are hourly from 18:00 to 22:00. An important feature which remains is that the three down expresses still leave at 16:45, 17:15 and 17:45, covering the 12½ miles to Bangor in 19 minutes, with one stop at Bangor West. By comparison the best trains from Dublin's Pearse Station to Bray (13¾ miles) are the 08:25 and 18:25 Rosslare main line trains, which take 23 minutes with a stop at Dun Laoghaire. The best local train to Bray is the 06:26 which takes 29 minutes with stops at Blackrock and Dun Laoghaire.

## **Executive**

NIR has appointed a Marketing Executive to take account of passenger needs and to ensure an adequate and comfortable service. This is a post which will assume increasing importance.

## **Runabouts**

The Rail Runabout tickets which are the descendants of the UTA "Freedom of Northern Ireland" tickets now cost £3 (standard class) and are issued from April to September. They are now advertised as valid as far south as Dundalk as well, of course, as all NIR stations.

### **Easter Specials**

Portrush saw its usual rush of special trains on Easter Monday and Tuesday. On Monday there were special workings from Belfast at 09:25 and 10:25, Ballymena at 09:50 and 10:35, and Derry at 08:40 and 11:25. The return services were 17:50, 19:20 and 19:45 to Belfast and 19:05 and 20:40 to Derry. The Derry specials did not run on Tuesday but there was an extra special to Belfast at 18:40.

### **Excavators**

Two new excavator-loaders by Ford have been obtained by the NIR. It is learned that at first they will be used between Lisburn and Antrim but will afterwards be based at Antrim and Ballymena.