

THE

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EDITORIAL

If any of our readers had been anticipating an exciting new Dublin suburban services train timetable on 10th June last, we trust that by now they will have recovered from their initial reactions of disappointment. Two of the regular Dun Laoghaire commuters and, incidentally, holders of monthly tickets, were recently overheard as they discussed the lateness of their train the 12:40 ex Connolly Station. One of the pair remarked that "moving the Western trains out of Westland Row/Pearse Station didn't make much difference anyhow!" We cannot for a moment go along with that argument as it has always been our firm belief that as far as the Midland line trains were concerned the station was simply built the wrong way round! Whether Connolly Station or Heuston Station is the better choice for such trains will, however, doubtless be a topic of conversation for quite a while but at least the dreadful bottleneck at Pearse Station has been removed for the good of all.

But we feel that CIÉ has not yet fully utilised the now unimpeded run through the city to make the suburban service as attractive as it might be. For instance, no effort has been made to introduce a regular interval service of trains to Dun Laoghaire and Bray. At the present time trains depart from Pearse Station in the evening peak-hour rush at 17:00, 17:14, 17:19, 17:29, 17:39, 17:50 and 17:58, while during the preceding afternoon "valley" period the departures southwards ex Connolly Station are at 15:25, 15:40, 16:10, 16:30 and 16:40. Of these services, the last two run to Dun Laoghaire and Lansdowne Road respectively.

It should be noted that all but one of those trains are in the "all stations" category so that the question of headway does not arise. We have noted a slight tendency towards regularising a few of the morning and lunch time services but this has been done to a limited extent only and the terminal points remain varied. Railway officials may argue that seven additional services run to Dun Laoghaire and that five of these continue on to Bray, while one terminates at Dalkey. This is in comparison with the same period last year. They may further hold that the frequency of services is ultimately more important than a symmetrical pattern of departures. But in fact, apart from speed, regularity and frequency are the two vital ingredients in a suburban railway system. The introduction of summer Sunday trains on a regular interval basis between Howth and Greystones is interesting in this connection and is, we hope, a taste of better things to come.

The extended use of this system, with all the Dublin/Drogheda/Dundalk services slotted in as far as Dun Laoghaire would result in a nice intensive inner suburban (Howth Junction to Dun Laoghaire) timetable. With detailed planning and the long-awaited signalling improvements at Howth Junction (coupled with similar signalling developments further northwards) some trains could miss out calls at some of the intermediate stations and thereby convey an impression of a general speeding up without neglecting short-haul passenger potential.

The recently-commissioned push-and-pull sets are increasing in both numbers and popularity with

regular travellers. They seem well capable of providing the regular interval service which we have expressed a wish for. That is, until something rather better is purchased, and to us that day appears to be getting very near. Sooner or later the CIÉ management will have to approach the appropriate Minister with a request for cash both to re-equip the suburban system and to provide new routes in addition. The case made will of course have to be a good one if funds are to be won for electric trains, diesel-electric railcars or whatever. We believe that efficient and regular services provided now will create a favourable climate for the expenditure of public money on the railways in the future.

News Section

CÓRAS IOMPAIR ÉIREANN

Rolling Stock Developments

Bogie Composite coaches 2140 and 2147, built in 1954, are at present in the process of being converted to guard's/luggage vans. A central compartment is being provided for the guard while large doors are being fitted on either side to facilitate the loading of parcels, etc. At least two more such vehicles are expected to be treated similarly in the near future.

All passenger coaches built prior to 1950 have been withdrawn from regular use on passenger train workings. This move means that all GSR-built passenger carrying coaches are unlikely to be seen in use again. However, exceptions (hopefully for a long time to come) will be standards 1335, 1327, 1328 and 1333, which have been purchased by the Railway Preservation Society of Ireland for use on special trains.

Work is in progress at Inchicore on the construction of a series of bogie flat wagons. The vehicles are similar in appearance to the bogie container wagons previously turned out but they lack the usual fittings for holding ISO containers and, in addition, the floor is wider than usual. The length over headstocks is 42ft 9in; they are mounted on French-manufactured bogies and are fitted with Swedish brake regulators. At the time of writing it is not known what they are intended to be used for. Numbers run from 26731 upwards; so far, over 20 have appeared.

Random Notes

As from 2 April last Ardee station has been closed on Saturdays.

With the exception of the Night Mail trains and other late-night specials steam heating of trains ceased for the summer on 14 May.

News Of Bayside

The somewhat overdue introduction of trains to and from Bayside Halt on the Howth Branch was achieved with the commencement of the summer suburban timetable on 10 June. However, an eleventh-hour announcement warned potential passengers that services would not operate on the 10th - a Sunday - but from the following morning. This was possibly explained by the fact that the platform surface was unfinished late on the evening of the 9th! And as we write the entrance is not yet complete, the work continuing without any apparent haste.

The tarmacadamed car park is still used for sporting activities while the actual station approach is still very much virgin ground. As Bayside is designed to be an unattended halt two Swiss "Autelca" ticket-issuing machines have been installed between the barriers in the subway. One issues single journey tickets in eight denominations ranging from 2p to 20p, while the second produces ten-journey tickets at

prices (eight in all) varying from 15p to 160p. A single ticket to any of the three city stations costs 8p, while 20p takes one as far as Greystones or Balbriggan. A wall chart shows fares for adults, children and schoolchildren, the last-mentioned being considerably less than 50% of full fare if the destination is beyond either Lansdowne Road or Rush.

All the Howth Branch trains call at Bayside with the sole exception of three early morning down trains on Mondays to Fridays. In announcing the opening of the halt the CIÉ "Travel Express" reported the further future use of automatic ticket barrier stations and also the introduction of travelling ticket checkers. Already the latter are at work while Dalkey is being equipped with the barriers.

Breakdown Cranes

Recent arrivals at Inchicore Works are two 30 ton steam breakdown cranes. Obtained from British Rail the cranes are awaiting the re-gauging from 4ft 8½in to 5ft 3in. They were originally built in 1960 by Cowans Sheldon of Carlisle and arrived in Dublin partially dismantled but accompanied by two long wheelbase 4-wheeled match trucks or runners. The tare weight is 63 tons. Speed while hauled is limited to 60 mph.

Derailment At Clonmel

A very destructive derailment took place on 4 July at Mylerstown, some 2 miles east of Clonmel, when seven wagons of a Limerick-bound goods train became derailed. Unfortunately, two more wagons, also derailed, were dragged along the sleepers for close on two miles, inflicting severe damage to sleepers and chairs. The line had to be closed until Monday 9 July, during which time a substitute bus service was operated between Limerick Junction and Waterford; lorries conveyed urgent freight. Magnesite trains from Ballinacourty and returned empties from Tivoli operated via Kildare. Some sixty permanent way staff had to be brought to the site to handle the resulting relaying job and while repairs are completed a 10 mph restriction is in force. One of the wagons involved was an ex-GNR cement hopper, apparently loaded. This is something of a minor mystery as these wagons normally operate only from Limerick to the Asbestos Factory at Athy.

Youghal Excursions

The first excursions of the season ran on 10 June. Unfortunately there appears to have been an initial outbreak of youthful bad behaviour which resulted in the addition of the note "The right to refuse travel on these services will be strictly enforced" to later advertisements. The fares are 60p whole-day and 55p after 13:00. As there are only two trains - at 11:00 and 14:15 - and the differential is small we are puzzled by the distinction.

Fairview Shed

A number of B201 class locos have been based at the Fairview shed since 7 May. Previously the depot had been the exclusive preserve of the railcars, except for emergencies and a few special occasions. Most of these locos are used for push-and-pull workings but normally they leave their trains at either Pearse or Connolly Stations while being serviced. As a result the number of light engine workings to and from Inchicore has been considerably reduced.

Green Shield

Between 1 June and 30 September "Green Shield" stamps can be exchanged for vouchers of the National Holiday Club Ltd and the latter then used in part or full payment for the CIÉ "Home Holidays".

Signalling And Station Developments

Clonydonnin Loop: Trackwork consisting of a loop on the Up side and a siding almost ¼-mile long at the Athlone end of the loop is now complete, but neither signals nor cabin have yet been installed.

Reports, as yet unconfirmed, indicate that materials from the abandoned 73rd Mile Cabin, in the Moate/Athlone section, are to be used here.

Rosslare Strand: In connection with the alterations mentioned in our last issue the altered signals were connected on 19 May. The former Up Home to Wexford became the Up Home to Bridgetown (Up platform) with a right-hand bracket as Up Home to Wexford. The former Up Starter now reads to Bridgetown with a right-hand bracket to Wexford.

Ballygeary: The once extensive fan of sidings has been reduced to just two leading to the shed and one serving the turntable. The space vacated has been used for yet another car park.

Campile: The Up loop became the through road (in place of the Down loop) from 19 May. Various signals exchanged identities as a result and the staff snatchers were moved across.

Kildare: The Up Main Home became a three-aspect colour light on 27 May, with a left-hand bracket to carry a call-on light to replace the Up Loop Home. Later, the Down Advance Starter was made a two-aspect colour light at a site slightly further south than before.

Tullamore: The Up Loop Starter is still a semaphore. The maximum capacity of the loop is one loco and eight bogie coaches.

Pearse Station: The Down Starter from No.5 Platform, demolished by a derailment on 29 March, has been reinstated.

Killester: Short extensions are being built at the Dublin end of both up and down platforms.

Howth Junction: On 16 April an extension at the Howth end of the Up Branch Platform was installed with the aid of the 35-ton steam crane.

Heuston Station: Work on the new tea bar and other facilities is proceeding slowly. The platform barriers have been moved out in line with the buffers, the change providing valuable extra space for queuing, etc.

Connolly Station: Further alterations to the signals have produced the following results:

The Down Starter at the Central Cabin had the theatre-type route indicator removed before it was put into working order. It was replaced by a double-position light indicator reading: left via Ossory Road Junction to the Link Line; right via No.17 Crossover to the Up Main Line; blank to the Down Main Line. Most of the other mechanical signals and discs are being progressively replaced by colour lights except for (so far) the platform Starters from Nos. 1-4. No.37 Crossover from the Up Main into No.1 Platform Road, installed some two years ago, was finally connected and brought into use in early June. Further points worked by the Central and Loop Line Cabins are converted to pneumatic operation and yet more are to be altered.

On the Loop Line side, No.12 Crossover from Up to Down lines at the north end was moved slightly northward on 17 June, to allow its sharp reverse curves to be eased somewhat. Because of this work the local trains between Greystones and Howth could not work through on that day.

Construction commenced in early June of the new two-sided loading platform for mails and parcels traffic. It has already entailed (or will shortly entail) the removal of the so-called "Valley" and "Back" sidings from the passenger yard and also the lifting of "Number 20", "Number 21" the "Loading Bank" and the "Crane" sidings from the former goods yard. Some lifting has already taken place and several shunting moves, hallowed by long tradition, have had to be rearranged. With the provision of the new facilities there will be an important rationalisation of the handling of rail parcels traffic in Dublin.

Difficulties At Clondalkin

The procession of evening trains from Heuston Station on 4 June was disrupted by a locomotive failure

at Clondalkin. The 17:15 to Westport was unaffected but the following 11 trains, mostly at 10-minute intervals, between the 17:30 and the 19:20, were delayed for up to an hour. The culprit was B192, the leading loco on the 17:30; the remainder of the train comprised loco 143 and 7 AC bogies. After a considerable delay the failed loco was dealt with and 143 alone resumed the journey. Because of the limited headways the following trains could only reduce minimally their lateness and the 19:20 to Waterford was 45 minutes late. As a postscript, it was followed by the 16:00 North Wall-Cork B+I Liner Train which had somehow missed its path ahead of the 17:15 and was over four hours late.

Our reporter noted that the eleven trains referred to comprised no fewer than 49 AC bogies (seven 7-coach sets) and 33 other coaches. The locos (including B192) were 3 AR-class, 4 B181-class and 9 B141-class.

A fortnight earlier Clondalkin basked in unexpected (and undeserved?) publicity when an "Evening Press" photographer was on hand to record the call there of a passenger special from Rush to Killarney and back on 20 May. Was this really the first passenger train to call for 25 years?

Moate And Kiltimagh

As from the end of April Moate/Dublin tickets have been available via Athlone on Sunday evenings. Passengers travel by train 774 from Moate at 20:08 to connect at Athlone with train 783, 21:07 Athlone/Dublin via Tullamore.

Kiltimagh Station was reduced to a halt under Claremorris as from 1 April.

Ambulances

The Knock Pilgrimage Ambulance Coaches, formerly based at Heuston Station, are now located at Pearse Station, usually in Platform No.5 road.

Train Changes

A 7-coach AC set was placed on the CIÉ "Enterprise" workings between Dublin and Belfast, commencing with the 08:30 on 4 June. The occasion was unmarked by publicity.

From 10 June all Rosslare Harbour line trains have called at Pearse Station. There had been objections to their not stopping.

A snack car is now provided on the 19:00 Heuston Station/Cork.

North Kerry News

We are indebted to our correspondents for some interesting news of this remote line.

On Thursday 17 May a high load - an excavator on a low-loader - damaged the rail overbridge on the Abbeyfeale/Athea road, just west of Abbeyfeale Station. The bridge is a low one although there are roadside warning signs, and the accident meant that Abbeyfeale could no longer be reached by rail from Listowel. Accordingly, services were restored, albeit temporarily, on the Newcastle West to Abbeyfeale section on Monday 21 May, when B172 headed 5 wagons over Barnagh - the first goods train since the Limerick/Tralee through goods ceased to operate on 1 December last. From then until 22 June the Mondays/Wednesdays/Fridays Limerick/Newcastle West goods was extended to Abbeyfeale on most days.

On June 10 a pilgrimage train from Abbeyfeale to Claremorris traversed the line; A40R brought 6 bogies (including RS23) to Newcastle West, where the train was strengthened to 13 bogies and 2 vans. It was thenceforth headed by B142 and B172.

The pace of repairs was fairly leisurely and on 19 June commenced in earnest. Next day the Limerick steam crane lifted the entire bridge out and placed it on the ground near the station water tank where it was taken apart. Two new main girders were then assembled with the four old floor girders, and the

entire assembly was put back on the abutments about 15:00. The bridge had its timber floor and the rails restored on the 21st and next day the bridge was tested by the loco of the Tralee/Listowel goods which came up for the purpose. On Sunday 24 June, the first passenger train crossed the repaired structure. It was a double-headed (B149 + B166 + van + 10 bogies) special bringing some 500 North Kerry pilgrims from Tralee to Claremorris for Knock. On the 25th the normal Listowel/Abbeyfeale goods working was resumed.

Commuter Tickets

Following the successful introduction of the unlimited-travel monthly commuter tickets in Dublin for rail and bus services, Galway, Limerick, Waterford and Cork now have them too. The Cork area ticket covers the Cork/Cobh train services.

Fares Structure

Further changes have been made in the passenger fares structure of CIÉ, the main change being the introduction of “mid-week” fares. Such tickets are available for travel outwards and back on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday of the same week. The rate charged is the standard single fare which has applied since August 1971. In view of this and other alterations in recent months it may be useful to summarise the various types of ticket currently available on CIÉ main lines:

Single Journey	Fare as at 30 August 1971
Mid-week Return	Tues/Wed/Thurs, Single Fare
3-Day/Weekend	Single Fare plus one-third
Monthly Return	Single Fare plus two-thirds (approximately)
Children (under 15)	Half the Adult Fare
Juvenile (15 to under 21)	Special reduced fares
Sunday Return	Special (“Class 1”) Fares

The now usual supplementary charge of £1 per journey for “Super Standard” travel (irrespective of distance) still applies regardless of the type of basic ticket being used. Fares for cross-border journeys and on the Dublin and Cork local train services are excluded from the above scheme.

Heuston Station Holy Thursday

On April 19 occurred the first mass Easter exodus from Heuston Station under the new main line timetable. Trains ran at ten-minute intervals from 17:30 to 19:20 as under:

17:15	Westport	044 + 9 bogies	dep. 17:27
17:30	Cork	B156 + 7 AC bogies	dep. 17:32
17:40	Galway	A5R + 9 bogies	dep. 17:42
17:50	Limerick	186 + 5 bogies; Special	dep. 17:55
18:00	Waterford	A39R + 9 AC bogies	dep. 18:03
18:10	Tralee	158 + B165 + 9 bogies	dep. 18:10
18:20	Limerick	A7R + 9 AC bogies	dep. 16:25
18:30	Cork	190 + 7 AC bogies	dep. 18:30
18:40	Limerick	A20R + 10 bogies	dep. 18:40
18:50	Galway	B176 + B159 + 9 bogies	dep. 18:50
19:00	Cork	A56R + 10 bogies + BR HV	dep. 19:03
19:10	Westport	B134 + 9 bogies	dep. 19:12
19:20	Waterford	B171 + 7 bogies	dep. 19:20

Altogether very commendable - the arrivals were punctual too.

The New Suburban Timetable

There are so many changes that all we can do is look here at some of the major alterations. Among them are:

- The opening (at last!) of Bayside Station.
- The increased use of Pearse Station as the terminus for many Northern suburban trains which formerly used to begin and finish at Connolly Station.
- The use of Howth Junction as a terminal point for a small number of services.
- Improvements to services and additional trains (although the only evening train to Bray after the 19:00 Down is a 22:20 serving only Tara Street, Pearse and Dun Laoghaire Stations).
- The extension of through working between Northern and South-Eastern sections to cover Sunday trains as well as on weekdays.

As mentioned earlier, Bayside was opened on 11 June. Its adjacent neighbour, Howth Junction, has become the turning point for a few trains. There is a 17:10 all-stations Connolly Station to Howth Junction, while the return working of the erstwhile 17:12 Howth/Bray (which now operates to Wicklow) leaves Wicklow at 19:55 and runs to Howth Junction, arriving at 21:22.

Among the extra morning trains are the 08:24 ex Howth Junction, running to Greystones, 08:45 ex Donabate (operating to Bray) and 09:12 Howth to Greystones. There are new trains to Howth departing Connolly Station at 09:25 (08:30 ex Greystones) and 10:45 (the 09:45 ex Greystones, reinstated after a short absence); they return at 10:12 and 11:42 respectively. At lunchtime there is a new 13:00 Dun Laoghaire to Howth and also a new 13:40 Bray to Connolly Station service. Other new trains are the 14:45 Connolly Station to Donabate (14:00 ex Bray), which returns at 15:38 and forms the 16:10 working from Connolly Station to Bray, and the 15:40 Connolly Station to Bray formed by the 15:12 (once 15:15) ex Howth.

In the evening rush there is now a 17:10 Connolly Station to Howth Junction, while the 16:53 and 17:32 (ex 17:34) from Connolly Station now run to Bray. Other than these changes the alterations are slight and to times only.

In some cases the starting points of trains have been changed. For example, the 17:12 Howth to Wicklow is now the 17:43 ex Connolly Station to Wicklow, while the 17:35 Connolly Station to Dundalk now starts at Pearse Station at 17:26. On Sundays there are some startling changes. Instead of the former half-hourly service to Bray and the more or less hourly service to Howth the workings have been combined resulting in a train every hour from Howth to Greystones and vice versa. However, there is no Sunday service to Sandycove, Glenageary or Dalkey.

While there are some negative aspects to the new schedules, CIÉ is to be complimented on the new timetable which should enable the local train service to cope more smoothly with the ever-increasing numbers of passengers.

Locomotive Developments

Loco A17R spent quite a time at Attymon Junction from about mid-March to sometime in June, apparently because of bogie or axle trouble. By early July it had reached Inchicore Works for repair. E407 has been fitted with lifting points on the buffer beams, the first of its class to be so treated. On the repainting front, A2R, A11R, A24R, A31R and A53R have been painted in the black and brown livery carried by 001. (They are now numbered 002, 011, 024, 031 and 053, respectively.) Also repainted, are B184, B205, B206, B211, B217, B218, B222 and B232 and they have lost the 'B' prefix. B121 has been seen on trials with push-and-pull trains, perhaps heralding a use for these locos which will obviate the need to turn them at the end of each journey. The locos normally used on the suburban push-and-pull workings are B203, B208, B211, B214, B219, B220, B228 and (occasionally) B225.

CIE As Landlords?

In recent months there have been various reports that CIE is contemplating an entry into the property business by developing some of its sites around the city of Dublin. At one stage it was claimed that the service alterations at Pearse Station were made for this reason but this was denied, and the true (and obvious) reasons detailed.

Sundry Strikes

Happily Irish railwaymen do not resort lightly to strike action and so the strike of loco drivers at Connolly Station on Good Friday, 20 April, took many people by surprise. The dispute arose over the operation of the push-and-pull trains after the two month trial period arranged by the Rights Commissioner of the Labour Court. On the 19th CIE withdrew the inspectors whereupon the drivers refused to work these trains. During the afternoon B226 worked some trips, using the 6102 set as a 4-coach train and running round at each terminus. The loco, not yet fitted fully for push-and-pull working, was outside the terms of the strike.

Next day, all Connolly Station Shed drivers struck from 08:00 to 18:00, halting virtually all trains in the locality and also those to Sligo, Belfast and Galway (via Mullingar). Both the 09:00 and 15:05 trains ex Sligo reversed at Mullingar and returned thence to base. The dispute was settled on the basis of there being a loco inspector on each push-and-pull working for a further month. Since then the trains have been worked without difficulty on the promise of a retrospective payment of mutually agreed extra money for drivers on such duties.

In early July the Traffic Department staff at Connolly Station threatened strike action over the proposed transfer of two foremen from Pearse Station. The matter was resolved by deferring the transfer pending further negotiations.

On 21 July a lightning strike by porters and a shunter at Dun Laoghaire over pay rates interrupted services between Dublin and Dun Laoghaire Pier, aggravating a situation already difficult following the interruption of British Rail car ferry services there.

Railcars And Push-And-Pull

Two more push-and-pull sets had entered service by the end of June, bringing the total to five. The new sets are: 6105 (ex 2608), 6312 (ex 2660), 6308 (ex 2668), 6206 (ex 2630); and 6106 (ex 2634), 6318 (ex 2641), 6314 (ex 2737), 6203 (ex 2602). The 6105 set entered service on 13 May, while set 6106 was observed in use about the middle of June.

On the conversion front, control cars 6108 and 6109 have been completed, as have connecting cars 6207 and 6208, along with intermediate cars 6324, 6325, 6326 and 6327. At present railcars 2622 and 2629 are undergoing conversion. At the time of writing, a total of sixteen railcars, as follows, share the small number of workings which remain to be handled by these vehicles:

2601	2603	2616	2620	2623	2624	2628	2633
2635	2642	2643	2648	2649	2651	2654	2659

South-Eastern Derailment

About 19:35 on 18 May a special train from the NET factory at Shelton Abbey (B181, 11 wagons and van) was derailed between MP 41¼ and MP 40¾ (Avoca/Rathdrum section). The loco, 2 wagons and the van remained on the track, and two of the derailed wagons were seriously damaged. As a result the line was blocked for 24 hours. The 18:50 Up from Rosslare and an Up goods from Wexford terminated at Arklow, while the 18:37 Connolly Station/Rosslare finished at Wicklow.

B209 with the Inchicore crane and breakdown train reached Rathdrum about 05:15 on the 19th and the first task was to re-rail the 7 wagons not severely damaged and bring them into Rathdrum Station. Later

the other vehicles were cleared and the task of relaying was set about. The rails used were some which had been more or less on site since 1965 when the track in the area had been damaged by flooding. The first regular train over the repaired road was the 18:37 ex Connolly Station (B177 + LV + 7 bogies + HV), running about 30 minutes late; it passed the site at 19:59. B209 with crane and breakdown train left at 20:25 (ex Rathdrum) for Inchicore.

Trouble On Sunday

CIÉ has unfortunately suffered interruptions to its Northern suburban line services (as well as the sadly inevitable damage to the rolling stock) on some Sundays in June. Following repeated trouble on the 17:55 train from Drogheda to Dublin the company was forced to provide special security measures. On 17 June, when the 20:58 from Connolly Station to Howth met the 21:10 extra from Howth at Howth Junction a passenger opened a door on the offside of the 20:58, resulting in its being torn off by the 21:10.

NORTHERN IRELAND RAILWAYS

Railcar Notes

Diesel-electric motor coach 76 appeared during June sporting the maroon, blue and white livery of the "Enterprise" stock. It has been running with trailer 721 which was similarly repainted at Easter.

MPD power car 65 has also been repainted in the normal maroon/grey livery.

MED trains seem to be rarely used from York Road nowadays, despite the transfer of stock away from the Bangor line. At Easter it was reported that they did not work north of Cullybackey; their only turn on the main line at that time was the 17:20 Belfast/Ballymena and return. Cars 17 and 20 without trailers were noted on the Larne line in early July.

The pioneer ex-NCC railcar No.1 is the property of the Belfast Transport Museum and is being stored at the RPSI site at Whitehead.

Parcels Vehicle

A parcels van numbered 621 has appeared from York Road. It is a conversion from an ex-GNR AEC railcar and retains the normal doors and driving end outline, but most windows are panelled in and the gangway has been removed.

Swap?

AEC railcars 113 and 116 were observed in Dublin on 4 July, apparently en route to Inchicore Works, but they were not visible there later that week. They were in poor external condition, with many broken windows. It has been rumoured - but not confirmed - that they are being exchanged for CIÉ BUT railcars, and that they will be converted for CIÉ push-and-pull operation.

Portrush Excursions

The acute shortage of both motive power and passenger rolling stock has caused a serious reduction in the excursion traffic to Portrush this season. One of the specials noted recently comprised DE motor coaches 71 and 76, two DE trailers and five coaches. A special on Easter Monday comprised DE loco 101 and 10 bogies, including AEC trailer 586. For the return trip MPD trailers 529 and 541 were added.

The New Railcars

The newly-built DE railcars and trailers were due from Preston in early June. It was stated that 23 vehicles were expected; the original order was for 22. They will be fitted out at York Road and the first units are due in service in the autumn.

Portrush

All building work appears to have stopped and it is likely that the dispute with the Council over planning permission is responsible.

Motorway Opened

The M2 extension from Greencastle to Whitla Street was opened to traffic on 22 May. This massive road is 5 lanes wide in each direction and during its construction the famous “Spoil trains” ran day and night. It devastated many features of the local railway scenery and costly alterations to the NIR’s workshops had to be paid for by the road authority in full as compensation.

The temporary signal cabin at Greencastle, installed to control the spoil trains’ access to their special sidings, was demolished in late June.

Central Railway

Since Easter JCB excavators have been at work along the existing formation clearing eight years’ accumulation of rubbish and weeds. A large pipe has been laid along the south side of the cuttings and at the site of Central Junction and at Maysfields large holes have been dug to accommodate more pipes. We are reminded that the last train on the Central Railway ran on 12 August 1965 and that Middlepath Street Bridge was demolished on 16-18 August.

Third Line

The laying of the third line from Lisburn towards Knockmore Junction on the Down side has commenced. By the end of June about half the distance had been covered.

Coach Notes

First/brake driving trailer 813 was restored to the “Enterprise” service on 2 July to replace 801, which requires repairs to its jumper cables. Trouble has arisen several times lately with this coach and delays were caused by the loco having to run round in Dublin. It is noted that 813 has handsome linen antimacassars with the NIR emblem embroidered in red, a vast improvement on the standard nylon covers of British Rail and CIÉ.

Loco No.28

This veteran locomotive - the last remaining loco made by Harland and Wolff - may now be acquired by the Belfast Transport Museum. It appears that the B&CD Railway Museum Trust has been unable to raise sufficient financial support to purchase it.

The New Timetable

A revised timetable booklet took effect from 2 July. A process of compression has reduced last year’s 60 pages to 56. Once again there are some odd changes without any apparent significance. The Bangor line has escaped with only tiny changes. On weekdays there is an extra 21:15 Up (Mondays-Fridays) to return as a new 22:15 Down, the 22:40 Down being cancelled. On Sundays 3 trains are each advanced 30 minutes. The Larne line also has its quota of trifling alterations, the only obvious improvement being the former 20:15 Down on weekdays becoming a 20:25 and giving a connection to the Stranraer boat.

The majority of changes, however, occur on the main line, where the Belfast/Derry trains have mostly been made 5 or 10 minutes slower than they were already. In the Up direction the 08:15 and 10:45 are unchanged, the 14:55 and 17:40 are 5 minutes slower and the Saturdays only 06:45 is both 5 minutes faster and 20 minutes earlier than last year. Pride of place, however, goes to the 12:25 Up, formerly the 12:30 which used to explore most of the remaining sidings en route to collect parcels vans. It is now 5 minutes faster (10 on Saturdays), despite additional “if required” stops at Magilligan and Downhill.

Glarryford, Killagan, Eglinton and Culmore have been deleted from the timetable; no trains called there anyhow.

The Portadown line has not escaped changes, but here they are at least fairly standard in pattern, and in general the times have been eased by four or five minutes. It is difficult to see why.

Annual Statement

NIR suffered a loss of £186,000 in the last year. The chairman's annual statement attributed this to the continued disturbances. He announced that the company was seeking approval for a further increase in fares. He also paid due tribute to the staff for their efforts during a trying period and also to the public for tolerating the delays caused by incidents on and adjacent to railway property.

Gantry

The 36-ton steam crane was used on 1 June to erect a gantry-crane astride the siding behind the parcels depot at York Road. Its purpose is unknown.

Bomb Damage

Both Great Victoria Street and Queen's Quay stations suffered from bomb damage on 18 May. In each place the bombs were planted in the toilets and caused serious damage. As had happened previously at Great Victoria Street, the adjacent Europa Hotel had many of its windows smashed by the blast.

Railway To Newry?

In a letter to the Town Clerk of Newry, the Managing Director of NIR stated that although the company was not opposed to the idea of "having a station to serve Newry", both practical and financial considerations precluded such a development in the near future. To provide a passenger service towards Belfast would require extra rolling stock, and if main line trains were to be stopped the service would not only be slowed down but the company would also be required to provide offices and facilities for Customs officials as well as paying for their attendance. Were Newry to get a rail service it would doubtless be from the most adjacent point on the main line, and certainly not be a restoration of the rails from the Goragewood site.

Mishap At Bellarena

On 8 May three CIÉ wagons were observed lying on the Up side of the line just east of Bellarena station. No details of the incident have yet come to light. The derailed spoil wagon lying at Magheramorne has at last been identified as M43.

Deviation At Larne

Work on this project - which is being undertaken in connection with roadworks - would seem to have been suspended since last April. The greatest distance by which the new formation will be separated from the present railway formation will be approximately 250 yards. The present station serving Larne Town will disappear and will be replaced by a new one on the new formation, but the site will be slightly nearer the Larne Harbour terminus.

Bangor

We note that a few holes have been dug along the side of the line recently, apparently for signals.

"Mixed"

The 11:45 to Derry on Easter Saturday comprised driving trailer 813, coaches 828, 825, 821, 824, DE loco 101, MPD trailers 529 and 541 and MED trailer 515!

"Enterprise" Precaution

In the event of a breakdown of the NIR "Enterprise" train, it is now possible to arrange haulage by CIÉ

locos of the B181 and B201 classes. Special adaptors are carried on the NIR locos to permit the air-brake bags of the two companies to be coupled up. Any such working by a CIÉ loco will be restricted to 40 mph.

OTHER ADMINISTRATIONS

Railway Preservation Society Of Ireland

In addition to the four ex-GSR coaches mentioned elsewhere in this issue, the RPSI has acquired NIR dining car 552. This had originally been GNR 88. It will be used as a catering vehicle by its new owners.

St John Of God Brothers, St Mary's, Drumcar, Dunleer, County Louth

Some 7 years ago it was reported that there was a proposal to construct a narrow gauge railway at this extensive well-kept establishment, where mentally handicapped children are looked after. A visit there confirmed the report but apart from a statement that the unseen loco had "come from a coal mine in Arigna" nothing further was learnt. We have paid another visit and have to report very considerable progress.

The loco on the line is a 2ft gauge Ruston 4-WD, Clas 13L. It lacks a number-plate but is almost certainly RH 264244 of 1949. It was used for a time in the early 1950s at Grogan's Mine, Carrowmanalt (near Derreenavoggy), Arigna, and then lay derelict until well into the 1960s. It now sports a livery of yellow and red, with black frames and ballast weights and appears in complete running order. A distinguishable feature is the driver's seat - from a farm machine by Pierce of Wexford.

The line consists of very light Jubilee rails, substantially laid on a variety of wooden sleepers, ranging from shortened main line ones to light pieces of post. The track is very neatly laid on stone ballast, with well-formed curves and fishplated joints; it has some severe gradients.

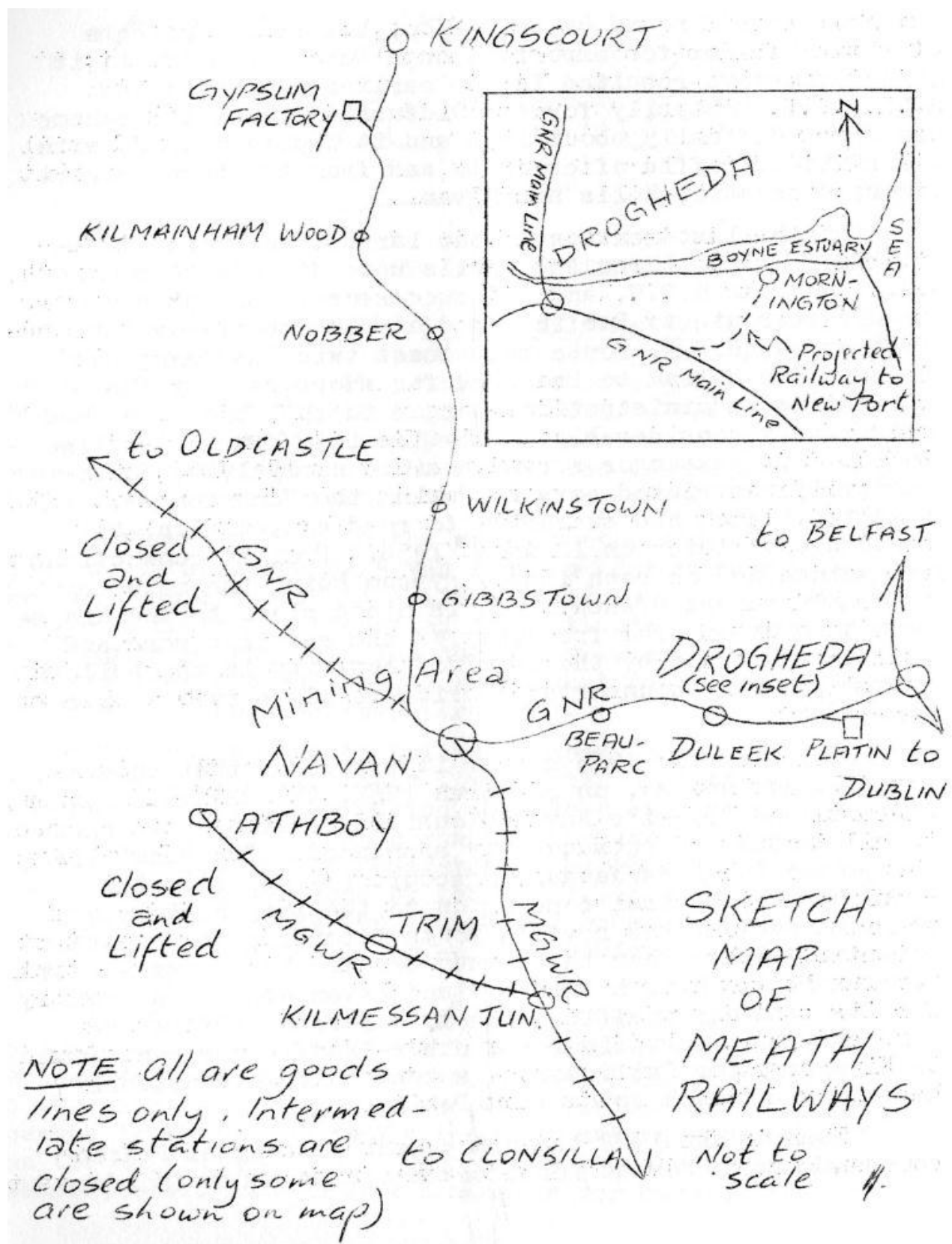
Feature Section

MEATH PAST AND PRESENT

Recent issues of the Irish Railfans' News have carried reports of developments affecting the Drogheda to Kingscourt section, with promises of more good news in the future. For a section of the CIÉ network which has not enjoyed a continual buoyancy in traffic over several years the development of the mining and cement manufacturing industries will restore some of the former glory.

Railway history in the area started with the completion of the Drogheda/Navan line on 15 February 1850. The line was extended to Kells on 11 July 1853 and some ten years later to Oldcastle, the ultimate terminus. The company responsible for the 39½ mile branch was the Dublin & Drogheda Railway, a subsequent constituent of the Great Northern Railway (Ireland).

The Dublin & Meath Railway Company built its line from Clonsilla, on the main line of the Midland Great Western Railway, to Navan and commenced operations on 29 August 1862, the trains running through to the MGWR Dublin terminus at the Broadstone. By 1888 the inadequate D&MR was absorbed by the MGWR, together with the Navan & Kingscourt Railway which had been opened on 1 November 1875, enjoying nominal independence in the intervening years.



The Clonsilla/Navan/Kingscourt Branch was 43½ miles long and completed the Meath lines network (apart, of course, from the Athboy Branch, 1864-1953). Extensions to the existing track were proposed periodically but none reached fruition. Probably the most noteworthy scheme was the Mullingar/Kells.

Such a line, reaching the sea as planned, would have been a contender for much of the cattle traffic carried round by the Sligo, Leitrim & Northern Counties Railway for export through Derry or Belfast; it might even have resulted in the earlier demise of the SL&NCR. Unhappily for the Oldcastle Branch the scheme was dropped finally about 1920 and it had to make do with the limited traffic offering to and from the three market towns: Oldcastle, Kells and Navan.

At the last-mentioned, the largest and most industrialised of the three, the spoils were divided between the GNR and the MGWR and its successors. For passengers the direct route to Dublin ended at the out-of-town Broadstone as the GNR route was almost twice as long; but it did offer a link to Drogheda for shoppers. By the time the two administrations merged in 1958 the scene had changed very considerably. The Clonsilla/Kingscourt line had lost its passenger services since early 1947, following a severely restricted service during the “emergency”. The Oldcastle branch had succumbed to road competitions, but over a decade later on 12 April 1958. Freight connections were maintained on both lines, gypsum being the mainstay of the Kingscourt Branch. (It is mined close to the Kingscourt terminus.) The frequency of the services were and still are governed by the level of activity in the building industry, hence an uncertain thrice-weekly service for some years past.

Following the 1958 merger it was clear that changes would be made and so, on 30 March 1961, the 22½-mile Navan/Oldcastle and 23½-mile Navan/Clonsilla sections were closed to all traffic and subsequently abandoned. The “new” line then became Drogheda/Navan/Kingscourt (37 miles). The result was the logical conclusion to the long history of underutilisation, the revised route retaining the greatest potential. Since then the gypsum traffic has grown - trains now run Monday through Friday - and Navan has got a gantry for its container traffic. The Tuam potato traffic has come and gone. Fertiliser and other traffic has continued to Kingscourt for Bailieboro - a town which historically has enjoyed through rates from Dublin.

Then in June 1972 the new cement factory at Platin came on stream. Now at least seven trains a day (Mondays to Fridays) run between Drogheda and Platin. These include the Kingscourt goods along with oil and cement trains to Platin. A second train frequently makes the return trip to Kingscourt in the evening. If the mining at Navan starts on schedule in 1975 the section to Navan will have many additional trains to and from the projected port at Mornington, which will receive a new rail link. As a result, Beauparc would possibly be restored as a crossing place.

The move to handle new traffic on the line is already reflected in the permanent way activity. Replacement bullhead rails and sleepers have been installed at the Drogheda end and similar materials are lying in wait at other points. Much of the section to Navan is laid with flat-bottomed rail spiked directly to the sleepers, along with some of the now unique GNR inside-keyed bullhead rail. Chairs are branded GNR, GS&WR, GSR and CIÉ. At Beauparc inside and outside-keyed chairs are in use on the same lengths of track! Between Navan and Kingscourt the MGWR track is flat-bottomed, spiked direct to the sleepers with soleplates only at the joints. Many of the sleepers are in poor condition and considerable effort would be required to bring the section up to the standard of that east of Navan. Hopefully, the peaceful Kingscourt terminus will retain its miscellaneous assortment of chairs, rails, etc., for many years to come.

CIÉ V THE NATIONAL PRICES COMMISSION - ROUND TWO

In our issue of February last we described the first round of a conflict between CIÉ and the NPC over the former's application for a price increase. The result was the refusal of the application pending the completion of a further investigation by the consultants employed by the NPC. An interim report on this detailed study has now been published by the NPC as their “Occasional Paper” No.8. In it the body states that it is trying to find an appropriate and rational pricing policy for transport and it was for this reason that consultants were engaged. The latter found that:

- (a) Dublin suburban railways have incurred substantial losses in recent years.
- (b) Dublin city bus services have been close to breakeven on aggregate in recent years, though this has been achieved by some services subsidising others.
- (c) CIÉ should price all services as closely as possible to their marginal costs and if this is not possible the services should be closed down unless social reasons dictate that they should be continued.
- (d) The Government should decide whether or not to subsidise a loss-making service and any subsidy should not exceed the social benefits.
- (e) Increases in fares in Dublin have little reaction on the number of passengers using CIÉ services.

On the basis of their findings the consultants made the following recommendations:

- (1) Concessionary fare arrangements between CIÉ and the Government should be renegotiated so as to ensure that subventions cover the cost of such concessions.
- (2) A subvention for suburban rail services should be negotiated.
- (3) CIÉ should be allowed fare increases to recover enough revenue to cover the estimated deficit on Dublin bus and rail services less any amounts CIÉ might receive from the negotiations under (1) and (2) above, and less any labour cost increases that the NPC would not normally allow to firms in the private sector when dealing with price increase applications. A subvention from the Government would be required to meet any labour costs which the NPC might reject.

Any new fares which CIÉ might introduce should meet the following criteria laid down by the consultants (though this is not mandatory):

- (A) Fare increases should be proportionately higher for long journeys so as to reduce the “taper” in fare scales.
- (B) The new fare structures should contain differentials between fares for weekday peak hours, Sundays and other times.
- (C) Rail fares should be higher than bus fares for journeys of comparable length.

The NPC accepted the consultants’ report but the Minister for Industry & Commerce rejected the increases and referred the matter to the Minister for Transport & Power. The bulky document refers only to services in Dublin; a further report will be issued later covering the rest of CIÉ’s activities.

As a theoretical exercise the report is a good one, but its authors seem rather out of touch with the realities of the situation. However, one good point made is that Government subventions should be paid to cover losses on certain services, a scheme more in the British style than the Irish one of giving a blanket subsidy to cover all. If a specific service is subsidised it can be kept under much closer surveillance and can be tailor-made to suit the traveller’s requirements. By so doing it may ultimately be possible to reduce a subsidy as the traffic builds up.

The criteria (A), (B) and (C) do not take account of the realities of transport in Dublin. Many re-housing schemes are sited far out from the city centre, Lucan, Ballymun and Tallaght, to name but three and to reduce “taper” for longer journeys would hit many people very hard indeed. Also, the idea of differential fares while novel would certainly cost a huge amount to administer and could well be viewed with disfavour, to say the least, by many of the Dublin transport employees.

On the question of higher fares for rail, vis-a-vis bus journeys, again the theory has its attractions but it negates all CIÉ’s efforts in recent years to get people off the roads and onto the railways where there has been spare capacity. There is no doubt that CIÉ’s imaginative fare policy has won people to rail, people who, if faced with stiff increases, would once again revert to the road - and by this we do not mean bus services!