

IRISH RAILWAY NEWS

Volume 1 Issue 1

October 1993



126/135 + 7 Mk2 + EGV at Rosslare Harbour with the 14:55 to Dublin on 17th July 1993.

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Editorial

Welcome to the first edition of *Irish Railway News*. We hope you find something to interest you in the pages which follow. The objective of this publication is to record accurately and reliably the modern Irish railway scene - in particular Irish Rail and Northern Ireland Railways. We will carry reports on other operators and activities - industrial or leisure as and when suitable information is to hand.

We are fully supportive of the development of a high quality railway system playing its full part in the economy, and providing an efficient, reliable and comfortable mode of transport. The development of Belview and the associated improvements on the Waterford line indicate the way forward. The recent acknowledgement of the potential of a modern railway system in the Republic's National Development Plan is extremely welcome, although the level of funding remains modest compared to the £1.61 billion being expended on the road system. The concentration of investment on routes radiating from Dublin, while both urgent and necessary, means that the opportunity of developing genuinely inter-regional services, such as Rosslare to Limerick, Galway and Westport/Ballina has again been lost.

The recognition of rail's and LRT's role in the urban transport environment is also welcome and owes much to the success of DART - the only public transport corridor of real quality yet established in Dublin. Commuter services on other rail routes into Dublin are characterised by infrequency, unreliability and extremely low average speeds - there is tremendous potential for improvement in service quality and consequent increase in ridership. The development of worthwhile services on the Western corridor to Maynooth, for instance, will require considerable investment so as to provide track capacity, frequency and reduced journey times as well as decent access to city centre stations either by means of through services to Pearse or vastly improved interchange facilities at Connolly. High speed services on the Belfast line will require a change in the anything goes culture which currently characterises traffic regulation and timetabling in the Dublin/Drogheda corridor - frequently resulting in express trains averaging little more than 30 mph over this portion of the line.

The developments on NIR, described in the news section, will greatly increase the journey possibilities particularly in the Belfast area, as well as making the system more compact and easy to manage. It will be possible to exchange equipment between York Road shops and Belfast Central in minutes instead of having to resort to the tortuous trip via Antrim and Lisburn. There are plans for regular interval services from Great Victoria Street to Larne, Portadown, Bangor and Ballymena. Upgrading of the Bleach Green/Antrim section, yet to be authorised, holds the possibility of a 95 minute journey time to Derry as well as through trains from Dublin via Belfast in little over 3 hours - a development which would bring the North West closer to Dublin than ever before.

Finally, it is our policy to correct any inaccuracies which may escape the editorial process and we will publish any corrections which may be warranted.

A. Gray

Irish Rail

National Plan

The National Development plan, involving a total investment of over £20 billion in the Irish economy was launched on 11th October. It covers the period from 1994 to 1999 and openly acknowledges the past under-investment in railway asset replacement and infrastructural renewal and speaks of the necessity of spending £800m on the national rail system over a 30 year period in order to bring it up to

an “adequate operational level”. The plan announces, or in some case re-announces EC-assisted development programmes costing £185m which include upgrading the Dublin/Belfast, Dublin/Waterford, Dublin/Cork/Tralee/Limerick, Dublin/Sligo and Dublin/Galway lines. A further programme of uncofinanced investment of approximately £90m will, subject to the resources available to CIÉ, be implemented to upgrade and develop a number of other rail links including Dublin/Westport/Ballina and Dublin/Rosslare. Although not explicitly stated this latter amount probably includes provision for a further twenty 3,250 hp locomotives, the tender for which has already issued. The first group of lines is either part of, or proposed for inclusion in the Trans European Network. Expenditure on mainline rail improvements is shown on a year by year basis as follows: £60m (1994), £56m (1995), £50m (1996), £29m (1997), £39m (1998) and £42m (1999).

“Existing manually operated signalling equipment will be replaced by radio-controlled automatic equipment, which will improve reliability, raise operating speeds, enhance the quality of service and reduce operating costs. Existing life-expired locomotives also need to be replaced with modern diesel-electric equipment which will provide greater haulage capacity with lower operating costs and improved fuel efficiency.”

The plan is very sketchy in relation to Dublin, the relevant sections stating:

“Public transport will be significantly enhanced by substantial investment in light rail transit links, the implementation of ten Quality Bus Corridors, the upgrading of suburban services on existing rail lines, the introduction of integrated ticketing and a range of infrastructure and other support measures.”

Funding of £359m in respect of the Dublin Transportation Initiative and other (related) public transport:

“will enable substantial progress to be made in the implementation of the public transport elements of the DTI recommended strategy. This funding will include up to £200m expenditure in respect of light rail. There will also be uncofinanced investment in bus services (including Quality Bus) and other public transport infrastructure and support measures in Dublin. In addition there will be £36m of co-financed expenditure on traffic management measures.”

As can be seen there is no explicit mention of DART extensions nor any specific detail of LRT routes. Expenditure under this heading is shown on a year by year basis as follows: £29m (1994), £40m (1995), £50m (1996), £68m (1997), £82m (1998) and £90m (1999).

Dublin/Belfast Project

Activity associated with this scheme has become increasingly evident in recent months as detailed below.

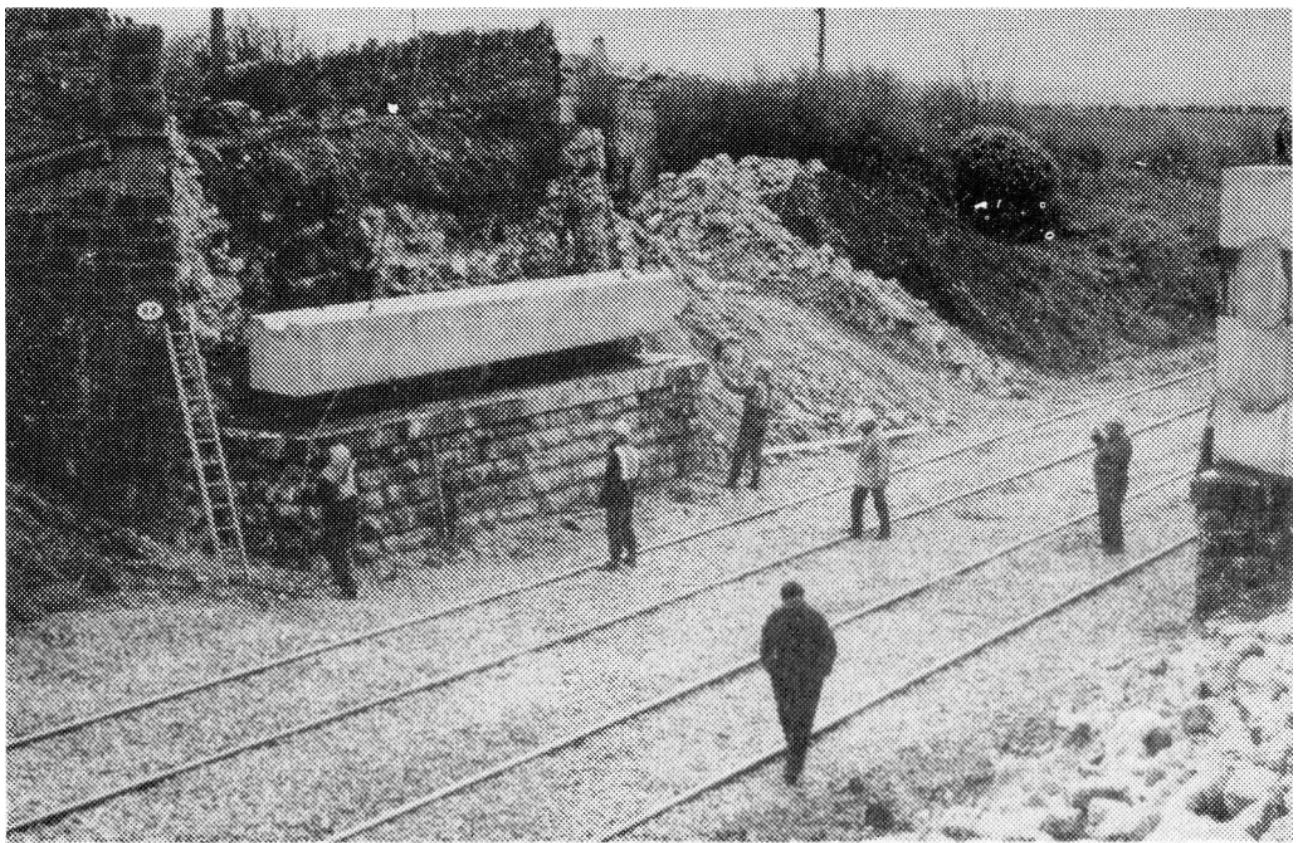
Signalling

Cable ploughing in connection with the extension of CTC operation from Malahide to Drogheda was substantially complete as of mid-September. Most intermediate signals and location cases were in place by early October except for a few in the immediate vicinity of Skerries, Balbriggan and Mosney stations. Signals are almost all three aspect and are spaced a little over one and one quarter miles apart. Bonding of jointed rail for track circuiting was completed some time ago and work is well advanced on the installation of glued joints at track circuit boundaries on CWR. A facing and two trailing crossovers have been assembled at Skerries together with the south end trailing turnout for the loop. The loop itself will be fashioned from the existing refuge siding located on the up side. The facing crossover will be sited on straight track near the present Down distant signal. Despite the assembly of two trailing crossovers, one of which is for Balbriggan, it is not clear yet whether Skerries itself will have a trailing

crossover. If one is not provided, the loop will be of limited value as Down trains routed into it could not regain the normal running line until just outside Balbriggan! There will also be a short siding, effectively a trapped headshunt extending from the loop at the southern end, for the storage of PW vehicles. Fabrication of the facing turnout from the Up main to the loop remains to be completed.

Reversible working will be available over the Up line between Balbriggan and Skerries. There will be a single trailing crossover at the south end of Balbriggan station to allow wrong line movements to regain the Down line and also to facilitate the departure of southbound trains from the Down platform. The siding located at the north end of the station and trailing into the Up line is being retained and will be trapped as currently. An emergency generator room has been constructed on the Down side just north of the station.

The layout at Mosney will remain pretty much as at present although the loop crossovers will be replaced by turnouts onto the Down line. The crossovers and turnouts for Mosney will be assembled in Gormanston and to facilitate this a large area was cleared on and around the former goods loading bank at the beginning of October. The signalling arrangements at Mosney will allow up trains to run to both the Loop and the Down main thus allowing an overtaking movement in the Up direction without occupying the loop.



Renewal of OB 88, near Drogheda 28/3/1993. (B. Carse)

Commissioning of the new signalling is not now expected to take place until February or March 1994 at which point Malahide, Rush, Skerries, Balbriggan, Mosney and Laytown cabins will be closed and control transferred to Connolly. There will be no wayside emergency panels as the entire multi-processor based Solid State Interlocking (SSI) will be located in CTC in Dublin, although commands to the trackside modules will be transmitted from both the Drogheda and Malahide end so as to avoid the system being completely disabled in the event of damage to the cable route.

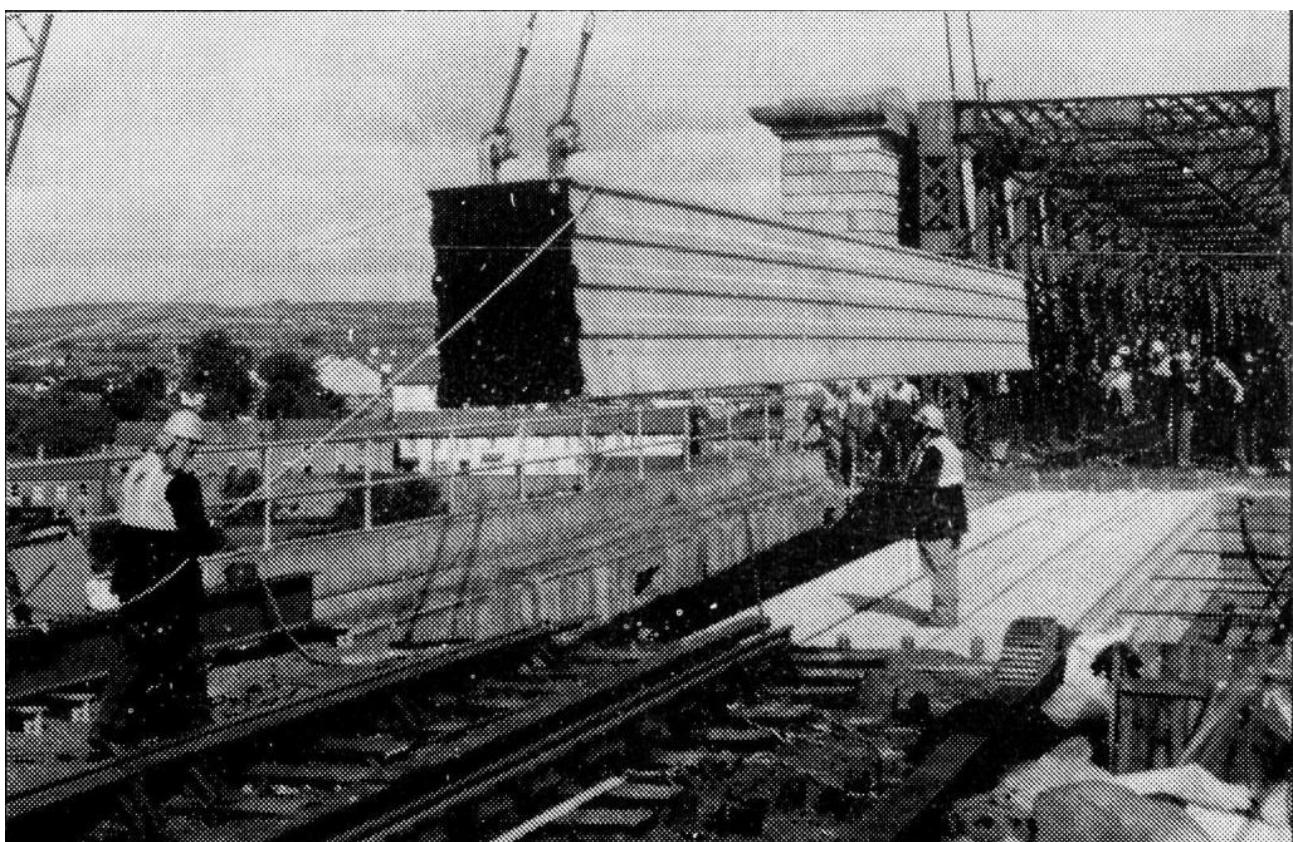
Bridges

Many stone arch overbridges have been replaced with a flat concrete span supported on the original bridge foundations, thus allowing a deeper bed of ballast and increased overhead clearance for container traffic. There is therefore no requirement for formation excavation at bridges thus avoiding the attendant drainage problems so evident on the Cork line in recent years.

OBs 35, 41, 49, 62, 63, 77, 88, 89, 90, 91, 93, 107, 123, 126 and 157 have been rebuilt since October 1992.

UBs 100 and 104, on either side of Dunleer station have had a ballasted deck installed in preparation for relaying as the former practice of rigidly securing the rails to the bridge structure is not appropriate for CWR. The latter bridge carries the railway over the White river and is a smaller version of the Devlin and Nanny viaducts at Gormanston and Laytown respectively, both of which are to be rebuilt. The somewhat dilapidated station footbridge, OB 101, was removed some months ago thus creating an immediate obstacle to any attempt at reopening this well sited station.

The parapets of many underline bridges have been raised particularly between Drogheda and the border in preparation for the raised ballast profile which is required for CWR installation.



Renewal of Boyne Viaduct at Drogheda 11/9/1993. (A. Gray)

The load bearing portion of Span 12 of the Boyne Viaduct (UB 82) was renewed during a possession which lasted from 21:40 on Friday 10th September until approximately 17:00 on the following Sunday. Span 12 is the arch nearest the river on the southern side and carries the main line on interlaced track. A 300 ton road crane, positioned in a timber yard at the base of the viaduct, was used to remove the four riveted steel beams and replace them with four 40 ton pre-stressed concrete beams. The new beams were positioned in the centre of the span and rest on the same vertical piers which support the

arch itself. New walkways were also installed on either side of the load bearing beams. The operation of the crane required considerable skill as the driver was naturally only able to see from the ground level to the bridge parapet and was dependent on instruction by radio thereafter. During the possession all rail services were cancelled between Drogheda and Dundalk and passengers were conveyed by bus between the two points. The operation was well organised but nonetheless entailed delays of between 20 and 40 minutes to most cross-border trains. A Garda was on duty at the exit from Drogheda station to assist traffic leaving the station and joining the busy Dublin/Belfast road.

Installation of decking on the Glyde river bridge (UB 120) just south of Castlebellingham was in hand at the beginning of October.

Permanent Way

Irish Rail have relaid and installed CWR on approximately twelve miles of the Dublin/Belfast line in the year to October 1993 bringing the total mileage of CWR south of the border to a little under 51 miles or 42% of total track miles. The bulk of the relaying has taken place on the Down line between Laytown and Drogheda and on the Up line between Dundalk and Dunleer. Work has recently commenced on sections of the Down line between Donabate and Rush and Mountpleasant and the border. The up line through Balbriggan, Gormanston and Portmarnock stations was excavated and relaid during the summer as was the Down line at Donabate and Balbriggan stations. The original bullhead rail and timbers were reused pending mechanical relaying. The cutting near MP 59, just south of the border, has been widened on the Down side preparatory to easing curvature at this point.

Signalling - General

Temporary signalling arrangements were brought into use at Belview on 23rd August to control access to the container terminal and protect the new manned level crossing which gives road access to the port site. A new colour light stop signal (AJ 101), controlled from Abbey Junction, is provided in advance of the ground frame and together with a three aspect repeater (AJ R101) protects the level crossing in the down direction. In the up direction a two aspect distant signal suffices for the same purpose. Access to the Belview sidings is controlled by a 3 lever ground frame released by the Abbey Junction/Wellington Bridge ET staff. The lever functions are as under:

- 1) Release
- 2) Facing point locks (mainline and trap end)
- 3) Points

Subsidiary ETS instruments are provided in both Abbey Junction and Belview thus allowing normalisation of the ETS circuit when a train has passed clear of the main line. It is understood that continuous track circuiting will be installed, in due course, from Waterford up to, and including, the Barrow Bridge thus eliminating the requirement to tie up the section, and in effect bringing Belview inside Waterford yard limits. In addition the level crossing will become an unattended full barrier installation with CCTV monitoring from Waterford. It is believed these further alterations will result in the elimination of Abbey Junction signal box.

The new bypass at Lavistown, mentioned elsewhere, will be controlled from the existing panel in Kilkenny and will apparently merely entail the provision of route indicators on the signals reading towards Lavistown from the Bagenalstown and Thomastown directions. There will not apparently be facilities to cross trains at Lavistown and therefore if two trains approach simultaneously from Bagenalstown and Thomastown it will be necessary to route one of them into Kilkenny. The section of line between Bagenalstown and Thomastown will be track circuited throughout so as to eliminate ETS working, the continuance of which would necessitate either manning Lavistown or installing subsidiary instruments - the latter arrangement would require trains to stop and the crew to surrender one staff and

pick up another.

The signal box at Cobh Junction, little used since the mothballing of the Youghal line, was in use during June and July to facilitate manual resleeping of the Down line near MP 171.

Permanent Way - General

Track upgrading and CWR installation continues throughout the country as detailed below. It is understood that some sixty five miles of track will have been renewed in the 12 months to the end of December 1993. This figure includes the Irish Rail portion of the Dublin/Belfast line. Renewals on the Belfast/Dublin/Cork axis are being engineered to 110 mph standards while CWR installation elsewhere is generally to a standard suitable for 90 mph.

Dublin/Cork

By mid-July track renewal on the Cork line had advanced to such a degree that CWR on the Down road extended continuously from MP 6½ to MP 162, except for short lengths through Portarlington and Limerick Junction and across Mallow viaduct. Including a further short stretch of CWR near Kilbarry this represents over 93% of the Down line. The up line is patchier, being welded from MP 162 to MP ¾, except from MP 158½ to MP 157, across Mallow viaduct, from MP 128¼ to MP 124, from MP 113 to MP 106¾, through Portarlington, from MP 32¾ to 30¾ and through Inchicore. Including a short stretch at Kilbarry this represents almost 89% of the Up road. In total some 20½ miles of track have been renewed so far this year. Renewal of the Down Line between Inchicore and Lucan commenced in early October.

Cherryville Junction/Waterford

Some 9½ miles of track has been renewed so far this year bringing the mileage of CWR to 20½ or approximately 24% of total branch mileage. A new bypass spur approximately 400 metres long is to be constructed at Lavistown to allow trains, particularly Bell Liners, to avoid the dead-end at Kilkenny and run directly from Bagenalstown to Thomastown thus effecting a saving in journey time of at least twenty minutes. Work is expected to commence shortly on this project which will cost £1.2m to complete.

Portarlington/Athlone/Galway

Approximately 2½ miles of track has been renewed so far this year bringing CWR mileage between Portarlington and Athlone up to 18¾ miles or 48% of the total. An additional mile of CWR has been installed between Athlone and Galway bringing the mileage in this section to 4¾ miles or 10% of the total.

Athlone/Westport

A mile of CWR has been installed so far this year bringing the branch total to 6¾ miles or 9%.

Limerick/Limerick Junction

Approximately 2¾ miles of track have been renewed this year bringing the mileage of CWR on the single track between Killonan Junction and Limerick Junction to 11 or almost 63% of total. A further 3¼ miles of CWR is in place on the Up road between Ennis Junction and Killonan Junction. There is at present no CWR on the Down line in this section.

Mallow/Tralee

No renewals on this road so far this year. Total CWR installed is 1¼ miles or just under 3%.

Dublin/Sligo

Extensive renewals have taken place over the last two years though many temporary speed restrictions

remain due to deferred maintenance. Up to the end of September, $7\frac{1}{4}$ miles of track had been renewed this year bringing the CWR total to $27\frac{1}{4}$ miles or 19% of track miles. On the Mullingar/Sligo section, which is single track throughout, CWR accounts for almost 28% of the mileage. No CWR has yet appeared on the $8\frac{1}{2}$ mile double track section to Clonsilla. Renewal work was in progress between Inny Junction and Mostrim in early October.

Dublin/Rosslare

A little over 2 miles of CWR is in place on the $80\frac{1}{2}$ miles of single track south of Bray representing under 3% of the total mileage.

Glasnevin Junction

Extensive earthworks have been undertaken at this location in preparation for renewal. The original south side retaining walls on the ex-MGWR Liffey Branch have been unearthed thus facilitating the removal of the deviation in alignment created when the Junction was installed in its present form. A large area has been cleared and the cutting on the ex-GS&WR line cut back in such a way as would permit the re-establishment of an additional scissors-like connection facing Newcomen on the Midland and Cabra on the Southern. Such a connection, if eventually installed, would allow commuter trains from the Kildare direction to approach an expanded loop line station at Connolly, via Newcomen Junction, thus minimising the potential disruption to the existing flow of DART and Northern outer suburban services. The new junction trackwork, a somewhat re-aligned version of the existing connections, has been substantially pre-fabricated on site and is currently awaiting installation.

Millstreet

A new platform, capable of accommodating a nine piece Mk3 set, was constructed at this location in preparation for the Eurovision song contest on 15th May. Special trains, conveying up to 600 VIPs, were provided at 15:20 and 15:50 from Heuston and 15:45 from Connolly. The first two trains were scheduled to complete the $164\frac{1}{4}$ mile trip in two hours and twenty five minutes - an average speed of 68 mph.

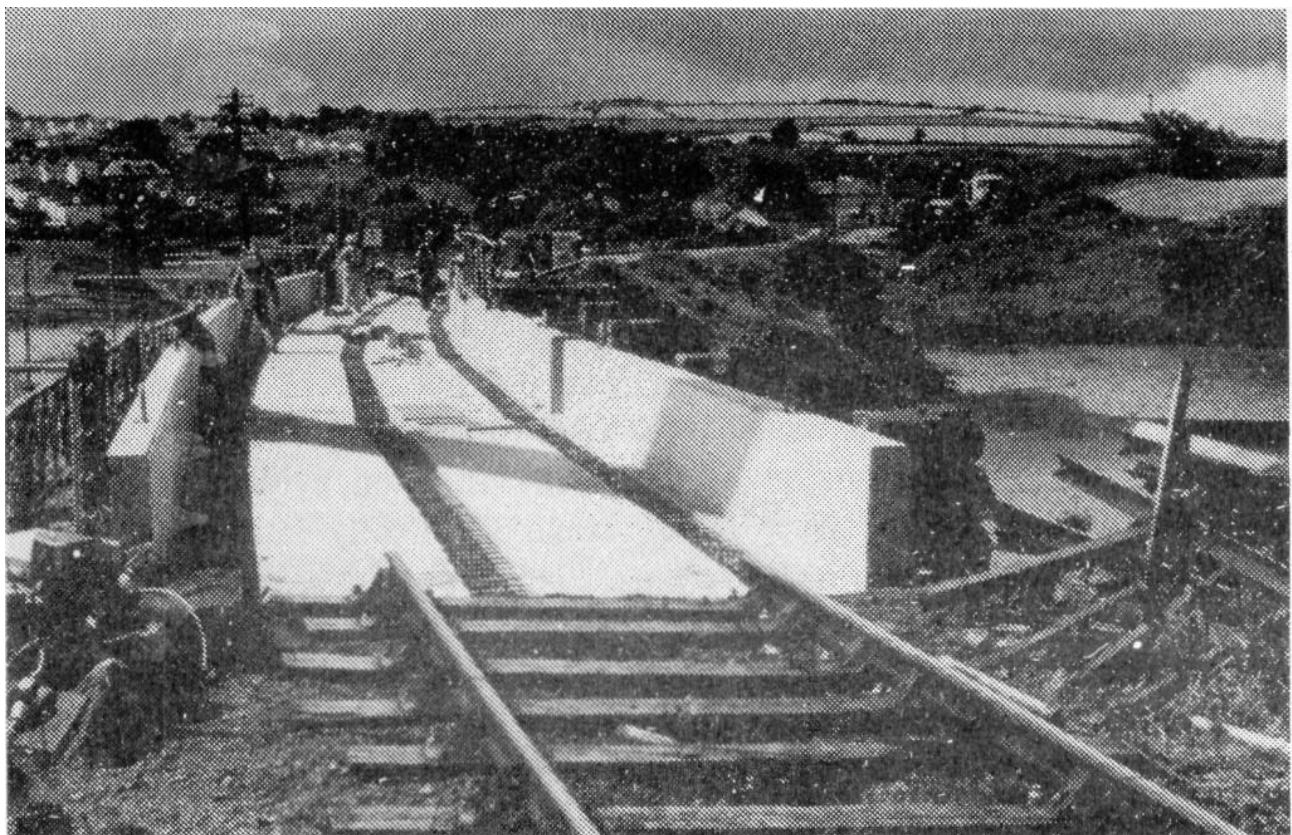
Ennis

A new weekend service from Dublin to Ennis, outwards on Fridays, back on Sundays commenced on 19th February, with no less than 81 passengers travelling through to Ennis on an initially very overcrowded 17:40 Heuston to Limerick. The eight piece Mk3 set was extended through to Ennis on this date after a ten minute stop at Limerick, for reversal, and arrived at its final destination 8 minutes behind schedule at 20:38. The weekday service ex Ennis to Dublin and back on Tuesdays to Thursdays is also doing well as indicated by the 17:40 ex Heuston on 24th June, 182 + 7 Mk3 + EGV, which arrived in Ennis at 20:40 with 70 passengers. It is understood, however, that while the 07:30 up service always operates as advertised, there is a tendency to transfer returning passengers to road conveyance at Limerick if the numbers travelling can be accommodated on a single bus! Unfortunately stone throwing in the Longpavement area is a major problem and despite appeals to the Gardaí to control the situation it is exceptional for a train to negotiate the area in the evening-time without being attacked. The line north of Ennis to Athenry is in regular use with, for instance, a palletised cement being observed on 24th June and a bulk cement train on 25th June.

Bridge Renewal At Wicklow

The five span lattice girder bridge, UB 160, carrying the Dublin/Rosslare line over the Broad Lough just north of Wicklow station was renewed in a possession which lasted from late Friday 23rd July to

mid-afternoon the following Sunday. There appears to have been a degree of urgency about this job as the line was closed on one the busiest weekends of the year thus disrupting literally thousands of passengers. If the renewal could not have waited a few months then a mid-week possession would have been a more sensible option and entailed far less annoyance to the travelling public. For instance at least eleven buses were required at Bray to accommodate passengers travelling on the 13:35 ex Dublin (Connolly), the last of which got away from Bray at 14:34 - already 36 minutes behind the train time. Some of these buses operated directly to Rosslare Harbour to connect with the 17:00 sailing from Rosslare to Le Havre while the remainder ran to Wicklow from whence the rail journey was resumed. Services north of Bray were provided by non-stop DART trains and in some instances ran in two portions, such were the numbers travelling. The popular steam hauled RPSI "Sea Breeze" scheduled for this date was cancelled at short notice. The bridge renewal itself was carried out in the usual efficient manner utilising a road crane which was positioned on a temporary causeway constructed alongside the bridge. The old structure had been disassembled and the twenty new precast concrete sections were in place by mid-day Saturday after which concrete was poured at the joints to bond the sections together. A temporary roadway was constructed from the station car park onto the permanent way in order to facilitate the delivery of bulk cement by road tanker directly to site.

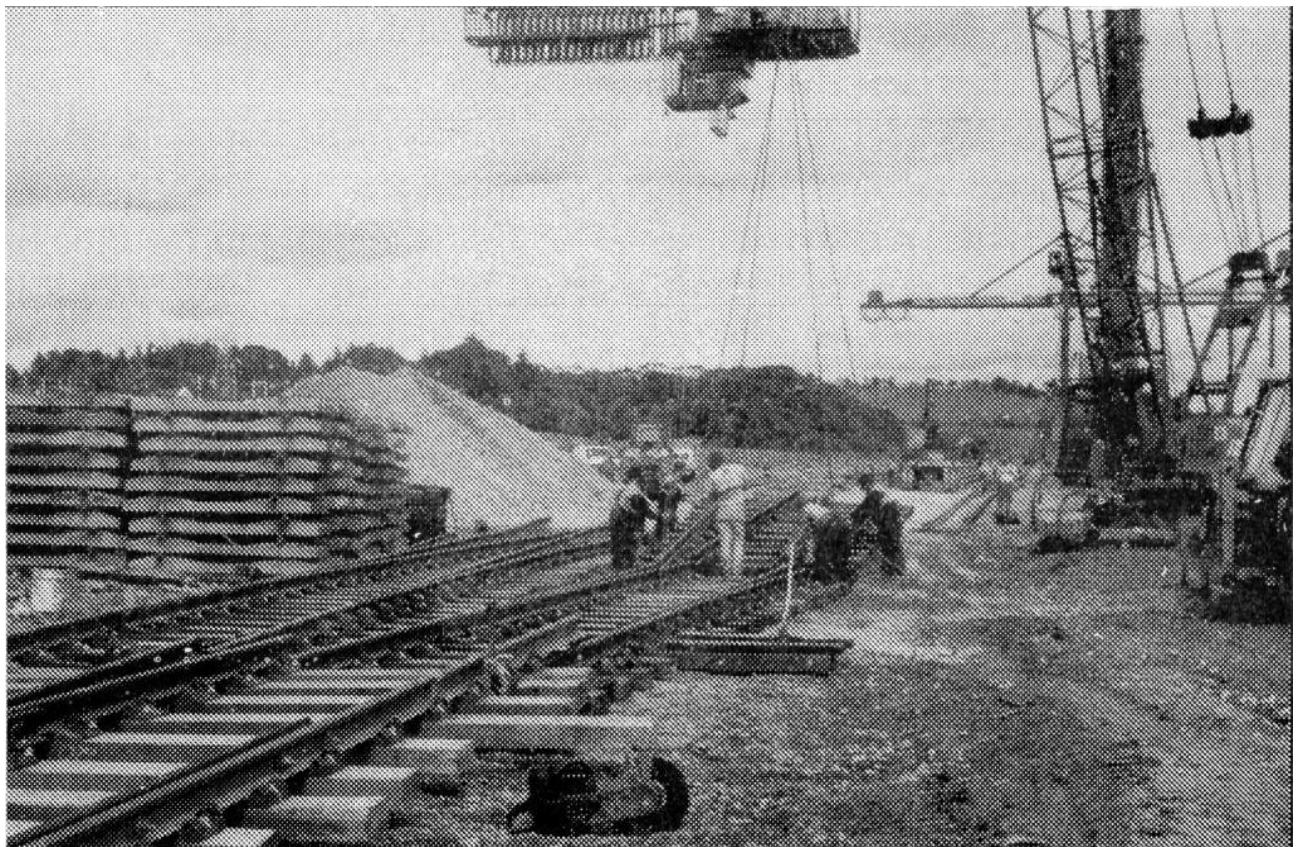


Renewal of UB 160 at Wicklow 24/7/1993. (B. Carse)

New Port At Belview

The new port at Belview, 5 miles East of Waterford was officially opened by An Taoiseach, Mr Reynolds, on 4th September with guests travelling from Dublin directly into the complex by special train. Operated by Waterford Harbour Commissioners and being developed at a cost of £25m, it is primarily a lift-on/lift-off installation with a state of the art container wharf 450 metres long and a low water depth of 8 metres. There are two high output 40 ton gantry cranes on the site serving four new

sidings each approximately 590 yards long. The principal user will be Bell lines who operate container services to the UK, Northern Europe and the Iberian peninsula. Some 60% of this company's container traffic is rail-borne travelling in nearly two thousand trains annually, mainly to and from Dublin, Belfast, Cork, Limerick, Ballina, Longford, Sligo, Mallow and Dundalk. Rail business through the port is expected to double by the end of the decade. Facilities for handling cruise liner ships are also being developed on the site though it remains to be seen whether passenger trains will become a feature of operations. The rail connection into the container yard is located at MP 79 $\frac{3}{4}$ on the Waterford/Rosslare line and was commissioned on 16th August, followed a week later by the four sidings already mentioned.



Installation of connections at Belview. (J. St Ledger)

Sligo Station

The rather neglected terminal station at Sligo is to be modernised and revamped at a cost of £300,000 - much of which will come from Interreg, an EC program covering border counties.

Ballinacourty Branch

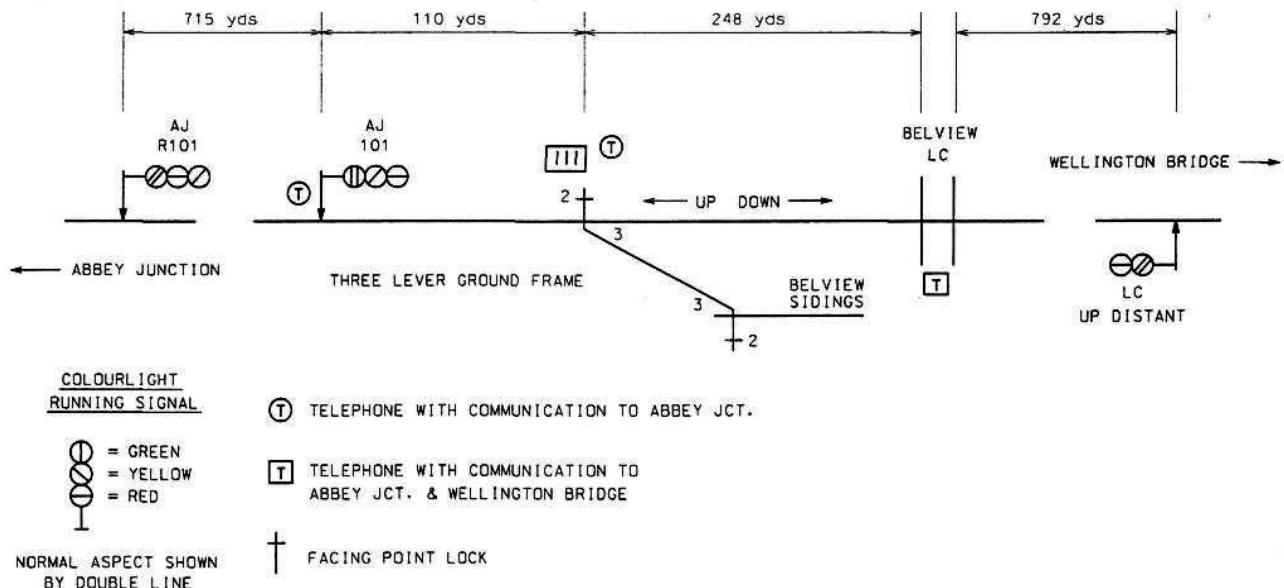
Irish Rail have given notice of their intention to abandon the disused twenty seven mile branch which runs from Waterford (West) to the now closed Quigley Magnesite plant at Ballinacourty, near Dungarvan. Revenue traffic ceased in 1982 with the closure of the factory which was served by a spur, opened in 1970, off the Mallow/Waterford line. This line had been closed completely in March 1967 and was thus given a new lease of life between the point of deviation and Waterford. The last recorded movement was EM50 which conveyed a small group of local business people over the line on 9th May 1990.

New Ross Branch

A light engine from Waterford attempted to traverse the branch in early August but apparently turned back after a short distance due to the condition of the line. An empty fertiliser train had attempted the same trip some days earlier but had stalled a short distance beyond Abbey Junction because of the overgrown condition of the line. One of the last recorded successful movements took place on 19th February last when 146 + 174 conveyed ten empty fertiliser wagons to New Ross. The laden train returned in two portions to Waterford as was the established practice. A further fertiliser special ran on 11th May. The line has been officially closed since 6th September until further notice and a temporary buffer stop is in place at the Abbey Junction Up outer home signal. It is believed that there is little likelihood that the line will in fact reopen.

BELVIEW SIGNALLING

From 00.01 Hrs. Monday 16th August 1993



Mullingar/Athlone

The only passenger train to operate on this line so far this year was a steam-hauled RPSI excursion train, on 4th July, consisting of No.461 and seven coaches which ran from Dublin (Connolly) to Ballinasloe on this date. The only other movements have been permanent way department trains or self propelled track maintenance vehicles.

Athlone/Claremorris

This section of line remains closed to all traffic and under the control of the Divisional Engineer in Athlone. It is understood that rails removed north of Tuam for use on the Ballina branch have now been replaced and that the line is passable throughout. It is thought that the weekly Foynes/Ballina "Coal and Oil" train may revert to running via Ennis and Tuam as the current routing via Portarlington and Athlone is not particularly efficient in terms of crew and locomotive utilisation. In the event of

reopening it is expected that Athenry/Claremorris will be worked as one section utilising either a manual staff or the staff and ticket system with ground frames provided at Tuam to maintain access to the Westrail operation. It is understood that the level crossing at Ballindine Road, which was removed in the course of road widening will be reinstated as a manually controlled full barrier crossing similar to those already in place at Avenue and Lisduff.

Belview Derailment

The 18:45 special train ex Dublin (Connolly) for Kilkenny and South Wexford GAA supporters was derailed at 22:12 as it passed over a temporary level crossing at the site of new Belview terminal approximately 4 miles east of Waterford on Sunday 11th July. The train, routed via Kilkenny, initially consisted of 084 + DV + 12 Cr + GSV and left Dublin at 18:48 with around 550 passengers. The rear 3 coaches (DV + 2 Cr) were removed at Waterford to form the following morning's 06:00 to Dublin thus reducing the trailing load to 11 vehicles at the time of the derailment. The locomotive and van remained on the rails but divided away from the following vehicles, at least 7 of which were derailed. Much of the damage was confined to under floor equipment, bogies and brake gear although some coaches (in particular 1524) were damaged at the vestibule ends by the buffers of adjacent vehicles, several of which came to rest leaning heavily to the left. The third, fourth and fifth vehicles were thrown clear of the formation which curves to the right hand side at this point on a low embankment. The train is understood to have been travelling at about 50 mph when the derailment occurred, during the course of which some 200 - 300 yards of track were destroyed. Sixteen of the seventy-two passengers on board were taken to hospital although none were seriously hurt. Construction cranes from the adjacent Belview site were used to assist recovery operations. The line was reopened to traffic in time to pass the 16:00 Limerick/Rosslare on Friday 17th July. While the cause of the accident has yet to be officially revealed, media speculation centred around the condition of the track in the vicinity of the level crossing.

Incidents

A distorted formation necessitated the introduction of single line working between Portlaoise and Ballybrophy on the evening of 8th June. The 17:45 Heuston/Limerick was cancelled at Portlaoise though all other services ran, albeit up to 50 minutes late. The 13:30 ex Sligo, due in Dublin at 16:41, failed at Maynooth on this date. The passengers were transferred to the 17:00 local service which arrived in Connolly at 18:21.

084 failed on the 10:50 ex Waterford on 10th June resulting in a delay of 2½ hours.

The Cork line was closed due to flooding at Hazelhatch on 12th June from around 04:00 until 16:15 causing severe disruption to Cork, Galway, Waterford, Tralee and Westport services. This resulted in some odd workings including the 14:10 to Galway which started from the Up platform in Kildare at 15:31 and consisted of 160 + EGV + 2 Mk3.

The 13:42 ex Drogheda became entangled in the OHLE near Raheny around 14:40 on 24th June. Both lines were closed initially but the Down road was cleared in time to avoid undue delay to the 15:00 Dublin/Belfast. Both roads were open for the evening peak period with electric trains confined to the Down line and diesel services operating over the Up line. Reversible working was later confined to the Down line to permit the completion of repairs. Normal conditions were restored at 22:07.

A fire on the locomotive of the 14:50 Ammonia train ex Marino Point, at MP 122, severely disrupted services south of Limerick Junction on 25th June. The 17:30 ex Cork was blocked in Charleville until 19:06 and crossed, for crew purposes, the 17:30 to Cork at Knocklong some time around 19:40.

The 10:25 Dublin (Connolly) to Rosslare failed at Wicklow on 27th June. A relief engine, from Dublin,

took the train to Rathdrum where it in turn failed. A further assisting engine, this time off a PW train working near Enniscorthy, took the unfortunate 10:25 on to Arklow before it was declared a failure. The 10:25 was still in Arklow at 18:30 at which point it was eventually terminated. Passengers were taken forward on the 18:30 ex Dublin which arrived in Rosslare at 22:26, just over nine hours late. The push/pull set worked back from Arklow, in the path of the 18:30 ex Rosslare, apparently without further difficulty.

DART services were severely disrupted on 30th June, due to OHLE damage on the Up road between Seapoint and Blackrock which occurred just before 21:00. Because of the arrangement of breakers and disconnects it was not possible to use the north crossovers at Dun Laoghaire and it was thus impractical to run through electric services to and from Bray. However a shuttle service was maintained south of Dun Laoghaire with passengers changing into /out of a Howth to Dun Laoghaire service which operated in both directions over the down line south of Booterstown.

The 14:10 Dublin (Heuston) to Galway was disabled at Attymon Junction on 7th July due to a failed loco fuel pump. The train was still blocking the line four hours later and as a result the 18:45 to Galway and the 18:05 ex Galway ran to and from Athlone only. Matters were considerably complicated by the total absence of communications - Attymon is outside the train radio coverage area and does not itself boast a public phone!

The 10:50 Heuston/Tralee failed one mile south of Thurles on 17th July. An "A", 005, was sent to assist but was of little use as the train was air-braked. The failed train was eventually brought back to Thurles at 15:20 where it was shunted clear of the main line for the 13:20 Heuston/Cork. A few minutes later the 13:30 Heuston/Tralee was declared a failure at MP 81, 5½ miles north of Thurles. This train, 144 + 4 Cr + GSV, was rescued by 184 and reached Thurles some time after 16:30. It was observed in Mallow at 18:00 operating as a combined 10:50 and 13:30 to Tralee and in its role as the former was over 4½ hours late.

The 17:00 Heuston/Athlone failed on both 19th and 22nd July and was thus delayed 1½ hours on the former occasion and cancelled at Portarlington on the latter.

Due to the failure of the computer driving the monitor displays in CTC, DART and outer suburban services were considerably disrupted during the morning peak on 22nd July. There was a silver lining, however, as normal working was resumed in time to allow the 08:00 ex Belfast to precede the late running 09:32 ex Howth and thus arrive about four minutes early at 09:54.

The 10:20 Heuston/Cork special was delayed at Limerick Junction for at least 77 minutes, on 26th July, due to single line working between there and Charleville over the Down line.

The 17:35 ex Tralee, to Dublin, failed near Rathmore on 2nd August and was overtaken by the 18:05 ex Tralee, 190/174 + 7 Cr + van, which arrived in Dublin at 23:48 with about 700 passengers. As there was limited accommodation on the 18:05 some passengers were agreeable to remaining in Rathmore and these eventually arrived in Dublin at 00:56 the following day!

The guard of the 14:55 ex Rosslare on 7th August, 005 + EGV + 7 Mk2, refused to work the train beyond Gorey for a time, due to the fact that it was extremely overcrowded with some 270 people standing at this point. At least 3 buses were requisitioned to take some of the passengers forward thus relieving the problem to some degree.

The 17:30 ex Cork was delayed for almost 2 hours after striking a maliciously placed obstruction near Newbridge on Sunday 8th August. The whole sequence of evening arrivals into Heuston were queued behind and thus also delayed.

The 13:30 ex Sligo partially failed at Longford on 16th August, but was able to continue after one engine had been removed. However, the remaining engine failed near Lough Owel. Total delay was 3½

hours.

Hooligans

A group of Dublin GAA supporters returning from Wexford rioted on board the 18:30 Rosslare/Dublin train (124 + 5 p/p 6104) on Sunday 25th May, as a result of which it became disabled at Enniscorthy for almost 3 hours. Some passengers took refuge for a time in private accommodation in the station buildings. A preceding special (131 + 6 p/p 6105) was observed at Greystones at 19:55 and is understood to have operated without undue difficulty. Passengers waiting at various points north of Enniscorthy for the deferred regular service were taken by road to Dublin in buses which had been arranged in advance of the disturbance to relieve heavy overcrowding on the two trains mentioned. It is difficult to understand the absence of suitable security precautions on this occasion given the abysmal record of Dublin GAA supporters on special trains over the years. The delayed train eventually arrived in Dublin under Garda escort at 00:45 on Monday morning. Two youths were arrested in Enniscorthy.

Loop Line Bridge

A design for a new centre city bridge to replace the existing loop line crossing of the Liffey has emerged from a competition organised by the Institution of Engineers in Ireland. The winning scheme, submitted by Kavenagh, Mansfield and Bullen consulting engineers, would span the Liffey with light pre-stressed concrete laid on a series of oval shaped columns built on top of the foundations of the existing bridge. A single ceramic coated steel arch would be used to support the centre span. The cost of the new structure is put at under £2 million and, if built, would much improve the vista from the city centre towards the Custom House and the port. Erection of much of the new structure would be on a phased basis, though a complete closure of the railway for a two week period would be necessary. There are no current plans to give effect to this proposal which appears to have been the result of an academic exercise to show how innovative modern structural engineering could improve upon the existing “eyesore”. Funding from the National Lottery has been suggested!

Citygold

First class accommodation was re-introduced on some Dublin/Cork services on 1st February with the launch of the Citygold brand. Three Mk3 coaches, 7133, 7156 and 7104, have been extensively refitted to a standard in keeping with the best international practice. Each coach accommodates forty-eight passengers and is fitted for in-seat mobile phone and fax use. A supplement of £15 is charged for each single journey except on Sunday when the charge is £3. On weekdays the service is available on the 07:35, 11:20 and 17:30 ex Cork and the 07:30 (SX), 08:20 (SO), 13:20 and 17:30 ex Dublin. On Sundays Citygold coaches operate on the 14:30 and 17:30 ex Cork and the 13:20 and 18:30 ex Dublin. When not required the third Citygold coach works with the Executive set.

Locomotives

The following 001 class locomotives have been observed in traffic recently: 001, 003, 005, 012, 015, 016, 017, 025, 026, 035, 036, 038, 039, 047, 048, 049 and 055. 051 was in the Diesel 1 shop in Inchicore in mid-September and should return to traffic shortly. 054 is understood to be in poor condition and has recently been in use at Heuston for driver training. 018 is in Limerick having surrendered its bogies to 012.

All 071 class locomotives have received their “L” exam except 078 and 088, the last engine dealt with being 087. The entire class has been fitted with yaw dampers and consideration is being given to similarly modifying some of the older General Motors locomotives.

The ten new 3,250 hp engines currently on order from GM are expected to be delivered in mid-1994 at a cost of £20.8m. They will have a maximum speed, subject to track conditions, of 110 mph. There are currently some question marks over route availability due to the 18 ton axle load, though the nature of any restrictions which may apply is far from clear at the time of writing. There has been speculation that twenty further engines of similar specification may be ordered for delivery in 1995 and 1996 though no such announcement has yet been made.

Due to the full availability of the 071 fleet and the severe shortage of locomotives generally, 084 found itself on the Dublin/Rosslare line for the six days commencing Monday 20th September.

Railcars

The 17 (single unit) railcars on order from Mitsui/Tokyu at a cost of £19.5m are scheduled for delivery in April 1994. The bulk of the new units, operating in either two or four car formations, will be allocated to the Dublin area - in particular to Dundalk, Mullingar and Maynooth services, though several will also be allocated to Limerick.

Annual Report

The 1992 annual report shows a small decline in passenger carryings reflecting the continued economic recession and the straight jacket imposed on the railway by limited resources, ageing equipment and declining reliability - a trend which should be reversed by new investment over the next few years. The number of passenger journeys for the year ending 31/12/1992 were: Mainline 7,630,000 (-1.44%), DART 16,121,000 (-5.14%) and outer suburban 2,100,000 (-0.66%). Freight tonnage rose 0.63% to 3,333,000 tons, reflecting increases in the carryings of beet, fertiliser and general freight, counterbalanced by decreased carryings of cement, ale, beer and stouts. Total Irish Rail receipts, including catering, Rosslare Harbour and road freight increased by 2.5% to £114.3m, reflecting an increase in revenue from most divisions with the exception of mainline rail which fell marginally.

Football Final

One of the busiest days of the year to date was Sunday 19th September, on which date Derry played Cork in the annual "All Ireland" football final. Details of trains into and out of Dublin on this date are shown in Tables 1 and 2 and as can be seen both special and regular services ran to a commendable standard, about which there could be little complaint. Return services from Dublin (Connolly) were loaded and dispatched with such efficiency that no less than seven trains departed for Cork alone between 17:10 and 17:44. There was little disruption to regular schedules throughout the day as the programme of special trains was restricted to that which could be reasonably be provided without the wholesale cancellations and chaotic overcrowding which was such a characteristic of big GAA days in the past. It is understood, however, that at least some services on each of the following routes were replaced by buses: Cork/Cobh, Cork/Tralee, Limerick/Limerick Junction and Limerick/Ballybroy. Fares were set to match the available accommodation and it is probable that revenue was little diminished compared to previous years. Due to their own commitments, assistance from NIR was limited to the loan of a railcar set to work the 14:50 Heuston/Waterford and return. All eighteen 071 class locomotives were in traffic together with at least 77 Mk3 (85), 54 Mk2 (61), 11 Mk2a/b (14), 23 push/pull Mk3 (24) and 39 Cravens (49), the latter figure assuming a single craven on the Ballina branch. In addition 47 NIR vehicles were also working trains into and out of Dublin on this date making a grand total of 251 known to have been in traffic. The figure in brackets is the total number of passenger carrying vehicles extant in each category, including the Presidential coach. At least 5 Cravens remain out of service as a result of the Belview derailment mentioned elsewhere.

| Link | Service | Formation | Load | Kildare | Dublin | Notes |
|-------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------|--------------------|------------------|--------------|
| 1* | 07:40 ex Cork | 075+8Mk3+EGV | 530/570 | pass 08:53 (+63) | arr 09:30 (+70) | (1) (2) |
| 2* | 07:50 ex Cork | 076+7Mk2+EGV | 420/430 | pass 09:16 (+50) | arr 09:51 (4-59) | (1) (3) |
| 3* | 08:25 ex Mallow | 088+EGV+8Mk2 | 430/450 | pass 09:32 (+44) | arr 10:09 (+51) | (1) (3) |
| 4* | 08:10 ex Cork | 081+9Mk2+EGV | 550/600 | pass 09:39 (+47) | arr 10:16 (+54) | (1) (2) |
| 5* | 08:20 ex Cork | 086+DV+11Mk2a/b+DV | 650 | pass 09:52 (+44) | arr 10:28 (4-52) | (1) |
| 6* | 08:30 ex Cork | 071+GSV+11Cr+DV | 700/780 | pass 10:37 (+9) | arr 11:19 (+11) | (1) (2) |
| 7* | 08:40 ex Cork | 082+GSV+11Cr+GSV | 700/780 | pass 10:53 (+3) | arr 11:32 (+8) | (1) (2) |
| 8* | 07:50 ex Tralee | 084+8Mk3+EGV | 500 | pass 11:00 (+13) | | (4) |
| 9 | 08:50 ex Galway | 078+7Mk3+EGV | 560 | 11:13/11:14 (-5) | | (4) |
| 10 | 09:00 ex Cork | 077+8Mk3+EGV | 450 | pass 11:28 (-6½) | | (4) |
| 11 | 09:50 ex Waterford | 083+7Mk3+EGV | 400 | 11:48/11:49 (+0) | | (4) |
| 12* | 09:45 ex Limerick | 153+143+8Cr+GSV | 450 | 11:59/12:01 (-1) | | (4) |
| 13* | 10:10 ex Cork | 080+4Mk3+EGV | 50 | pass 12:07 (+3) | | (4) |
| 14 | 14:30 ex Cork | | | | | (4) |
| 15 | 14:35 ex Waterford | | | | | (4) |
| 16 | 14:50 ex Galway | | | | | (4) |
| 17 | 13:40 ex Tralee | 079+8Mk3+EGV | | 17:27/17:29 (-½) | | (4) |
| 18 | 15:10 ex Westport | 149+5Cr+GSV | 300 | 18:42/18:43 (-10½) | | (4) |
| 10 | 17:30 ex Cork | 076+8Mk3+EGV | 400 | pass 19:26 (-3½) | arr 19:52 (-2) | (4) |
| 19 | 18:00 ex Waterford | 85+4+82 | 350/380 | 20:07/20:09 (-8) | arr 20:40 (-5) | (4) |
| 12 | 18:10 ex Limerick | 001+GSV+8Cr | 400/450 | 20:21/20:22 (-12½) | arr 21:00 (-15) | (4) |
| 8 | 17:05 ex Tralee | 074+7Mk3+EGV | 430/450 | 20:26/20:27 (-6½) | arr 21:05 (-15) | (4) |
| 2 | 18:10 ex Galway | 129+126+7Mk2+EGV | 380/400 | 20:43/20:44 (-6½) | arr 21:13 (-3) | (4) |
| 20 | 17:45 ex Westport | 072+6Mk3+EGV | 360/380 | 21:00/21:02 (-2) | arr 21:31 (+4) | (4) |
| 21 | 18:30 ex Cork | 6102 6p/p+124 | 350/360 | 21:40/21:42 (-27½) | arr 22:15 (-30) | (4) |
| 22 | 08:55 ex Sligo | 146+150+7Mk2+EGV | 450/460 | arr 12:14 (+1) | | (1) |
| 19* | 09:30 ex Portadown | 82+4+85 | Empty | | arr 12:19 | (1) (7) |
| 23 | 09:15 ex Rosslare | 128+134+9Mk2+EGV | 250/270 | | arr 12:21 (-5) | (1) |
| 24* | 07:50 ex Derry | 97+4+92+93+4+90 | 750/800 | | arr 12:36 (-43) | (1) |
| 25* | 10:00 ex Belfast | 81+4+98+2+86 | 560/600 | | arr 12:59 (-34) | (1) (9) |
| 26 | 10:15 ex Belfast | 112+12Mk2 | 400/450 | | arr 13:14 (-34) | (1) |
| 30* | 11:55 ex Dundalk | 6104 6p/p+122 | Empty | | arr 13:30 approx | (1) (10) |
| 27 | 15:00 ex Belfast | 133+127+7Mk2+EGV | 250/260 | | arr 17:22 (-2) | (1) |
| 28 | 14:35 ex Sligo | 186+158+EGV+5Mk2 | 230/240 | | arr 17:56 (-5) | (1) |
| 22 | 18:00 ex Belfast | | | | | (1) |
| 23 | 18:10 ex Sligo | | | | | (1) |
| 29 | 18:30 ex Rosslare | | | | | (1) |

Table 1: Trains into Dublin on Sunday 19/9/1993.

* Indicates special train

| Link | Service | Formation | Load | Dublin | Kildare | Notes |
|------|-----------------|------------------------|---------|-----------------|-------------------|----------|
| 17 | 08:50 Tralee | 073+EGV+8Mk3 | | | | (4) |
| 16 | 09:20 Galway | 087+EGV+7Mk3 | | | 09:47/09:48 (+3½) | (4) |
| 15 | 09:50 Waterford | 079+EGV+6Mk3+EGV | | | 10:27/10:28 (-1½) | (4) |
| 14 | 10:15 Cork | 085+EGV+8Mk3 | | | 10:48/10:50 (-3½) | (4) |
| 8* | 12:00 Tralee | 074+EGV+7Mk3 | Empty | dep 13:07 (-67) | | (4) (13) |
| 12* | 12:45 Limerick | 143+153+GSV+8Cr | Empty | dep 13:01 (-16) | | (4) |
| 21* | 13:00 Cork | 124+6 p/p 6102 | Empty | dep 12:43 (+17) | | (4) |
| 10 | 13:20 Cork | | | | | (4) |
| 2 | 14:10 Galway | | | | | (4) |
| 19 | 14:50 Waterford | 82+4+85 | 100 | dep 14:51 (-1) | | (4) |
| 1* | 17:00 Cork | 075+EGV+8Mk3 | 600 | dep 17:10 (-10) | pass 17:44 (-2) | (1) (11) |
| 5* | 17:10 Cork | 081+DV+11Mk2a/b+DV | 600 | dep 17:16 (-6) | pass 17:56 (-4) | (1) |
| 4* | 17:20 Cork | 086+EGV+9Mk2 | 550 | dep 17:23 (-3) | pass 18:02 (-1) | (1) (11) |
| 30* | 17:30 Cork | 122+6 p/p 6104 | 480/520 | dep 17:28 (+2) | pass 18:11 (+1) | (1) |
| 7* | 17:40 Cork | 071+GSV+11Cr+GSV | 800/850 | dep 17:37 (+3) | pass 18:21 (+1) | (1) (11) |
| 31* | 18:35 Cork | 131+6 p/p 6101 | 500/530 | dep 17:48 (+47) | pass 18:30 (+53) | (1) |
| 15 | 18:00 Westport | 088+6Mk3+EGV | | | 18:39/18:41 (-7) | (4) |
| 11 | 18:15 Waterford | 078+7Mk3+EGV | 490 | | 18:47/18:49 (+0) | (4) |
| 14 | 18:30 Cork | 077+8Mk3+EGV | 540 | | pass 18:54 (+1½) | (4) |
| 9 | 18:50 Galway | 080+7Mk3+EGV | 450 | | 19:20/19:23 (-4) | (4) |
| 16 | 18:40 Limerick | 083+7Mk3+EGV | 520 | | 19:27/19:29 (-20) | (4) (12) |
| 6* | 18:45 Cork | 082+DV+11Cr+GSV | 800/850 | dep 18:48 (-3) | pass 19:37 (-2) | (1) (11) |
| 3* | 19:15 Cork | 084+8Mk2+EGV | 500 | dep 19:16 (-1) | pass 19:44 (-1) | (4) |
| 13* | 19:40 Cork | 087+EGV+4Mk3 | 50 | dep 19:41 (-1) | pass 20:08 (+0) | (4) (3) |
| 17 | 19:45 Tralee | 085+EGV+8Mk3 | 530/550 | dep 19:46 (-1) | pass 20:11 (-½) | (4) |
| 18 | 20:10 Galway | 079+GSV+TPO+GSV+5Cr | 80/90 | dep 20:12 (-2) | 20:51/20:52 (-4½) | (4) |
| 10* | 20:15 Cork | 073+EGV+8Mk3 | 80/100 | dep 20:20 (-5) | pass 20:56 | (4) |
| 32 | 21:15 Cork | 076+2TPO+3Cr+2DV | 200 | dep 21:17 (-2) | | (4) |
| 28 | 09:00 Sligo | 186+158+EGV+6/7Mk2+EGV | | | | (1) (14) |
| 29 | 10:25 Rosslare | 169+141+6105 5 p/p | 90 | dep 10:29 (-4) | | (1) |
| 27 | 10:30 Belfast | 127+133+EGV+7Mk2 | 90 | dep 10:30 (+0) | | (1) |
| 23 | 13:40 Sligo | 157+135+9Mk2+EGV | 90/100 | dep 13:45 (-5) | | (1) |
| 22 | 15:00 Belfast | 128+134+EGV+7Mk2 | 270/300 | dep 15:01 (-1) | | (1) |
| 25* | 18:00 Belfast | 86+2+98+4+81 | 550 | dep 17:58 (+2) | | (1) |
| 27 | 18:15 Sligo | 150+146+EGV+7Mk2 | 450 | dep 18:17 (-2) | | (1) |
| 26 | 18:20 Belfast | 112+12Mk2 | 650 | dep 18:21 (-1) | | (1) |
| 28 | 18:30 Rosslare | 186+158+EGV+5Mk2 | 160 | dep 18:31 (-1) | | (1) |
| 33* | 18:40 Belfast | 111+8Mk2 | 250/270 | dep 18:48 (-8) | | (1) |
| 24* | 19:15 Derry | 90+4+93+92+97 | 750/800 | dep 19:15 (+0) | | (1) |

Table 2: Departures from Dublin, 19/9/1993.

* Indicates special train

Notes in respect of Tables 1 and 2 above:

- 1) Train operated to/from Dublin (Connolly).
- 2) Train ran empty to Dublin (Pearse).
- 3) Train ran empty to Dublin (Pearse) and from there to Dublin (Heuston).
- 4) Train operated to/from Dublin (Heuston).
- 5) Executive set.
- 6) 17:15 ex Ennis passengers connected in Limerick.
- 7) Delayed by SLW Skerries/Malahide, pilotman at wrong end.
- 8) Delayed by SLW Skerries/Malahide, also empty to Malahide at 12:53, due to return at 14:45.
- 9) Delayed by SLW Skerries/Malahide, and held by flagman near Donabate for up to 15 minutes.
- 10) Delayed by SLW Skerries/Malahide.
- 11) Empty ex Pearse, Up and Down DARTs over Down Line Pease Yard/Connolly 16:16 to 17:44.
- 12) Delayed at Heuston and Thurles by automatic door problems.
- 13) Delayed by the removal of defective Mk3, 7170, off incoming set, overtook empty Limerick.
- 14) EGV and either one or two Mk2 removed in Sligo, probably to form part of Monday, 04:50 ex Sligo.

U2, etc.

The U2 concerts in Dublin resulted in heavy cross border traffic on the weekend of 27th to 29th August. On the Friday three trains arrived in Dublin from Belfast at 16:52, 17:18 and 17:24 formed by 81 + 4 + 82 + 2 + 92, 2 + 84 and 111 + 9 Mk2, respectively having departed Belfast at 14:00, 14:50 and 15:00. The nine piece set returned after the concert leaving Dublin at 00:44 the following morning but terminated at Lisburn due to a terrorist incident near Belfast (Central). Traffic on the Saturday was disrupted by the closure of the Belfast/Lisburn section and made busier by community games specials to Mosney as detailed in the tables below.

| Service | Formation | Load | Skerries | Notes |
|---------------------------|-------------------|---------|-------------------|----------|
| 08:00 ex Belfast | 91+4+86 | 330/350 | pass 10:30 (-51) | (1) |
| 10:05 ex Drogheda | 6104 6 p/p+124 | 300/330 | 10:50/10:52 (-21) | (2) |
| 11:30 ex Drogheda | 190+GSV+4Cr | 480 | 12:00/12:02 (-5½) | (3) |
| 09:00 ex Belfast | 6102 6 p/p+126 | 450/490 | pass 12:30 (-88) | (4) |
| | | | Mosney | |
| 13:00 ex Drogheda (Empty) | 078+DV+6Mk2a/b | | dep 13:09 (-2) | (5) (PL) |
| 13:00 ex Drogheda | 6104 6 p/p+124 | 50/60 | dep 13:14 (-2) | (PL) |
| 13:00 ex Mosney (Empty) | 184+169+8Mk2+EGV | | dep 13:45 (-45) | (PL) |
| 10:10 ex Belfast | 81+4+82+2+92 | 480/520 | pass 13:53 (-111) | (6) (PL) |
| 12:35 ex Mosney | 154+129+DV+6Cr+DV | | dep 14:03 (-88) | (7) (PL) |
| 11:00 ex Belfast | 079+7Mk2+EGV | 360/400 | 14:12/14:15 (-92) | (8) |
| 13:42 ex Drogheda | 6105 4 p/p+131 | 40/50 | 14:20/14:23 (-29) | (9) (PL) |
| | | | Laytown | |
| 14:15 ex Belfast | 87+2+85+4+84 | 230/300 | pass 16:38 (-32) | |
| 15:00 ex Belfast | 111+9Mk2 | 180/210 | pass 17:00 (-18) | |

U2 Table 1

Notes:

- 1) From Lisburn only.
- 2) Looped Mosney for 08:00 ex Belfast (running from Lisburn).
- 3) Unable to load intending passengers at subsequent stations - minibuses hired?
- 4) Made very slow progress - Lisburn depart 10:02, Dundalk 11:23 and Dublin 12:50.
- 5) From Mosney only, not Drogheda as intended.
- 6) From Lisburn only, Dublin arrive 14:30.
- 7) To/from Drogheda, not Mosney as originally intended.
- 8) From Lisburn only, Dublin arrive 14:55.
- 9) Held Drogheda to follow 11:00 ex Belfast - Mosney too congested.

PL Platform Loop (there is only one platform at Mosney served by the Down running loop).

| Service | Formation | Load | Skerries | Notes |
|--------------------------|-------------------|---------|-------------------|----------|
| 06:57 ex Arklow | 190+4Cr+GSV | 15 | dep 09:21 (+0) | |
| Cable Train | 055+15 Wagons | | pass 10:37 | |
| Empty Cement | 188+12 Bulks | | pass 11:25 | |
| 11:20 Belfast | 86+4+91 | 330/360 | pass 12:01 (-23) | (10) |
| 11:24 ex Pearse/Drogheda | 124+6 p/p 6104 | 250 | 12:25/12:26 (-22) | |
| 08:20 ex Ennis/Mosney | 078+6Mk2a/b+DV | 330/350 | pass 12:35 (-12) | (11) |
| 08:50 ex Galway/Mosney | 129+154+DV+6Cr+DV | 360/400 | 12:43/12:44 (-32) | (12) (7) |
| | | | Mosney | |
| 12:09 ex Pearse/Drogheda | 131+4 p/p 6105 | 40 | 13:27/13:28 (-26) | PL |
| 08:45 ex Cork/Mosney | 169+184+EGV+8Mk2 | 360/400 | 13:36 (-36) | PL |
| 13:00 Belfast | 126+6 p/p 6102 | 270/300 | 13:52/13:56 (-29) | PL |

U2 Table 2

Notes:

- 10) Fuelled in Dublin.
- 11) Ran Round at Mosney.
- 12) Arrived Mosney 13:17.

Return specials after the concert left Dublin for Belfast at 00:31 and 01:00 on Sunday morning, each formed by nine piece railcar sets. A 14:30 Dublin/Belfast relief 111 + 12 Mk2, operated ahead of the regular Sunday 15:00 service.

Crouzet Ticketing System

Irish Rail are currently installing a new ticketing system purchased at the cost of £1.8m from Crouzet, a French based company. The new tickets are credit card sized and incorporate a machine readable magnetic strip primarily intended to operate the Entrance/Exit barriers installed at Dublin suburban stations. Unlike the Almex ticket, the Crouzet replacements clearly show origin, destination, class and validity without the use of codes and are thus easier to interpret for both staff and public. The major drawback with the system is that the time taken to issue a ticket is considerably extended with the result that lengthy queues at even the less busy booking offices are now the norm rather than the exception. The following is typical of many instances:

“Thursday, 20th May 1993, Pearse 17:50.

Two booking office windows open. Queue right back through booking hall and as long again outside the station, the end being at the pedestrian lights south of the overbridge! Trains very comfortable with plenty of seats. It would seem that getting a ticket could take up to 15 minutes, doubling or trebling the journey time for a short distance traveller unlucky enough to strike a long gap in headways. Apparently such queuing at Pearse has been the norm for several days now, but must clearly be regarded as utterly unacceptable. It is certainly a novel way of extending the peak."

The response of booking office staff to the problem has been typically creative - preprint as many tickets as possible during slack periods and cancel them as necessary prior to closing off for the day. No attempt has been made to commission the barrier exit feature with the result that huge volumes of people are still channelled through narrow passages at a snail's pace with the result that several minutes can be wasted exiting from busier suburban stations, especially Tara Street and Pearse.

Miscellaneous

- A new 35 ton container gantry crane is in place at Limerick station supplied at the cost of £1m by the Aumund company, Rheinberg, near Dusseldorf, Germany. Tenders have been issued for new cranes to be installed at North Wall and Dundalk. There is a possibility that the new Dundalk crane may be sited in the Irish North yard due to problems with planning permission at Barrack Street.
- There was little evidence up to mid-October of construction work at the site of the proposed new station at Cherry Orchard or indeed at the former stations at Clondalkin, Hazelhatch and Sallins, all of which are due to open in 1994 as part of the £13.2m Dublin (Heuston)/Kildare South West Rail Corridor commuter project. There is considerable unease about this project as the number of people likely to find the service useful is expected to be extremely small compared to the number of mainline passengers who will be delayed either due to additional stops or because of pathing problems caused by slotting the new service into the 17:15 to 19:00 window which is already well occupied by mainline departures from Heuston.
- The Irish Rail sleeper manufacturing plant at Portlaoise returned to double shift working in mid-February - a result of the increased track renewal program.
- Mrs Felicity Manley was recently presented with an award by the Minister for Tourism & Trade, Mr Charlie McCreevy. The award is in recognition of the excellence of the commentary which she has been giving for the past six years to participants on CIÉ tours travelling on DART. (The ordinary public get to hear the commentary free if they are seated in the right carriage!)
- Irish Rail have invited tenders from companies interested in supplying a racking system for the transport of 36 UIC standard 54kg rails of 108m lengths in 3 stacks. The system would be mounted on six bogie wagons, each of 20.71m over the buffers.
- Irish Rail are to acquire a dynamic track stabiliser as well as a further new tamper, the equipment being due for delivery towards the end of 1993.
- For the second time in recent years the system did not receive the usual annual weed-spray with the result that many sections of line are in a badly overgrown condition with serious deterioration of the track formation evident at numerous locations. The closure of the New Ross branch is directly attributable to this somewhat short-sighted economy measure.
- The Boyne Road branch at Drogheda is again in use as far as the marshalling yard at which point ballast trains are loaded in connection with the Belfast/Dublin upgrading project. Regular traffic ceased with the termination of the Platin/Boyne Road oil transfer trains which were no longer required after the conversion of the Platin cement works to coal fired operation.

- The bodies have been removed from at least two Park Royal coaches at Inchicore and the underframes modified and plated for permanent way use, apparently being destined for use as transport vehicles for the Donelli Gantries.
- Mr Pat Hayden, Bell lines general manager Port and Transport services Irish Sea and Iberia, was quoted recently as “being keen to see the development of the Western Parkway Rail Terminal which will add immeasurably to the efficient movement of boxes country-wide.” Such a development would bring rail access closer to the an ever expanding industrial belt and should greatly enhance the potential for increased market penetration.

Northern Ireland Railways

Cross Harbour Link - Position As Of Early October

Construction of the viaduct sections of the new railway from Lagan Junction to Yorkgate is well advanced on both sides of the river with only the final few spans on the Yorkgate or County Antrim side at Donegall Quay remaining to be erected. The harbour crossing itself is also progressing well and now extends across the river from the County Down side. The approach on this side commences on a double track embankment at Lagan Junction which then narrows onto a single track elevated box concrete viaduct which will carry the line to the river, a distance of somewhat under half a mile. The river crossing is likewise of box concrete construction being cantilevered from the two river piers towards the centre of the river on one side and the approach viaducts on the other. A further stretch of single track viaduct, almost a half mile in length is then in place from Tomb Street to Dock Street.

Fabrication of the two steel bridges which will span Middlepath Street (near Lagan Junction) and Dock Street (at Yorkgate) is currently underway off site. There will be a crossing loop at Donegall Quay though the proposed station at this site is not yet authorised. It is anticipated that the completed alignment will be handed over to NIR in April 1994 at which stage track laying and the installation of signalling will commence. The installation of the new double track Lagan Junction will necessitate considerable resignalling in the Belfast Central area and this work is understood to be included in the £1.7m cross-harbour signalling contract which has been awarded to Westinghouse. Services on the new railway are expected to start in October 1994.

Great Victoria Street

Construction of new houses close to City Hospital halt has commenced and when completed will facilitate the relocation of residents occupying properties in Bentham Street which are to be demolished preparatory to the construction of the new connection from Westlink Junction to City Junction. This double track chord will enable Bangor, Larne and Londonderry (via Bleach Green) trains to run directly into a new station to be constructed on the site of the former GNR terminal at Great Victoria Street.

The project will also see the reinstatement of the abandoned portion of the original mainline from Dublin as between Central Junction and Great Victoria Street, with three running lines being provided between Westlink Junction and the reinstated terminal. There will be four platforms in the new station, although only two of these will extend under the Boyne bridge which, thanks to the Ulsterbus operation, has remained in situ since the closure of the old station in 1976 and the diversion of trains onto the former Belfast Central railway towards the then new station at Belfast Central. Most commuter

and Londonderry line services will either start from or serve Great Victoria Street though a limited number of peak period trains will continue to be routed directly from City Junction to Central Junction as at present. It is also likely that at least some, if not all, Dublin trains will call once the new high speed push/pull sets enter traffic in 1996. It is expected that work will commence on this project in February 1994.

Incidents

The driver's windscreen of the 20:35 Belfast - Londonderry, 69 + 2, was shattered by an object thrown by a trespasser on 3rd June. The driver was taken to hospital but released shortly afterwards. Passengers were transferred at Lisburn to the set of the 19:00 ex Londonderry. The damaged set worked the continuation of the latter train to Belfast and thence to CSD for repairs. A youth was later charged with the offence.

The locomotive of the 10:30 ex Dublin, 112 + 11 NIR Mk2, failed on arrival at Belfast on Sunday 20th June due to a cooling problem. After attention the same locomotive and set formed the 15:00 to Dublin but got into difficulties near Dunleer. The train struggled to Drogheda amid vast clouds of smoke and diesel fumes at which point 112 was removed and two Irish Rail locomotives substituted. The train eventually arrived in Dublin about 80 minutes late. Meanwhile 113 ran light from Portadown to work the return 18:20 from Drogheda forward. 112 was hauled to Belfast as part of a freight train the following day. It returned to traffic on 4th July after the replacement of two piston and liner sets at York Road.

The 15:00 ex Belfast failed in the Portadown/Poyntzpass section on Saturday 26th June reportedly due to traction motor problems on 113. The failed train was hauled back to Portadown after a delay of over 2 hours. Passengers were transferred to the 17:00 Belfast/Dublin, 082 + 7 NIR Mk2, this latter arriving in Dublin 40 minutes late at 20:00. The return 20:15 was hauled by 111 which had been in Inchicore for wheel turning. The 18:20 Dublin/Belfast was cancelled and passengers herded into the miserably overcrowded 18:27 ex Dublin (Pearse) to Dundalk which was extended through to Portadown. Eventual arrival in Belfast was at 21:25.

113 was taken out of traffic on arrival in Belfast with the 11:20 ex Dublin on 29th June due to bogie problems. The locomotive was worked to York Road at reduced speed the following day and was still out of use as of mid-September due to the lack of suitable spare parts. As NIR was now reduced to one serviceable locomotive suitable for cross-border workings a pair of Irish Rail engines was borrowed from 2nd to 4th July inclusive. These were initially 150 + 156 but 154 was substituted for 150 on 3rd July after the latter failed in Drogheda with a hot engine while working the 08:00 ex Belfast. 112 worked light from Belfast to Dundalk the following day after the completion of repairs and took over the 18:20 ex Dublin from the IR pair.

The Monkstown/Antrim line was closed for several days after a road vehicle damaged an underline bridge near Muckamore sometime before 21:00 on 6th July. As there are currently no scheduled services on this route disruption was minimal as only stock transfers would have been affected.

Due to late running of the 20:10 Dundalk/Bangor service on 21st July, the 19:00 ex Londonderry, 2 + 91, was extended from Belfast (Central) to Bangor.

The 15:00 Belfast/Dublin, 111 + 9 Mk2, was cancelled at Dundalk on 24th July due to a brake defect which had not been isolated by 17:20. There was little or no information given to passengers until the train had been stationary for over 70 minutes at which point everybody was de-trained and given the option of travelling on the 17:00 ex Belfast or continuing by bus. About half elected for the latter option departing Dundalk between 17:40 and 18:00. To make matters worse some, if not all, of the buses arrived in Dublin after the train! The leading vehicle, a brake standard, was removed from the set

sometime after arrival but this made little difference. As single line working was in operation from Dundalk (North) to Newry the 15:00 ex Dublin was required to pull forward and set back over the north crossover into the up platform, but as this latter was occupied it was unable to do so. Eventually this train set back into the up yard departing wrong line from there 73 minutes late at 17:14. It is understood that first open 901 was eventually identified as the culprit and was returned to Belfast at the rear of the 20:10 ex Dundalk, 89 + 2, on 26th July. As on 26th June Irish Rail were either unable or unwilling to provide a set for the 18:20 ex Dublin and this train was cancelled, passengers again being herded onto a hopelessly overcrowded 18:27 ex Dublin (Pearse) to Dundalk.

The 17:37 ex Bangor, 91 + 2, failed at Dundalk on 9th August. As a consequence the push/pull operated 18:27 ex Dublin (Pearse) to Dundalk ran through to Portadown forming the southern leg of the 20:10 Dundalk to Bangor service.

The 08:00 ex Belfast, 112 + 9 Mk2, failed between Drogheda and Laytown due to a broken water pipe on 10th August. The train was worked forward by 160 arriving in Dublin at 11:25, 87 minutes late. The return 11:20 was hauled by 086 and departed at 11:42. Due largely to delays associated with SLW between Dunleer and Dundalk, Belfast was not reached until 14:28.41 minutes late. To make matters even worse the train was overcrowded and the First Class accommodation “invaded” by Dublin/Mosney excursion traffic which could easily have been accommodated on the following lightly loaded 11:24 ex Pearse to Drogheda.

The 19:30 ex Portrush was involved in a fatality at Carngranny level crossing, between Ballymena and Antrim, on 10th August thus entailing a delay of over an hour. The train was impounded by the RUC on arrival at CSD and not released to traffic until 16:30 the following day. The same train, this time 68 + 3 + 87, was in trouble again on 21st August as a result of hitting animals at Springfarm AHB, near Antrim. Due to brake pipe damage the rear set ran round at Antrim and hauled the remainder of the train to Belfast.

The 19:00 ex Londonderry, a three car 80 class set (67), was failed before departure on 22nd August due to a brake problem. Passengers were taken by road to Coleraine. from whence they travelled to Belfast on the Portrush branch set.

First open, 901, was removed from the 20:15 Dublin/Belfast at Drogheda on 23rd August due to a brake defect. The train arrived in Belfast, 72 minutes late, at 23:50.

The 17:30 Belfast/Portrush, 3 car set 86, failed at Glenavy due to an overheated engine on 3rd September and was pushed back to Lisburn by the 17:00 ex Londonderry. Passengers on the Portrush train transferred to the 18:10 ex Belfast at Ballinderry while those on the 17:00 transferred at Lisburn to the 18:20 ex Dublin. Further disruption was caused around the same time by the failure of MV 108 at City Hospital. The latter was en route from Adelaide to CSD for fuelling and was hauled forward by the three car set rostered for the 18:10 ex Belfast (No.67). The 18:10 was in turn worked by 91 + 4 + 98 which presumably split at Coleraine to balance set allocations for the following morning.

Locomotives And Rolling Stock

Motor coach 453 was at York Road with engine damage on 17th July.

113, out of traffic since the end of June, was still at York Road in early October. It is understood that this engine is to have yaw dampers fitted similar to those already successfully installed on the Irish Rail 071 fleet. The purpose of the new dampers is to improve locomotive riding characteristics by limiting excessive rotational movement around the bogie axes.

MV 105 ran light from York Road to Ballymena on 19th July to retrieve sister locomotive 106 which has been stored unserviceable for some time and was required at York Road for spare parts.

111 was in Inchicore for wheel turning on 26th June while 112 visited the works on 3rd October for the same purpose. A two car 80 class unit, 68 + 1, was at Inchicore from 17th to 20th August, also for wheel turning.

Permanent Way

Relying and CWR installation has commenced on the up Larne line between Whitehead and Bleach Green Junction. Some ten miles of track will be renewed over a 3 year period at the rate of approximately 3½ miles per year.

Terrorist Activity

A bomb was placed aboard the 16:20 ex Portadown on arrival at Finaghy station on Sunday 30th May. The motor coach, No 99 Sir Myles Humphreys, was badly damaged in the subsequent explosion although the other two vehicles escaped unscathed. Normal traffic resumed later that evening after the train had been removed from the site.

Bomb warnings, mainly affecting all or part of the Belfast/Lisburn section, disrupted traffic for short periods on the 21st, 23rd, 24th and 25th June as well as 2nd July.

Belfast Central station was damaged by a car bomb which exploded on East Bridge street at 01:15 on the 15th July. Services operated normally the following morning although passengers were required to access the platforms via the station car park.

An explosion occurred at the Blackwater Bridge just outside Belfast Central at 01:00 on Saturday 28th August causing minor damage to the track. A warning of further devices meant that the entire Belfast/Lisburn section had to be closed until around 13:00 the same day. Both the 23:59 (Friday) and 07:55 (Saturday) ex Dublin terminated at Lisburn. The 08:00, 09:00, 10:10 and 11:00 ex Belfast for Dublin similarly started from Lisburn. (See also Traffic.)

Equipment Exchanges

Due to heavy traffic on Irish Rail on Sundays 20th June, 18th July, 8th August, 15th August and 4th September, NIR stock was used to operate the entire Dublin/Belfast service on these dates.

The NIR railcar set off the 07:15 Belfast/Thurles special on 30th July, 91 + 4 + 82 + 2 + 94, also worked Irish Rail's 15:00 Dublin/Belfast and 18:00 Belfast/Dublin on this date. The 17:00 Belfast to Dublin, 111 + 7 Mk2, remained in Dublin and the railcars were utilised to work the 20:15 to Belfast which eventually departed at 20:45. The NIR Mk2 worked the 08:40 Dublin/Sligo, 13:30 Sligo/Dublin and 20:15 Dublin/Belfast the following day. The locomotive, 111, worked the 08:00 Dublin/Belfast (7 IR Mk2 + EGV), 11:00 Belfast/Dublin return and 20:15 Dublin/Belfast. The railcar set worked the 09:00 Belfast/Dublin, 13:00 Dublin/Belfast and 17:00 Belfast/Dublin, the latter formed by 81 + 4 + 82 + 2 + 94. (See also Traffic.)

A six piece set, 81 + 4 + 86, worked a 15:45 auxiliary from Gorey to Dublin on 14th August. The train worked empty ex Portadown at 06:15 for Dublin, leaving there at 12:47 for Gorey. The set returned from Dublin to Portadown at 20:24 following the regular 20:15 to Belfast.

A six piece set, 91 + 4 + 98, was loaned to Irish Rail on 2nd September and worked an 08:50 Galway/Mosney community games special the following day. The train continued empty to Belfast after unloading its passengers at Mosney.

A nine piece set, 97 + 4 + 94 + 2 + 82, operated the 09:00 Kilkenny/Dublin (Connolly) and 17:10 Dublin (Connolly)/Kilkenny GAA specials on 5th September. The return train was delayed 30 minutes at Carlow by a broken rail and almost an hour at Connolly as the signalman at Malahide had gone off

duty.

Due to equipment availability problems Irish Rail 146 worked a number of local services in the Belfast area on the morning of 7th September commencing with the 06:50 empty from Bridge End to Bangor.

On 7th October IR locos 133 + 131 worked the 07:35 ex Portadown to Belfast (Central), but, having failed for a time while running round, it was considered inadvisable to send them back on the continuation of the 08:15 ex Bangor as originally intended. This train, 111 + 7 Mk2, continued through to Portadown and as result the 09:00 to Dublin was formed by a Castle class set as far as Portadown. MV 104 worked part of the 06:10 ex Dundalk (liner) to Adelaide. It was originally intended to split a pair of twin-cabbed Bo-Bos at Portadown, with one loco working the 07:35 passenger and the other taking forward as much of the goods as possible. The MV was on standby to work an overload as required. The following day the IR pair was split with 169 working the 07:35 ex Portadown. The latter engine also worked the 13:50 Belfast/Londonderry and return on this date.

Traffic

The summer period brought much extra traffic, particularly to Portrush, and resulted in activity at several “closed” stations including Craigavon, Culmore, Kellswater, Magilligan and Tanderagee.

Saturday 5th June was a busy day with specials at 09:15 Belfast/Portrush (97 + 4 + 84) and 18:15 return, 07:55 Bangor/Mosney and 17:40 return (91 + 4 + 86), 09:45 Portadown/Portrush (2 + 85) and 18:30 return. A special, 68 + 4 + 69, also operated at 09:35 from Londonderry to Portrush returning to Coleraine at 19:30 at which point it was attached to the 18:10 ex Belfast. The Portadown special was strengthened in the evening to 98 + 4 + 85 to accommodate a party of 250 for Ballymena who had travelled to Portrush on the 08:25 ex Belfast.

Saturday 19th June saw three specials, 09:10 Belfast to Portrush (89 + 4 + 68) returning at 18:15, 09:20 Londonderry to Portrush (92 + 4 + 91) returning at 19:20 and attaching at Coleraine to the 18:10 ex Belfast. The third special, with about 350 passengers, was at 10:05 from Tanderagee to Mosney (97 + 3 + 90) due to return at 17:40. The 09:55 ex Portadown (98 + 4 + 93) and 15:55 ex Bangor served Craigavon on this date to accommodate a large party of Brownies.

The 09:40 ex Londonderry was a through train to Portrush on 24th June and called at Culmore to pick up a Sunday school party. Passengers for the Belfast direction were required to change at Coleraine on this date. The group returned on the 19:30 ex Portrush which was a through train to Londonderry.

On Saturday 26th June an 08:55 special operated from Newry to Portrush (85 + 87 + 94, nine car) due back at 18:15 ex Portrush, 09:50 Antrim to Portrush (67 + 90 + 98, nine car) due back at 19:10 ex Portrush and 09:20 ex Londonderry to Portrush. The last-mentioned train was formed by a 3-car unit (89 + 2) hauling 2 trailers and it was therefore necessary to run round at Coleraine. A second motor coach (68) was worked into Portrush on the 11:30 ex Belfast having received attention for a brake defect which necessitated its removal from the 20:35 ex Belfast at Ballymena the previous evening. The Antrim special also served Kellswater, Ballymena and Cullybackey,

A special train operated from Belfast to Dublin at 10:35 on 27th June in connection with a pop concert. It was formed by a nine-piece 80 class set (85, 87, 94) and returned from Dublin at 00:10 the following morning. A further special at 09:00 ex Belfast ran to the Curragh in connection with the Budweiser Irish Derby. It arrived with about 400 passengers at 13:28, 53 minutes late, and then ran empty to Dublin (Heuston) via Kildare for servicing. The return train was due to leave the Curragh at 18:55 having run empty from Heuston to Kildare at 17:40. The regular 10:15 ex Belfast on this date was formed by railcars 67 + 4 + 90. This train later returned empty to Belfast, the regular 18:20 ex Dublin being formed by 113 + 10 Mk2 which ran empty ex Belfast at 15:30.

A special train, 89 + 4 + 94, was provided from Mosney to Belfast at 15:55 on 28th June to convey a party which had travelled outward on the 09:00 ex Belfast.

The 09:40 service train ex Londonderry ran through to Portrush on 5th and 6th July formed on both days by a 9-car 80 class set. The 10:00 ex Portrush on both dates was extended to Belfast while the 08:50 ex Belfast split at Coleraine, the rear portion forming the regular 10:23 Coleraine to Portrush which was deferred to 10:35 awaiting line clear to Portrush. The signal box at Portrush was, of course, switched in on these dates.

The annual Royal Black Preceptory gatherings at Scarva and Bangor took place on 13th July. Two specials operated from Lurgan to Bangor at 09:55 (455, 456 and 457, 9 car) and 10:05 (112 + 11 Mk2) to accommodate a party of 1,200. These trains returned from Bangor at 18:25 (455, 456 and 457) and 18:35 (86, 87 and 68, 9 car) - the latter set having run empty from Portadown. A party of around 3,000, mainly band members, travelled from Portadown to Scarva and in order to cater for this group and accompanying spectators a shuttle service operated from Portadown with departures scheduled at 10:00, 10:15, 10:30, 10:45, 11:00, 11:15, 11:45, 13:00, 14:00, 15:05 and 16:25. Return services were booked ex Scarva at 10:26, 12:11, 13:36, 15:05, 15:30, 15:40, 15:50, 16:10, 16:20, 16:30, 16:55 and 17:44. As there is no crossover at Scarva trains ex Portadown continued to Poyntzpass while trains from Scarva originated there. Some of these trains were advertised as

Portadown/Poyntzpass/Portadown services. In order to facilitate the 34 additional movements scheduled between Portadown and Poyntzpass a temporary block post was in operation at Scarva from 09:50 until 17:10 on this date and a hand-signalman was on duty to flag trains as appropriate. A following train could only be accepted at Scarva if the preceding one had passed beyond the station and had been protected by detonators. Three sets were required for the shuttle, two six-piece and one nine-piece 80 class sets being diagrammed for this duty. Due to the Belview derailment Irish Rail were unable to supply a set to work the 07:30 ex Newry, 09:00 ex Belfast and 13:00 ex Dublin as previously arranged and therefore this link was worked by 81 + 2, while 85 + 5 + 98 worked the 10:05 Belfast/Portrush and 17:25 return.

Power boat racing on the Lagan resulted in the erection of viewing stands near Belfast Central and in anticipation of extra traffic most Bangor/Portadown sets were strengthened to six-car formations on Saturday 24th July.

A special train, 92 + 3 + 81, operated from Belfast to Portlaoise on 26th July to convey Boy Scouts en route to the International Jamboree being held nearby at Ballyfin. The party returned on a special train, 98 + 3 + 85, due ex Portlaoise at 10:45 on 6th August. This working was observed at Dunleer, being blocked there from 12:58 to 13:10 awaiting the 11:00 ex Belfast which was travelling wrong line from Dundalk due to engineering work.

An 07:15 special train from Belfast to Thurles, 91 + 4 + 82 + 2 + 94, operated on Friday 30th July to convey around 600 passengers to the Feile '93 music festival held over the Irish August bank holiday weekend. The set returned empty to Dublin (Connolly) in time to work the 15:00 Dublin/Belfast which was observed 35 minutes late at Newry. The normal Irish Rail set, 082 + EGV + 6 Mk2, worked the 16:45 Heuston/Tralee. There was thus no catering or first class accommodation on what would once have been considered a front line prestige service. Incidentally, the 16:05 Dundalk/Adelaide bulk cement train ran in the path of the 15:00 ex Dublin passing Newry at 16:25. The party returned on 2nd August, the 10:05 special ex Thurles being observed at Portarlington almost an hour late at 11:42.

In connection with the Londonderry holidays the 09:40 and 11:55 ex Londonderry were strengthened to six-car formations and operated as through trains to Portrush on both 2nd and 3rd August. Similar arrangements applied in respect of the 17:25 and 19:30 ex Portrush. Certain trains ex Portrush on these dates were through trains to Belfast - notably the 10:00 and 12:15 departures.

On Sunday 8th August an 09:30 Belfast/Dublin special operated for around 800 Antrim GAA supporters formed by 93 + 4 + 82 + 85 + 3 + 98. The train served Finaghy in both directions.

In connection with the Apprentice Boys gathering on 14th August, the 08:25 ex Belfast was formed by a nine-piece 80 class (sets 85, 90 and 93). The 11:25 ex Portrush, 84 + 2, was used to form an 11:50 Coleraine/Londonderry special on this date, returning empty at 12:35. In order to cater for return traffic the 17:00 ex Londonderry was made up to an eleven-car formation consisting of sets 98, 93, 90 and 85.

On Sunday 22nd August a special train operated from Londonderry to Dublin for Derry GAA supporters. The train consisted of 91 + 2 + 85 + 4 + 98 and arrived in Dublin at 12:06 with over 500 passengers. A further train, 93 + 4 + 94 + 2 + 82, ran from Portadown at 10:40 as a relief to the 10:15 ex Belfast, 111 + 13 Mk2. These trains carried around 500 and 600 passengers respectively and were further supplemented by an Irish Rail operated auxiliary, this time from Dundalk formed by a hauled six-piece push/pull set which arrived in Dublin at 13:04 with about 150 passengers. Return trains in the evening were 17:45 Dundalk (122 + 5 p/p 6101 - about 250 passengers leaving Mosney at 18:28), 18:00 Belfast (98 + 4 + 85 + 2 + 91, Mosney 18:50 with about 600 passengers), 18:20 Belfast (111 + 13 Mk2, Mosney dep 19:12 with 750/800 passengers) and 18:45 Londonderry (82 + 2 + 94 + 4 + 93, Mosney 19:49 with about 150 passengers). A further train left Dublin around 19:00 formed by 112 + 6 Mk2, Mosney 19:29, but was very lightly loaded. This train was arranged at the last minute but the empty set was severely delayed by engineering works and did not arrive in Dublin in sufficient time to depart ahead of the 18:20 as was apparently intended. Punctuality was not assisted by the fact that all cabins between Malahide and Mosney were switched out as has happened on innumerable occasions previously.

The 20:45 Empty from Dublin to Belfast, 111 + 10 Mk2, was used as a passenger special on 5th September. The train had earlier worked Irish Rail's 18:00 ex Belfast.

In preparation for the closure of the Boyne viaduct at Drogheda on 11th and 12th September, the 17:00 ex Belfast on the preceding Friday was worked by 93 + 4 + 92 + 2 + 98 and stabled in Dublin on arrival. The 20:15 to Belfast was worked by the Irish Rail set off the 18:00 ex Belfast, 080 + 7 Mk2 + EGV, and passed Laytown at 21:23 - 32 minutes late. The displaced sets worked the regular Sunday evening services at 18:00 ex Belfast and 18:20 ex Dublin - the first through trains after the reopening of the viaduct. The 16:05 Belfast to Londonderry on the Friday was formed by 111 + 8 Mk2.

Signalling And Level Crossings

Track circuit block is expected to be introduced between Ballymena and Ballymoney towards the end of 1993 after which signalmen will no longer be required at either location though presumably the existing panels will be retained for emergency working. A passing loop is to be commissioned at Killagan at the same time thus splitting the twenty mile Ballymena to Ballymoney section into two of ten miles each. (The colour light distant and home signals at Killagan have been in place for some time to comply with a statutory requirement which demands that stop signal protection be provided within ten minutes running time of AHB crossings for the fastest train.)

At the time of writing in early October the number of Automatic Open Crossings remaining on the Antrim/Londonderry line had been reduced to six from a peak of twenty five in October 1990. All remaining open crossings are located west of Bellarena, namely Carrowreagh, Myroe, Ballykelly, Eglinton, Lock and Dupont. Train speed is restricted to 60 mph at these locations with the exception of Lock, through which a 40 mph speed limit applies. In addition to the open crossings there are now 3 AHBDs (Automatic Half Barrier Distant monitored) at Cullybackey, 25 AHBs, 3 manual controlled barriers (Coleraine, Castlerock and Magilligan) and 1 gated crossing, the latter at the north end of Antrim station.

A restriction of 40 mph applies through the Cullybackey AHBDs while the nearby Galgorm and Broughdone AHBs carry a 50 mph limit in the Down direction only. These latter restrictions will be removed as soon as the control circuits are modified and the Cullybackey crossings restored to standard AHB operation.

The crossing at Magilligan is a full barrier installation which normally operates in automatic mode, is CCTV monitored at present from Castlerock and is protected by colour light distant and home signals in each direction. The crossing at Bellarena is similarly protected, but due to the proximity of Castlerock and Magilligan it has only been necessary to install signals for Up trains. It is expected that these signals will become intermediate semi-automatic section signals when track circuit block working is eventually introduced between Coleraine and Londonderry towards the end of 1994. This latter change will see the closure of the signal box at Castlerock and the removal of the loop although intermediate section signals will be provided to protect the level crossing at the east end of the station.

A new loop is to be installed at Ballykelly mid-way between Castlerock and Londonderry thus splitting the line west of Coleraine for crossing purposes into two sections of 19½ and 14½ miles long respectively compared to the current sections which are 6 and 27½ miles long.

Cameras have been installed for some time at various crossings to record the registration of vehicles ignoring the road warning lights.

On the Portrush branch Artillery Road crossing is now a full barrier installation similar to that at Magilligan and is CCTV monitored from Coleraine. The other crossing on the branch, at the former Portstewart station, is an AHB. The signal box at Portrush, which is not normally "switched in" will become redundant when track circuit block is introduced on the branch towards the end of 1994.

Dublin/Belfast Project

NIR have relaid and installed CWR on approximately 8½ miles of track in the past year, mainly on the Up road between Tanderagee and Poyntzpass and on the Down line between the border and Adavoye. Work is continuing on the Down line at the time of writing with single line working between Dundalk North and Newry scheduled from 09:20 to 15:45 on Mondays to Fridays as required until 31st December.

The underbridge, No.184, carrying the mainline over the Dublin/Belfast road at Cloghogue outside Newry was renewed with steel spans over the weekend of 3rd and 4th April last. The line was closed from 22:00 Friday until the early hours of the following Monday morning.

The underbridge, No.239, at Woodhouse Street, immediately south of Portadown (Junction) station was renewed with steel spans over the weekend of 5th and 6th December 1992, the line being closed from late Friday until 15:00 on the following Sunday. The original bridge was three tracks wide, but as only two roads presently exist the new structure is correspondingly narrower.

Bleach Green/Antrim

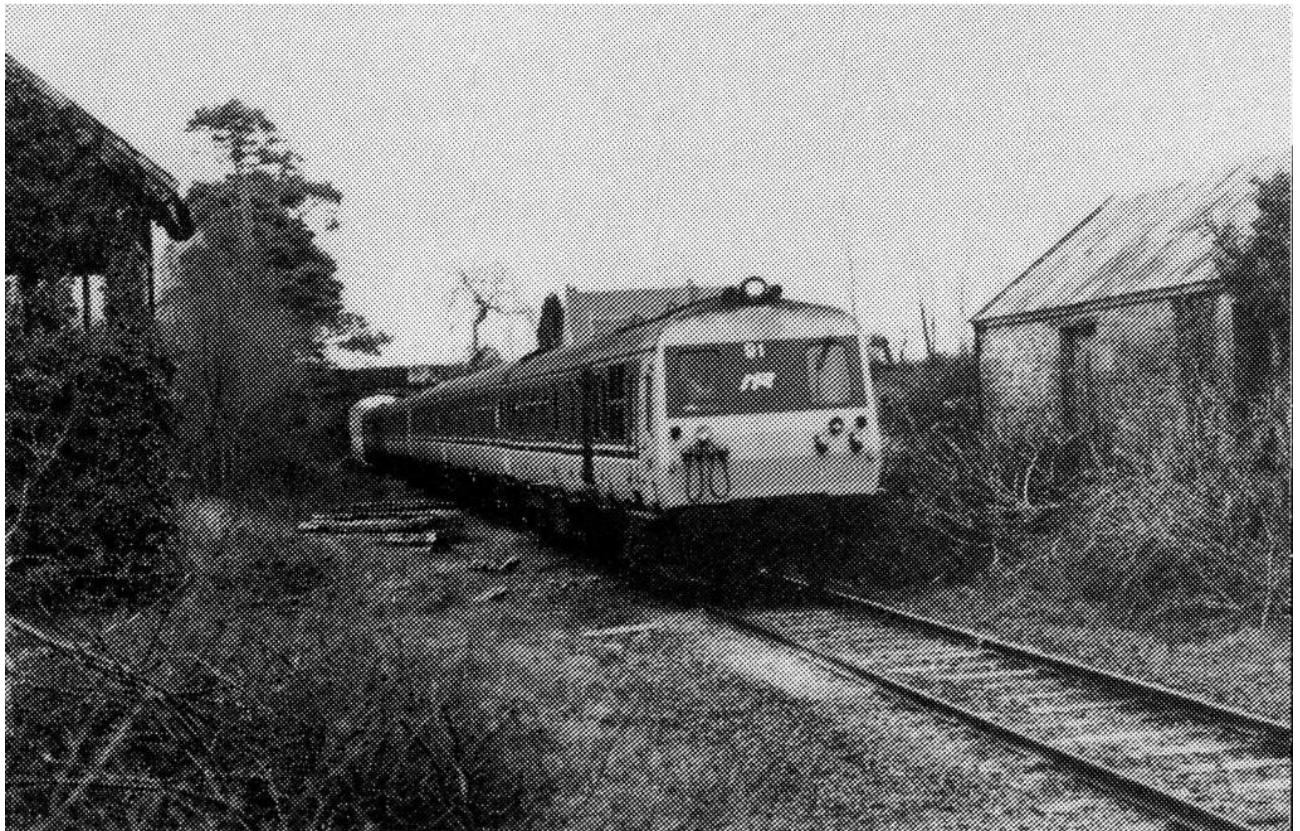
NIR are seeking £8 million pounds to reinstate the Bleach Green Junction/Antrim section preparatory to rerouting Londonderry trains via the Cross-Harbour link to Yorkgate and thence to Antrim over the original NCC route.

It is understood that express trains booked to stop at Ballymena, Ballymoney and Coleraine would complete the Belfast/Londonderry trip in 95 minutes thereby restoring a competitive end to end journey time. A service from Dublin of perhaps 3, hours would be possible via this route once upgrading of the Dublin/Belfast line is completed.

Sadly the Monkstown/Antrim section would remain single track although new crossing loops would be

installed at Kingsmoss and Templepatrick thus creating sections no more than 5 miles long.

The scheme would also include the upgrading of almost 17 miles of track and the modernisation of the level crossings, only one of which had been converted to barrier operation prior to the cessation of regular passenger services in 1978. A high speed turnout is planned at Monkstown from which point the line is double to its junction with the Larne line at Bleach Green.



91 + 4 + 98 en route to Ennis at Ballycar, 28/2/1993. (A. Gray)

Miscellaneous

- Consequent on the closure of the Belfast/Lisburn line on 29th August, mentioned elsewhere, both the 08:25 Belfast/Londonderry and 10:05 Belfast/Portrush started from Yorkgate and were formed by 450 class units 455 and 457 respectively. Sets 452 and 459 were sent to York Road the following day to balance stock allocations.
- Irish Rail “A” class, 049, worked a ten-bogie fertiliser train from Adelaide to Londonderry on 29th July. MV 105 worked a five bogie fertiliser train from Adelaide to Londonderry on 26th August - the other half of the train reportedly going by road!
- NIR fares were revised with effect from 2nd August with average increases of under 1% being applied to Larne, Bangor and Portadown suburban services. Cross-border fares remain unchanged while there has been a small decrease in fares on the Londonderry line. For example the single fare from Portadown to Portrush is £8.00 compared to £8.20 previously.
- The station at Whitehead is being refurbished. The platforms have been raised, new lighting installed, and substantial renovation and refurbishing of the listed station buildings, including the redundant signal box, was well advanced in early August.

Private Railways And Museums

Folk and Transport Museum

NIR's railbus (RB3) was scheduled to join the railway collection in the new exhibition hall at Cultra on 14th September. The railbus was built in 1981 by BREL at Litchurch Lane in Derby and was regauged in 1982 from 4'8½" to 5'3" for service in Ireland. The railbus worked intermittently on the Portrush branch for a number of years and was also to be found occasionally on the Larne and Bangor lines. As there were only 56 seats on board, the vehicle was of limited use to NIR who received it as a replacement for a fire bombed 70 class motor-coach. The railbus was also used as an inspection car and in this role travelled throughout the NIR system and also to Dundalk. A railtour from Belfast to Kingscourt on 28th July 1990 saw RB3 making its deepest incursion into Irish Rail territory although the vehicle was exhibited on a low loader at the 1981 UITP congress held in Dublin.



Cultra Siding, 14/2/1993. Transfer of Maedbh and Dunluce Castle. (A. Gray)

The ex GNR(I) railbus No.1 dating from 1934 and used to reopen the Scarva/Banbridge line has been immaculately restored by Grimley Brothers of Dungannon and travelled with passengers and under its own power from Poyntzpass to Cultra on 21st March 1993.

The new exhibition hall was opened by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Sir Patrick Mayhew, on 30th September. Guests were conveyed by special steam train to Cultra siding returning later in the afternoon from Cultra station also by special steam train. (Note: Cultra siding trails onto the Down Bangor line just beyond the station.)

North West Of Ireland Railway Society

- Ex CDRJC railcar No.12 has returned to traffic following the reconditioning of its Gardner diesel engine.
- Ex CDRJC railcar No.18 is being restored by Grimley Brothers of Dungannon to its pre-1949 condition. This work was understood to be nearing completion in mid-September.
- The extension of 3ft gauge track southwards along the trackbed of the former GNR Derry Road towards Carrigans and St. Johnston continues, with considerable quantities of second hand 5'3" track panels supplied by Derry City council and stacked near the existing railhead about a mile south of the Foyle Road station and museum premises.
- The North West of Ireland Society has been successful in its application to the International Fund for Ireland and is in line to receive a 90% Community Sponsored Tourism Development grant - the society will have to raise 10% of proposed £93,000 expenditure.

South Donegal Railway Restoration Society

- This society plans to restore on a phased basis a nine mile stretch of the Stranorlar/Donegal line over the Barnesmore Gap as between Meenglas and Keadue, the latter point adjacent to Lough Eske.
- The National Heritage Council of Ireland has formally approved a £3,500 grant for the removal of asbestos lagging from the boiler of CDR 2-6-4T "Drumboe" which is on long term loan from the Foyle Valley railway museum.
- The society has expressed grave concern over the small take up of the Loan Stock Issue, launched some months ago in order to create a source of finance against which to draw down Bord Fáilte administered grants (International Fund for Ireland or ERDF). A target of £200,000 has been set in regard to the first phase of the project from Croghonagh to Derg Bridge - as of July only £15,000 has been raised or committed.
- In order to raise funds the society has produced a limited edition of 250 fine art prints, 33"x22", taken from an original oil painting by George Hanan and showing CDR locomotive Alice heading towards Stranorlar through the Barnesmore Gap. These prints cost £50 each including post and packaging. The society is also selling a limited edition full colour, high quality reproduction, on heavyweight art paper of the spectacular 1903 CDR "Land of Tyrconnell" poster measuring 40"x30". Each poster is numbered (up to 1,000) and features artist drawn scenes of Derry, Killybegs, Lough Eske, Donegal Castle and the Barnesmore Gap (in moonlight!).

Irish Rail Timetable Review

The current timetable came into effect on 10th May 1993 and will be operative until 15th May 1994. There are no significant changes on any routes, and the timetable can be summarised as follows:

Dublin / Belfast, valid to 31/12/1993: The amended sequence of departures from Dublin - 07:55 (formerly 08:00), 11:20 (formerly 11:00), 13:00, 15:00, 18:20 and 20:15 presents a somewhat untidy appearance. The change in the departure time of the long established 08:00 to Belfast is a commercial nonsense and appears to be a lazy way of addressing a pathing conflict at Howth Junction involving a following DART train from Dalkey which has been advanced by three minutes. The 07:55 continues to

serve Skerries on Mondays, during school terms, to cater for traffic to the RTC in Dundalk - the next available service departs at 09:21 and gives connection into the 11:20 at Drogheda thus arriving in Dundalk at 12:19! The 11:00 ex Dublin is deferred to 11:20 to facilitate single line working between Dundalk and Newry. This train continues to serve Mosney on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Saturdays, during the summer season, despite the consequent overcrowding and the intrusion of noisy excursionists into the first class accommodation. The 18:20 ex Dublin continues to serve Portadown and is scheduled to arrive in Belfast at 20:18 though this depends on the performance of the 17:42 ex Pearse, which has been observed leaving Dublin (Connolly) as late as 18:19 with the 18:20 trailing behind as far as Mosney. Both the 11:20 and 13:00 operate in two different schedules north of Dundalk arriving in Belfast at 13:47 and 15:35 on Mondays to Fridays, and 13:32 and 15:20 respectively on Saturdays. The 20:15 to Belfast is marginally accelerated and now completes the journey in 143 minutes - not bad with nine stops.

The Sunday service is unchanged and was again used to accommodate excursionists to and from Mosney during the summer period - earlier comments are applicable.

Belfast / Dublin, valid to 31/12/1993: Weekday services remain as previously except that the 09:00 and 11:00 ex Belfast operate in altered paths south of Newry on Mondays to Fridays thus arriving in Dublin at 11:32 and 13:22 instead of 11:20 and 13:15 respectively. Consequent on the abolition of customs examination at Dundalk, the 09:00 (Saturday path), 11:00 (Saturday path), 15:00 and 17:00 ex Belfast are accelerated to Drogheda, by as much as five minutes, though the time gained is wasted away in non-stop schedules of up to 41 minutes in the final 31¾ miles between Drogheda and Dublin. The 18:00 ex Belfast now serves Dundalk (19:01) but due to careless pathing south of Malahide rarely arrives at 20:00 as scheduled - it sometimes arrives earlier if given priority over the 19:45 ex Howth. Sunday services are unaltered.

Dublin / Cork: The only change of importance on weekdays is the advancing of the 21:00 Heuston/Cork to 20:30 which, while more convenient for late evening commuters, often presents problems for connecting passengers off the 18:00 Belfast/Connolly especially if the latter is running even slightly late. On Sundays the 09:20 Cork/Heuston and the 13:50 Heuston/Cork are advanced to 09:00 and 13:20 respectively. On Sunday evenings the 18:20 Cork/Heuston is advanced to 17:30 and is speeded up by 16 minutes (journey time now 2 hours 20 minutes). This provides a much better service and it corresponds to the weekday departure time - a practise that should be more widely adopted. The 18:55 Cork/Heuston is advanced to 18:30; however its schedule is unaltered. Overall there is an absence of any regularity in departure times from either Cork or Dublin, the present times being anything but easy to remember. Charleville has erratic and unattractive services particularly in the down direction.

Dublin / Limerick & Ennis: A very welcome feature is that Ennis is brought back on the Irish Rail passenger map with its first regular service since 1975. That said, the service provided is very basic, consisting of one train ex Limerick at 19:50 arriving at 20:30 on Tuesdays to Friday-only, and one train departing Ennis at 07:30 on Tuesdays to Thursdays and 17:15 on Sundays. It seems a great pity that there could not be a regular service every weekday, as the present offering precludes any chance of commuter traffic to or from Limerick. The only other changes of note are the advancing of the 08:35 (weekdays) Limerick/Heuston to 08:20 and the deferral of the Sundays 17:50 Limerick/Heuston to 18:10. This latter train actually starts from Ennis at 17:15, yet despite its 3 hour 30 minute schedule has no advertised catering facilities of any description.

Dublin / Limerick (via Nenagh): Timings are improved on most Nenagh branch trains as a result of the provision of Cravens stock. However, little serious attempt is made to make this route attractive with the use of the 17:45 Heuston/Limerick (no advertised catering, all-stops, Cravens stock) as the evening connecting train from Dublin being indicative of the interest the Company has in this line. Many trains

are allowed 2 minute station stops for Cloughjordan, Birdhill and Castleconnell - one wonders whether the people who make out schedules like this have ever travelled on the line. The 10:20 Ballybroyphy/Limerick is deliberately given slow timings so as to arrive in Limerick behind the 11:13 ex Limerick Junction. There is no reason for any train to take more than 1 hour 25 minutes on this route. The evening Ballybroyphy/Limerick train is speeded up by 20 minutes and now arrives in Limerick ahead of the 17:45 ex Heuston. On Sundays the sole Up and Down trains are 12 and 6 minutes faster; however there is a 10 minute connection time in Ballybroyphy for passengers from the 18:40 ex Heuston. when 5 minutes is more than adequate.

Dublin / Tralee: The only changes of any note are on Sundays in the up direction, with the advancing of the 08:05 Tralee/Cork, 17:15 Tralee/Heuston and 17:50 Tralee/Cork to 07:50, 17:05 and 17:30 respectively. Surprisingly this 17:30 Tralee/Cork does not give a connection to the 18:30 Cork/Heuston, which it misses at Mallow by 7 minutes. Overall services remain barely adequate with only two trains taking less than 4 hours for the journey (the weekdays 07:30 Up and 18:30 Down). The 09:00 Heuston/Tralee is particularly unattractive for Kerry passengers since it serves all stations from Heuston to Tralee and has a 4 hours 15 minute journey time.

Dublin / Waterford: There are no changes except that the 17:15 (Friday only) and 18:10 ex Heuston are speeded up by 5 minutes. The end to end timings on this route are very unattractive - the 07:35 Heuston/Waterford takes 2 hours 45 minutes for a journey easily completed by road in 2 hours 20 minutes (this train spends 10 minutes in Carlow crossing the 07:30 ex Waterford despite the fact that a crew change does not take place).

Dublin / Westport & Ballina: There are no changes in Westport services; however Ballina branch trains are speeded by 15 minutes in all cases. On Sundays a rail connection to Ballina and Foxford is now provided out of the 18:00 Heuston/Westport.

Dublin / Galway: There are no major changes except that the weekdays 18:25 Galway/Heuston is advanced to 18:05 and has its overall journey time cut to 3 hours 5 minutes (still very poor). In common with the Waterford and Rosslare lines, journey times are very poor on this route, with most trains taking close to 3 hours to complete this 135 mile journey. Excessive time spent stopped in Athlone is an irritating feature for passengers on Galway and Westport trains. It is rare, irrespective of timetable, for trains to spend less than 5 minutes in Athlone - it seems pointless in spending millions upgrading track and signalling to improve journey times if needless time wasting like this is allowed to continue.

Dublin / Sligo: Journey times are reduced on all trains by between 5 and 14 minutes. Sunday morning trains are advanced by 20 minutes in each direction - a change likely to have caught many people out. Enfield continues to have a rather poor service, with no trains calling on Sundays. The Sunday afternoon trains on this line are well patronised, in particular the 14:35 ex Sligo which is often filled to near capacity.

Dublin / Rosslare: The 07:55 ex Rosslare is advanced to 07:30 and has 3 minutes added to its schedule (now 3 hours in total). The journey times on this route are extremely uncompetitive, with 3 hours being standard - this equates to an average of 35 mph! Notes are provided in the timetable stating that there is NOT a connection from the 18:30 ex Connolly to the 21:40 sailing to Pembroke, that ferries may NOT wait for late running trains, and trains will NOT wait for late running ferries. The negative tone is indicative of service levels on this line.

Limerick Junction / Rosslare: No major changes except that the summer only 11:05 Limerick Junction/Rosslare and 15:15 Rosslare/Waterford do not serve Campile, Ballycullane and Bridgetown. This move seems amazing since schedules indicate that traffic on this line is anything but time sensitive, and in any event these trains ended up doing the stops as a result of stop orders issued locally

due to public complaint. The service provided on this route continues to be appalling with only one train in each direction between Limerick Junction and Waterford for most of the year, and no service at all on Sundays. Many excuses are given as to why extra services cannot / should not be provided (the negative tone again) - no such excuse is convincing since there has NEVER been any attempt to provide a decent service on this route. It must surely give a very poor impression of Ireland to passengers who arrive off a boat in Rosslare and travel on the 19:40 Rosslare - Limerick Junction (Park Royal coaching stock, tediously slow schedules and no catering facilities).

Cork / Cobh: A spartan service continues to be provided, with services being replaced by bus whenever there is a shortage of rolling stock. Irish Rail evidently have little interest in this line.

“Freight On The Move”

With the opening of the new Belview port recently, the Bell traffic carried by Irish Rail is set to increase. The current business is substantial and Bell are probably the largest customer in terms of tons carried. Originating from the current wharf near Abbey Junction in Waterford there are departures from the main freight yard each day at 02:45 and 04:00 to North Wall, 03:40 to North Esk in Cork as well as 05:25 to Limerick. The standard size of train is fifteen bogies and the statistics could be summarised as follows.

| Wagon Type | No. Series | Tare Weight (Tonnes) | Capacity (Tonnes) | Gross Weight (Tonnes) | Load (15 bogies) |
|------------------|-------------|----------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| Bogie Flat 42'9" | 30001-30218 | 16 | 41 | 57 | 855 |
| Bogie Flat 47'6" | 30219-30278 | 17 | 41 | 58 | 870 |

Between Dublin and Waterford, eighteen bogie trains have been observed. There are, however, operational difficulties in that a locomotive and 14 bogies is the maximum size that will fit in the loop at Thomastown, while it is still necessary to go into Kilkenny to reverse direction pending the construction of a direct curve at Lavistown. Saturdays can be particularly busy with up to five special Bell trains leaving North Wall anytime after 10:30. There is also a long established path at 11:30 from Limerick. On the Northern there is an 09:20 Liner from Dublin to Adelaide and this is largely a Bell train although the departure time on Saturdays varies.

It has been often mentioned that the most regular running trains on the system are the Ammonia trains from the IFI plant at Marino Point to the fertiliser factory at Shelton Abbey, near Arklow. Although the train may appear small, the six bogies gross to 450 tonnes and together with the two barrier wagons (weighing 40 tonnes each), the entire train can total 530 tonnes. It is believed that larger trains at reduced frequencies may be the pattern in the future. The ammonia tanks were built by Fauvet Girel in France and are leased from STS (Storage and Transport Systems Ltd) in London. The barrier wagons carry water to be used in an emergency. Departure times from Marino Point are 08:42, 14:50 and 19:50. From Shelton Abbey the times are 03:35, 09:40 and 22:30. A few years ago these trains were the preserve of the 001 class, but with the reduction in the fleet numbers the trains can be worked by anything nowadays including the 071 class locos.

Asahi, of Killala near Ballina in Co. Mayo, produces a lot of business for the railway. Acrylonitrile is imported through Dublin Port, and loaded containers are placed on four wheel flats in the Asahi depot

at the east end of Alexandra Road, North Wall. These wagons (27768-27791) were introduced in 1975 and have a 20 ton capacity. They are also fitted with spark-proof brake blocks and wheel guards. When the train leaves, a barrier wagon is next to the locomotive. This wagon consists of a 20 ft container filled with 10 tons of ballast.

Demountable laden oil tanks also travel on this train from North Wall to Ballina. A 40 mph speed limit applies between North Wall and Manulla Junction, whereas a 35 mph limit is in force on the Ballina branch.

In the reverse direction, the finished product is carried in 40 ft containers. A typical observation was the 02:50 ex Ballina on 30th July - loco 036 + 8 bogies + barrier wagon + 8 empty acrylonitrile containers + 1 empty methyl acrylate container + 4 oil tanks. It passed Kildare at 09:00, 106 minutes late.

Asahi also obtain coal from Foynes, which is loaded into open topped containers just outside the station. On Mondays the empty train leaves Limerick Check at 07:00. As the train has to be loaded in the section, most of this is done before departure of the 09:10 barytes ex Silvermines from Limerick Check. Although it is known as the "Coal and Oil" it is nowadays exclusively coal. Originally the 12:15 from Foynes ran via Ennis and Tuam, but is now diverted via Portarlington and Roscommon. This Mondays-only train returns the following Saturday from Claremorris. On paper it is booked to leave at 11:40, but this can be much earlier in practise. The 22-wagon train normally arrives at Portarlington at lunch time, and the two engines return to Athlone. These locos are probably off the previous night's 17:00 Heuston/Ballina. Limerick usually provides a loco which follows the 11:20 ex Cork.

In the next issue we will look at other bulk traffic, including important businesses like Irish Cement, Tara Mines, Esso, and fertiliser.