

IRISH RAILWAY NEWS

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071 hauls NIR's 10:15 ex Belfast past relaying activity at Balbriggan on Sunday 2nd April 1995.

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Editorial

This magazine is titled January/April 1995 so as to bring the title date back in line with the actual publication date. Hopefully our next issue will appear as scheduled in July and thence every three months as advertised. All existing subscriptions have been extended by one issue to compensate for the combination of the January and April editions.

Regular travellers on Irish railways can hardly avoid noticing the accelerated pace of change evident throughout the system, as long awaited investment begins to bear fruit. On Irish Rail the 201 class now dominate mainline passenger trains and much of the goods service, a presence that will increase even further as the remainder of the fleet is commissioned. The 071 class, probably the most successful locomotive type to run in Ireland, are now largely relegated to secondary duties thus resulting in standards of reliability and performance which were a forlorn dream as little as a year ago. Progress on the civil engineering front is extremely encouraging with work well advanced on the Dublin/Belfast upgrade, the by-pass at Lavistown and the decking of the Blackwater viaduct at Mallow, to mention but a few of the major developments currently in hand. There is still much to be done to recover the ground lost as a result of the accumulated neglect of the last decade although there is now, at least, a brightening light at the end of the tunnel. There is great goodwill towards the railway and a public desire for a transport system comparable to that enjoyed by the more progressive of our European neighbours. On the other hand the recent public and media dissatisfaction with services on the Cork line is evidence of increased expectations and emphasises the need for improved reliability and higher standards commensurate with the significant investments which are now taking place.

On NIR rapid progress is being made on the Great Victoria Street project which will provide rail users with direct access to the city centre from Larne, Bangor, Portadown and Londonderry. Once Dublin/Belfast services are converted to push/pull operation in 1996 these too should be able to call at Great Victoria Street, before continuing to Belfast Central or beyond, although the planned initial platform lengths may preclude this highly desirable development in the short term.

It would be improper not to mention what appears to be the final demise of the Metrovick locomotives which took place on NIR in March and Irish Rail in early April. These machines, originally fitted with Crossley engines, were the first diesel locomotives to appear in significant numbers on CIÉ and their demise breaks one of the few remaining links with the West Cork system, the Valentia Harbour branch and the truncated secondary lines of the former GNR, all of which featured either or both the 'A' and 'C' classes during the late 1950s.

A. Gray - 26/4/1995

Irish Rail

(Iarnród Éireann, including CIÉ and DTI)

Dublin/Belfast Project

Signalling And Layouts

Preparatory work for remodelling and re-alignment of the layout at Dundalk has seen the disconnection of a number of sidings, principally at the north end of the station on the Up side. The latter area is being used for the assembly of new trackwork as is the open space adjacent to the Down loop near the site of the former carriage shed. Further trackwork will be pre-assembled in the "V" formed by the main line and the Barrack Street branch. Pegs are in place on the Down line which suggest that the track will be considerably straightened through the station with the alignment pulled westwards at the Belfast end and eastwards at the Dublin end - thus tracking through both the former Greenore dock (Platform 4) and the Central cabin. The altered layout will require at least a partial re-building of the overbridge carrying the Dundalk/Carrickmacross road over the southern end of the station as one of the intermediate piers obstructs the path of the new Down line. A further casualty may well be the classic Dundalk North signal box which is perilously close to the proposed position of the Down line at the Newry end of the station. When the new track arrangement at Dundalk is complete the existing 40 mph speed limit through the station area will be raised to 80 mph.

In order to simplify the laying of signal cables between Drogheda and Dundalk channels are being excavated by JCBs at various locations where the plough train can not be used normally either due to unsuitable terrain or confined space - typically in rock cuttings and notably (on the Up side) between Dunleer and Castlebellingham. Sites for location cases have also been prepared in cuttings at a number of places, e.g. a little south of Dunleer near OB 96 and North of Castlebellingham.

- Tenders were invited at the beginning of December for the supply of power signalling equipment to be used on the 37km stretch of double track between Drogheda and Dundalk.
- The redundant signal boxes at Skerries and Balbriggan have been severely vandalised and were finally boarded up towards the end of March at which time the steps to the operating floor were removed. The signal box at Laytown is the latest to suffer from the attention of vandals being heavily stoned within the last few weeks.
- The signal box at Donabate has been externally repaired and repainted. The shattered glass is replaced with an unbreakable darkened plastic material, the end result being to provide the station with a structure of some character. This somewhat unusual and very welcome move follows strong pressure from the local community - Irish Rail originally wanted to demolish the structure.
- The signal box at Mosney, now in private ownership, was broken into in mid-March and valuable preserved signalling equipment is understood to have been removed. The incident is not being treated as vandalism. The cabin is now completely boarded up and security lighting and alarms have been installed.

Bridges

The stone arch overbridge, No.118, located about ¾ mile south of Castlebellingham was renewed and raised over the weekend of 25th/26th February. The pre-cast concrete sections were loaded by a road crane onto a special train at Dundalk (Barrack Street) on the Saturday afternoon and were taken to the work site during the course of the overnight possession. OB 55, the County bridge at Balbriggan, was

rebuilt as a portal arch over the weekend of 1st/2nd April. A temporary footbridge was provided to cater for pedestrian traffic while vehicles were diverted via an alternative route from 1st to 5th April inclusive. The new arch in this instance is formed by ten beams which are flat in the centre but angled downwards at both ends, an arrangement which reduces the number of sections as the beams rest on the stone abutments which supported the original arch. It is not therefore necessary to raise the original abutments to the height required for renewals using standard I-beams. The portal arch method provides pretty much the same clearance envelope as a flat structure but has the advantage of producing a bridge which is visually much more attractive than box appearance produced using the I-beams. OB 55 is the largest overbridge renewed to date. OB 74, the footbridge at Laytown station, was raised slightly some months ago in order to provide increased clearance, the original structure being retained in this instance. Although some thirty bridges have either been rebuilt, repaired or significantly altered since 1992, between ten and fifteen have yet to receive attention. These include the Devlin viaduct at Gormanston, as well as the overbridges at Portmarnock, Malahide and Donabate stations.

- Louth County Council have invited tenders for the construction of the three rail bridges required in connection with new road construction between Mooremount (near Dunleer) and Gibbstown (near Dundalk). The contract is valued at £1.5m and tenders are to be valid for twelve months commencing 18/11/1994.

Permanent Way

Almost eleven miles of track, was relaid between November 1994 and mid-April 1995:

Dundalk/Castlebellingham ²	from MP 53½ to MP 50½	Up Line
Dunleer/Drogheda ²	from MP 41½ to MP 40	Up Line
Balbriggan/Skerries/Rush ¹	from MP 20½ to MP 16¼	Up Line
Skerries/Balbriggan/Gormanston ¹	from MP 21½ to MP 22½	Down Line
Drogheda/Dunleer ²	from MP 40½ to MP 41½	Down Line

¹ Work undertaken during Sunday possessions - typically involves the renewal of about half a mile of track. Single line working is maintained on the opposite road.

² Work undertaken during possessions from approx. 09:30 to 15:30 on weekdays. Single line working is maintained on the opposite road.

Some 70.6% of Irish Rail's portion of the Dublin/Belfast route now consists of concrete sleepers and CWR.

Formation excavation and re-ballasting of older stretches of CWR has taken place on the Up road just South of Laytown, near MP 12 between Rush and Donabate and is currently in progress between Portmarnock and Howth Junction. Because of the limited opportunities for possessions south of Drogheda there can be a lot of activity on a Sunday which can result in some unusual operational arrangements. For instance on 12th March stressing of CWR through Skerries station combined with formation excavation at Portmarnock resulted in single line working over the Down line between Mosney and Howth Junction, a distance of twenty one miles and probably the first time that SLW was established between these two points.

Miscellaneous

- The Up platform at Skerries and the Down platform at Balbriggan have been raised to compensate for the deepening of the formation, the consequence of recent relaying. The other platform at both stations together with those at Laytown and Malahide are expected to be similarly modified in the near future.

- Despite the delays arising from ongoing engineering work cross-border traffic has increased by around 30% in recent months as a result of the changed situation in Northern Ireland. It is believed that current traffic levels are approaching or exceeding the targets set for the post-upgrade environment!

Permanent Way - General

Dublin/Cork

A further five miles of the Cork line was relaid between early November and the end of January as under

Up line	MP 163½ to MP 162 ⁷ / ₈	between Cork and Rathpeacon
Up line	MP 110 ⁵ / ₈ to MP 107 ¹ / ₈	between Emly and Limerick Junction
Up line	MP 106 ⁷ / ₈ to MP 106¾	at the north end of Limerick Junction yard
Down line	MP 106¾ to MP 106 ⁷ / ₈	at the north end of Limerick Junction yard

Upgrading of the Cork line is thus almost complete with 98.2% of the Down line and 97.6% of the Up line consisting of CWR and concrete sleepers. With a view to higher speed limits and a more secure environment, palisade fencing is being erected at various locations notably between Clondalkin and Lucan in the Newbridge area and on the Dublin side of Kildare station. Accommodation crossings are being eliminated where possible either by the construction of underpasses (MP 58 and MP 62½), the purchase of land on one or both sides of the railway or the construction of roadways parallel to the line leading to nearby bridges or underpasses. An example of the latter is to be seen at Lisduff where a new roadway has been constructed along the Up side of the line linking several crossings to the overbridge at the Templemore end of the yard. Similarly a new roadway has been constructed on the Down side near MP 94, just north of the closed station at Goolds Cross. Elsewhere years of accumulated undergrowth is being systematically removed and cuttings are being cleared or lowered so to provide an unobstructed view for both rail and road traffic at such crossings. Such work is evident at numerous locations, a good example being between MP 12 and MP 12½ in the Hazelhatch/Sallins section.

Although no further CWR has been installed on the Cork line since January older sections of CWR are being re-sleepered using the beam relaying method, the temporarily displaced running rails being used for the gantries. For instance on Sunday 9th April resleepering was in progress near MP 62½ on the Up road while the ballast cleaner (780) and the dynamic track stabiliser (741) were at work near MP 54½. Both of the locations mentioned are in the Ballybrophy/Portlaoise section and were within a single possession. Further south, extensive earth and drainage works are in progress at Coolowley (MP 69¼) preparatory to the elimination of the manned level crossing and the re-alignment of the track at this point. The curve approaching the crossing is restricted to a maximum speed of 80 mph, a minor irritation in 90 mph territory, but potentially more of a problem when the general limits are raised to 100 mph.

In order to facilitate the installation of a ballast deck on the Blackwater viaduct at Mallow the Down line was taken out of use on 5th March and all traffic is presently being routed via the Up road between Mallow station and a temporary turnout at MP 145½, just south of Killarney Junction. When work on the Down side is completed the Up line will be slewed across so as to pass over the viaduct on the Down side thus maintaining single line working without the necessity for further signalling alterations. (See signalling below.) At the time of writing in mid-April the decking of the Down side was almost completed and the Up line was scheduled to be stewed on either side of the bridge with effect from 23rd April.

The stone arch overbridge at Cherryville Junction, No.88, has received as a concrete portal arch over the weekend of 11th/12th March thus improving clearances and allowing greater flexibility in ballast

depth and track alignment. Overbridges Nos. 44, 59 and 82 have been raised and renewed in recent weeks although all were originally flat structures.



Portal Arch overbridge No.88 at Cherryville Junction

Cherryville Junction/Waterford

Grading of the new curve at Lavistown is now complete and the formation is ready for track laying to commence although apart from the delivery of strings of LWR there is little evidence that this work will start in advance of the installation of the turnouts. Preparations for the assembly of the latter has resulted in the provision of the usual base of sleepers and rail which have been in place at either end of the loop for some weeks though as of mid-April there was no sign of work actually starting on the manufacture of either turnout.

As on the Cork line considerable effort is being made to improve safety at accommodation crossings with extensive earthworks being undertaken to improve visibility. Such activity is particularly noticeable between Lavistown and Gowran, but is not confined to this section.

The accommodation crossing formerly located close to MP 77¼ has been moved to a point near MP 77 due to restricted visibility arising from the curvature of the line. A new road linking the two points has been constructed parallel to the railway within the land owner's property.

Athlone/Galway

A further two miles of CWR on concrete sleepers has been installed between MP 102¼ and MP 104¼, between Woodlawn and Ballinasloe. The amount of CWR between Athlone and Galway is thus 8¾ miles or 17.9% of the total. The renewal of this latest section resulted in the suspension of services between Ballinasloe and Galway on about seven mid-week dates between mid-February and early March. The trains affected were the 08:00 and 11:00 Down and the 11:35 and 15:15 Up - all of which

operated to/from Ballinasloe only.

Killarney Junction/Tralee

Just over a mile of CWR has been installed from MP 15 to MP 16, just West of Rathcoole in the Banteer/Millstreet section. Work on the renewal of a further 1¼ miles, this time between MP 6 and MP 7¼, just west of Lombardstown in the Killarney Junction/Banteer section was completed in early April. There are now 3½ miles of CWR on the Kerry road - about 5.7% of the total branch mileage.

Manulla Junction/Ballina

Work begun towards the end of March on the installation of a ballast deck on the Moy river bridge just South of Foxford. This work is designed to permit the operation of 071 class and possibly 201 class locomotives on the Ballina branch.

Miscellaneous

Irish Rail have invited tenders for the supply of 10,000 tonnes of UIC 54kg section rail in lengths of 36, 54 or 108 metres. This quantity of rail should be sufficient to relay 93 miles of track - about a year's requirement at current renewal rates.

Signalling and Layout Alterations

Consequent on the temporary singling of the Cork line from Mallow station to MP 145½ (see above) on 5th March an additional route has been provided from signal MW815. This signal is normally only applicable to Down Kerry trains and is positioned on the Up road just on the Mallow side of Killarney Junction. Pending the restoration of normal double line working, the Mallow station area including the temporary turnout and the approaches to Killarney Junction is being worked from the emergency panel located in the South cabin.

Cable laying in connection with the Lavistown bypass and the introduction of track circuit block between Bagenalstown and Thomastown commenced on Sunday 5th February in the Lavistown/Thomastown section. The cable train was again at work in the same section on 19th February and was scheduled to work between Waterford and the Barrow bridge on 26th and 28th February, the latter in connection with the Belview scheme mentioned elsewhere and described in previous issues. The cable train was again at work on the Waterford line in March, this time between Bagenalstown and Kilkenny. At the time of writing in mid-April cables were in place from the site of the future Bagenalstown Down distant to the site of the future Thomastown Up distant though additional cables had still to be ploughed between Lavistown and Kilkenny. Signal bases and location cases are in place between Lavistown and Thomastown including those required for the existing Up distant and home signals protecting Lavistown which are to be moved Southwards so as to additionally control access to the new loop from the Thomastown direction.

Additional cabling has been ploughed on the Manulla Junction to Ballina section in preparation for the re-siting of distant signals at various locations on the branch. The first signals to be moved were the distants protecting Lisniska level crossing which is located at MP 160¼, the change taking effect on 9th April. Similar changes at Keelogue, MP 148½, took place on 23rd April. In both cases the Up and Down distant signals were moved 400-600 yards further away from the level crossings to which they apply thus providing increased braking distance.

The track layout at Limerick Check cabin, last altered in June 1989, has been changed again with effect from 5th February 1995. The existing trailing crossover (No.22) located adjacent to the cabin and connecting the Up and Down main lines has been replaced by a facing crossover (No.31). The crossover (No.20) trailing onto the Down main line and giving connection to the "Old Departure Road" has been renewed and is now located opposite the cabin. Both connections are power operated using

the now standard Westinghouse type-63 point machines. The three existing sidings to the North of the running lines have been somewhat re-fettled and a new hand operated crossover is in place linking the "Old Departure Road" with the middle siding. This latter is located immediately on the station side of No.20 crossover thus allowing direct access to this road from either the Up or Down main lines. The effect of the new layout is to allow freight trains to run directly into the yard from the Up line at the check cabin. Consequent on these changes a new shunt signal (No.16), co-sited with the 3-aspect colour light home signal (No.45/49), is provided and reads along the Up road to another new shunt signal (No.13), the latter located at the Waterford end of No.31 crossover. No.13 reads either along the Up line to No.12 or across the road to No.2 shunt signal. The latter protects No.20 crossover and in turn leads either into the Yard or along the Down line towards Limerick station. *(NB: Trains departing Limerick for Waterford, Dublin and Ennis are Down trains.)*

The new signalling arrangements between Waterford (Central) and the Barrow bridge are expected to be commissioned by mid-May. The Rosslare line will be track circuited from Waterford to a point some distance east of the bridge where signals will be provided, the bridge itself will be additionally protected by trap points. It will thus be possible to open the bridge for shipping without possession of the Wellingtonbridge/Abbey Junction token. Similarly, movements to and from the Belview terminal will no longer require possession or the ETS token as the terminal will be within the area controlled by the Waterford panel. Abbey Junction will cease to be a block post and the existing Down line from Waterford will be used for traffic in both directions. Signals already erected at Abbey Junction suggest that the layout will be much simplified with access to the New Ross line controlled from a ground frame. Access to the old Bell yard and the premises of R&H Hall will be maintained via the former Up line which will be downgraded to the status of a siding extending from Waterford.

- The redundant signal boxes at Sheriff Street Level crossing (North Wall) and at Rathpeacon have been demolished.

Locomotives

The Willemstad registered "Jumboship" Stella Nova docked at the North Wall extension quay on Monday 30th January with a cargo of eleven 201 class locomotives. The ship sailed from Charleston, South Carolina (USA), the locomotives having been sent by rail on flat wagons from London, Ontario (Canada). The locomotives were placed on their bogies prior to loading on the ship. Unloading in Dublin commenced the day after arrival but was disrupted by high winds with the result that only four spare bogies had been taken off by 14:00. However, three locomotives were unloaded during the afternoon, one of which remained on the quayside overnight. The remainder were taken off over the next two days, six on 1st February and two on the 2nd. This batch, 215-224 and 226 featured a number of changes compared with the initial ten locomotives delivered during 1994. The principal changes are: 1) the provision of drop head automatic buckeye couplers and retractable buffers; 2) the substitution of sealed roller suspension traction motor bearings instead of traditional sleeve type bearings.

The Stella Nova made a second visit to Dublin on 23rd March, arriving at the North Wall extension quay around 17:30. The ship was carrying a further thirteen 201 class locomotives, eleven for Irish Rail and two for Northern Ireland Railways. The first locomotive, 209, was carried as deck cargo and had to be placed on its bogies before being hauled to Inchicore by 187 shortly before 10:00 the following day. Contrary to previous practice 209 was towed from the North Wall with a protective canopy still covering the body of the locomotive. Six further locomotives were unloaded on the 24th: 231, 229, 228, 230, 225 and 227. These latter were worked to Inchicore in pairs from the Granaries, near Church Road Junction, and as was the case for all previous transfers a brake van was attached in rear. The remaining seven locomotives were taken off the ship on the 25th including the second NIR locomotive, 208, which was unveiled on the quayside. This latest delivery completes outstanding orders for new locomotives

placed by both Irish Rail and Northern Ireland Railways with the General Motors Corporation. The total 201 class fleet is thus 34 locomotives, of which two are owned by NIR. Four locomotives, 206-209, will be dedicated to express services between Dublin and Belfast and in addition to Irish Rail CAWS and radio equipment, these latter will also be fitted with standard British Rail type AWS as well as VHF mobile radio equipment compatible with the existing NIR system-wide radio. (*CAWS stands for Continuous Automatic Warning System and repeats the aspect of the last signal until such time as the train is closely approaching the next signal. Should conditions change while the train is travelling between signals, the display is updated to reflect the aspect which would have been displayed in the previous signal had conditions changed prior to passing that signal. CAWS is based on coded track circuits while AWS relies on the combination of a permanent magnet and an electro-magnet which are placed on the track just ahead of each signal, the electro-magnet being energised only if the signal is displaying an unrestricted aspect. The in-cab indication thus updates only on the approach to a signal and is incapable of displaying either the precise aspect of the signal nor of reflecting any change in conditions while the train is travelling between signals.*) As previously reported these locomotives have a manufacturer's model designation of JT42HCW, J indicating dual cab, T indicating turbo charging, 42 indicating a twelve cylinder fourth generation engine, H indicating head-end power, C indicating 3-axle bogie trucks and W indicating wide gauge.



229 being unloaded from the Stella Nova at the North Wall extension quay, 24/3/1995.

Various trials have been conducted with the 201 class including the working of a combined liner and fertiliser train from North Wall to Cork consisting of 21 wagons and weighing in excess of 1,000 tons. The 201 class have also hauled a nine-bogie laden Ammonia train from Cork on at least one occasion - the formation including the usual additional water tank bogies at either end giving a total of 11 bogies weighing around 775 tons. Even before the arrival of the final eleven locomotives the 201 class were working almost all services from Heuston to Cork, Limerick, Tralee, Galway and Westport including

the Athlone commuter service and the 17:40 Heuston/Limerick, the latter sometimes consisting of as few as four bogies. More recently the 201s have begun working Cork/Tralee services and have even been reported on Limerick/Limerick Junction local trains. Similarly liner, Ammonia, cement and grain trains on these routes are routinely hauled by 201s, thus reflecting the dramatic effect these locomotives have had on Irish Rail's operations. It is anticipated that 201s will be allocated to passenger and freight duties on the Belfast line in the near future and with this in mind 201 was used to check clearances between Dundalk and Belfast (York Road) on 6th March. Subsequently 201s have appeared on local services on the Belfast line, probably for driver training purposes, with 201 + DV + 5 Cr forming the 17:28 ex Pearse to Drogheda and 19:35 return (to Connolly) on 10th April. The following day 212 + DV + 3 Cr worked the 16:32 ex Connolly and the 17:48 ex Drogheda. The introduction of 226 to traffic on or around 1st April completed the commissioning of all except the latest batch of 201s, i.e. 21 of the 32 locomotives were then available for revenue use. At the time of writing 207 had just entered service, being observed on liner trains on both 13th and 14th April.

Several of the fleet now carry names, all rivers and all in Irish. Sadly the Irish Rail locomotives to be used on the new Belfast services, 206 and 207, are to carry the names "Abhainn na Life" and "Abhainn na Boinne" instead of the historic names "Liffey." and "Boyne" which were carried by their GNR(I) predecessors, the VS 4-4-0s built by Beyer-Peacock in 1948 and used extensively on the "Enterprise" expresses. Indeed many of the names applied are a puzzle to the general public and the whole exercise seems to be a lost opportunity to create a little bit of romance and atmosphere. The names so far applied are listed in the table below.

No.	Name	English Translation
201	Abhainn Na Sionnaine	The River Shannon
202	Abhainn Na Laoi	The River Lee
204	Abhainn Na Bearu	The River Barrow
205	Abhainn Na Feoire	The River Nore
206	Abhainn Na Life	The River Liffey
210	Abhainn Na Heirne	The River Erne
212	Ahhainn Na Slaine	The River Slaney

The 201 class started to work Irish Rail cross-border passenger trains commencing on Thursday 20th April with the 15:00 Dublin/Belfast which was formed by 221 + EGV + 7 Mk2 on this date. All subsequent services operated by Irish Rail on this route, up to and including both the 10:30 and 15:00 Dublin/Belfast on Sunday 23rd April, have been powered by 201s.

As of 25th March only three 001 class locomotives were in traffic, all of which are understood to have been restricted to either ballast or pilot duties. 012 was rostered to work the 15:20 North Wall to Sligo oil train on 23rd March but failed at Glasnevin Junction in such a position as to block access to the Midland line from both the Liffey branch and the Southern link line. This caused considerable delay to services on the Maynooth line as the 16:10 ex Connolly was trapped on the wrong side of the incident. 012 was subsequently returned to traffic, being observed at Drogheda a few days later. The other two engines, 003 and 015, were allocated to Limerick and Connolly respectively - the latter being generally assigned to pilot duties at North Wall. By 5th April the "A" class era was at an end, the last engine, 003, being withdrawn at Limerick on this date, the final duty being the tripping of cement traffic to and from the Castlemungret factory. 012 finished its days as North Wall pilot following the withdrawal of 015.

The demise of the 001 class has seen the allocation of first one and then two 071s to Tara Mines traffic.

Regular 071 haulage of these trains commenced after the failure of 051 at Skerries on 29th January while working the 04:00 Drogheda to North Wall - the continuation of the previous (loading) day's 19:30 ex Navan. Pending some minor alterations within the Alexandra Road terminal to accommodate 071s on the traverser the latter did not initially work the Tara trains between North Wall and the terminal, this duty generally falling either to the pilot engine or in some instances the train engine of the previous ore working ex Navan. In the latter case a locomotive swap would take place between the incoming laden and the outgoing empty workings, the latter still 001 hauled at that time. 071s are now regularly seen on cement trains from Drogheda particularly at night or at weekends when Tara Mines trains are not running - the nightly transfer of Belfast bound bulk cement wagons to Dundalk being a case in point. This train normally leaves Drogheda as soon as the 20:15 to Belfast clears the block section to Dundalk as the sole surviving intermediate cabin, at Dunleer, is not normally "switched in" other than to facilitate permanent way work or at times when additional paths are required for passenger traffic. 088 is presently in Inchicore undergoing an "L" exam, in effect a partial rebuild which has already been applied to the remaining 17 members of the class.

With no 001s in Drogheda it has become the practice to double-head gypsum trains on the Kingscourt branch, one of the first such workings being a Limerick bound train which was hauled by 124+121 on 13th March. A similar train was observed leaving Kingscourt at 09:57 on 20th March consisting of 126+121 and 15 laden gypsum plus 1 empty, all of the wagons being four wheelers.

Despite the much improved motive power situation the ageing and severely under-powered 121s still struggle valiantly with six-piece push/pulls on the Dublin outer suburban services while lighter conventional trains are often double-headed or hauled by 071s. It appears that although the 201s are fully fitted for push/pull working and in plentiful supply, they will not be used with suburban push/pull sets and thus long overdue performance improvements must await the conversion of 071s for such duties.

- The last reported passenger workings by the 001 class were those powered by 003 on the Limerick/Ballybrophy section. The final working is thought to have taken place on Saturday evening, 1st April.
- The precedent setting flight of 201 across the Atlantic may have provided the inspiration for another airlift, this time of an electric locomotive from ABB's Dandenong works, near Melbourne, to Zurich for installation of 25kV-50Hz traction equipment. The flight took place in January and featured an Antonov 124-100, the same type of plane used to transport the Irish machine. The locomotive involved in this latest airlift is the first of 30 high-power electric engines being built by ABB for Indian Railways.

Coaching Stock

Air braked Mk2c 4112 has entered service with Irish Rail for the first time and was included in the formation of the Saturday only 19:00 ex Heuston on 8th April. The latter is an empty working which stables overnight in Athlone and continues to Claremorris at 14:00 each Sunday to form the 16:45 auxiliary to Dublin. 4112 was built by British Rail at Derby in 1968 and purchased in 1990 from the Vic Berry scrap yard in Leicester along with an assortment of fifteen other withdrawn Mk2s of types a, b and c. It was damaged by the fire in the carriage shops at Inchicore on 14th September 1991 and was put aside until recently. A total of fifteen of these coaches are now in traffic, 4101/10, 4112/14 and 4401/2, the latter being fitted out as buffet/snack cars. 4111 was a victim of the carriage shop fire and never appeared in traffic.

Railcars

There have been some alterations in the duties allocated to the railcar fleet, notably on the Waterford line where they are no longer used on Sunday services. There are a few extra/altered duties on the Northern outer suburban although in reality a two-piece railcar is totally unsuited to the irregular and infrequent pattern of service and its use generally results in severe overcrowding. In contrast two-piece sets are almost always adequate for southwest corridor services with only the 07:29 ex Kildare and 17:45 ex Heuston having insufficient seating. They have also proven almost ideal for off-peak Maynooth services, the only peak train however, the 18:00 ex Connolly, is generally badly overcrowded.

Since the resumption of locomotive haulage on the Athlone commuter service there are two spare 2-piece sets at Inchicore until the 08:35 Heuston/Kildare on weekdays and again after the arrival at 16:41 of the 16:00 ex Kildare. On Fridays, however, all eight sets are now used as the Inchicore spares form the 17:05 to Waterford. It had been the practice up to the beginning of March to retain a spare set at Inchicore and use the 2-piece Dundalk set as part of the Waterford train. As a consequence of the above change and if locomotive hauled stock is in short supply a 2-piece set may work the 16:32 to Drogheda, 17:48 ex Drogheda and 19:15 to Dundalk on Fridays instead of its normal Monday to Thursday roster. In these circumstances the 15:04 Pearse/Mosney and 16:11 Mosney/Connolly are locomotive hauled using the set of the 17:26 Connolly/Arklow. This latter arrangement releases the three Cravens normally used for the 16:32 to Drogheda, but at the expense of severe overcrowding on the latter. The 19:15 to Dundalk is presently normally worked by a railcar set although this train reverted to coaching stock on Fridays. On Sundays since the end of March it has become the practice to roster a 2-piece railcar set on the early morning trains to and from Dun Laoghaire. These latter are the last remaining services run in connection with sailings between Dun Laoghaire and Holyhead - they had been worked by the push/pull set which forms the 10:25 to Rosslare, an arrangement which provided somewhat more accommodation than was necessary. The revised and slightly corrected list of railcar operated services is therefore as shown below:

Monday to Saturdays

All local services Dublin (Heuston)/Kildare/Dublin (Heuston)
05:45 (MF), 08:03, 10:40, 12:05, 14:00, 16:10, 18:00, 19:45 (MF) Connolly to Maynooth
07:08 (MF), 09:15, 11:20, 12:50, 15:05, 17:05, 19:00, 20:35 (MF) Maynooth to Connolly
05:53² Dundalk to Pearse (MF)
08:00[¶] Dundalk to Dublin (Pearse)
10:05² Drogheda to Connolly - push/pull on Saturdays for accommodation reasons
13:05 Drogheda to Connolly
16:11 Mosney to Connolly (MF)³ - formed by Cravens on Fridays (17:26 Arklow set)
17:12[¶] Drogheda to Pearse
17:48 Drogheda to Connolly. Fridays³ and Saturdays only, otherwise Cravens
08:06² Pearse to Drogheda - push/pull on Saturdays, see 10:05 ex Drogheda above
11:05 Pearse to Drogheda
15:04^{¶2} Pearse to Drogheda (SO)
15:04² Pearse to Mosney (MF) - Cravens on Fridays³, see 16:11 ex Mosney above
15:40[¶] Pearse to Drogheda (MF)
16:26 Pearse to Drogheda (SO)
16:32 Connolly to Drogheda (MF) - Railcar set on Fridays³ only, otherwise Cravens
18:27[¶] Dublin (Pearse) to Dundalk
19:15² Connolly to Dundalk
05:40 Waterford to Heuston (MO)

17:00 Heuston to Portarlinton (SO)

17:05¶ Heuston to Waterford (FO)

Sundays

18:10§ Portadown to Dublin (Connolly), formed by previous day's 18:27 and 19:15 ex Dublin

20:15§ Dublin (Connolly) to Dundalk, then split for 05:53 and 08:00 Monday

07:45 Dublin (Connolly) to Dun Laoghaire

08:05 Dun Laoghaire to Dublin (Connolly)

08:30 Dublin (Connolly) to Dun Laoghaire

09:10 Dun Laoghaire to Dublin (Connolly)

Mainline auxiliaries as required.

§ Indicates that train is worked by a six-piece set. - indicates that train is worked by a four-piece set.

² This train operates to a non accelerated schedule.

³ Note: Arrangements on Fridays vary depending on availability of Cravens, as a two-piece railcar has severely inadequate accommodation for the 16:32 Connolly/Drogheda.

The potential for significant improvement in the Northern outer suburban service is well demonstrated by a recent trip on the 17:12 ex Drogheda which took 18'51" from Donabate to Pearse inclusive of four stops - a distance of 12¼ miles. Push/pull operated trains with the same stopping pattern struggle to complete the journey in 29 minutes while peak hour trains, which also stop at Portmarnock, do well to maintain the generous allowance of up to 35 minutes. Details of the run referred to are reproduced below:

Table 2: 17:12 Drogheda - Dublin (Pearse)
Railcars 2606/05/10/13

	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)
	Distance (Miles)	Sectional Allowance	Actually Recorded	Station Dwell Time
Donabate	0.00	0.00	0.00	(0.19)
Malahide	2.44	3.30	3.16	0.27
Howth Junction	4.20	6.30	4.56	0.21
Dublin (Connolly)	4.80	6.30	6.12	0.36
Tara Street	0.76	2.30	1.35	0.25
Dublin (Pearse)	0.25	2.00	1.03	(0.57)
Totals	12.45	20.00	17.02	1.49
		(B)+(E)	(C)+(D)	
Donabate-Dublin (Pearse)	12.45	22.30	18.51	

(E) 30 seconds are allowed at each station, except Connolly where 1 minute is allowed, total allowance for this trip was thus 2.30".

- According to reports in the Cork Examiner a two-piece 2600 class railcar set is to be introduced shortly on the Cobh line presumably with effect from the new timetable which is due to commence on 15th May. This move follows much local agitation for improved reliability, enhanced frequency and the restoration of the late evening service which was abandoned in 1991.

Greystones

A government decision on the future provision of rail services to Greystones is expected shortly. It is

believed that the erection of overhead electrification along the single line between Bray and Greystones will be authorised thus permitting the extension of the existing Howth/Bray DART service to Greystones. At present there is only one train from Greystones to Dublin arriving in the city before 09:30, a level of service which has applied since the collapse of the diesel shuttle in November 1990.

Timber

Timber traffic continues at a healthy level although there was some tailing off in activity during February and March due to bad weather and rain-soaked ground. Contrary to our last report timber has not been loaded at Dundalk but a number of new locations can be added to the list, notably Kingscourt, Tralee, Millstreet and Gorey. There has only been one timber train out of Kingscourt so far, that on 28th January being the first non-gypsum freight train beyond Navan for at least 20 years. The empty train, 144+141 and 10 bogie timber wagons, left Drogheda in the early morning empty gypsum path and loaded on the platform road, the train being split into two rakes of five wagons for the purpose. Utilising lorry-mounted grabbers designed for the purpose and assisted by a previously assembled stockpile the first five wagons were quickly loaded and had been placed in the loop by 11:30. Loading of the remainder of the train was slower as the lorries had to make a number of trips for reloading at the forest site near Bailieboro. The train eventually departed at 16:13 with nine wagons fully loaded and a tenth partially loaded. It had originally been intended to bring the train forward to Navan in two portions but in the event this was not convenient as the locomotives were required to re-position the wagons from time to time. Given poor rail conditions there was inevitably some slipping, which resulted in a unplanned stop at MP 48, near the site of the former Gypsum Industries siding. The train was re-started following the manual sanding of the rails by the train crew and accompanying officials. Although assisted by permanent way staff opening the level crossing gates progress was very slow to Castletown after which the falling gradients posed no further difficulty.

Fastrack

The passenger train parcels service celebrates its 21st anniversary under the Fastrack brand in 1995 and as part of the “celebrations” is to sponsor Gary O’Brien in the 1995 Irish Formula Opel Championship. The ten busiest Fastrack offices, including Limerick and Sligo which were refurbished in 1994, are to be modernised and improved signage will be introduced at all 66 locations handling parcels. It is planned to use “track and trace” computer based technology to better control the movement of parcels and provide enhanced information concerning the location of consignments in transit.

Bell Trains

The movement of Bell Line containers to and from Waterford has recovered somewhat following the dramatic slump which occurred as a result of threatened disruption to rail services in early 1994. There are currently eight trains handled at Belview on weekdays, two each way on the Dublin line and one each way to Cork and Limerick. On Mondays three trains generally run to Dublin while on Saturdays there are usually three trains from Dublin. Much of the Dublin traffic actually either originates in, or is destined for Belfast. For instance the 09:20 Dublin (North Wall) to Adelaide liner on 14th April consisted of 080 and 18 bogies with all spaces occupied by 40 ft Bell containers and was observed passing Castlebellingham at 12:28. On the same day the 13:15 North Wall to Waterford Bell liner was a fully laden train of 15 bogies hauled by 081. It left ahead of the 15:00 Heuston/Waterford passenger but was held in Carlow for over an hour during which time it was overtaken by the 15:00 Down, 079 + EGV + 6 Mk2, and crossed the 15:15 Up, 073 + 7 Mk3 + EGV. With the passenger trains gone the liner continued to Thomastown where it was held until about 18:55 to meet the 18:25 ex Waterford. Had the loop at Lavistown been operational the liner could have avoided running-round in Kilkenny

and would have arrived in Waterford at least an hour earlier and in plenty of time to clear the line for the Up 18:25. The 19:25 North Wall to Waterford Bell liner was also fully loaded on this date and consisted of a mixture of 40 ft and 20 ft containers hauled by 073 and passing Kildare at 20:34.

Grain Traffic

A new flow of grain traffic is expected to commence in the near future originating at the premises of R&H Hall Ltd at Waterford. It is thought that up to two trains per week will be required initially.

New Ross Branch

A spur is to be built from the New Ross branch to enable timber trains to run directly into the \$40m Louisiana-Pacific plant currently under construction near Belview. The position of the factory is such that a connection from the Waterford/Rosslare line would be too steeply graded.

Fertiliser traffic out of New Ross continues at a healthy level. For instance there were trains on both 11th and 12th April. The first movement on each date was a ten-bogie empty train from Waterford, then a special of five bogies from New Ross, then the two engines returning with a further two empties. The second loaded train therefore consisted of seven wagons on each date.

170 + DV worked to New Ross on Sunday 23rd April in connection with a civil defence exercise in the town on this date.



165 at New Ross with Albatros Fertiliser special, 30th January 1995.

Limerick/Ennis/Athenry/Claremorris

The Limerick/Ennis line has again been severely affected by flooding near Ballycar, the result of one of the wettest winters in the West of Ireland for many years. The section was closed to all traffic on or

around 8th February and despite the recent dry weather is not expected to be re-opened until some time in late June, as although the water level has fallen the rate at which it is receding is extremely slow. The flooding is so severe and persistent that it is thought to be at least partly due to the disruption of underground drainage from nearby lakes, possibly resulting from the collapse of some of the natural caverns through which the subterranean rivers flow. The latter are a well known feature of the area and are due to the porous limestone which overlays large parts of County Clare. The Limerick/Claremorris liner has ceased for the moment, although the Foynes/Ballina coal train and the Limerick/Athenry cement train have been re-routed through Portarlinton as have the semi-regular timber trains from Ballina and Galway to Clonmel. A number of fertiliser trains have also run from Shelton Abbey to Ennis via Athenry and Gort. The Athenry/Ennis section has also been closed on one or more occasions for short periods since early February due to flooding at Kiltartan, near Ardahan.

The Irish Traction Group ran a special train from Bray to Claremorris and back travelling via Portarlinton, Athenry and Tuam in both directions on Saturday 8th April. The train, consisting of nine Cravens and a GSV, was hauled by 202 from Bray to Connolly and by 131+172 for the rest of the trip. It had been intended to return via Moate but major signalling problems at Athenry resulted in the train leaving the latter at 18:42, 92 minutes behind schedule. As most of the passengers were booked to travel on the 22:30 sailing from Dun Laoghaire to Holyhead it was decided to opt for the faster return route via Portarlinton. The organisers originally planned to continue from Claremorris to Ballina and return via Castlerea, but were prevented from doing so as the railway company insisted that the manual token for the Athenry/Claremorris section must be picked up at Athenry and returned there as would apply in the case of a dead-end branch worked under manual token arrangements. It is not apparently permitted to convey the token in either direction between Athenry and Claremorris other than by train thus creating an extremely inflexible mode of operation under which there is no provision for two successive trains in the same direction. (This ruling applies despite the fact that trains arriving at Claremorris are fully protected by signalling, can clear the Athenry/Claremorris section and are under the control of a manned signal box.) Due to the diversion of traffic consequent on the Ballycar flooding no trains had operated between Athenry and Claremorris since February, the last movement having deposited the manual token at Claremorris. In order to normalise the situation the empty Ballina/Foynes "Coal and Oil" train ran via Tuam on the 8th before continuing to Foynes via Ballinasloe, Portarlinton and Limerick. The special passenger train, the first such working between Athenry and Claremorris since 1991, was not permitted to stop in Tuam in either direction - a fact noted with some displeasure by the Tuam Herald. This latter ruling was apparently on the grounds of safety although the Up platform remains intact and in good condition.

Derailments

The trailing bogie of power car 83 and the leading bogie of intermediate 768 were derailed at the Boston yard in Pearse on 21st January while shunting from No.2 platform preparatory to working a positioning run to Connolly. The derailment blocked the northern exit from the yard and trapped the Arrow railcar sets rostered to work the 15:04 and 16:26 services from Pearse to Drogheda. The 15:04 started from Connolly and was formed by 149 + 4 Cr + GSV while the 16:26 was formed by a spare railcar set, 2601/2, provided by Inchicore. The derailed vehicles were part of a 9-piece railcar set which had worked the 07:45 ex Belfast. The train was split after the derailment with 96+4+67 working to Connolly for inclusion in the 17:45 to Belfast. 83 and 768 were re-railed on Sunday morning and were stored at Pearse, along with 744, until the following Wednesday when they returned to NIR assisted by another 3-piece set which was powered by motor coach 93.

The rear two coaches of the 18:30 Dublin/Rosslare became derailed near MP 48¼, on 8th February, just as the Arklow stop was being announced over the public address. The unaffected portion of the train is

understood to have been uncoupled and used to bring the passengers into Arklow station. The line was re-opened the next day by the Up afternoon 14:55 ex Rosslare which ran normally. Media speculation subsequently centred on a permanent way defect.

Passengers on the 19:00 ex Cork had a lucky escape on 24th March when 7111 was partially derailed due to an axle failure which reportedly occurred some two miles south of Limerick Junction. The problem was not noticed until the train was entering the station at Limerick Junction where the signalman in the South Cabin spotted sparks beneath the carriages and threw the signals to danger. The train halted with the locomotive near the cabin and the van close to the Tipperary road overbridge. Passengers, most of whom were unaware of the derailment, were evacuated through the van and thence to the Tipperary road before continuing on foot into the station. Onward conveyance to Dublin was provided by a relief train, formed by the Mk3 set off the 17:35 Heuston/Limerick. Single line working was established over the Down line between Limerick Junction and Charleville and this resulted in delays of up to an hour to services the following morning, the 09:00 ex Cork thus arriving in Heuston at 13:19 formed by 211 + 8 Mk3 + EGV.

General Traffic and Operations

The 17:26 Connolly/Arklow was delayed at Dun Laoghaire on 21st December, reportedly due to a problem with the coupling between the two locomotives. This incident resulted in queue of DART trains which was not fully cleared until 19:00. The locomotives returned light from Arklow but were involved in a further mishap at Wicklow where they collided with the buffer stops on the headshunt at the Dublin end of the Up loop.

The 15:00 Dublin/Belfast, 078 + EGV + 7 Mk2, terminated at Skerries at 16:06 on 29th December following damage to the train which occurred as a result of hitting an obstruction on the line near Rogerstown. Passengers were transferred to the following service, the Arrow-operated 15:04 Pearse/Drogheda, which was extended to Dundalk where yet another change was required - this time to an NIR railcar set. Cross-border passengers were delayed by over two hours as a result of this incident although such is the lie-over at Drogheda the following (delayed) Arrow railcar was able to run to Dundalk and back without causing undue delay to the return 17:12 ex Drogheda.

A special train consisting of 078 + 6 Mk2 + EGV ran from Dublin to Ballymena on 7th January at 09:15 in connection with a Rugby League fixture. The following Saturday, 14th January, a similar special ran from Limerick to Blackrock. The return train, 084 + 9 Mk2a/b + DV, left Blackrock at 17:48 with somewhat over 450 passengers. The 14:55 Rosslare/Dublin which should have closely followed was cancelled at Bray and the occupants, which included a large group of Rugby supporters travelling from Greystones to Belfast, were brought forward on the 17:45 ex Bray. The 18:20 Dublin/Belfast, 112 + 9 Mk2, was thus delayed and did not pass Killester until 18:41, with the 18:27 Pearse/Dundalk, 2607/8/15/16, close behind at 18:43.

Due to the failure of the 05:53 ex Dundalk on the Down platform at Drogheda on an unspecified date around the middle of January, it was necessary to bring the 07:55 to Belfast onto the Navan branch, then back over the south crossover and forward onto the Up Platform. With station business complete the express then propelled along the Up line before continuing through the middle road and regaining the Down line at the north end of station.

The 22:00 Dublin/Dundalk was cancelled at Drogheda on 17th January due to a block failure between there and Dundalk, passengers and crew being brought forward by mini-bus. Both the 17:00 and 18:00 ex Belfast were also affected, the latter being delayed by almost an hour as Irish Rail's signalling regulations dictate that trains be restricted to 15 mph in such circumstances.

On 20th January, due to increased traffic in connection with the following day's International Rugby

match the 3-piece push/pull operated 18:00 ex Limerick was extended to Dublin in advance of the 17:30 ex Cork with which it normally connects. Both trains were badly overcrowded. The following day saw specials from Cork, Limerick and Galway, the latter to Connolly formed by 080 + 8 Cr + van and loading somewhat under 150 passengers.

The 16:52 Pearse/Drogheda was taken out of service at Donabate on 27th January due to the failure of the automatic doors. Passengers were obliged to join 17:13 ex Pearse to Dundalk which was delayed about 30 minutes as a result of this incident. The 17:48 ex Drogheda was cancelled and the set used to form the 18:16 instead.

The 09:35 Dublin/Rosslare, 077 + EGV + 3 Mk2, was severely delayed in the Arklow to Enniscorthy section on 4th February because of the regulation 15 mph limit which applies to the first train entering a single line section after a block failure. The train thus arrived in Rosslare some 70 minutes late at approximately 13:50.

Traffic on the Dublin/Cork line was severely disrupted on 10th February due to a small fire on the leading locomotive of the 14:50 Marino Point/Arklow anhydrous ammonia train. The incident, which brought the train to a halt near MP 134, was treated as a major incident by the emergency services and as a result the Up line was blocked for about 2½ hours. The 14:55 Dublin/Cork was held first in Limerick Junction from 16:32 to 17:00 and subsequently in Charleville until 17:50. 168, which was working an empty timber train from Clonmel, was sent to assist the failure and preceded the 14:55 from Limerick Junction. The 17:30 Cork/Heuston was held in Mallow until 18:50 and was further delayed by crew changes with the 17:30 and 21:00 Down at Kilmallock and Hazelhatch respectively. The 21:00 to Cork was worked to Hazelhatch by an Inchicore crew and was delayed there from 21:16 to 21:29.

The 17:30 Heuston/Cork was delayed for over two hours about three miles outside Thurles on 11th February apparently due to damaged brake piping between two coaches on the train. The incident received considerable media attention because of the presence on the train of a passenger with a medical condition. Subsequent services were considerably delayed including the 18:50 Special to Cork which terminated at Thurles due to difficulties with the generator van.

A special train, formed by a four-car Arrow railcar, ran from Dundalk to Lansdowne Road at 15:30 on 15th February in connection with an Ireland v England soccer International. The railcar was then used to work a special at 17:36 from Connolly to Booterstown before returning empty to Connolly to form the 19:15 to Dundalk. Rush hour DART services were delayed up to 20 minutes as a result of the usual pre-match crowd congestion on and around the level crossing at Lansdowne Road. There was further disruption later that evening as the match was abandoned amid scenes of violence and disorder rarely witnessed at sporting events in Ireland. The police requisitioned a number of DART trains to convey English followers to Dun Laoghaire and Tara Street to connect with cross-channel ferries.

The 07:35 Cork/Heuston, hauled by 222, failed at Mallow on 2nd March apparently due to accumulated snow interfering with the locomotive's radar control system. The delay in this instance was about 90 minutes making this the worst of several similar incidents, which affected other 201 hauled trains including the 07:30 from Heuston to Cork.

The 18:20 Dublin/Belfast, 111 + 11 Mk2s, became disabled near Portmarnock due to damaged air brake pipes on 3rd February. Single line working was eventually instituted to allow following trains around the obstruction although, in fact, normal working was restored after passing the 18:27 ex Pearse on the wrong line. The latter train arrived in Donabate at 20:19 and was closely followed by the delayed Belfast service, now almost two hours late, at 20:27. The 18:00 ex Belfast, 086 + 8 Mk2 + EGV, was blocked at Malahide from 19:50 until 20:20 due to the single line working already mentioned.

In order to cater for additional traffic ahead of Saturday's Rugby International, a 2-piece Arrow railcar

worked a relief train from Limerick to Dublin at 17:45 on 3rd March arriving Heuston about 19:50. The train was formed by the 2-piece set normally spare at Inchicore. The following day saw specials from Cork at 07:20 and Limerick at 08:20, the former stopping at Mallow only and the latter non-stop. The regular 08:20 ex Limerick was deferred to 08:35, ran to a slower schedule and was due in Heuston at 10:55 having served Thurles, Templemore, Ballybrophy and Portlaoise. There was no Galway special on this date although an Arrow railcar operated a relief from Clara ahead of the 07:25 ex Westport.

202 hauled a six-piece push/pull from Portarlinton to Killarney and back in connection with a GAA fixture on Sunday 5th March. The special departed around 10:20 but was badly delayed by engineering works, being observed thirty miles away, at Lisduff around 11:45.

DART services were disrupted on 6th March after a lorry struck the Tolka Bridge at East Wall road around 22:30. Services were resumed over the Down line by 23:20. Although double line working was restored in time for services the next morning, a temporary 5 mph speed restriction caused congestion and resulted in delays of 10-15 minutes during the morning rush hour.

The two Mk3s, 7161 and 7162, which form the core of the executive train have been refurbished and now sport a crimson lake livery with gold lining, logo and lettering. The revamped train made its debut on an 08:25 Belfast/Killarney special on 9th March which was formed by 071 + 5 Mk3 + EGV. The special returned to Belfast the following day leaving Killarney in advance of the 09:55 ex Tralee.

Traffic to Rugby League fixtures produced special trains from Sandymount to Limerick and Blackrock to Belfast on 11th March. These trains departed Connolly at 10:09 and 10:15 and were formed by 218 + EGV + 4 Mk2s and 086 + EGV + 5 Mk3s respectively, the latter being the executive train.

There was severe disruption to services on the Cork line on 13th March following an incident involving both the 15:15 Cork/Tralee and the 13:20 Dublin/Cork. The first train, hauled by 150, reportedly struck an obstruction which dislodged part of a traction motor gear case cover which in turn was struck by the Down express. The latter sustained damage to air brake connections and was thus disabled at the scene of the incident for over 3½ hours. The delayed 13:20 ex Dublin eventually arrived in Cork at about 20:00 and returned to Dublin shortly afterwards with waiting passengers. The 14:55 ex Dublin terminated at Mallow and worked back as the much delayed 17:30 ex Cork arriving in Heuston at 21:24. The 17:40 from Dublin to Limerick Junction, which normally continues to Limerick at 20:18 as a connection from the 19:00 ex Cork, instead formed the latter service as between Limerick Junction and Dublin. The 18:00 ex Limerick which normally connects into the 17:30 ex Cork worked through to Heuston so as to avoid inordinate delay to Dublin bound passengers.

The 08:15 Heuston/Cork, 224 + EGV + 8 Mk3, failed at Ballybrophy on 18th March following what appeared to be a full-service brake application. The failed train, already partially on the Down platform, was pushed clear of the loop points by the 09:00 to Tralee which then ran via the loop and picked up the stranded passengers departing Ballybrophy at 10:45. Passengers destined for Limerick travelled on the delayed branch train, via Nenagh, so as to avoid undue disruption to Limerick/Limerick Junction services. Other activity at Ballybrophy included the 10:20 Heuston to Millstreet executive special, 215 + EGV + 4 Mk3, which passed at 11:29, en-route to the Collins v Eubank boxing match. Meanwhile the return working of the 08:15, the 11:20 ex Cork, was formed by a Mk2 air-braked set as far as Thurles where passengers transferred to the empty Mk3 set which had been worked from Ballybrophy by a relief engine.

Traffic on the Sligo line was seriously disrupted as a result of a serious road traffic accident involving a 20,000 litre capacity LPG tanker which occurred just outside Mostrim at 21:20 on 11th April. Following an explosion and fire at the accident site the railway, was closed to all traffic and much of the village evacuated. The Down liner got through but the corresponding Up train terminated at Longford as did the following morning's 07:50 Sligo to Dublin passenger service. The 08:40 ex Dublin terminated at

Mullingar with passengers on both trains being exchanged by road thus entailing a delay of about an hour in both instances. The “all clear” was given around mid-day on the 12th.

DART services were badly disrupted on 2nd April due to damage sustained by the overhead line equipment between Harmonstown and Howth Junction. The pantograph on the trailing unit of the 14:25 Bray/Howth, 8131/10, was found to be severely damaged when the train came to a halt on the Down branch platform at Howth Junction. DART services continued to operate between Bray and Harmonstown until 18:00 after which electric trains terminated at Connolly until normal services were resumed with the 19:25 ex Bray, 8135, which left Connolly at 20:03. Outer suburban services were also somewhat disrupted with all trains being routed via the Down platform at Howth Junction and the Up line between there and Killester.

A bog fire close to the railway in the Enfield/Killucan section seriously delayed trains on the Sligo line on 13th April. The Down ESSO oil train stopped in the section and thus blocked the 18:30 Dublin/Sligo at Enfield. Passengers on this train were taken by bus to Mullingar where they eventually rejoined the original train which ran empty from Enfield and arrived almost two hours late into Sligo. The 17:40 ex Sligo got to Killucan where it was held for some time before continuing its journey about an hour behind schedule.

New Work Practices

The July 1994 issue may have given the impression that regular lodging turns for drivers have been entirely eliminated. Although lodging is much reduced in scale it is still a daily occurrence, notably in respect of Inchicore drivers working the 18:15 Heuston/Tralee and 14:20 Tralee/Heuston, a link that involves lodging in Tralee on alternate days. Another source of lodging is the timber train which tends to be crewed out of Portlaoise, an arrangement which results in staff lodging as far afield as Sligo. It is reportedly not unknown for such crews to then work the laden train as far as Limerick Junction on a Saturday evening before returning to Portlaoise.

Dundalk Freight Facilities

CIÉ published a formal closure notice on 24th January announcing the withdrawal of freight services on the Barrack Street branch in Dundalk with effect from 31st March 1995 although services in fact ceased on 24th March. Traffic will in future be handled at the new Ardee Road freight terminal which is located on the site of the former INWR yard at Dundalk station. The Barrack Street branch has its origins in the Dundalk and Enniskillen railway which commenced services from Barrack Street to Castleblaney on 15th February 1849. This line intersected the then Dublin and Belfast Junction Railway at the famous Square Crossing which was located half a mile south of the present Dundalk station. Services from Dundalk to Greenore were also routed over the Square Crossing, an arrangement which necessitated the propelling of trains in both directions between Dundalk station and Dundalk West Junction. Passenger services ceased with the closure of the Greenore line on 31st December 1951 although freight continued as before to destinations on the Irish North. The final closure of the Irish North lines on 31st December 1959 made the Square Crossing redundant and also resulted in the rationalisation of connections from Dundalk Station to the former Clones line. Despite the closures most of the trackwork within the INWR yard, including the old Up and Down lines to Dundalk West, remained in situ until 1994 when work commenced on the new freight depot. In the intervening years goods traffic to and from the Dundalk area continued to be handled at Barrack Street with trains being routed via the curve from Dundalk South Junction to the former Dundalk East Junction, a section of track built by the GNR(I) around the turn of the century. The tradition of propelling was maintained to the end as goods trains from Dundalk station to Barrack Street were pushed in both directions over the Up Belfast line to and from Dundalk South Junction which became electrically operated from Dundalk

Central with the closure of Dundalk South cabin in 1961.



157 works a transfer from Dundalk Junction on the last day of normal working on the Barrack Street branch.

To mark the closure of the branch Irish Rail ran a special passenger train from Dundalk station to Barrack Street and back on Saturday 25th March. The train was formed by a push/pull set, (6104) 6 p/p + 127 and departed at 15:07 with some 250 invited guests, many of them retired GNR staff from the Dundalk area. The short journey, inclusive of reversal at Dundalk South, took fifteen minutes, speed on

the branch being restricted to 10 mph for this working. The return train departed at 15:36 to the sound of exploding detonators and the massed sirens of the Dundalk fire brigade - the latter also providing a water salute! A trial train formed by the push/pull set of the 17:13 ex Pearse is understood to have run to Barrack Street on the preceding Monday in order to check clearances. The last goods trains ran on the 24th with the regular afternoon working arriving in Barrack Street at 14:30 formed by 157 + four laden bogie wagons. The usual procedure was adopted, whereby the train engine ran round on arrival before shunting the wagons under the gantry crane where one was detached and the other three were unloaded. The return train consisted of 157 + 3 empty bogies + 4 laden bogies + 1 four-wheel wagon containing kegs. A further working was expected that evening in order to clear traffic on hand preparatory to final closure.

The new depot at Ardee Road should considerably expedite the handling of freight trains at Dundalk as it will no longer be necessary to trip traffic to and from Barrack Street, a task entrusted in later years to the train engines of Up liners which were thus subject to delay. An interesting feature of the new yard which has led to the cessation of bagged cement traffic is the absence of covered storage, the only buildings being a somewhat futuristic looking office/reception/messroom and a garage for fork lift trucks.

LRT

CIÉ are to establish a panel of contractors valid for three years from 1st February to undertake civil engineering investigations and provide geotechnical services in connection with the Dublin LRT project. Although expected shortly the formal and specific go-ahead for the development of LRT and confirmation of the initial routes are still awaited as of mid-April.

High Court Action

Irish Rail are challenging the constitutionality of the Civil Liability Act (1961) in so far as it requires a party held liable for damages to meet an award in full if other parties, held jointly liable, are not in a position to meet their portion of the award. This is precisely the situation in which the company finds itself in the aftermath of the Claremorris derailment of 24th September 1989. Irish Rail was held 30% liable for damages arising from the accident while the owner of the cattle with which the train collided was held 70% liable. Should the action fail, Irish Rail will be required to pay 100% of any damages which may be awarded in respect of some 200 personal injury claims yet to be settled. The court was told that this would cost up to £4m and would have to be financed by borrowing which in turn would necessitate either a reduction in services or a 7% increase in fares.

Miscellaneous

The reconstruction of the fire damaged carriage workshop at Inchicore is proceeding rapidly. The work is costing in the region of £1m and when completed will provide a modern facility covering 4,500m². The impressive portal shaped steel roof framing was almost complete by the end of March. Work on the project which includes support offices is scheduled to be completed by May 1995, the principal contractor being John G. Burns Ltd of Clonsilla.

The new multi-level CWR train was at work at Skerries on 29th January discharging long welded rail on the Up line just south of the station.

The carriage ramp at Pearse has been demolished along with the nearby block of railway company offices which stood at the north-east corner of the station. The entire $\frac{3}{4}$ acre site between the station and Pearse Street has been sold by the holding company, CIÉ, and is being developed by Trinity College to provide additional student accommodation. There is currently no access for wheelchair-

bound travellers to either platform 4 or 5 although a ramp does exist to Platform 3 from Sandwith Street. Re-opening the latter for public use would partly address the problem and at the same time greatly improve access to the station for the hundreds of commuters working in the Mount Street and Grand Canal Street areas. (See page 31, January 1994.)

Wagon painting which was undertaken for a time in the old locomotive shed at Limerick is now being carried out at Silvermines, the terminus of the otherwise disused 1¼ mile branch which opened in 1966 to carry barytes and zinc destined for Foynes.

The new car park at Cork station is now being managed by Park Rite of Dublin. The charge is £3 for 24 hours and the facility is open from 07:00 to 21:00 on weekdays.

The card operated public telephones which were located in Mk3 dining cars have been removed in many instances - neither the 08:50 Heuston/Tralee or the 17:30 Cork/Heuston offered the facility on 9th April. In the case of the Tralee train the phone had been missing for some weeks.

Irish Rail have informed local representatives in East Cork that although the 6¼ mile section of the Youghal branch from Cobh Junction to Midleton is closed the line has not been abandoned. The status of the remaining 14¼ miles between Midleton and Youghal is less clear with some two miles of track missing in the vicinity of Bog Road level crossing, near Youghal. Restoration of passenger services between Cork and Midleton remains a possibility in the context of improvements to local rail services in the Cork area. While regular passenger traffic ceased in 1963 the branch remained open for goods traffic and hosted seasonal Cork/Youghal seaside trains until the early 1980s. Subsequent years saw traffic reduced to little more than an annual pilgrimage train from Youghal to Claremorris although the final passenger workings on the branch were two Midleton to Dublin specials which ran in connection with a GAA fixture on 17th March 1988.

The Irish Post Office, An Post, issued four stamps celebrating the Irish narrow gauge on 28th February. Each of the stamps feature specially commissioned drawings by Charles Rycraft showing trains in settings characteristic of the concerns depicted. Thus the 28p stamp shows a West Clare train entering Kilrush, the 32p stamp No.2 "Blanche" on a Killybegs bound train at Donegal town, the 38p stamp a street scene at Cork's Western Road on the Cork & Muskerry light railway and the 52p stamp a coal train at Drumcong on the tramway section of the Cavan & Leitrim. The launch took place at Blennerville, Co. Kerry, and included a trip behind No.5T of the Tralee & Dingle railway.

Woodlawn station, between Ballinasloe and Athenry, is being restored by a FAS sponsored community group.

The underbridge which carries the disused Claremorris/Collooney line over Lower Main Street in Swinford is being cleaned and sand-blasted. Flood lighting is expected to be erected in due course thus providing a centre-piece in the village. The station at this location is still substantially intact although the track is heavily overgrown. Services on the line ceased in November 1975 although local agitation for re-opening has continued over the years with the result that the line has remained in place and, although long disconnected at Collooney, is still theoretically accessible from the Claremorris end.

Irish Rail invited tenders in November for the supply of 1,600 steel wheels for locomotives, carriages and wagons.

Recent improvements to stations include an extension to the car park at Booterstown, painting and cleaning of the station buildings at Balbriggan, resurfacing the car park at the latter and the provision of improved public toilets at Connolly and Heuston. The number of suburban stations with retail outlets increased recently with new franchises trading from small mobile or semi-mobile facilities at Malahide and Maynooth, although the latter did not survive for very long. Ulster Bank ATM machines are in operation at Connolly, Tara Street, Pearse and Heuston stations, those at Tara Street and Heuston

replacing machines previously provided by AIB Bank. On the other hand stations recently partially de-staffed have deteriorated severely - the classic rural GNR station at Laytown has been vandalised to such a degree that basic facilities are no longer available even when the station is manned. When unmanned there is no shelter on either platform nor is there any way of ascertaining the status of the service in the event of disruption. The loss of revenue at this location, even before taking into account the cost of repairs, probably exceeds the payroll savings realised. Either way the overall quality of service to the customer has sharply dis-improved as a direct result of de-staffing.

The car park at Maynooth station has been temporarily closed due to road traffic arrangements in connection with the construction of a new overbridge at the Dublin end of the station. Temporary parking is available on the town side of the canal and on the Up side. The disused water column which was located on the Up side at the Dublin end of the station has been demolished to facilitate the construction of the bridge.

Northern Ireland Railways

Policy Change

It was announced in January that the existing boards of NIR and Ulsterbus/Citybus are to be replaced by a joint board answerable to the Northern Ireland Transport Holding Company. Additionally the rail and bus companies are to have a unified managerial structure with a single Managing Director. The changes have been prompted by the recognition that it is no longer acceptable or affordable to seek to meet the full demands of future traffic growth by simply building more roads particularly in urban areas and are therefore intended to achieve the following:

- A reduction in the environmental impact of transport.
- Diversion of traffic from private to public transport.
- A better overall public transport system with improved co-ordination of rail and road services.
- Fuller integration of land use and transportation planning.
- A more integrated approach to transport connections between Northern Ireland and the rest of the UK and Europe.

It will be interesting to see if these changes are followed through to their logical conclusion and lead to significant improvements in rail services such as the re-opening of lines between Belfast and Newtownards or Portadown and Armagh. Both of these long closed alignments are substantially intact and would add substantial catchment areas to the existing system. Another pointer will be the manner in which Bleach Green Junction/Antrim is restored - the reinstatement of double track would provide the capacity to develop a high quality local service without impacting on mainline services.

Cross Harbour Link

The Cross Harbour road and rail links were officially opened by Queen Elizabeth II on Thursday 9th March during the course of a ceremony which took place on the motorway bridge close to the centre of the Lagan crossing. With formalities complete the royal party, including Prince Philip, joined a special train which drew up alongside the podium. A temporary walkway was provided to span the gap between the road and rail bridges, and this also formed a short platform, on the railway side, from which access was gained to an immaculately turned out, four car, Castle class set, 459+2+455. This

latter took the party on the half-mile trip to Belfast Central thus affording an opportunity to sample the new rail facility before continuing by air to Armagh.

Passenger traffic on the Larne line is understood to have increased by at least 10% since the opening of the Cross Harbour link and in consequence a number of trains have been strengthened from time to time, notably the 07:53 ex Larne Harbour which is occasionally a four-car set instead of the previous three.

The item detailing the new passenger information systems associated with the Cross-Harbour link and published in the last issue should have read as under:

- A new passenger information system has been provided at Belfast Central and Botanic stations whereby details of train services are displayed on overhead colour monitors in the concourse and on the platforms. The information is normally displayed in two ways, a summary format on monitors in the general circulation areas and in detail for the next train on the platform monitors. The system is computer driven and is automatically updated from the new train describer incorporated into the Belfast Central signal cabin panel. It is also proposed to use the new system to relay pre-recorded digitised messages to stations covered by the long line public address system. The contract for the supply and commissioning of the necessary equipment was awarded to British Rail Business Systems and, although not fully operational for the opening of the Cross-Harbour link, the new system has the potential to be very useful and will give NIR an information system considerably in advance of anything so far installed in Ireland.

Dublin/Belfast Project

Relaying is in progress on the Down line between Poyntzpass and Portadown with slightly under five miles of CWR being installed between December 1994 and mid-April 1995. This figure includes the laying of approximately a mile of welded rail on two separate sections of track which had previously been renewed with jointed rail on concrete sleepers. The mileages are as follows, all of which are on the Down line:

MP 77 ⁷ / ₈ to MP 78 ¹ / ₄	CWR installed, section previously relaid
MP 78 ³ / ₄ to MP 81 ⁷ / ₈	Relaid with concrete sleepers and CWR
MP 85 ³ / ₈ to MP 86	Relaid with concrete sleepers and CWR
MP 86 to MP 86 ¹ / ₂	CWR installed, section previously relaid

In order to accelerate the progress of relaying NIR have invited tenders for the replacement of ten miles of rail track between Portadown and the Border. The work is to be carried out between April and September 1995 and will involve the regrading and consolidation of the existing track formation for speeds of up to 90 mph. As of mid-April some 60.8% of NIR's portion of the Dublin/Belfast line consisted of concrete sleepers and CWR.

Two stone arch overbridges were demolished between Portadown and Lurgan in November. These structures, which will not be replaced, were OB 249 at MP 89¹/₄, McCaughey's bridge, and OB 251 at MP 90, Balteagh bridge. This corrects the information given in the last issue. Incidentally the Portadown/Lurgan section has been radically transformed over the last twenty five years with the elimination of six of the original seven overbridges in addition to the four intermediate level crossings.

Rehabilitation of the formation between Lisburn and Belfast is not now expected to commence until later in the year, probably after the re-opening of Great Victoria Street in September.

Great Victoria Street

Rapid progress is being made on this project although contrary to the impression given in the last issue

ballasting of the new and reinstated alignments did not begin until March. As of mid-April much of the formation of the previously disused former Great Northern mainline had been ballasted between Central Junction (MP 112) and Great Victoria Street (MP 112½) although as yet there was no ballast on the curve from Westlink Junction to City Junction. The houses in Bentham Street which obstructed the path of the new curve have been demolished but, as of 14th April, the Central line cutting at the site of the future City Junction had not been breached. A new footbridge has been built over the Central Junction-Westlink Junction alignment to give access to a nursery school located within the triangle being formed between the three junctions. Similarly road access to the school will be maintained via an overpass already completed on the Westlink Junction-City Junction alignment, much of which is to be contained within a deep cutting bounded by high concrete retaining walls. The new station at Great Victoria Street station is also progressing well with the foundations in place and the erection of the structural steel framework virtually complete. The project is costing some £16.5m including expenditure on the station, the new curve, trackwork, and associated signalling. An additional 800,000 passenger journeys are expected to result from the new facilities which are due to open in September. (See also Signalling, Layouts and Level Crossings below.)

Bleach Green Junction/Antrim

This line has been little used since the opening of the Cross Harbour link. Apart from the MRSI's Dargan Link railtour on 3rd December the line saw no passenger trains until 31st March. The MRSI special consisted of 98+1+67 and ran from Central Station to Adelaide freight yard and back before continuing to Portrush via the Cross Harbour link. Various photographic opportunities were provided including a stop at the long-closed Doagh halt. The failure of the 11:35 Londonderry to Larne Harbour, between Castlerock and Coleraine, on 4th January, resulted in 113 running light from York Road to Coleraine the following day. The locomotive returned with the failed 3-car set, power car 84, and as on the outward trip, was routed via Bleach Green Junction. Widening and repairs to OB 28 near Monkstown was in progress as of mid-March and has resulted in an extended possessions of the line by the Civil Engineers.

Due to a three day possession between Botanic and Adelaide to facilitate re-instatement work at Central Junction most services between Belfast and points north of Antrim were diverted via Bleach Green Junction on 31st March and 1st April. On the Sunday, 3rd April, passengers were conveyed by bus either between Belfast and Lisburn or in some instances between Adelaide and Botanic.

Diverted trains on 31st March were:

06:20	Larne Harbour to Londonderry ran to Botanic and reversed to form the 07:23 to Londonderry	Central dep	07:27 (07:15)
07:53	Larne Harbour to Londonderry started from Botanic at 09:00	Central dep	09:05 (08:50)
09:30	Bangor to Portrush ran first to Botanic and reversed to form the 10:06 to Portrush	Central dep	10:10 (10:00)
10:20	Larne Harbour to Londonderry ran to Botanic and reversed to form 11:23 to Londonderry	Central dep	11:30 (11:20)
12:45	Larne Harbour to Londonderry started from Botanic at 13:43	Central dep	13:48 (13:40)
16:05	Central to Londonderry started from Botanic at 16:08	Central dep	16:15 (16:05)
16:52	Whitehead to Portrush started from Botanic at 17:33	Central dep	17:38 (17:30)
18:10	Central to Londonderry started from Botanic at 18:13	Central dep	18:20 (18:10)
06:10	Londonderry to Central	Central arr	08:50 (08:39)
08:05	Londonderry to Carrickfergus	Central arr	10:20 (10:32)

09:45	Londonderry to Central	Central arr	12:05 (12:19)
11:35	Londonderry to Larne Harbour	Central arr	13:42 (13:56)
14:40	Londonderry to Carrickfergus	Central arr	16:48 (17:04)

Diverted trains on 1st April were:

08:25	Central to Londonderry started from Botanic at 08:28	Central dep	08:35 (08:25)
11:30	Central to Londonderry started from Botanic at 11:33	Central dep	11:40 (11:30)
14:10	Central to Londonderry started from Botanic at 14:17	Central dep	14:22 (14:10)
16:05	Central to Londonderry started from Botanic at 16:10	Central dep	16:20 (16:05)
16:30	Bangor to Portrush started from Botanic at 17:36	Central dep	17:45 (17:05)
18:15	Central to Londonderry started from Botanic at 18:18	Central dep	18:25 (18:15)
08:10	Londonderry to Central	Central arr	10:20 (10:34)
11:20	Londonderry to Central ran to Botanic	Central arr	13:26 (13:41)
14:40	Londonderry to Central ran to Botanic.	Central arr	16:50 (17:07)

Bracketed times at Belfast Central are the normal arrival/departure times.

At present the 13¼ mile single track section between Monkstown and Antrim is worked by tablet with instruments located at Belfast Central and Antrim, the circuit between them being maintained by radio. In normal circumstances trains carry the tablet on the double track between Monkstown and Belfast, an additional distance of approximately 7½ miles. However, in order to allow trains to leave Belfast while the Antrim/Monkstown section was occupied, working by pilotman was instituted as required by the timetable with normal tablet working being maintained where practical. The five intermediate level crossings, normally operated by the train crew, were manned and flag protected during the diversions so as to avoid unnecessary delays to traffic. Interestingly the normal published timetable was generally adhered to north of Antrim, despite deferred departure times from Belfast and the 40 mph speed limit between Bleach Green Junction and Antrim. Additional speed restrictions applied to Up trains both over the turnout at Monkstown and on the Up line between there and Bleach Green Junction - the latter section being limited to 30 mph. As for Down trains the shorter distance more than compensated for the reduced speeds with trains being scheduled into Belfast up to seventeen minutes earlier than normal.

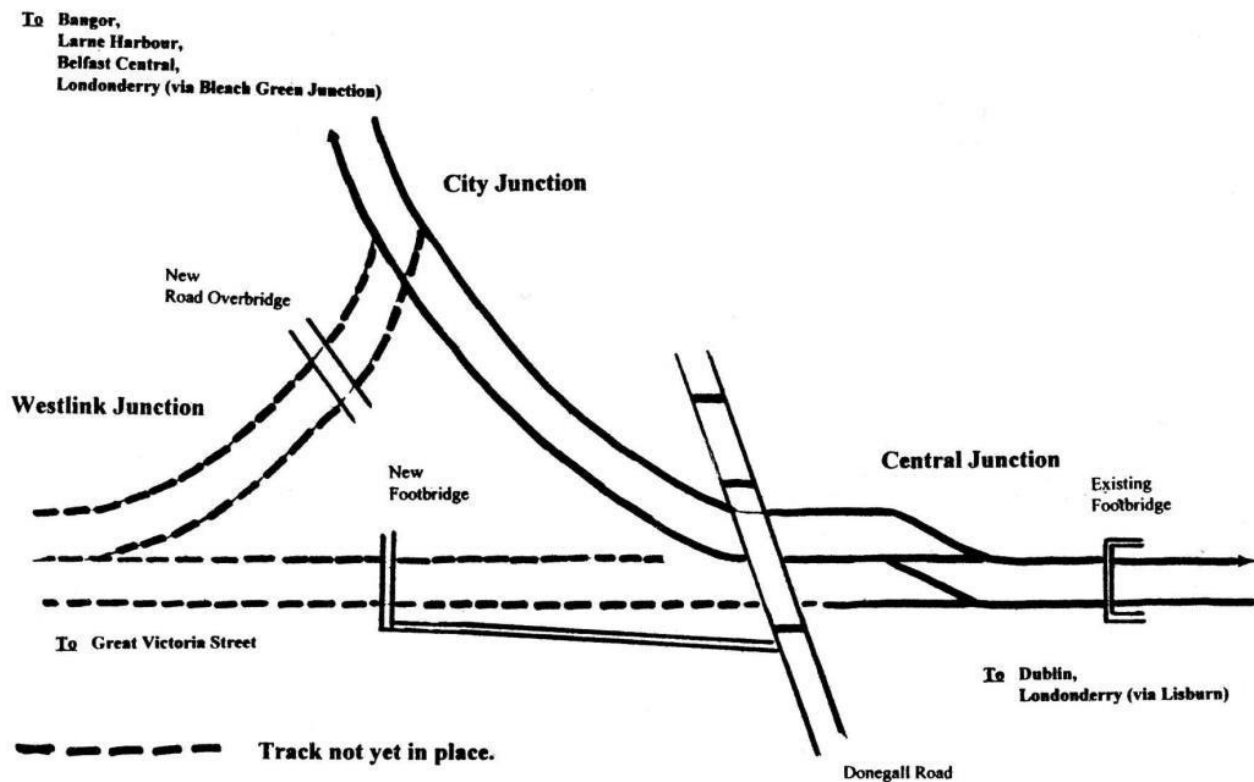
- Contrary to the information in the July issue regular services on the NCC mainline continued to operate via Bleach Green Junction until early 1978. An experimental local service was introduced between York Road and Antrim in June 1980 but was withdrawn in February 1981.

Signalling, Layouts and Level Crossings

A major possession of the Dublin/Belfast line between Adelaide and Botanic was scheduled from 06:00 Friday 31st March to 06:00 Monday 3rd April so as to facilitate formation repairs, the slewing of the existing Up and Down main line and the installation of a new facing crossover. Following the completion of this work and pending the opening of the line into Great Victoria Street all Down trains are routed over the facing crossover back onto the alignment previously occupied by the Down line and thence onwards to Botanic as formerly. Up trains from the Botanic direction are presently diverted from the original alignment to the re-sited Up road by means of a piece of plain track shaped like a crossover.

The effect of the track slewing is to move the Down line westwards towards the former “third road” thus creating a short stretch of triple track extending from the site of the new facing crossover to the point at which the Central line curves away at MP 112. As the new trackwork is slightly on the Adelaide side of the Donegall Road overbridge there was no alteration, at this stage, to the heavily

canted curve which marks the commencement of the Central line proper. The following Sunday, 9th April, saw further possessions to facilitate the lowering of the curve and removal of the cant onto the Down Central line at the Donegall Road overbridge so as to permit the installation of a turnout from the Up Great Victoria Street line. It is understood that the possessions were surrendered early on both weekends thus slightly easing the heavy disruption being occasioned by this work. (A third possession, again involving complete closure of the line between Adelaide and Botanic, is to take place on 23rd April during which the trailing connection between the Up Central line and Up Great Victoria Street line will be put in place.)



Central Junction Track layout as of 25th April 1995.

Lisburn

The station buildings at Lisburn which feature the classic yellow brick to characteristic of the GNR and still to be seen also at Dundalk, Malahide and Navan are being extensively refurbished both internally and externally. The work on the B1 listed buildings which commenced in early March is being undertaken by Graham Construction of Dromore and in effect involves the reconstruction of the single storey station within the original facade and in keeping with its historic status. At present all passenger facilities are accommodated in portacabins which are located in the station forecourt. When the £350,000 refurbishment is completed in June the station will be equipped with much improved waiting facilities, better toilets, retail facilities and an upgraded booking office. There will be special facilities for disabled passengers including a ticket counter specially designed for wheelchair use.

Traffic

A £2 return fare was available between any two NIR stations on Saturdays and Sundays leading up to Christmas. This had the effect of considerably boosting traffic and resulted in a number of interesting workings. On 3rd December the 08:10 ex Londonderry, initially a five-car 80 class set, was

strengthened at Coleraine by the addition of the Portrush branch set - a move which resulted in bus substitution between Coleraine and Portrush pending the arrival of a replacement unit which was attached to the 16:05 ex Belfast. In order to provide increased accommodation the 18:15 Belfast to Londonderry was formed by 453+4+458 on this date although a change of sets took place at Coleraine with the 19:10 Up. The shortage of sets evident from the above arrangements was due in part to railcar operated auxiliaries on the Dublin line at 07:45, 08:30 and 09:20 as reported in the previous issue.

The following weekend was equally busy although more sets were available, there being no International Rugby match in Dublin to contend with. The 08:10 ex Londonderry was 69+4+93 and this was preceded by an auxiliary, 84+4+68, which left Coleraine at 08:38. Most other trains on the Londonderry route on this date were either five or six car 80 class units including the 09:30 ex Portrush. Several other links were also strengthened with at least three Portadown/Bangor sets made up to six-car units. An auxiliary formed by 453+4+459 operated to Coleraine at 17:03 following the 17:00 to Dublin. As reported in the previous issue there were also auxiliaries to and from Dublin to cater for shoppers.

The 08:38 Coleraine to Belfast auxiliary again operated on 17th December as did the almost standard shopping reliefs at 07:45 and 18:30 from Dublin and 07:45 and 16:55 from Belfast. It is understood that a second auxiliary was scheduled from Dublin at 08:05 but was not required. The Coleraine special returned at 16:40 on this date.

The Ireland v England Rugby International at Lansdowne Road on 21st January resulted in heavy traffic on the Belfast/Dublin as shown in the table below:

Saturday 21st January 1995

Train	Formation	Load	Notes
07:45 ex Belfast	83+2+67+4+96	600	Malahide pass 09:59, Connolly arr 10:16
08:00 ex Belfast	111+13 Mk2	530/550	Malahide pass 10:15, Connolly an 10:26
08:15 ex Belfast	87+2+94+3+98	430/450	Malahide pass 10:37, Connolly arr 10:52
10:05 ex Drogheda	6103 6p/p+124	350	Malahide 10:58/10:59, Connolly arr 11:22
10:00 ex Dundalk	149+GSV+3 Cr	150/160	Malahide pass 11:03, Connolly arr 11:24
09:00 ex Belfast	112+10 Mk2	450/460	Malahide pass 11:16, Connolly arr 11:38
09:20 ex Belfast	81+4+92	130	Malahide pass 11:40, Connolly arr 11:51
11:30 ex Drogheda	181+GSV+4 Cr	330/350	Malahide 12:16/12:17

The 07:45 and 08:15 ex Belfast continued empty across the loop line to the Boston Yard in Pearse for stabling. Unfortunately the 07:45 set partially derailed in the yard at about 14:20 with the result that the return formations had to be somewhat altered. Return services to Belfast were due to depart Connolly at 17:45, 18:20, 18:30, 20:05 and 20:15. These trains passed Laytown at 18:14, 18:57, 19:51, 20:39 and 20:58 respectively, formed by 92+2+96+4+67, 111 + 13 Mk2s, 98+3+94+2+87, 2+81 and 112 + 10 Mk2s. The 18:30 was delayed at Connolly due to brake problems and left at 18:58 following the 18:27 Pearse/Dundalk local which departed at 18:53. The latter train, itself badly delayed as a result of the Boston Yard derailment was allowed to run ahead of the Belfast train as far Mosney although it is possible to overtake easily at both Howth Junction and Skerries.

The 18:10 Belfast to Londonderry, 85+2, failed at Ballymena on 8th February. The train was worked forward to Coleraine by the Portrush branch set which then completed the journey. A replacement set for the branch was attached to the 20:35 ex Belfast.

The Larne line was closed at Glynn on the afternoon of 14th February due to emergency repairs to a storm damaged culvert, the problem having been discovered by the track walker. Normal working resumed on the morning of 16th February, with services terminating at either Whitehead or Ballycarry during the period of disruption.

The Ireland v France International Rugby match on 4th March resulted in a somewhat similar program of specials to that provided for the English match. Details of the morning trains are shown in the table below:

Saturday 3rd March 1995

Train	Formation	Load	Notes
07:45 ex Belfast	81+2+87+4+82	530/580	Drogheda pass 09:22
08:00 ex Belfast	111+12 Mk2	460/490	Drogheda pass 09:38
08:15 ex Belfast	93+1+68+4+89	380/410	Drogheda 10:07/10:08
10:05 ex Drogheda	6102 6p/p+122	18:20	Drogheda dep 10:10
10:00 ex Dundalk	148+3 Cr+DV	120/130	Drogheda 10:31/10:32
09:00 ex Belfast	112+9 Mk2	450/460	Drogheda 10:49/10:51
09:20 ex Belfast	84+2+67+2	160/200	Drogheda 11:21/11:22, Belfast dep 09:35

Return services to Belfast were scheduled as for the English match, i.e. 17:45, 18:20, 18:30, 20:05 and 20:15. The only reported delay was to the 18:20 to Belfast which was badly checked by a CWR train running immediately behind the 17:42 ex Pearse to Drogheda. Despite the fact that there was no path available, this train was allowed to precede the express instead of pausing for a few minutes at Skerries to be overtaken. This produced the rather odd spectacle of the local train being overtaken at Mosney first by the CWR train and then by the closely following 18:20 ex Connolly, the latter passing Mosney at 18:53. The 20:05 to Belfast was formed by 2+67+2+84 and loaded about 330 passengers. The following 20:15 consisted of 112 + 9 Mk2s and loaded between 430 and 480 passengers.

A special train was provided from Lurgan on 4th March to cater for a group of about 250 people travelling to Cork in connection with a GAA fixture the following day. The train stabled in Cork overnight before returning to Lurgan at 17:50 the following day. An NIR driver worked the special in both directions, the formation of which was 98+3+99.

The 18:07 Belfast/Bangor train, 456+2, failed at Holywood on 10th March and was propelled to Bangor by the following 17:45 ex Portadown, 1+459. This delay also affected the 19:00 Bangor/Lisburn, 20:25 Lisburn/Larne Harbour and 21:52 Larne Harbour/Belfast - the latter departing at 22:25.

17th March saw heavy traffic on the Belfast line as detailed below:

Friday 17th March 1995

Train	Formation	Load	Notes	
08:00 ex Belfast	112+12 Mk2	550/570	Dundalk 09:13/09:14	
Relief ex Dundalk	6103 6p/p+122	20/30	Dundalk dep 09:30	wlc to Dunleer
Relief ex Belfast	83+3+96	250/260	Dundalk 09:37/09:46	wlc to Dunleer
09:00 ex Belfast	111+10 Mk2	480/500	Dundalk 10:27/10:30	
Relief ex Dundalk	2606/5/10/13/4/3	60	Dundalk dep 10:46	wlc to Dunleer
Relief ex Belfast	2+82	160/170	Dublin arr 12:06	

The two reliefs from Belfast returned as a combined train at 18:30, following the regular 18:20 express. Incidentally while St. Patrick's Day is a bank holiday throughout Ireland it is a public holiday in the Republic only - the 08:00 ex Belfast does not normally serve Dundalk, but on this date provided the first departure for Dublin.

On Sunday 19th March a special train operated from Portadown at 07:30 to convey somewhat over 550 Down supporters to a GAA fixture being played in Cork later that day. The train returned at 17:50 and was formed by 83+3+96+2+94.

The 18:20 Dublin/Belfast, 078 + NIR Mk2s, hit an obstruction placed by vandals as it approached Newry on 30th March. The train sustained damage to air hoses and had to be worked from the scene in two portions, the damaged vehicles, including 901, being taken to Portadown by 078. The remainder of train was worked forward by 113, currently the Portadown ballast engine, and arrived in Belfast over 90 minutes late at approximately 22:00.

Locomotives and Rolling Stock

NIR's two new 201 class locomotives, 208 and 209, were delivered by ship to Dublin on 23rd March, 209 being brought to Inchicore on the 24th and 208 on the 25th. (See Irish Rail section for further detail.) The locomotives were subsequently started at Inchicore and underwent some preliminary trials there before being worked light engine to York Road. 208 was thus observed passing Malahide at 12:13 on 22nd April having been preceded by 209 the previous day.



208 at North Wall awaiting transfer to Inchicore, 25th March 1995.

DH locomotives 1, 2 and 3, now owned by the Irish Traction Group, were hauled from Adelaide to Dublin on 7th January by 189 with "Dutch Van" 3159 attached in the rear. The movement was

restricted to 20 mph and having departed Adelaide at 12:20 was subsequently overtaken by the 15:00 ex Belfast at Drogheda, the 17:12 ex Drogheda at Mosney and the 17:48 ex Drogheda at Howth Junction. Arrival in Inchicore was at 20:30. The locomotives were transferred to Carrick on Suir on 14th January.

102, which was spare at York Road, is understood to have assisted a double-headed liner train which had failed on the Up line between Balmoral and Finaghy on 6th March. Incidentally, 102 continues to be used on pilot duties at both York Road and Adelaide.

Motor coach 99, "Sir Myles Humphreys", returned to traffic in mid-December following repairs arising from an attack at Finaghy on 20th May 1993.

As of the end of February 106 was the only MV still operational and at that time was being used as the Adelaide pilot, a duty which it continued to perform until mid-March when 102 replaced it. At present 106 is out of service at York Road having been towed there by a pair of Irish Rail locomotives on 18th March. It is not expected to be repaired thus ending the career in company service of what were once known as the 'C' class. A similar fate befell the former 'A' class a few days later when 003 was taken out of traffic at Limerick by Irish Rail. At the time of writing in mid-April the Portadown ballast engine was 113, a duty previously performed by 108 which is also stored at York Road.

It is understood that Hunslet locomotive 101 is receiving attention at York Road having been out of use since April 1994. If returned to service the NIR fleet would then consist of 101, 102, 111, 112, 113, 208 and 209.

Equipment Exchanges And Unusual Haulage

Because of a shortage of DEMUs, in part arising from the Dublin derailment of 21st January, the 07:51 Lisburn to Portadown (06:50 ex Bangor) and 08:30 Portadown to Belfast were worked by 113 + 4 Mk2s (912, 931, 933 and 914) on 23rd January. The 06:50 ex Bangor set formed the 07:52 from Lisburn to Whitehead substituting for the set which normally works empty at 07:20 from Belfast. The locomotive hauled set was strengthened to six bogies the following day and worked the 07:50 from Bangor to Lisburn and 08:40 return.

25th and 26th January saw 459+3+452 at work on various services, perhaps the first time that Castle class units were combined as a five-car set.

Saturday 11th March saw two-car Castle class set, 455, work the 07:00 Bangor/Lisburn and 08:15 Lisburn to Belfast on this date. This is one of the two-car units which was formed to work the Royal train and like 459 was released to traffic without re-inserting the intermediate trailer.

On 31st March, consequent on the possession of the Adelaide/Botanic line, the 07:47 Lisburn to Antrim and the 07:33 Antrim to Lisburn were locomotive hauled, the sets used being those rostered to form the 08:00 and 09:00 ex Belfast from Lisburn forward.

Due to the failure of 112, NIR borrowed successively 073, 078 and 071 to work alongside 111 on cross-border passenger services. 073 was exchanged for 078 on 30th March and 078 for 071 on 31st March. 112 returned to traffic on 13th April working the 15:00 Belfast/Dublin, the latter preceded by 071 which departed Belfast, light engine, at 14:30.

Timetable Alterations

The re-timing of the 10:30 Dublin/Belfast and 10:15 Belfast/Dublin mentioned in the last issue and shown in the current NIR timetable has not taken place, being deferred to the commencement of the new timetable in May.

Miscellaneous

- The British Army dealt with a suspicious object at Portadown station on 21st March. Both the station and the Dublin/Belfast line were closed from 20:00 to 23:45. The package turned out to be a hoax and the incident was probably related to a soccer match being played that evening.
- A lorry driver who struck an underbridge near Muckamore in July 1993 was fined £150 recently. The driver was traced by police and evidence detailed in court included the fact that displaced stonework was discovered in the back of the lorry.
- The “Rail it with Guinness” travel promotion which applied during the Christmas Holiday period and permitted free travel on services within Northern Ireland after 18:30 saw 34,000 avail of the facility, an increase of 40% on 1993. The offer applied from 19th to 31st December inclusive.
- Passenger facilities at Newry have been considerably upgraded by the provision of heated waiting accommodation in the portacabin previously used by the British customs and located at the entrance to the Down platform. A public telephone and information display is also provided within the portacabin unit while outside both platforms shelters have been fitted with windbreaks. Despite the improvements the facilities provided do not yet adequately reflect either the present importance of the station or more significantly its future role as one of the principal stops on the upgraded cross-border service.
- NIR have invited tenders from interested parties for a contract to carry out internal cleaning of rolling stock at York Road from June 1995 to May 1998 inclusive.

Private Railways And Museums

Clonmacnoise & West Offaly Railway

The summer season commences this year at Easter and continues daily until 30th September with trains departing hourly from 10:00 to 17:00. Trains start from the Bord Na Mona works at Blackwater near Shannonbridge, Co. Offaly. The fare for the 45 minute trip along the bog railway is £3 for adults, £2 for children and £8.50 for a family of two adults and up to six children.

Tralee & Dingle

Some 45,000 passengers travelled on the 1½ miles of 3ft gauge railway linking Tralee and Blennerville during the course of the 1994 tourist season. This represents an increase of 33% on the previous year and is a major step towards the goal of making the railway a self-sufficient entity in its own right.

Cavan & Leitrim

A 1970 built Motor Rail U class locomotive of 60 hp was delivered to Dromod on 11th February and will be used to power works trains servicing track laying towards Clooncolry level crossing. The locomotive was originally built to a gauge of 2'6" and was used at the “Mogul of Ireland” barytes mine at Silvermines, near Nenagh, before being sold to Alan Keef Ltd who re-gauged it to 3ft. Two ex Bord na Mona simplex locomotives are currently receiving attention at the Alan Keef works at Ross on Wye, one of which, LM350, is expected to return to Dromod in late May.

A 30 minute video entitled “Cavan & Leitrim Revival” has been produced to raise funds for the restoration project. It contains archive film footage from the 1950s together with a section detailing the

current state of the project as well as future plans. It is available from the Cavan & Leitrim Railway, Station Road, Dromod, Co. Leitrim and costs £10.

Irish Traction Group.

Recent arrivals at Carrick-on-Suir bring the number of preserved diesels on the site to ten, the complete list now comprising 1, 2, 3, B103, 226, 231, G601, G611, G616 and G617. 226 and 231 were built originally by Metropolitan Vickers in 1957 and finally withdrawn in September 1986 having had a General Motors 8-cylinder 645E power plant installed by CIÉ in 1972. They have a Bo-Bo wheel arrangement. B103 was built by the Birmingham Railway Carriage & Wagon Company in 1956 and has a Sulzer 6LDA28 engine of some 960 hp. It has an A1A-A1A wheel arrangement and continued in traffic until November 1977. The G class are 130 hp shunting engines built by Motorenfabrik Deutz at Köln between 1955 and 1962 and withdrawn in the late 1970s. At present 226 and G616 are housed in the former goods store (which is the group's workshop) with the remainder being stored in the open.

Downpatrick & Ardglass

Park Royal brake 1944 and TPO 2978 were delivered to Downpatrick recently. The two former Irish Rail vehicles were worked to Adelaide as part of a cross-border freight train on 17th December and subsequently transferred to Lisburn on 22nd December. The remainder of the journey to Downpatrick was completed by road.

Miscellaneous

Upton station on the former Cork Bandon & South Coast Railway was placed on the market recently, the sale to include the redbrick stationmaster's house, platforms and station buildings.

Former Irish Rail Park Royals 1400 and 1946 have been preserved at the West Cork Model Village at Clonakilty, Co. Cork. Two further Park Royals 1383 and 1416 are in the possession of the RPSI.