

IRISH RAILWAY NEWS

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Laden Gypsum train at Wilkinstown, 21st July 1995.

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Editorial

It is pleasing to able to report so much good news in the current issue but also sobering to realise that the utility and economic justification of the railway system is not universally accepted, as illustrated by the recent Oireachtas Joint Committee Report into the affairs of Iarnród Éireann/Irish Rail. The reader of this report is left in no doubt that the committee is not quite convinced that upcoming expenditure on the railway system represents good value for money and an appropriate application of taxpayers' funds. While it is a bit depressing to see the re-emergence of the same old dogma it needs to be remembered that an industry receiving such significant state support will always have to justify its existence. It is imperative that the resource which the railway represents be put to use carrying as many passengers and as much freight as possible, a view which appears to be generally accepted by the committee. For this to be possible the modest investments proposed under the Operational Program for Transport must be undertaken so as to allow the railway to enhance its services and reduce its operating costs, thus increasing the socio-economic benefit of the system to the entire country. While improved roads are clearly an economic necessity, a decent and attractive public transport system could significantly lessen the scale of road construction with its associated inefficient use of land, environmental damage and ever increasing pollution.

The progress of Irish Rail's Dublin/Belfast upgrading is extremely encouraging and shows just how rapidly a rundown railway can be transformed. The completion of this project next year should facilitate accelerated upgrading of other lines and help spread the benefit of infrastructural funding more widely.

A number of initiatives coincided with the new timetable, notably the commencement of 100 mph running on the Cork line, the much improved service to Cobh and the additional midday trains to and from Ennis. The success of these services would suggest that there might be other untapped markets some of which would be particularly suited to light weight railcars. Limerick to Waterford and Galway immediately spring to mind while the provision of a direct curve at Limerick Junction would permit direct running between Dublin and the sizeable towns of Tipperary, Cahir, Clonmel and Carrick-on-Suir. Although the railway route is not direct, a journey time of around two hours to Clonmel would be possible by taking advantage of the relatively high speed track on the Cork line. The provision of such a facility at Limerick Junction should be carefully considered when the time comes to re-signal and redesign the layout there.

Last but by no means least is the announcement of the DART extension to Greystones. This was probably inevitable given the difficulty of providing a decent service by any other means. That the current skeletal bus/rail arrangements are inadequate is well illustrated by the large numbers who drive from Greystones to Bray every day, not to mention those who felt obliged to abandon public transport entirely.

A. Gray - 31/7/1995

Irish Rail

(Iarnród Éireann, including CIÉ and DTI)

Annual Report

The 1994 Irish Rail (Iarnród Éireann) annual report has been published, and shows that the company had a surplus of just over £2m compared to £5.5m in 1993. The main financial statistics are as under:

	1994 (IR£000)	1993 (IR£000)	% Change
Total Revenue (A)	114,152	112,033	+1.89%
State Grants (B)	93,180	94,053	-0.93%
Profit on Asset Disposal (C)	77	107	-28.03%
Total Operating Costs (D)	193,877	184,309	+5.19%
Interest (E)	11,495	16,368	-29.77%
Surplus (A+B+C-D-E)	2,037	5,516	-63.07%

These figures show a marginal increase in revenue, a small decline in state grants, a large fall in interest and a significant increase in operating costs. The rise in the latter largely relates to voluntary severance payments and increased provision for claims arising out of the 1989 derailment near Claremorris.

Overall passenger and freight carryings were similar to 1993 although the performance of the latter sector was somewhat mixed with increases in Beet, Cement and Fertiliser traffic being offset by a decline in the haulage of General Freight, Mineral Ores and Drink products. The relevant figures are reproduced below:

	1994	1993	% Change
Mainline Passenger	7,850	7,903	-0.67%
Howth/Bray (DART)	15,904	16,150	-1.52%
Dublin Outer Suburban	2,059	2,090	-1.48%
Ale, Beer, Stout	209	215	-2.79%
Beet and Beet Pulp	166	156	+6.41%
Cement	659	583	+13.03%
Fertiliser	177	169	+4.73%
Mineral Ores	618	675	-8.44%
Petrol and Oil	48	50	-4.00%
General Freight	1,136	1,215	-6.50%
Total Passenger Journeys	25,813	26,143	-1.26%
Total Freight Tonnes	3,015	3,061	-1.50%

Passenger traffic in thousands of journeys, freight traffic in thousands of tonnes.

Other points of interest in the Annual Report include:

- The cost of the twenty 201 class locomotives delivered in 1995 is put at £47.6m.
- The railway company had 5,412 employees in 1994 compared to 5,539 at the end of 1993.
- Revenue from Catering activities increased from £7.1m to £7.7m yielding a profit of £413,000 compared with £308,000 in 1993.

Management Changes

The appointment of Mr Eamonn Walsh as CIÉ Executive Chairman in April was followed by the appointment in early May of Mr Michael McDonnell as Group Chief Executive. Mr Walsh vacates a similar position at Hibernian Insurance plc while Mr McDonnell was an Assistant Secretary at the Department of Transport, Energy and Communications. Interestingly Mr McDonnell is reported not to own a car and as such is a regular public transport user - a fact that will doubtless help instil a new realism as the company strives to become more customer oriented, to improve its image and to develop a greater commercial focus. These appointments taken together with recent Ministerial statements suggest that effective control of the operating companies will be returned to CIÉ and that the existing management structures will be significantly rationalised as part of the overall drive to reduce overheads and improve group performance. The other factor which gave rise to the new appointments is the stated desire of the Government to ensure that the moneys being allocated to the CIÉ companies from EU structural funds are wisely spent and yield the maximum benefit to the travelling public.

Joint Oireachtas Committee Report on State Sponsored Bodies (Iarnród Éireann)

The report of the Joint Oireachtas Committee into Irish Rail makes interesting reading and while clearly the result of considerable research is, at times, confused, inaccurate and contradictory. Its key findings, however, are explicit enough and centre on the funding of the railway. The report, in effect, questions whether the cost of the railway to the Exchequer can be justified in value for money terms and suggests a greater level of debate and analysis than heretofore. The committee expresses disappointment with the justification presented by the railway company, both for its annual subvention and capital funding and believes that it has not formulated a good socio-economic justification of the annual subvention. The committee goes on to call "for a detailed and comprehensive review of railway policy, addressing the critical question of the railway's value for money from the Exchequer's and taxpayers' perspective". The report estimates that Exchequer expenditure on Irish Rail will be some £680m between 1994 and 1999 which it states to be double the combined costs of the following (road) projects: the Western Parkway, the Northern Cross, the Southern Cross, the Lee tunnel, the Athlone, Dundalk, Mullingar and Balbriggan by-passes. This might be thought an impressive comparison but for the fact that the expenditure on any one of these road schemes would be sufficient to bring an entire railway line up to 90 mph standards! In the final analysis the future of the railway will be determined through the political process. The reality on the ground is that the public wants a quality transport system and are aware that the railway can be improved almost beyond recognition given the political will to do so. It is therefore of paramount importance that full advantage is taken of new investments to provide faster, more frequent and more user-friendly services. The Belfast line upgrading, for instance, gives the opportunity to transform the service along the Dublin/Dundalk corridor from its current restricted and infrequent format into something really useful.

The report suggests that there is scope both for reducing track maintenance costs and increasing train speeds by the greater use of lightweight railcars. It is further suggested that such a policy could lead to reduced journey times without substantial track renewal. (As part of the justification for such an approach it is stated that railcars are more economic to buy than locomotives, a railcar costs about £1.1m while a locomotive costs £2.1m!)

Some of the statistics quoted in the report are interesting:

- There are currently 232 manual level crossings operated by gatekeepers or train crew compared to 32 automated crossings.
- Market share for “Long Journeys” is stated to be Car (79%), Train (18%), Bus Éireann (10%), Private Bus (5%) and Air (2%). For “Long Journeys” on inter-urban corridors the figures are Car (67%), Train (24%), Bus Éireann (3%), Private Bus (3%) and Air (1%).
- Some 900 (track) miles contain rail more than 50 years old while 290 (track) miles contain sleepers more than 25 years old.

Dublin/Belfast Project

Signalling and Layouts

Visible progress on this front has been somewhat limited in recent months with activity largely confined to the excavation of trenches for cables and the preparation of sites for wayside signalling equipment.

- The redundant signal boxes at Rush, Skerries, Balbriggan and Laytown have been boarded up and the steps leading to the operating floor have been removed except at Laytown.

Bridges

No renewals have taken place since the last issue although renewal of OB 44 and OB 46, just north of Rush station appeared imminent at the time of writing in mid-July.

Permanent Way

Almost eight miles of track, was re-laid between mid-April and mid-July as under:

Dundalk/Dunleer	At and either side of OB 118	Up Line
Rush/Malahide ¹	From MP 11½ to MP 10½	Up Line
Malahide/Howth Junction ¹	From MP 8 ⁷ / ₈ to MP 8½	Up Line
Skerries/Balbriggan ¹	From MP 19¼ to MP 21½	Down Line
Drogheda/Dunleer ²	From MP 40 to MP 40½	Down Line
Drogheda/Dunleer ²	From MP 41 ⁷ / ₈ to MP 45½ (¶)	Down Line

¹ Work undertaken during Sunday possessions - typically involves the renewal of about half a mile of track in a single session. 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.

¶ Excluding under, and immediately on either side of, OB 113, which is located just north of (the former) Dromin Junction.

Ballasting, packing and lining of the Down road between Skerries and Balbriggan was greatly facilitated by the availability of reversible working on the Up line. It was thus possible to take weekday possessions which would otherwise have been impractical due to the volume of traffic and the overhead associated with single line working controlled by pilotman.

Additional drainage has been put in place on the Up side of the line, just south of Rush station, in order to improve the condition of the formation at this point.

The Up line has been renewed under and on either side of OB 118 which is located just south of

Castlebellingham.

Some 77.1% of Irish Rail's portion of the Dublin/Belfast route now consists of concrete sleepers and CWR. The Up road is virtually complete from the border to Portmarnock except for short stretches at Dundalk, Dunleer, Drogheda, Gormanston and Malahide. The Down line contains a number of additional gaps, notably from MP 14 to 16½, from MP 35¾ to 38, from MP 46¾ to 49 and from MP 50⅓ to 52¾. Long welded rail is already in place over a substantial portion of this mileage with relaying either in progress or expected to commence shortly. Both lines between Portmarnock and Howth Junction require to be renewed as does much of the section between Howth Junction and Dublin.

Miscellaneous

- The Up platform at Skerries has been raised and both platforms re-surfaced with cobble-lock style bricks. The station itself has been repainted in the green dominated colour scheme which is gradually asserting itself throughout the system. Work commenced in mid-July resurfacing the Down platform at Balbriggan. At Laytown the classic GNR shelter has been demolished and new wooden fencing installed at the back of the Up platform. This exposed station now affords no shelter for passengers on the Up side and when unstaffed there is no shelter available on either side. As at other local stations north of Howth Junction, on the Maynooth line, and between Cherry Orchard and Sallins, there is no centralised public address facility and no means for passengers to ascertain the status of the service when stations are unattended. (There are facilities for passengers to establish emergency contact with CTC at Clondalkin, Hazelhatch and Sallins. On the Northern line additional cables were put in place at the time of the Malahide/Drogheda re-signalling for this and other purposes, but as yet nothing has been connected.)
- About a quarter of a mile of palisade fencing has been erected on either side of the Belfast main line commencing at, and running northwards from, Shaw's Bridge. The latter is located at MP 5¼ approximately and marks the limit of overhead electrification.
- As elsewhere on the system, overhanging hedges are being cut back and in some instances accumulated lineside vegetation is being removed entirely to facilitate drainage renewal. A side effect of this activity is the opening up of vistas not seen in years, a good example being on the Down side between Laytown and Drogheda.

Permanent Way - General

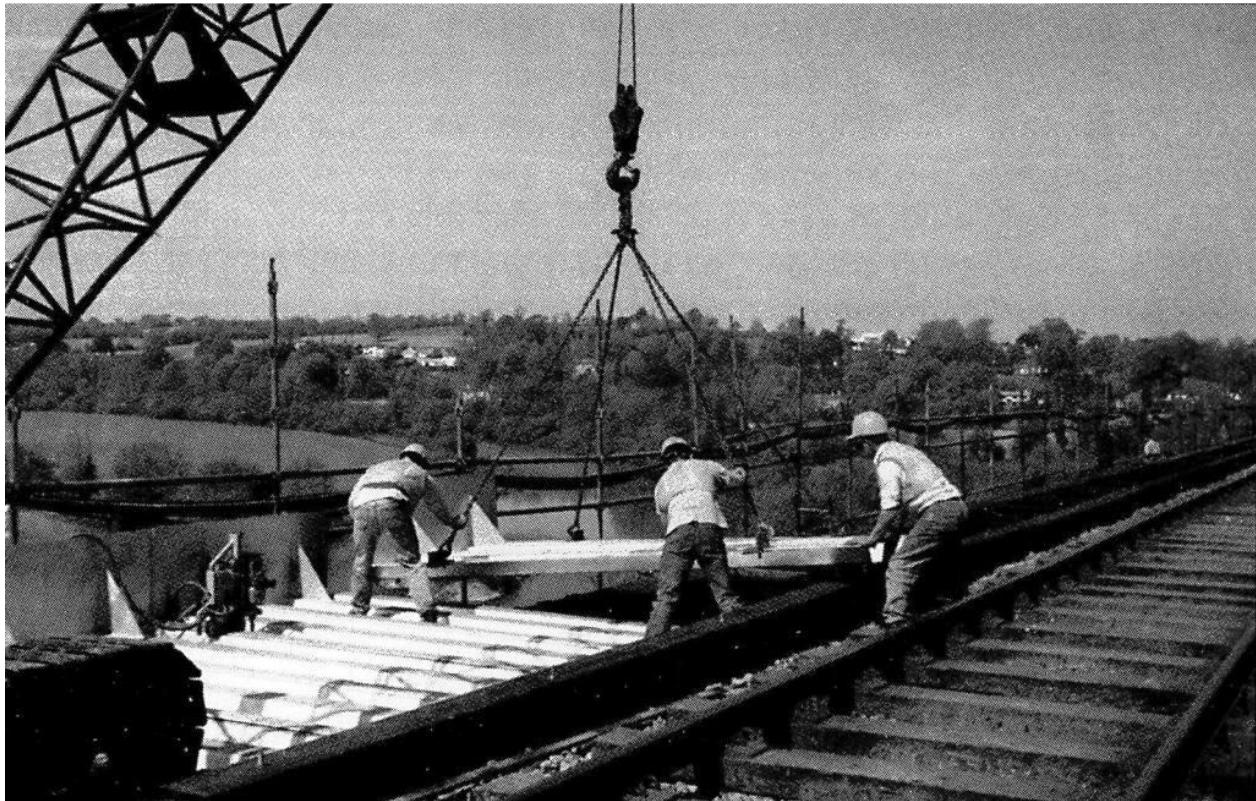
Dublin/Cork

There has been no further relaying on the Cork line since the last issue although it has been found necessary to replace rail between MP 11¼ and 10½ on the Up line and between MP 47 and 49 on the Down line.

With effect from 15th May speeds of up to 100 mph are permitted on two separate sections of track totalling 25½ miles of the Down line and 26½ miles of the Up line. The sections concerned are Cherryville Junction to Portarlington and Limerick Junction to Charleville, although in the case of the latter speed must be reduced to 80 mph through the automatic half-barrier crossing at Emy. (This crossing, like that at Grange, is not equipped with CCTV.)

The level crossing at Coolowley has been eliminated and replaced by an underpass. The removal of the crossing, which was located on a curve, has allowed the track cant to be considerably increased as a result of which the 80 mph speed restriction has been removed, although pending settlement of the earthworks a temporary slack to 25 mph is in force. (The general speed limit in this area is currently 90 mph.)

Installation of corrugated steel decking on the Down side of the Blackwater viaduct at Mallow was completed on 12th April. Following re-instatement of the track on the Down side the Up road was stowed at either end of the bridge on 23rd April thus allowing work commence on the Up side. 31st May saw the last section of the decking in place with work being sufficiently complete to allow the resumption of normal double line working with effect from Sunday 11th June. Both roads have been re-laid with jointed track on wooden sleepers, a temporary measure pending the installation of CWR on special concrete sleepers designed for use with check rail.



Mallow Viaduct during re-decking of the Up line, May 1995.

In order to provide an adequate clearance envelope for 100 mph operation OB 110, a stone arch structure formerly located near MP 39, has been demolished. OB 96 near MP 35 has been raised while OB 54, near MP 21½, has been rebuilt as a pre-stressed concrete portal arch in place of the former stone arch. Extensive formation repairs have also taken place on both roads at, and on either side of, the three locations mentioned.

Portarlington/Athlone

The general speed limit over this line was raised from 70 to 80 mph with effect from the commencement of the new timetable on 15th May. Just over 23 miles of the 38¾ mile long branch is now cleared for 80 mph, the longest segments being located on either side of Geashill, from MP 42½ to 49½ and MP 50½ to 57½. A further stretch of 80 mph track is located immediately west of Clara station and extends for almost 5½ miles towards Clonnydonnin. At the time of writing in mid-July each of the 80 mph stretches mentioned above have short temporary restrictions to 70 mph contained within them, the result being that the new line speed cannot yet be sustained over a useful distance.

Limerick Junction/Limerick

The general speed limit over this line has been raised from 60 to 80 mph with effect from 15th May. So

far the 8½ miles between MP 4¼ and 12¾ has been cleared for 80 mph as has 2¾ miles of the Up line between Killonan Junction and Limerick station.

Athlone/Westport

A further 1¾ miles of CWR on concrete sleepers were installed in May during a series of weekday possessions which did not affect services. The latest section to be renewed is from MP 86¼ to 88, between Athlone and Knockcroghery. Some 12.7% of this route is now covered by CWR.

Manulla Junction/Ballina

Contrary to the report in the last issue work has not yet begun on the installation of a ballast deck on the Moy river bridge, activity to date being of an investigative nature and included examination of the bridge piers and foundations. The branch is expected to be closed completely for a number of weeks, possibly in September, to facilitate unhindered access to the bridge.

The general speed limit on this branch was raised from 50 to 60 mph with effect from 15th May. So far 1½ miles of the 2½ mile branch have been cleared for 60 mph. Restrictions to 50 mph still apply at the former Ballyvary station, at Foxford station, approaching Shanclough level crossing and between MP 152¼ and 153¾.

Cherryville Junction/Waterford

Renewal of UB 114 at Newrath was about to commence on 23rd July at which stage a site had been levelled adjacent to the bridge for plant and materials. A temporary access road has been provided, parallel to the line, from the nearby level crossing at Newrath.

The direct curve at Lavistown is now in place and consists of CWR on concrete sleepers although as of 22nd July the pre-fabricated turnouts at either end had yet to be installed.

Limerick Junction/Waterford

UB 187 at Dunkitt is currently being repaired and repainted. UB 188, co-sited with UB 114 on the Cherryville Junction/Waterford line, is about to be renewed (see above).

Dublin/Rosslare

A further half mile of CWR was installed near Newcastle in April, from MP 22¾ to 23¼, bringing the total mileage of CWR South of Bray to almost 4½ miles or 5% of the total route. Panel relaying using second-hand materials has been in progress at several locations recently in both the Wicklow/Rathdrum and Arklow/Gorey sections. Excavation and renewal of track through Ferrycarrig tunnel took place at the end of April during a possession scheduled to commence late on Wednesday 25th April and finish in time to pass the 18:35 Connolly/Rosslare on 27th April. During this period passengers travelling south of Enniscorthy were conveyed by bus.

Limerick/Claremorris

Panel relaying utilising reconditioned track panels recovered from upgrading work elsewhere has been in progress recently between MP 30 and 32½ in the Ennis/Gort section.

Signalling and Layout Alterations

The new SSI interlocking controlling the section of line between Waterford (Central) and the Barrow Bridge was commissioned on 14th May - Abbey Junction ceasing to be a block post the previous day. The New Ross branch was disconnected on 30th April to facilitate the removal of the existing junction preparatory to re-modelling and simplification of the trackwork as shown in the drawing below. The main changes arising from the resignalling are as follows:

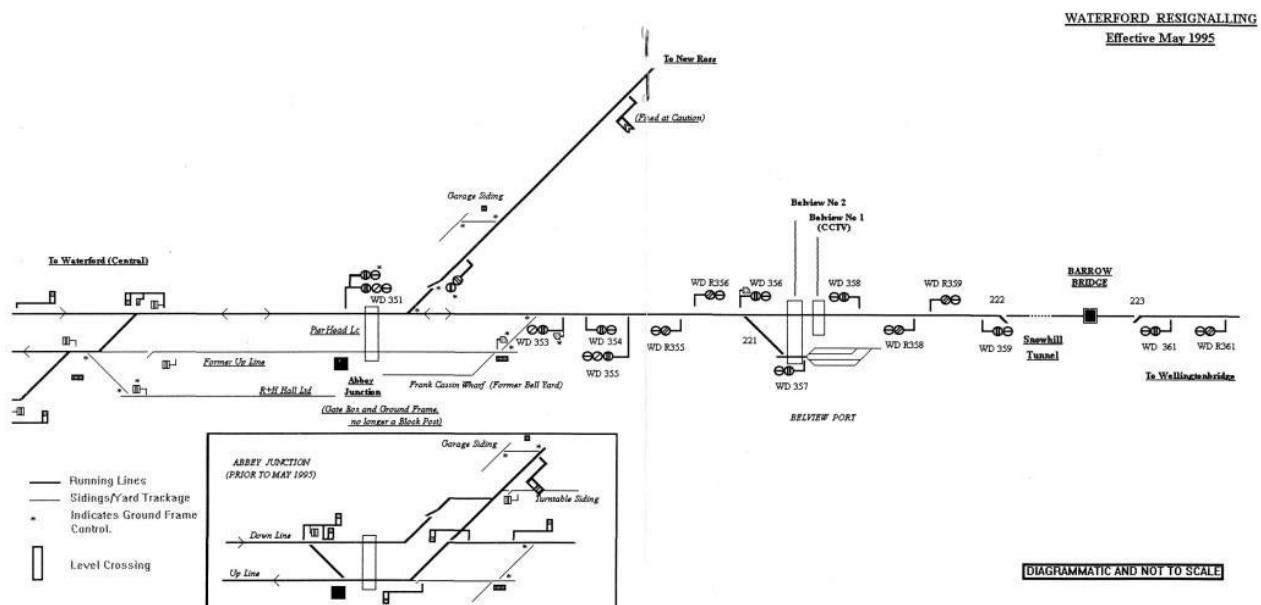
- The section of line between Waterford (Central) and Abbey Junction has been singled and all

traffic is now routed over the former Down line. The former Up line is retained as part of a loop siding which runs from the east end of Waterford station to the ground frame connection at the Frank Cassin wharf.

- Apart from a turnout to the New Ross branch, which was commissioned later, all connections which were directly worked from Abbey Junction signal box have been disconnected and removed. The ground frame giving access to the Frank Cassin wharf is retained but the release is now under the control of Waterford (Central) and the associated discs have been changed from the semaphore type to standard position light shunt signals.
- The main running line is fully track circuited from Waterford (Central) to a point near signal WD R361, which is located on the Campile side of the Barrow bridge.
- Trains travelling in either direction between Waterford and the Belview terminal operate entirely under the control of Waterford (Central) and are no longer required to carry the Wellington bridge token. The points, No.221, giving access to Belview yard are now directly controlled from Waterford and the former ground frame has been dispensed with. The existing Down signals AJ R101 and AJ 101 have been removed while the Up distant signal for Belview level crossing is now numbered WD R358. The level crossings together with No.221 points are additionally protected by signals WD 358, WD R356 and WD 356 as shown on the diagram. A new two-aspect signal, WD 357, is provided to control movements from Belview yard towards Waterford. In order to facilitate movements between Belview and Wellingtonbridge (in either direction) the subsidiary ETS instrument has been retained and is connected to the Waterford/Wellingtonbridge circuit as heretofore.
- The Barrow bridge is no longer interlocked with the ETS circuit as the bridge lies within the area controlled from Waterford and is fully protected by both signals and trap points. In consequence a train may approach the bridge even if the centrally pivoted swing span is open. To open the bridge it is necessary to obtain a release from Waterford which, of course, cannot be obtained unless the signals are at danger and the trap points are open. The semaphore stop signals previously located a short distance on either side of the bridge and controlled from the bridge cabin have been removed. The bridge operator can replace signals WD 359 and WD 361 without reference to Waterford should circumstances require it.
- Trains from the Waterford direction travelling beyond signal WD 359 must carry the Waterford (Central) for Barrow Bridge/Wellingtonbridge token, the instruments controlling the section being located in Waterford (Central) and Wellingtonbridge. As might be expected signal WD 359 is interlocked with the ETS circuit.
- The main level crossing at Belview (No.1) is now a full barrier crossing and is monitored by closed circuit television from Waterford. A new manual, gated, level crossing designated Belview No.2 has been brought into operation and as shown on the diagram is protected by signals WD 356, 357 and 358.
- The New Ross branch is now worked by manual staff only. The previous “provision” for reversion to ETS working is now cancelled although it is many years since such arrangements were used. As a consequence of the final cessation of ETS working New Ross is now no longer a block post. Incidentally a large type ETS instrument could be seen at Abbey Junction until its closure as a block post.
- The turnout giving access to the New Ross branch together with the associated trap points and signals were commissioned on 29th May and are controlled by a five-lever ground frame housed in the former Abbey Junction signal box. To operate the ground frame it is necessary both to obtain a

release from Waterford (Central) and to be in possession of the manual token for New Ross. The ground frame will normally be operated by the guard of the train although it may be worked by a suitably qualified person and in the latter case it will not be necessary for the train to stop on the branch while the guard resets the ground frame. This provision is required as the initial part of the branch is quite severely graded and there could be considerable difficulty in restarting a heavy train. Trains destined for the branch must, however, stop at signal WD 351 regardless of circumstances. (The five ground frame levers together with the gate lock lever is all that remains of the 26 lever frame at Abbey Junction.)

- Abbey Junction signal box is manned by a gate keeper as the adjacent Pier Head level crossing is still manually controlled.
- As can be seen from the diagram and contrary to information in the last issue, access to the premises of R&H Hall is via the ground frame at the east end of Waterford station, the operation of which is unchanged. This siding has been recently renewed with second hand materials while the tramway layout within the R&H Hall premises has been modified by slewing the loop track into the main track about half-way along its length. Apart from producing a rather oddly aligned siding this change makes it impossible to run round and trains will therefore have to propel either into or out of the premises. (The ground frame mentioned above replaced Waterford East cabin in 1985.)



Preparatory to the commissioning of the direct curve at Lavistown and the introduction of track circuit block working between Muine Bheag (Bagenalstown) and Thomastown the following signalling alterations have taken place:

- The Up and Down semaphore distant signals protecting Shankill level crossing (MP 69) have been replaced by colour-light signals located respectively 734 and 950 yards further out. The Up distant is located on the left hand side of the line while the Down distant is on the right hand side, just south of the new Muine Bheag Up distant. These changes became effective on 18th July.
- The Up and Down semaphore distant signals protecting Gowran level crossing (MP 74½) have been replaced by colour-light signals located respectively 758 and 750 yards further out. Both signals are on the left hand side of the line. These changes became effective on 18th July.
- The Up and Down colour-light distant signals for Dunbell level crossing (MP 32½) have been re-sited respectively 658 and 704 yards further out. The Down distant is now located just on the

Thomastown side of the future Lavistown (South) Junction while the Up distant is now on the left hand side of the line. These changes took effect on 13th July.

At the time of writing on 22nd July the following new signals were in position but not commissioned:

Muine Bheag: New colour-light Up and Down distant signals, a new three-aspect Up outer home and on the station side of the latter a new two-aspect Down advance starter which also acts as the limit of shunt. The existing (worked) semaphore distant signals will be removed.

Kilkenny: Re-sited Up distant from Thomastown (KY R33), re-sited Up home signal for Lavistown (KY 33). This latter will be a three-aspect colour light with route direction indicator reading onto the direct curve. The yellow aspect will only apply to trains traversing the curve but not yet signalled into the Muine Bheag section. This signal will continue to read to Kilkenny as heretofore but in this instance, when cleared, will only display a green aspect without the route direction indicator.

Re-sited Down distant from Muine Bheag (KY R32). The corresponding Down home signal (KY 32) remains on the right hand side of the line and is positioned, as at present, immediately on the Muine Bheag side of Highrath level crossing. This latter will be a three-aspect colour light with route direction indicator reading onto the direct curve. The yellow aspect will only apply to trains traversing the curve but not yet signalled into the Thomastown section. This signal will continue to read to Kilkenny as heretofore but in this instance, when cleared, will only display a green aspect without the route direction indicator.

There will be a two-aspect section starting signal at each end of the loop to control access to the mainline but these signals had yet to be erected as of 22nd July. These are the only entirely new signals at Lavistown.

Thomastown: New colour-light Up and Down distant signals, a new three-aspect Down outer home and on the station side of the latter a new two-aspect Up advance starter which also acts as the limit of shunt. The existing (worked) semaphore distant signals will be removed.

Alterations have been taking place recently at both Marino point and Shelton Abbey preparatory to accommodating longer Ammonia trains between these locations.

Locomotives

The eleven locomotives delivered to Irish Rail on 23rd March, 206-207, 225 and 227- 234 have all entered revenue service, the last to be commissioned being 234 at the end of May. A further batch of locomotives have been named while some of those already carrying Irish language names have recently received English language nameplates as well.

No.	Name	English Translation
201	Abhainn Na Sionnaíne	River Shannon
202	Abhainn Na Laoi	River Lee (dual plated)
203	Abhainn Na Coirbe	River Corrib (dual plated)
204	Abhainn Na Bearú	River Barrow
205	Abhainn Na Feoire	River Nore
206	Abhainn Na Life	River Liffey
210	Abhainn Na hÉirne	River Erne
211	Abhainn Na Suca	River Suck

212	Abhainn Na Sláine	River Slaney
214	Abhainn Na Brosnaí	River Brosna
217	Abhainn Na Fleisce	River Flesk
221	Abhainn Na Féilge	River Feakle (dual plated)
224	Abhainn Na Féile	River Feale
226	Abhainn Na Siúire	River Suir

The introduction of the 201 class on cross-border passenger trains was quickly followed by the introduction of the class on cross-border freight trains. For instance the 11:35 ex Belfast was observed at Rush on 26th April and consisted of 224 + 16 bogies + 3x4-wheelers, the cargo comprising fertiliser, Bell containers (13x40') and empty kegs. Other liners on the Belfast line regularly worked by 201s include the 09:20 ex North Wall and 15:10 ex Belfast, the engine for the former also working the 06:32 local passenger from Dundalk. 29th April saw the 09:20 Adelaide/Drogheda empty cement at Dundalk formed by 218 + 18 wagons. The 11:40 ex North Wall on this date consisted of 074 + 18 bogies carrying 17x40' containers.

With effect from the commencement of the new timetable on 15th May the 201 class may operate at normal line speeds from Dublin to Cobh, Dublin to Belfast (subject to special temporary restrictions on NIR), Dublin to Bray, Drogheda to Navan, Cherryville Junction to Waterford (¶), Portarlington to Galway, Athlone to Westport, Limerick Junction to Limerick, Portlaoise to Conniberry, North Wall to Islandbridge Junction, North Wall to East Wall Junction and North Wall² to Liffey Junction.

Also from 15th May 201s may operate at normal line speeds from Dublin to Sligo, Bray to Rosslare, Sligo to Sligo Quay, Howth Junction to Howth and Limerick to Castlemungret. However, apart from "emergencies", the only duty normally permitted on these routes is the haulage of freight trains between Bray and Shelton Abbey. 201s are also permitted to operate in "emergencies" from Limerick Junction (¶) to Rosslare (40), Killonan Junction to Ballybroy (40), Limerick to Foynes (20), Limerick to Claremorris (20) and Mullingar to Athlone (30). In the case of the latter routes maximum speed in miles per hour must not exceed the bracketed figure. 201s may operate on Beet trains between Waterford and Wellingtonbridge in normal circumstances but are restricted to a maximum speed of 30 mph. The locomotives remain banned, under all circumstances, from the Ballina, New Ross, Kingscourt, Boyne Road and Conniberry branches.

(² Also from Connolly. ¶ May not cross UB 114 or UB 188 at Newrath pending reconstruction - it is thus not yet possible to operate 201s into Waterford other than via Rosslare and then only in an "emergency".)

The 16:50 Heuston/Ballina was worked by 085 on 2nd June but was subject to a 5 mph restriction over the Moy River bridge. These locomotives are still officially banned from the branch although they will be a familiar feature once engineering work has been completed at the Moy bridge.

217 + 5 Cr + GSV formed the 06:57 ex Arklow on 15th July and was observed to time at Merrion Gates.

Locomotive 039 has been returned to working order at Inchicore and is expected to be used on an Irish Rail organised official farewell trip from Dublin outward via Limerick and return via Waterford and Rosslare Harbour. The Irish Traction Group hope to preserve this locomotive and 003 at its Carrick-on-Suir base.

The last 001 hauled passenger train is now understood to have been the 10:20 Ballybroy to Limerick

on 1st April rather than the evening branch service as reported in the last issue.

The availability of 121 class locomotives has declined considerably with as few as four available for traffic in mid-July. As a consequence push/pull sets are frequently locomotive hauled, usually by 201s although 071s are sometimes used. For instance on 20th July both the 07:32 ex Drogheda and 07:00 ex Newry consisted of push/pull trailers hauled by 204 and 203 respectively. (Further details of the latter appear elsewhere.)

088 has returned to traffic following its major overhaul ("L" exam) at Inchicore although at the time of writing it had not been repainted and presents a rather battered appearance with the bodywork repairs plainly visible.

124, 158 and 176 have recently returned to traffic following attention at Inchicore. Given the transformation of the motive power situation there is some doubt as to the future of 133, 156 and 165 all of which need extensive repairs.

Coaching Stock

Refurbishment of coaching stock continues with a steady stream of Mk3 push/pull trailers, Mk3s, Mk2s (vacuum and air braked) and Cravens emerging from the works in recent months.

Work on the conversion of the International set is progressing at Inchicore with standard 6206 sufficiently advanced to undergo wheel slip trials at Heuston on 25th June. The numbering being used would seem to indicate that the vehicles are to be fitted for push/pull operation with standards being numbered in the 62xx series, the dining car being 6401 and the driving trailer being 6501. The set is believed to be destined for use on the Galway line where almost all weekday services are still formed of vacuum braked Mk2 stock. (The only exceptions are the 07:50 ex Galway and the 18:50 to Galway which are generally formed by Mk3s as, oddly enough, are all Sunday services.)

Railcars

It is anticipated that a further ten railcar vehicles will be ordered in the near future with twenty three more to come over the next ten years. It is expected that the next batch will have improved seating and a different bogie design although it is unclear whether the maximum speed of the cars will be raised to 90 mph, as is now the standard elsewhere for vehicles of this type engaged in mainline and outer suburban work. Following the introduction of the new timetable on 15th May railcar rosters were somewhat revised and expanded although there is still generally at least one spare set in Inchicore except for a brief period in the morning on Monday to Thursdays, both morning and evening on Fridays and again on Saturday evenings. The rosters are:

Monday to Saturdays (All trains are formed by two-car sets unless otherwise noted)

- 05:45 Heuston/Portlaoise (MF)
- 06:50 Heuston/Portarlington
- 16:55 Heuston/Waterford (FO)
- 16:55 Heuston/Portarlington (SO)
- 07:05 Portlaoise/Heuston (MF)
- 08:10 Portarlington/Heuston

Revised and reduced local services from Dublin (Heuston) to Kildare:

06:00 (MF), 08:00, 09:15, 09:55, 11:20, 12:15, 13:25, 14:10, 15:20, 16:10, 17:45, 18:30, 19:35, 20:35, 21:50, 22:35

Revised and reduced local services to Kildare to Dublin (Heuston):

06:50 (MF), 07:28 (SO), 09:00, 10:11, 10:53, 12:18, 13:06, 14:33, 15:13, 16:15, 17:13, 18:33, 19:43, 20:48, 21:48, 21:50, 22:50

Off-peak Connolly/Maynooth/Connolly services:

05:45 (MF), 08:03, 10:40, 12:05, 14:00, 16:10, 18:00, 20:15 (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

Northern Outer Suburban services as under:

06:05 Dundalk to Pearse (MF)
08:00[¶]³ Dundalk to Pearse
09:50 Drogheda to Pearse - push/pull on Saturdays to provide extra accommodation
13:05 Drogheda to Connolly - push/pull on summer Saturdays to provide extra accommodation
13:42[¶]² Drogheda to Pearse - railcar on summer Saturdays - see 13:05 above
17:12[¶] Drogheda to Pearse
17:48² Drogheda to Connolly - Cravens on Fridays
08:08 Pearse to Drogheda - push/pull on Saturdays, see 09:50 ex Drogheda above
11:05 Pearse to Drogheda - generally a push/pull on summer Saturdays
12:09[¶]² Pearse to Drogheda - formed by railcars on summer Saturdays - see 11:05 above
15:04[¶]² Pearse to Drogheda (SO)
15:40[¶] Pearse to Drogheda (MF)
16:26² Pearse to Drogheda (SO)
16:32² Connolly to Drogheda (MF) - Cravens on Fridays, Railcar goes to Waterford
18:27[¶] Dublin (Pearse) to Dundalk
19:15² Connolly to Dundalk

Cork/Cobh:

Hourly service 06:25 to 12:25 and 14:25 to 23:25 inclusive. (The 13:25 ex Cork is formed by a locomotive hauled set.)

Cobh/Cork:

Hourly service 06:55 to 12:55 and 14:55 to 23:55 inclusive. (The 14:00 ex Cobh is formed by a locomotive hauled set.)

Sundays

16:30[¶] Cork to Dublin (Heuston)
11:25, 12:35, 13:30, 14:30, 15:45, 16:45, 18:45 and 20:15 Cork/Cobh
11:52, 13:02, 13:57, 14:57, 16:15, 17:15, 19:15 and 20:42 Cobh/Cork.
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, reduces to four-car on occasions.

¶ Indicates that train is worked by a four piece set.

² Operates to a non accelerated schedule.

³ Operates to an accelerated schedule but is timetabled to lie in Drogheda for up to thirteen minutes for no particular reason!

The table below contains details of a recent run between Heuston and Kildare and shows that performance on this service can be of a similar quality to that on the Northern and Western suburban services. Of particular note are the sectional timings achieved from Hazelhatch to Sallins and from Sallins to Newbridge which were covered at start to stop averages of 58.7 mph and 56.9 mph respectively. This was a remarkable performance especially given the overall 70 mph maximum speed limit which applies to the Arrow railcars and is testimony to the rapid acceleration and excellent braking characteristics of these trains.

06:50 Dublin (Heuston) to Portarlington

Railcars 2611/12

	(A) Distance (Miles)	(B) Sectional Allowance	(C) Actually Recorded	(D) Station Dwell Time
Dublin (Heuston)	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Cherry Orchard	3.12	5.30	4.54	0.15
Clondalkin	1.28	2.30	2.32	0.14
Hazelhatch	5.60	6.30	6.37	0.39
Sallins	7.90	8.30	8.05	0.14
Newbridge	7.57	8.00	7.59	0.20
Kildare	4.53	6.00	5.46	(0.21)
Totals	30.00	37.00	35.53	1.42
	(B)+(E)	(C)+(D)		
Heuston-Kildare	30.00	39.30	37.35	

(E) 30 seconds are allowed at each station, total allowance for this trip was thus 2.30".

Cork/Cobh

Following considerable local agitation Irish Rail allocated a single two-piece Arrow railcar set to this service with effect from 15th May. The service has been completely recast with weekday trains operating ex Cork at hourly intervals from 06:25 to 23:25 inclusive returning from Cobh, again at hourly intervals, from 06:55 to 12:55 and from 14:55 to 23:55. Additional trains operate to Cobh at 07:50 and from Cobh at 08:25 and 14:00. These latter and the 13:25 ex Cork remain locomotive hauled, all other services being formed by the railcar set. The journey time for railcar operated services is 22 minutes in the Down direction and 23 minutes in the Up direction, inclusive of five stops - a modest acceleration of 2 minutes over the locomotive hauled allowance for the 11¾ mile trip. While the stock is being used intensively by Irish Rail standards there is nonetheless a lie-over of seven minutes at Cork and eight minutes at Cobh. The previous weekday timetable provided eleven trains to Cobh and twelve trains from Cobh except on Fridays when one service was cancelled in each direction. The new Sunday service starts earlier, ends later and has been expanded from five to eight trains in each direction, all of which are railcar operated. The set allocated to the Cobh service is changed (at least) once a week by exchanging it with one of the two sets forming the Saturday only 20:30 Heuston/Cork empty working. The re-marshalled four-piece set then works the new, non-stop, Sundays only, 16:30 Cork/Heuston.

- The public reaction to the new service has been favourable despite their being no provision for the

carriage of cycles. It is understood that carryings have increased substantially since the introduction of the railcars with some reports suggesting increased business of almost 30%.

- Toilets are not presently in use on the Cork-based railcar set as suitable discharge facilities have yet to be provided.
- The platforms at Littleisland and Fota are being raised and altered to accommodate the railcars. The Down platform at Fota is expected to be relocated thus eliminating the staggered platform arrangement at this increasingly busy halt.

Radio Train

Irish Rail have resuscitated the “Radio Train” which was once such a well known feature of the summer tourist season especially during the 1950s and 1960s. The concept was inaugurated on a centenary special from Dublin to Cork in 1949 whereby commentary and music was transmitted through the train from a mobile studio coach, somewhat of a novelty on the CIÉ system at that time. The tourist oriented Radio Trains operated principally from Dublin to Killarney and Galway although specials were to be seen throughout the system both on excursions and pilgrimage trains until 1979. Thereafter the combination of the decline in tourism, the relatively poor condition of the vehicles and the general rolling stock shortage resulted in the radio studio coaches being pressed into general use and subsequently converted into side-corridor standards.

The new service utilises the saloon coaches of the executive train, 7161 and 7162, the train typically consisting of six bogies, the remaining vehicles being a generator van, two Mk3 standards and a dining car. Following various preview trips for the press the service proper commenced on 20th June and apart from 8th August is to run each Tuesday until 22nd August. The train departs from Heuston station at 08:50 and arrives in Killarney at 12:05. The return train leaves Killarney at 18:05 and is due into Heuston at 21:00, an average start to stop speed of 60 mph. Given that the only stop en-route is at Mallow (for crew purposes), that the train is hauled by a 201 class locomotive and that speeds of up to 100 mph are permitted between Mallow and Dublin it is hardly surprising that early arrivals have been the norm with the journey being completed on at least one occasion in under 2½ hours - an overall average of 70 mph for the 175 mile trip. The day return fare is £29 and includes coffee and biscuits on the outward trip with an evening meal being served on the way back. Optional extras include the traditional jaunting car trip or a trip on the lakes on board the recently introduced waterbus.

While the initial uptake was somewhat slow, due no doubt to the limited advance publicity, traffic has built up quickly with about 130 passengers travelling on 4th July. This venture deserves to be a success given the excellent value for money, spacious accommodation, the enthusiasm of the train’s crew and the high standard of catering. Hopefully the Radio Train will appear in next year’s advance tourist literature so that visitors will be tempted to incorporate the train in their holiday plans rather than stumbling across it at the last moment.

- There was some suggestion that the Radio Train would carry the well known “electrical flash” headboard though this has not happened to date.
- The Radio Train is to run to Portadown, for Armagh, on 10th August. Passengers will have the opportunity to visit the Planetarium, cathedrals, Navan Fort, Palace Stables and St. Patrick’s Trian. Fares are as for the Killarney trip with admissions being extra.

Curragh Races

Saturday Dublin/Kildare/Dublin Arrow local services are to call at the Curragh on race days from 11:00 to 14:00 and again from 17:00 to 19:00. In addition the following mainline trains will also call:

09:00 Cork/Heuston	17:20 Heuston/Cork
10:55 Waterford/Heuston	17:30 Heuston/Limerick
11:20 Galway/Heuston	18:05 Heuston/Westport
	18:10 Heuston/Waterford

On Sundays when race meetings are being held the following services will call:

09:10 Cork/Heuston	18:00 Heuston/Westport
10:05 Limerick/Heuston	18:30 Heuston/Limerick
09:35 Waterford/Heuston	19:00 Heuston/Cork
08:50 Galway/Heuston	

As there are no Arrow local services on Sundays a special operates at 12:40 ex Heuston returning from the Curragh at 18:15.

Greystones

After years of procrastination the extension of the DART service to Greystones was finally announced on 29th May by the Minister for Transport, Energy and Communications, Mr Michael Lowry TD at a news conference held in the La Touche Hotel in Greystones. Work is scheduled to commence in early 1996 and will take some twenty months to complete. The cost of associated civil engineering, power supply, erection of overhead equipment, signalling alterations and the construction of a passing loop at Redford is expected to be £8.4m.

The Minister stated that services will operate every fifteen minutes at peak periods and every thirty minutes off-peak. Feeder bus services are to be provided from Delgany, Kilcoole, Newcastle and Newtownmountkennedy. Park and ride facilities are also envisaged as is the possibility of a new station at Redford. The Minister went on to say “Investment in rail based commuter services has been recognised for many years by other European countries as the most efficient and cost effective way to move large sections of populations, alleviate traffic congestion, improve safety and reduce environmental deterioration. I have also repeatedly emphasised my personal commitment to the delivery of quality reliable public transport services at the lowest possible cost to the consumer. I strongly support the view that the European approach to public transport is the correct one for us to adopt both in the case of Dublin and for the other networks throughout the country.”

The Minister’s statement also anticipated announcements in the near future concerning the further upgrading of DART and other rail commuter services as well as the development of a Light Rail system for Dublin.

The Greystones project does not include provision for additional rolling stock and whereas there may be little problem in providing the off peak service and in extending Bray based DARTs to start from Greystones in the morning and terminate at Greystones in the evening it will require either considerable ingenuity or a reduction in existing frequencies to maintain services out of Greystones between 08:20 and 09:30. The reason for this is that the 08:30, 08:40, 08:50, 09:05 and 09:15 services out of Bray are formed by trains from Howth which arrive respectively at 08:25, 08:32, 08:43, 09:00 and 09:10. There is thus no time to go to Greystones and virtually all other stock is committed elsewhere during this period. One possibility might be to split trains with two-car sets working between Bray and Greystones although the present signalling and operating procedures are probably too inflexible for this to work

efficiently. In any event loadings on the existing peak services out of Bray and also on the Northside are such as to deter further growth in ridership as the existing pool of rolling stock is physically incapable of accommodating additional traffic in an efficient and acceptable manner. Without new equipment overall peak carryings will remain static with Greystones passengers simply replacing commuters at stations closer to Dublin. This, hopefully, will not be allowed to happen although in the absence of additional rolling stock or higher operating speeds it is almost inevitable.

The population of the Greystones/Delgany area is projected to rise to 42,500 by 2011 compared to 7,500 in 1985.

Newry

Commencing on 15th May the 07:25 Dundalk/Pearse was extended to operate from Newry on weekdays thus providing the border town with an early morning commuter train to Dublin for the first time. The 17:13 Pearse/Dundalk is extended to Newry and depending on the availability of a return path to Dundalk may continue to Poyntzpass to avoid blocking the 18:20 ex Dublin. On Saturdays the set returns empty to Dublin at 19:10, an odd arrangement given the Spartan service presently obtaining on the Up road. (The last train to Dublin on a Saturday leaves Newry at 18:03, Dundalk at 19:07, Drogheda at 18:49, Balbriggan at 18:35 and Skerries at 18:42.)

So far the morning service has not been heavily patronised with generally less than ten passengers availing of the facility, no doubt because of college holidays and the unattractive journey time which requires an average speed of no more than 34 mph. The 17:13 ex Pearse, although not much faster has proven very useful for accommodating parties returning from Mosney to Newry. Even without parties the evening service has proved reasonably popular. For instance on 24th June some 36 passengers got off at Dundalk with 34 continuing to Newry. The train on this date was formed by 130 + 6 p/p 6105 and left Dundalk nine minutes late at 18:54.

The 07:00 ex Newry started from Dundalk on 19th, 20th and 21st July as the rostered push/pull set was being hauled by a 201 class and as there is only one crossover at Newry there was no convenient way of running round. Taxis were provided on the first date and an Arrow railcar on the other two days. The 17:13 ex Pearse was 201 hauled on the first two of these dates but continued to Newry and thence empty to Poyntzpass to run round. On the Saturday 22nd the empty set for the 07:00 ex Newry had to run to Poyntzpass to cross to the Up road and as a result did not reach Dundalk until 07:50 where it waited to form the 08:00 to Dublin as the Arrow set of the latter had operated in the path of the Newry train from Dundalk.

Timber

Following the success of the timber trains to date the Minister for Agriculture, Food and Forestry, Mr Ivan Yates, speaking at Mullingar station on 5th June, officially launched a joint project involving the railway company and Coillte whereby up to 500,000 tons of timber will be moved annually mainly from the West of Ireland to processing plants at Clonmel and Belview. It is believed that both of these locations will be directly served by private sidings, that at Clonmel via the former Thurles branch while Belview will be served via the New Ross branch as mentioned in the last issue. Up to 20 railheads will be involved and when traffic reaches its projected level it is envisaged that up to five timber trains will operate each day compared with a maximum of two at present. Most traffic will be routed via the Limerick Junction to Waterford line which is single track throughout and severely restricted in capacity by lengthy block sections and the limited number of crossing loops. (The Tipperary/Clonmel section, some 24½ miles long, will be the principal problem although this section could easily be split by reinstating the crossing and block facilities removed from Cahir in April 1988.)

The environmentally beneficial potential of the railway system is well illustrated by the fact that up to 12,000 truck movements will be avoided by the carrying of timber by rail, a traffic which is incidentally predicted to become the fourth largest category of rail-borne bulk freight.

- While activity appears to have reduced somewhat in recent months there is still a steady flow of timber particularly from Ballina, Westport, Mullingar, Sligo, Killarney, Galway and Roscommon.

Bell Trains

This traffic continues to be handled at a much reduced level particularly since the diversion of most Belfast/Waterford traffic to sea transport which occurred towards the end of May. As a result of the latter change there is now generally only one Bell liner train in either direction between North Wall and Waterford on Mondays to Fridays. Traffic on Saturdays, traditionally the busiest day of the week, rarely results in more than three Down trains. On the few recent occasions when three trains have run the last would generally not be fully laden. For instance on 22nd July the 11:30 ex North Wall consisted of 087 + 18 bogies with fifteen 40' boxes while the second train, the 15:00 ex North Wall, was 085 + 16 bogies with only five 40' boxes.

Bell traffic from Cork to Waterford is reportedly lighter as well, although Limerick is still producing a good trade. The 18:50 Cork/Waterford left Limerick Junction at 23:04 on Friday 9th June and consisted of 071/177 + 16 bogies with fourteen 40' boxes. Incidentally 177 was running but was not operating in multiple with 071. The 11:30 Limerick/Waterford, the following day, consisted of 087 + 18 bogies carrying 17½ loads although few of the containers were actually carrying the Bell brand.

Grain Traffic

Grain traffic from Waterford to Portlaoise was expected to commence on 24th July utilising the modified and re-instated facilities at the premises of R&H Hall, adjacent to Abbey Junction and accessed via the Waterford East ground frame (see signalling diagram above).

New Ross Branch

Although reconnected to the Rosslare line on or after 29th May no revenue traffic has operated on the branch due, apparently, to adhesion difficulties caused by the overgrown condition of the formation.

After some difficulties the weed spray train, double-headed by 172+121, reached New Ross on 28th June and stabled overnight, the first such occurrence for many years. The return trip encountered severe adhesion problems, near Glenmore, which caused the undergrowth beneath the train engines to catch fire. This fire in turn spread to 121, although the damage sustained is not thought to be overly serious. An inspection car subsequently traversed the line after which all traffic was suspended until further notice.

Limerick/Ennis/Athenry/Claremorris

The Limerick/Ennis line was re-opened to traffic on 3rd May, the first revenue service being the 07:30 ex Ennis the following day. The line had been closed to all traffic since 8th February due to flooding at Ballycar. The Limerick/Claremorris liner train has not resumed, however, and in consequence freight traffic for Ennis continues to be road hauled. Traffic north of Ennis consists largely of the weekly "coal and oil" from Foynes to Ballina and the several times weekly Limerick/Athenry bulk cement. Monday 12th June saw both a bulk cement train to Athenry and a palletised bagged cement from Limerick to Ennis.

Passenger traffic to Ennis has recovered well despite the prolonged closure. For instance the 17:30

Heuston/Ennis left Limerick on 1st June with around 110 passengers and consisted of 177 + 7 Mk3 + EGV. Despite the above observation it is not now the normal practice to run the 17:30 ex Dublin through to Ennis, the preferred arrangement being to transfer passengers into a Cravens set at Limerick. With effect from the commencement of the new timetable on 15th May a new service was introduced at 12:10 from Limerick to Ennis returning at 14:15. The set used is that of the 10:30 Ballybroy/Limerick and consisted of 172 + 1 Cr + GSV on 10th June, on which date eighteen passengers travelled from Limerick and twenty from Ennis. The new service gives an outbound connection off the 09:10 from Dublin either via Nenagh or via Limerick Junction. The return 14:15 ex Ennis connects into the 15:10, 15:45 and 15:55 from Limerick thus providing connections to Dublin, Cork, Waterford, Rosslare and the Nenagh line. Given good marketing and further improvements in services, Ennis clearly has the potential to generate traffic at least on a par with say Waterford, Westport or Sligo.

Derailments

A wagon of an up empty bagged cement train was derailed just north of Rathpeacon on 4th May causing some delay to services although little damage was caused.

The “Coal and Oil” train is understood to have derailed at Gort on or around 4th May, as a result of which the loop at this location is currently out of use.

The 06:15 ex Cork made a spectacular arrival at Cobh on 5th May, the train demolishing the buffer stops and embedding itself in the wall of the Cobh Heritage Centre. Considerable damage was caused to the rear wall and roof of the centre, which is housed in the former station concourse and extends over part of the original arrival platform. The locomotive, 165, was extensively damaged and may not be repaired. The four Irish Rail employees on the empty working escaped uninjured although the story could easily have been different as evidenced by the roof beam which penetrated the cab through the right windscreen. Services were disrupted for some time but are understood to have resumed during the course of the afternoon. After some controversy in the local media Irish Rail agreed to publish the results of its investigation into the accident, which according to the Cork Examiner was to be completed by early July.

The van of the 17:35 Tralee/Cork train became derailed at the west end of Rathmore station on 13th May. While the damage was not particularly severe and no injuries were reported the line was blocked and the 18:15 ex Dublin was unable to reach its destination. The 13:25 Dublin/Sligo terminated at Longford on the same date due to the derailment of an empty oil train at Sligo station and the consequent cancellation of the 13:25 ex Sligo. Passengers on these two services were taken by road from and to Longford.

An empty cement train was derailed in the cutting just east of Tullamore station at or shortly after 14:00 on 17th May. Services were considerably delayed as the line was initially completely blocked for some hours and it was subsequently not possible to enter the loop at for a number of days due to damage to the points at the Geashill end of the station. Passengers on the 14:55 Heuston/Galway, 15:25 Galway/Heuston and 16:50 Heuston/Athlone were taken by conveyed by bus between Portarlington and Athlone. The 18:05 to Westport was almost an hour late arriving in Tullamore and was closely followed by the 18:50 to Galway. The 18:20 ex Galway was also about an hour late and terminated at Athlone where passengers transferred into 18:20 Westport/Heuston.

According to the Sunday Business Post the CIÉ board have been told that the majority of the twenty-four “accidents” since January 1994 occurred because of procedural failures and did not relate to equipment. (Fortunately the majority of these incidents were either minor in nature or minor in consequence and did not result in serious harm to either passengers or staff, although in one or two

instances the consequences could have been somewhat more serious.)

General Traffic and Operations

The 12:09 Pearse/Drogheda train, 127 + 6 p/p 6102 failed at Donabate on 14th April and was pushed to Skerries by 083 arriving at 13:50. The train was routed into the Up platform and passengers were transferred to the 13:00 Dublin/Belfast which called additionally at Skerries, Balbriggan and Laytown. The 13:45 ex Drogheda was expected to start from Skerries with a connecting bus from Drogheda and intermediate points.

An auxiliary to the 15:00 ex Belfast ran from Dundalk at 15:45 on 26th April due to the large numbers travelling to an international football match. The well filled train was formed by 2616/15 but failed at Drogheda where passengers were transferred to the 15:00 ex Belfast. The railcars were attached to the 17:12 ex Drogheda and the latter terminated at Connolly at 18:14. The return 18:27 ex Pearse, 2611/12/01/02, started from Connolly but did not get away until 18:49. The failed set was quickly repaired and formed the 19:15 from Connolly to Dundalk.

It is understood that the 17:50 Cork/Cobh service was operated by a 201 class on 29th April, but that on arrival at Cobh the locomotive was unable to run round its train due to the length of the head shunt. A second 201 was sent out to haul the train back to Cork, the two engines involved being 227 and 228.

A GAA fixture on 30th April resulted in two specials one at 11:05 from Ballybroy and the other at 11:50 from Portlaoise. Both operated to Connolly and were formed by 087 + 6104 6 p/p and 2614/17/8/7/4/3 respectively, the first with about 600 passengers, the second with about 160. Return trains were at 17:40 and 17:50.

The Up Asahi liner on 5th May consisted of 144/121 + 13 bogies + barrier + 9 Acrylonitrile and passed Clondalkin at 09:06. The bogie wagons were laden with 40' containers. This was followed at 09:44 by 078 + 15 bogies, fully laden with 40' Bell Line boxes.

As there are no Up road passenger services after the 19:35 ex Drogheda it was necessary to run a special train from Laytown to Dublin after the strand races on 15th May. The special departed at 20:46 and was scheduled to serve Skerries, Malahide, Howth Junction, Connolly, Tara Street and Pearse station. About 90 passengers travelled reflecting the much reduced attendance at the event itself which up to now has been staged much later into the summer.

A new North Wall to Cork liner train commenced operation on 15th May and is scheduled to depart at 13:00. The first day's working was formed by 224 + 15 bogies, five of which carried Guinness traffic, attached at Heuston. A 10:00 North Wall/Limerick liner has also been operation although the latter is not timetabled. These trains reflect the improved availability of locomotives and will hopefully help to improve the railway's share of the freight market.

DART services were suspended between Booterstown and Dun Laoghaire for about 40 minutes on 18th May following a fatality at Blackrock station.

The 15:10 Heuston/Cork was detained at Charleville for over twenty minutes on 20th May apparently awaiting the arrival of steam locomotive No.461 at Mallow. There are several sets of intermediate automatics between these two places but for some unexplained reason absolute block working between controlled signals was enforced. An unusual special operated at 18:10 from Belfast to Hazelhatch on this date and was formed by 071 + 5 Mk3 + EGV. The train was the return leg of an executive train hire which had travelled north earlier in the day and which is also understood to have gone to Bangor.

The 16:30 Cork/Heuston was formed by 2608/7/12/11 on 21st May and passed Cherryville Junction at 18:53 with between 110 and 120 passengers. This was the first day of operation for this train and as mentioned elsewhere the working is an integral part of the arrangements devised in connection with the

introduction of Arrow railcars between Cork and Cobh.

27th May saw the Modern Railway Society of Ireland organise a special train, consisting of 98+2+96, from Belfast (Yorkgate) to Navan and thence to Gorey. The train left Belfast at 08:00, Gorey at 15:35 and finally returned from Dublin at 18:30.

A special train ran from Dundalk to Newbridge at 14:45 on 28th May in connection with a GAA fixture and was formed by 6102 6 p/p + 124. The train failed on arrival at Newbridge and reportedly delayed the 17:50 Heuston to Cork.

The 08:00 ex Dundalk was cancelled between Dundalk and Balbriggan on 30th May. The 08:08 ex Pearse/Drogheda, a two-piece railcar set, terminated at Balbriggan and worked back in the path of the missing service.

The 07:55 to Belfast was blocked outside Malahide for almost 30 minutes on 1st June due to brake problems on the 06:00 Connolly to Drogheda which was eventually shunted into the Quarry sidings. The 07:16 ex Drogheda did not run on this date.

The new 17:10 Cork/Mallow service was observed leaving Cork on 2nd June and consisted of 150 + GSV + 3 Cr. The train which had about eighty passengers departed from one of the Cobh bays and ran non-stop through platform six.

Athenry presented an animated scene on 3rd June with no less than three trains in the station, the 15:25 ex Galway (218 + 8 Mk2 + EGV), a bulk cement from Limerick (130/168 + 8 bogies) and the empty “Coal and Oil” from Ballina.

The 15:25 Galway/Dublin, 216 + EGV + 11 Mk2s + EGV, failed on 5th June reportedly at or near Ballinasloe. The failed train was eventually rescued by 218 which was taken off the 14:55 Heuston/Galway. Both trains were seriously delayed, the Up train for about 2½ hours and the Down train for about 2 hours. As often happens on such occasions there were further problems this time involving the 18:20 ex Galway which departed around 20:00 and was formed by 171/192 + 9 Mk2 + EGV. The locomotive pair was assembled at Galway by combining the Athlone pilot with the engine of the weed spray train. Unfortunately the consist got into trouble near Sallins and was still in the vicinity of the latter around 23:30. On the same day, the Monday of the June Bank Holiday weekend, traffic on the Belfast line was considerably swollen by day trippers necessitating reliefs to both the 17:00 and 18:00 ex Belfast. The additional trains were worked by an NIR railcar set and a 201 hauled push/pull respectively.

DART services were severely disrupted during the morning rush hour on 4th July as a result of an OHLE fault on Platform 6 at Connolly which apparently necessitated cutting power over the entire section from Fairview to Sandymount. Southbound DART services terminated at Killester while services in the opposite direction were unable to proceed beyond Sydney Parade. Northside outer suburban services got through but were subject to delay.

A number of waiting DART passengers were struck and at least one person was injured by objects thrown from the 13:38 Connolly/Rosslare on 8th July. The Gardaí were called to meet the train at Bray resulting in a prolonged pause which together with various earlier out of course stops resulted in an accumulated delay of about 30 minutes. The 13:00 from Dublin to Belfast did not stop at Mosney on same date as the train was incorrectly signalled along the Down main line by the automatic routing system which was working on the basis on an incorrect train ID. As a result about one hundred passengers had to await the next service thus entailing missed connections and delays of at least two hours in most cases.

The Munster Hurling final, between Clare and Limerick, resulted in considerable additional traffic on 9th July. Movements at Thurles between 15:00 and 20:30 are summarised in the tables below. The only

major problems were the blockage caused to the last special which was caused by the preceding railcar being held outside Limerick Junction while the train ahead of it was running round. This latter made a special call to set down a handful of passengers for Charleville. (The Arrow railcars are still subject to block working between controlled signals on this section of the line.) There was a pilot engine at Thurles for most of the period covered by the tables, this role being assigned to 224 which departed at 19:15.

Thurles, Sunday 9th July 1995

Down Trains. Munster Hurling Final Day

Train	Formation	Load		Notes
13:45 Dublin/Limerick	220+DV+4Mk2a/b	110/130	15:13/15:14	
Charleville Special (T)	6101 3p/p+128	300/350	dep 17:24	
Ennis Special (T)	214+6p/p 6104	850/930	dep 17:34	Also Limerick, hauled mode
Limerick Special (L)	207+GSV+10Cr+DV	710/780	dep 17:49	Also Ennis passengers
Cork Special (L)	216+9Cr+DV	750/800	dep 18:03	
Ennis Special (B)	229+8Mk2a/b+DV	530/550	dep 18:16	Also Limerick
Cork Special (T) (K)	2601/2/13/10	310/320	dep 18:26	Held at Limerick Junction for 17:50
Limerick Special (T)	211+EGV+10Mk2+EGV	630/680	dep 18:55	Absolute block behind railcar
17:50 Dublin/Cork	206+EGV+8Mk3	330	pass 19:03	
18:30 Dublin/Limerick	234+EGV+7Mk3	250/270	20:14/20:18	
19:00 Dublin/Cork	212+EGV+5Mk2	270/300	20:22/20:25	

(T) Stabled Thurles, (L) Stabled Lisduff, (B) Stabled Ballybroy, (K) Served Kilmallock.

Thurles, Sunday 9th July 1995

Up Trains. Munster Hurling Final Day

Train	Formation	Load		Notes
14:15 Cork/Dublin	212+8Mk3+EGV	360/370	15:43/15:46	
14:30 Cork/Dublin	234+5Mk2+EGV	110/130	16:01/16:03	
13:35 Tralee/Dublin	230+7Mk3+EGV	300/330	16:19/16:21	
16:30 Cork/Dublin	2614/17/08/07/04/03	450/500	17:51/17:58	80/100 arriving
17:30 Cork/Dublin	221+8Mk3+EGV	360/400	pass 18:43	
18:15 Limerick/Dublin	220+DV+4Mk2a/b	450/460	19:02/19:05	Some passengers left behind
17:20 Tralee/Dublin	222+8Mk3+EGV	460/490	pass 19:49	Additional stops (S)
Empty ex Limerick	215+DV+10Cr+GSV		20:17/20:21	
18:40 Cork/Dublin	210+9Mk2+EGV	550	20:30/20:32	

(S) Served Templemore, Ballybroy and Portlaoise, no room on 18:15 ex Limerick.

The Irish Traction Group organised a special train from Bray to Sligo and back on 15th July departing Bray at 06:15, outward via Connolly, Cabra, Portarlington, Athlone, Moate and Mullingar and returning directly via Mullingar and Enfield. Most of the passengers were cross-channel and joined the tour train at Dun Laoghaire. Motive power was 131+124 as far as Mullingar when NIR's 112 took over for the remainder of the trip to Sligo and back to Bray. The train consisted of four Cravens and a GSV and carried around 200 passengers. (The associated 05:00 Heuston/Bray and 19:55 Bray/Heuston were also available to any participants wanting to travel on them!)

High Court Action

Irish Rail have lost their challenge to the constitutionality of sections 12 and 14 of the 1961 Civil Liability Act and as such are obliged to compensate in full those injured as a result of the September 1989 derailment near Claremorris. An earlier High Court decision had apportioned responsibility for the derailment between Irish Rail (30%) and a Mr Diskin (70%). The problem arises in this instance as Mr Diskin is “a person without any significant means” and the act provides for the injured parties to recover damages if any one of the defendants are financially solvent even though the others are not. The total involved is £3.8 million and this has been reflected as an exceptional operating cost in the 1994 accounts. This provision is additional to an amount of £2.5 million set aside in the 1992.

Miscellaneous

The re-development of Sallins station has won the 1995 Royal Institute of Architects in Ireland Eaten Region award in the over £200,000 category.

To coincide with the general upward adjustment of day and monthly saver tickets Irish Rail has been running a promotion on the Dublin/Waterford and Dublin/Rosslare lines whereby passengers travelling on these routes during July are entitled to enter a draw for a free trip to Canada. The fare adjustments range between 50p and £1 although in a few instances the fare has not been changed. The Cork or Mallow to Dublin day return fare, effective 13th July, is £22 and is valid on certain trains only and not at all on Sundays, Mondays and Fridays. In contrast the Waterford to Dublin day return, effective 3rd July, is £10 and is available every day and on all trains.

Through ticketing is now available from most provincial centres in the south and west to O'Connell Bridge via Heuston and the connecting bus service. Hopefully this new facility will help to reduce the time wasted queuing to purchase tickets and join buses at Heuston in circumstances which do little to commend the use of public transport. Control of the connecting timetabled number 90 and 91 buses remains poor with frequent instances of buses pulling away as trains enter the station. A good example occurred on Saturday 3rd June.

The free travel scheme for pensioners and certain other Social Welfare recipients in the Republic has been extended to include cross-border travel although intending passengers travelling by train must complete a travel warrant and present this together with a travel pass to the booking office clerk prior to travel. Free cross-border travel is similarly available to suitably qualified persons originating in Northern Ireland, but is again subject to the presentation of a travel warrant.

Platforms 5 and 6 at Cork have been re-numbered 4 and 5 respectively and are to be extended to accommodate nine Mk3s. Coinciding with this change was the commissioning of a new electronic passenger information system, a smaller scale version of that at Heuston. Platform and station improvements are also expected at Ballina as part of an ongoing program of station upgrading which has already seen improved passenger facilities, including disabled toilets, at Sligo, Roscommon, Westport, Limerick and other places. The general appearance of Dundalk station, and in particular the platform area, has improved greatly helped by the ever growing display of historical photographs and maps which adorn the platforms, the former buffet and the interior of the covered walkway.

Irish Rail have sought tenders for 63 petrol driven saloon cars for use throughout the railway system. It is thought that these vehicles may be used for routine track inspection in place of the traditional track walker although such usage has not been confirmed.

A span was removed from the 1,205ft long Suir bridge at Waterford towards the end of May thus creating an unobstructed shipping lane and obviating the necessity to operate the 80ft lifting span. The

section removed is being stored adjacent to Waterford West signal box and could be reinstated in the (unlikely) event of the mothballed Ballinacourty branch being resuscitated. This line, if linked to the disused Cobh Junction/Youghal line, would provide a direct Rosslare/Waterford/Cork route and as such would have considerable potential for both passenger and freight traffic.

Weed spraying of the system got underway on 24th May using Irish Rail's own dedicated weed spray train, initially hauled by 184. Although the sprayer ran last year, the spring and earlier summer have seen extensive weed infestation of the formation, particularly on secondary lines, many of which went unsprayed for several years as part of a short-term cost cutting exercise.

The 1946 built, Cowans of Sheldon, 35 ton steam crane (295A) and its jib runner (627A) are not expected to be used again and have been added to the scrap line at Inchicore.

Northern Ireland Railways

Dublin/Belfast Project

No relaying has taken place since the last issue although the formation at Trummery AHB was excavated and renewed in early June. It is anticipated that much of the remaining work, in particular the renewal of nineteen track miles south of Portadown, will be undertaken by contractors although no announcements have yet been made. The Belfast/Lisburn section, currently subject to an overall 40 mph restriction is to be upgraded by NIR commencing in October and due for completion in July 1996. It is anticipated that some or all of the track in the latter section will be re-laid using steel sleepers so as to facilitate the deepening of the ballast bed without significantly raising the formation.

NIR have invited tenders for the supply of eight crossovers and two turnouts for installation at five locations between Lisburn and Newry. The rail used is to conform to BS 113A and is to be set on cast base plates. (S79/183)

Signalling contractors have recently pegged out the section of line between Portadown and the border preparatory to the installation of new signalling equipment. This scheme will see the closure of Poyntzpass and Newry signal boxes and the introduction of track circuit block from Portadown to the interface with Irish Rail's CTC system which has yet to be extended North of Drogheda. Early indications suggest that isolated clusters of colour light signals will be located in or around Poyntzpass (MP 77), Newry (MP 69 $\frac{1}{4}$) and Adavoyle (MP 62).

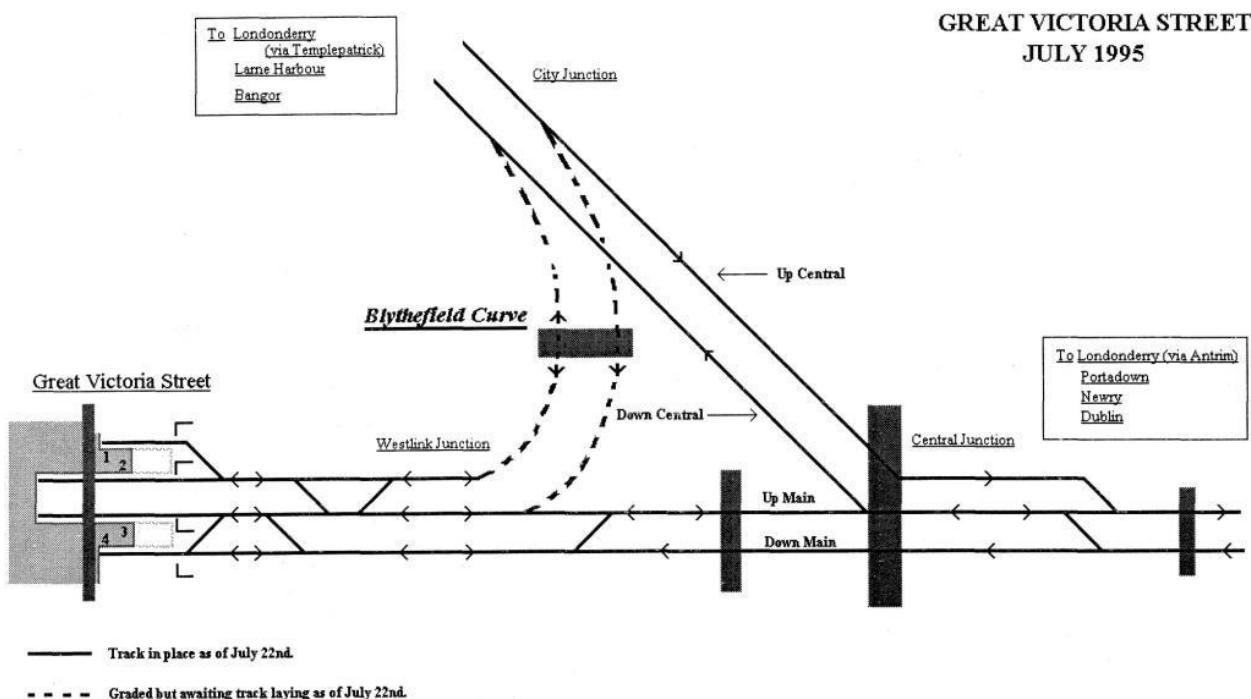
Work on bridge reconstruction is expected to commence in September, the program to include the reconstruction of two underbridges and twelve overbridges. A project engineer has been appointed to oversee both this activity and sea defence works, the latter presumably on the Larne line. The underbridges are owned by the DOE and detailed discussions have been taking place to establish the detail of the renewals to be undertaken.

Work on the construction of the new De Dietrich rolling stock for the cross-border service has commenced at Reichshoffen, France. The new coaches will run on Y32 bogies to be constructed by De Dietrich although many of the other fixtures and fittings including the sliding plug doors will be subcontracted. The gangways will be completely sealed, a design feature which should considerably reduce the ingress of noise into the passenger saloons. Coupling within the train sets will be effected by means of tightlock devices similar to a fixed head buckeye although the driving trailers will be fitted with drop head couplers.

Great Victoria Street

Work on this project is continuing with the track layout completed at Central Junction and between there the station platforms, although as of 23rd July, neither City Junction or the Blythefield curve was yet in place. The reason for the delay in laying track along the otherwise completed curve is to preserve the access route which it provides for heavy machinery being used in the preparation and installation of City Junction.

The station platforms and canopies are also largely complete while work is well advanced on the moderately proportioned passenger facilities. Although platforms two and three, which extend under the Boyne bridge, will only accommodate six-car sets the foundations are already in place for extensions which will allow the handling of nine-car sets. These extensions, when authorised, will also result in platforms one and four being roughly doubled in length so to accommodate six-car trains. Interestingly, various parts of the station are being lined in yellow and black brick similar to that once used extensively by the GNR(I).



Signalling of the new layout is also underway with signal bases and location cases already in evidence throughout the site. All lines between Westlink Junction and the buffer stops will be signalled for reversible working as will the Up main line as far as Central Junction and the outbound Blythefield curve, the latter to facilitate empty trains coming from Central and York Road.

Bleach Green Junction/Antrim

Due to engineering works between Adelaide and Botanic, in connection with the re-opening of Great Victoria Street, the former NCC mainline has again been host to diverted traffic as under:

2nd July:

10:10 Belfast (Central) to Londonderry started from Botanic at 10:13 and ran to Portrush	Central dep 10:18 (10:10)
(A separate train ran from Lisburn to Londonderry with passengers changing trains as required at Coleraine. The Belfast train, 453+4+457, preceded the Lisburn train and ran directly to Portrush before returning to Coleraine to form the Portrush connection off the Lisburn service.)	

21st July:

06:15 Larne Harbour to Londonderry ran to Botanic and reversed to form the 07:23 to Londonderry	Central dep 07:27 (07:15)
08:50 Belfast (Central) to Londonderry started from Botanic at 09:00	Central dep 09:05 (08:50)
10:00 Belfast (Central) to Portrush started from Botanic at 10:06	Central dep 10:10 (10:00)
11:20 Belfast (Central) to Londonderry started from Botanic at 11:23	Central dep 11:30 (11:20)
13:40 Belfast (Central) to Londonderry started from Botanic at 13:43	Central dep 13:48 (13:40)
16:05 Belfast (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 Belfast (Central)	Central arr 08:50 (08:39)
08:05 Londonderry to Carrickfergus	Central arr 10:20 (10:32)
09:45 Londonderry to Belfast (Central)	Central arr 12:05 (12:19)
11:35 Londonderry to Belfast (Central)	Central arr 13:42 (13:56)
14:40 Londonderry to Belfast (Central)	Central arr 16:48 (17:04)

22nd July:

08:25 Belfast (Central) to Londonderry started from Botanic at 08:28	Central dep 08:35 (08:25)
10:00 Belfast (Central) to Portrush started from Botanic at 10:03	Central dep 10:10 (10:08)
11:30 Belfast (Central) to Londonderry started from Botanic at 11:33	Central dep 11:40 (11:30)
14:10 Belfast (Central) to Londonderry started from Botanic at 14:17	Central dep 14:22 (14:10)
16:05 Belfast (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 Belfast (Central) to Londonderry started from Botanic at 18:18	Central dep 18:25 (18:15)
08:10 Londonderry to Belfast (Central)	Central arr 10:20 (10:34)
09:25 Portrush to Belfast (Central)	Central arr 11:21 (11:31)
11:05 Londonderry to Botanic	Central arr 13:26 (13:41)
14:40 Londonderry to Botanic	Central arr 16:50 (17:07)

23rd July:

10:10 Belfast (Central) to Londonderry started from Botanic at 10:13	Central dep 10:18 (10:10)
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Bracketed times at Belfast Central are the normal arrival/departure times.

NIR have invited tenders (EJ/S130) for the installation of signalling on fifteen miles of single track between Bleach Green Junction and Antrim to be completed by March 1997. There is to be only one intermediate loop which is expected to be located on the Belfast side of Templepatrick near the mid-point of the single line from Monkstown to Antrim. The contract is to include the installation of automatic half-barriers at five locations in addition to a full barrier crossing remotely monitored by CCTV, the latter presumably on the busy airport road.

It is understood that some remedial bridge work will be required in advance of the reopening of this line to normal traffic and that this work will include attention to the pre-stressed concrete viaduct at Bleach Green Junction as well as to two other structures. Tenders for bridge work of a more minor nature should have issued by the time this issue appears in print.

Slaght Accident Report

The report of enquiry into the collision and subsequent derailment which occurred at Slaght AOCL on

1st March 1990 has been published. The train involved was the 20:35 from Belfast (Central) to Londonderry which consisted of driving trailer (745), intermediate (771) and power car (90). The train struck a Rover 213 saloon car on the crossing and derailed as it did so. The leading vehicle of the train (745) ran down an embankment to the left, turned end for end and came to rest with the left hand side of its body uppermost and the bogies lying beside it. The other two vehicles separated from 745 and continued derailed but along the track and roughly in line, coming to a stand approximately 181 metres from the crossing. One passenger in the train was killed, as was the driver and one of the passengers in the car.

The enquiry, conducted by Major A.G.B. King, concluded that the battery feeding the Down line track circuit (13D), located on the Antrim side of the crossing had discharged due to a break in the 110V AC cable feeding the battery charger in the location cabinet. This caused the associated relay to drop at about 21:15 and the crossing sequence to be activated. After four minutes the crossing controls timed out and the audible and visual warnings were extinguished. The crossing was not activated by the approaching 20:35 as the relay associated with track circuit 13D was still de-energised and the crossing equipment had not therefore reset itself. As a consequence of the non-operation of the crossing the driver's white light did not show and the report states that the driver should have brought his train to halt clear of the crossing. The weather at the time of the accident was cold with intermittent snow flurries. Visibility is stated to have been fair. (A fault such as the above at an AOCL is not indicated remotely hence the driver's white light which when illuminated indicates that the crossing is operating correctly.)

The driver did not give evidence to the enquiry as following his admission of manslaughter he was dismissed by NIR and chose not to attend the enquiry. The driver was not, however, jailed but instead received a two year conditional discharge.

All automatic open crossings on NIR have since been eliminated and the Antrim/Ballymena line is now operated as a single line with all traffic being carried on the former Up road.

Signalling, Layouts and Level Crossings

A temporary level crossing has been created at Fortwilliam (MP 1) to facilitate access to the Up side of the line in connection with the construction of new sidings. The latter will supplement the accommodation available at the nearby York Road depot and ease problems in advance of the arrival of the new cross-border coaching stock.

Following the three-day possession which severed the line between Adelaide and Botanic from 31st March to 2nd April there were further complete full day or near full day closures of the same section on Sundays 9th, 23rd and 30th April, 25th June and 2nd July. These latter closures saw the installation of the turnout from the Up main line to the Down Central line (9th April) and the subsequent excavation and adjustment of the formation in and around the Donegall Road overbridge. A further three day closure commenced around 06:00 on Friday 21st July and was scheduled to end in the early hours on Monday 24th July. This latter was preparatory to the installation of trackwork at City Junction and saw the excavation of about 200 yards of track immediately west of City Hospital Halt. Yet more closures are scheduled for 30th July and 6th August.

Traffic

Two special trains operated from Portadown to Dublin on 30th April at 10:25 and 10:50 and were formed by 89+2+68+4+67 and 111 + 8 Mk2s respectively. Some 1,200 passengers travelled on the two trains which were operated in connection with a GAA fixture. A special train operated from Lisburn on 2nd July to convey around 800 passengers to the Bon Jovi concert taking place in Dublin on that day.

The train consisted of a twelve piece railcar set, motor coaches 95, 90, 68 and 92, and returned from Connolly at 00:30 the following day. Also on 2nd July 209 + 11 Mk2s worked a special from Lisburn destined for the Curragh in connection with the Irish Derby, the train being worked forward from Connolly by 223. Both of these specials worked back to Belfast as the possession of the Adelaide/Botanic section was lifted in time to pass the 17:55 ex Dublin. The latter was formed by a six-car set, part of the Bon Jovi special, and returned empty to Dublin around 21:00.

The annual RBP gathering at Scarva on 13th July resulted in a programme of special trains similar to last year with three railcar sets providing an intensive service before and after the event. As in previous years a temporary block post was established at Scarva to split the 10½ mile Portadown/Poynzpass section and so reduce the normal signalling headway. For the second year in succession the return trains from Scarva were loaded on the Up platform and worked wrong-line to Portadown as detailed in the tables below:

Thursday 13th July 1995

14:30-17:30 Down Trains approaching Portadown (MP 86)

Train	Formation	Load	Line Used	
13:00 ex Dublin	078+DV+9Mk2a/b	160/180	Down	pass 14:56
15:30 ex Scarva	452+4+458	400/430	Up	pass 15:29
15:40 ex Scarva	457+4+453	400/430	Up	pass 15:49
15:50 ex Scarva	67+4+90	460/480	Up	pass 16:03
16:15 ex Scarva	457+4+453	480/500	Up	pass 16:30
16:25 ex Scarva	452+4+458	460/480	Up	pass 16:44
15:00 ex Dublin	224+EGV+7Mk2	130/150	Down	pass 16:45
17:05 ex Scarva	457+4+453	480/500	Up	pass 17:18

Thursday 13th July 1995

14:30-17:45 Up Trains leaving Portadown (MP 86)

Train	Formation	Load	Line Used	
Empty ex Portadown	90+4+67		Up	pass 14:40
Empty ex Portadown	453+4+457		Up	pass 14:56
Empty ex Portadown	458+4+452		Up	pass 15:08
15:00 ex Belfast	209+9Mk2s	90/130	Down	pass 15:44
Empty ex Portadown	458+4+452		Down	pass 15:58
Empty ex Portadown	453+4+457		Up	pass 16:13
Empty ex Portadown	453+4+457		Up	pass 16:57
Empty ex Portadown	99+2		Up	pass 17:27
17:00 ex Belfast	078+9Mk2a/b+DV	90/100	Up	pass 17:45

As can be seen almost all of the specials used the Up road, both empty and laden. The initial three empties stabled at Scarva and thus returned to Portadown in reverse order. The set for the 16:25 special ran to Poynzpass on the Down line and thence to Scarva on the Up line. Meanwhile the arrival of the

15:50 ex Scarva at Portadown allowed the set for the 16:15 special to run directly to Scarva over the Up line. Similarly the set for the 17:05 special ran directly to Scarva as soon as the 16:15 and 16:25 ex Scarva arrived in Portadown. The final special, formed by 2+99, left Scarva at 17:49 and worked over the Down line. In order to accommodate wrong line movements from Portadown or Poyntzpass single line working was established for short periods, initially on the Down line and subsequently on the Up line. The Irish Rail set which worked the 13:00 ex Dublin also worked the 07:30 Newry/Belfast, the 09:00 Belfast/Dublin, the 17:00 Belfast/Dublin and the 20:15 Dublin/Belfast, the latter as far as Dundalk where a six-piece railcar set, 457+4+453, was waiting to take passengers to Belfast. This Irish Rail set, in turn, released a locomotive hauled NIR set which was strengthened and used to form the second of two specials from Lurgan. These latter were scheduled to depart for Bangor at 09:55 and 10:05.

Stations

The extensive renovation of Lisburn station mentioned in the last issue is now almost complete although work is still in progress on the Down side facilities.

Major refurbishment work commenced at Carrickfergus towards the end of May and will involve structural repairs to the listed station buildings. To facilitate this work, which has been contracted to Grahams of Dromore, all Up trains are being routed via the loop platform.

Locomotives and Rolling Stock

113 returned to traffic in early July after bogie repairs at York Road. The locomotive has subsequently worked to Dublin on a number of occasions but can generally be found on Portadown-based ballast duties, a role which has caused it to visit Great Victoria Street on a number of occasions.

Hunslet locomotive 102 continues to be used on pilot duties at Adelaide and was so engaged at the beginning of July.

208 commenced revenue earning service on the 15:00 Belfast/Dublin on 17th May. 209 was initially used for driver training but either locomotive can be seen hauling the link which commences with the 08:00 from Belfast to Dublin. The semi-fast link (07:00, 09:00 and 17:00 ex Belfast, 08:00 ex Portadown, 13:00 and 20:15 ex Dublin) remains in the hands of the 111 class for the moment, possibly because this link is shared with Portadown crews.

Accidents

A man was struck and killed by the 08:00 Belfast/Dublin train near Lurgan on 28th June. The subsequent police investigation resulted in the line being closed for some time as a result of which passengers intending to travel on a Poyntzpass/Portrush special were conveyed by road. This was the second of three fatalities on NIR within a few days, the others being those of a youth who fell from a train near Newry and a man struck by a train on the Portrush branch.

Miscellaneous

NIR have recently reported increased passenger carryings amounting to a 7.2% increase in the twelve months ending in March 1995. Cross-border traffic is now running at about 700,000 journeys per annum, a level of traffic unprecedented in recent years.

NIR have recently introduced “Day-Tracker” tickets which are valid for unlimited travel within Northern Ireland. The tickets cost £10 for a family of two adults and up to three children, £4 for an adult and £2 for a child. These fares are further reduced on Sundays to £5, £2 and £1 respectively. On

Mondays to Fridays travel may not commence before the 09:19 ex Newry, the 09:45 ex Londonderry, the 10:00 ex Belfast (Central), the 10:05 ex Bangor or the 10:05 ex Larne Harbour. There are no restrictions on Saturdays and Sundays.

The Belfast/Dublin line was closed between Newry and Dundalk all day on 4th July due to a bomb hoax near Adavoyle. This incident followed disruption to services in the Lurgan area for about an hour the previous day, due to a fire on or adjacent to the line.

The Belfast/Dublin line was again closed due to a bomb hoax on 12th July, this time between Newry and Poyntzpass. The services principally affected were the 11:00 ex Dublin and 11:00 ex Belfast although there were problems later the same day which delayed the 18:00 ex Belfast and resulted in the 18:27 ex Pearse, 2611/12/07/08, being extended to Portadown. The 18:20 ex Dublin was formed by 212 + EGV + 7 Mk2 which had earlier worked the 15:00 ex Belfast. The regular NIR set had been turned back to form the Southern portion of the 11:00 Up and subsequently worked the 15:00 ex Dublin.

The latest Passenger Charter Report published in April shows a high level of passenger satisfaction with the reliability and punctuality of services, with staff helpfulness, answering of phones and compliance with No Smoking regulations. Train cleanliness, particularly toilets, are seen as problem areas as is on-train catering.

An “Armco” type bridge has been built to carry the Newry bypass road over the trackbed of the closed Goraghwood/Newry line, a sensible piece of planning which preserves the right of way for possible future use.

1995/6 Irish Rail Mainline Timetable Review

This timetable came into effect on Monday 15th May 1995 and will be operative until 19th May 1996. The main alterations are summarised below:

Dublin to Belfast

Most Down trains have been further decelerated by between four and eight minutes compared to the times published in May 1994 although with so many versions of the 1994/5 timetable comparisons are difficult. On the Up line most services have been slightly accelerated although again comparison is difficult. New commuter services are introduced between Newry and Dublin by means of extensions to existing Dundalk local services. The 07:25 ex Dundalk thus becomes the 07:00 ex Newry while the 17:13 ex Pearse is extended from Dundalk to Newry. (See news section for further details.)

The main changes occur on Sundays, the 10:30 to Belfast now leaves at 10:15 while the corresponding service ex Belfast departs at 10:00 instead of 10:15. The 15:00 ex Dublin and the 14:30 ex Belfast are both (theoretically) five minutes faster while the 18:00 ex Belfast is deferred to 18:15 due to the persistent late arrival of the incoming 15:00 ex Dublin. The 18:15, however, no longer serves Mosney, this stop being made by the 18:10 ex Portadown which although running for some time has only now appeared in the Irish Rail timetable. The latter is formed by an Arrow railcar and returns as the 20:15 to Dundalk serving Drogheda only. The same Arrow set, which formerly ran empty to Portadown now works a new service at 17:10 from Dundalk calling at Newry only and giving a connection into the 18:00 to Bangor.

Dublin to Cork

There is now an 07:30 Heuston to Cork each weekday, formerly this train operated at 08:15 on Saturdays only, however this often resulted in an over-tight turn-around time in Cork. The 10:20 from Heuston is deferred to 10:45 and retains its 2 hour 25 minute journey time. As before this is a Friday only service. The old 10:45 to Cork is retimed to 11:00, arriving in Cork at 13:55, an acceleration of five minutes. The 13:20 ex Heuston now arrives in Cork five minutes earlier at 16:15. The 14:55 Heuston to Cork is retimed to 15:10, and is also accelerated by 5 minutes, arriving in Cork at 17:50. The 16:45 Fridays only ex Heuston is advanced to 16:30 and is also accelerated by 5 minutes. The 17:30 ex Heuston departs at 17:20 and arrives in Cork at 19:45, once more an acceleration of 5 minutes. The 18:55 from Heuston is deferred to 19:00 but still reaches Cork at 22:05. In the opposite direction Arrow services are extended to start from Portlaoise at 07:05 and Portarlington at 08:10, arriving in Heuston at 08:10 and 09:05 respectively. The 11:20 ex Cork is accelerated by three minutes to arrive in Heuston at 14:22, this being shown incorrectly as 14:32 in the public book. The Fridays only 13:45 ex Cork is retimed to 14:00, calls additionally at Limerick Junction and Kildare, to arrive in Heuston at 16:40 (previous arrival time 16:15). A new 17:10 Cork to Mallow runs on Mondays to Fridays in order to siphon local traffic off the 17:30 Cork to Heuston. The 19:00 Cork to Heuston is deferred to 19:10 and is five minutes slower due to an additional stop at Newbridge. The 19:55 from Cork to Mallow departs at 20:05 and is one minute slower, arriving in Mallow at 20:31.

On Sundays the 10:15 Heuston to Cork is twenty minutes faster and despite nine intermediate stops is due in Cork at 13:10. The 13:20 ex Heuston is five minutes slower, arriving in Cork at 16:35 due to an additional stop at Templemore. The 18:55 ex Heuston is deferred to 19:00 with no overall change in journey time. In the opposite direction the 14:30 ex Cork now reaches Heuston five minutes earlier at 17:15, while an Arrow railcar set is used to form a new service leaving Cork at 16:30 and running non-stop to Heuston, where it arrives at 19:10. The 18:30 ex Cork is deferred to 18:40, arriving in Heuston at 22:10 (previously 21:45), and has an additional stop at Newbridge.

Dublin to Limerick & Ennis (via Limerick Junction)

There is now a connection out of the Down morning Kerry to Ennis arriving at 12:50 although it is necessary to change at both Limerick Junction and Limerick. A new 14:15 from Ennis connects into the 14:45 ex Cork but again it is necessary to change at both Limerick and Limerick Junction. There is now a connection to Limerick out of the Fridays only 13:40 Heuston to Tralee arriving at 15:41, theoretically the fastest weekday service. The 17:35 Heuston to Ennis is advanced to 17:30, but there is no change in overall journey time, Limerick and Ennis being reached at 19:35 and 20:25 respectively. The 17:40 ex Heuston now arrives in Limerick five minutes earlier at 20:45, however a 20:20 arrival time is possible by changing at Ballybrophy and travelling on the branch train via Nenagh. In the Up direction the 07:00 Limerick to Heuston is accelerated by five minutes to arrive at 09:20, while the 07:30 Ennis to Heuston is deferred to 07:35, with no overall change in journey time. A new service is provided on Fridays only at 14:30 ex Limerick connecting into the 14:00 ex Cork and arriving in Heuston at .0. The 19:35 Limerick to Limerick Junction is deferred to 19:45 to correspond with the altered departure time of the Cork/Dublin service.

On Sundays Limerick is reached at 12:37 by way of the 10:20 Heuston to Cork (previously 12:49) while the 13:40 Heuston to Limerick is deferred to 13:45, no longer calls at Kildare, and arrives one minute later at 16:22. The 18:30 ex Heuston is accelerated by five minutes to arrive at 20:50. In the Up direction the only change of note involves the 19:10 ex Limerick which is deferred to 19:20 to correspond with the later departure of the Cork to Dublin service.

Dublin to Limerick (via Nenagh)

The 10:20 ex Ballybroy is deferred by 10 minutes due to the later running of the Down morning Kerry, and is accelerated by four minutes to arrive in Limerick at 11:56. The 07:50 Limerick to Ballybroy is deferred to 07:55 due to a similar deferral of the morning Ennis to Heuston service.

Dublin and Cork to Tralee

The Monday only 06:25 Cork to Tralee is deferred by five minutes and is decelerated by five minutes to arrive in Tralee at 08:50. A new train is introduced at 09:10 from Cork and connects with the 07:30 ex Heuston at Mallow to give an arrival in Killarney at 10:42 and Tralee at 11:20. This train then returns as the 12:05 Tralee to Cork, but due to extended crossings at Killarney and Banteer does not reach Cork until 14:45. Although not shown in the public timetable this train provides a reasonably good connection into the Friday only 14:00 ex Cork to give an arrival in Dublin at 16:40. The 09:00 ex Heuston is deferred by ten minutes but has no overall change in journey time. The 12:40 ex Cork is deferred to 12:50 giving a Tralee arrival time of 15:25, a deceleration of ten minutes from Dublin and fifteen minutes from Cork. The 15:15 ex Cork now arrives in Tralee every weekday at 17:35, a deceleration of five minutes from both Dublin and Cork. The Friday only 13:40 ex Heuston (previously 13:30) is eight minutes faster overall despite a slower journey between Mallow and Tralee. The 17:40 Fridays only from Heuston is accelerated by five minutes, while the regular 18:15 Heuston to Tralee is deferred to 18:25, with no overall change in journey time. The 07:30 Tralee to Heuston is decelerated by five minutes to arrive Heuston at 11:15. The 09:55 Tralee to Cork departs at 10:00 and as before runs to Dublin on Fridays only arriving at 14:00, an acceleration of fifteen minutes, despite having three stops on the mainline in place of the previous two. (Portarlington is retained, Limerick Junction and Thurles are added while Kildare is deleted.) The journey time on other days is seven minutes quicker to Dublin but unchanged to Cork. The 14:20 Tralee to Heuston now leaves at 14:10 but retains its 18:25 arrival at Heuston due to increased running time on the Kerry road and an additional stop at Charleville. The overall timing for this train is thus 4¼ hours, the same as the 09:10 ex Heuston. The evening Tralee to Cork service now leaves departs at 17:50, previously 17:35 (FX) and 17:45 (FO), with Dublin passengers arriving in Heuston at 22:10 by way of the 19:10 ex Cork.

On Sundays the 08:50 ex Heuston now arrives in Tralee fifteen minutes earlier at 12:40, the schedule now reflecting the use of Mk3s which have been working the service for some years. The 19:15 ex Heuston is deferred to 19:20 and is decelerated by five minutes to arrive at 23:10. The 17:10 Tralee/Heuston is deferred to 17:20 and is accelerated by five minutes to arrive at 21:00. The following 17:30 Tralee/Cork is deferred to 17:35 and is five minutes slower arriving in Cork at 19:55.

- In general timings on the Mallow/Tralee line have been eased by up to eight minutes with most through trains to and from Dublin being accelerated on the mainline to at least partially compensate for the time lost on the branch.

Dublin to Waterford

The 07:35 ex Heuston is put back to 07:40, but still takes 2¾ hours to complete the journey - a pretty wretched performance for such a short distance. The 11:35 leaves five minutes later, while the 15:00 is advanced to 14:45, and accelerated by ten minutes, arriving in Waterford at 17:15. The 17:05 (Friday only) is advanced to 16:55 and is accelerated by twenty minutes to reach Waterford at 19:15, but is no longer booked to call at Thomastown. The reason for not stopping at Thomastown is that 18:20 ex Waterford is now crossed there and as there is no footbridge it is deemed unsafe to allow passengers to disembark at the Down platform. The 2 hour 20 minute schedule of the Arrow-operated 16:55 ex Heuston is the fastest on the line although it is not always achieved as the crossing with the 18:20 ex

Waterford often occurs at Kilkenny. The 18:10 ex Heuston has had its Newbridge stop reinstated but is still five minutes faster overall (except on Fridays). In the Up direction the (Monday only) 05:40 "Early Bird" now departs at 06:20 and arrives in Dublin correspondingly later at 08:50, it is no longer railcar operated. The 07:30 is decelerated by five minutes, while the 10:50 runs five minutes later throughout. The 15:15 is advanced to 14:55 and now reaches Dublin at 17:25, a five minute acceleration achieved by eliminating the Newbridge stop. The 18:25 is advanced to 18:20 and reaches Dublin five minutes earlier, the journey time of 2 hours 35 minutes being unaltered despite the elimination of the Newbridge stop.

On Sundays the only changes of any note are the advancing of the 09:45 and 14:45 Up to depart five minutes earlier. The former is five minutes slower, the latter five minutes faster. The afternoon train, however, no longer serves Newbridge.

Dublin to Westport & Ballina

Times in brackets beside Ballina arrivals/departures are the old times. The 08:30 Heuston to Westport is advanced to 08:25 and is accelerated by fifteen minutes to give an arrival of 11:55, Ballina being reached at 12:05 (12:25). The 13:00 ex Heuston is accelerated by five minutes, arriving in Westport at 16:40, with Ballina being reached at 16:48 (16:50). The 17:00 Fridays only Heuston to Ballina is advanced to 16:50, but is five minutes slower overall, with an arrival time of 20:55 (21:00). The 18:05 to Westport is ten minutes faster overall, arriving at 21:30, while Ballina is reached at 21:40 (21:50). In the Up direction the 07:25 becomes the 07:30 ex Westport, and is five minutes faster overall (retaining its 11:00 Heuston arrival time), the Ballina departure is now 07:20 (07:15). The 13:30 ex Westport is ten minutes faster, arriving in Heuston at 17:05; however Ballina passengers must now leave at 13:23 (13:25). The 18:25 ex Westport is advanced to 18:20, and is accelerated by no less than twenty minutes to arrive at 21:55, Ballina passengers now leaving at 18:10 (18:15).

On Sundays Westport is now reached at 13:20 (by way of the morning Heuston to Galway service to Athlone), while passengers for Ballina arrive at 13:35 (13:30). In the Up direction on Sundays there is now a connection from Ballina at 07:40 into the morning Westport to Athlone service, which now departs at 07:55, previously 07:50. The 15:10 Westport to Heuston now arrives at 18:55 (a ten minute acceleration), while Ballina passengers for this train now leave at 15:00 (15:05). The additional winter service from Claremorris, commencing on the 24th September serves all stations to Kildare and arrives in Heuston at 20:07. The 17:45 ex Westport is accelerated by fifteen minutes to arrive at 21:20, Ballina passengers connecting by way of the 17:35 (17:40) to Manulla Junction.

Dublin to Galway

The 08:00 Down is advanced to 07:50 and accelerated by ten minutes to arrive at 10:40, while the 11:05 is deferred to 11:10 and decelerated by 5 minutes. The 14:10 is deferred to 14:55, omits stops at Woodlawn and Attymon, yet is no faster overall, with a Galway arrival time of 17:40. The 17:00 Athlone service is advanced to 16:50, arriving at 18:32 (on Fridays this train runs to Ballina), while the 18:45 to Galway is deferred to 18:50, with no alteration to its 2 hour 30 minute schedule. In the Up direction the 05:30 (Monday only) service is six minutes faster, the 08:00 is advanced to 07:50 and runs ten minutes later throughout. The 11:35 is advanced to 11:20, and is two minutes slower, while the 15:15 leaves at 15:25 and is six minutes faster. The 18:05 is deferred to 18:20 but reaches Heuston at 21:12, only two minutes later than previously.

On Sundays the 09:20 Down is deferred to 09:25, but is fifteen minutes faster overall, arriving in Galway at 12:10. The 14:10 becomes the 14:15, with no change in journey time, the 18:45 is now 18:50, and is ten minutes quicker to Galway. The 20:20 is deferred to 20:40, but is accelerated by ten minutes to reach Galway at 23:15. In the Up direction on Sundays, the 08:50 is quicker by five

minutes, the 14:50 is quicker by fifteen minutes, while the 18:10 is quicker by eighteen minutes. The Sunday accelerations reflect the (long established) use of Mk3 stock although the 18:10 ex Galway no longer serves Kildare.

Dublin to Sligo

The only significant change here is the extension of the Mullingar commuter service from and to Longford (06:20 departure and 19:35 arrival). The 20:10 Mullingar to Connolly service is cancelled.

Dublin to Rosslare

In the Down direction the 09:35 is ten minutes faster, while the 13:35 is changed to 13:38 and is three minutes faster. In the Up direction the 07:30 and 14:55 are both deferred five minutes and are five minutes faster, while the 18:00 is seven minutes faster. On Sundays the 10:25 Down is five minutes faster, while in the Up direction the 09:15 is deferred to 09:25 and is ten minutes faster. The 18:30 ex Rosslare is also five minutes faster but the corresponding Down train, already the fastest service of the week from Dublin, is unaltered arriving in Rosslare at 21:20 as formerly.

Limerick to Rosslare

The 10:30 ex Limerick (summer service) is deferred by ten minutes, with no change in schedule, while the 15:55 ex Limerick is ten minutes earlier out of Limerick Junction, arriving in Rosslare at 19:20, an end to end acceleration of ten minutes although sectional running is unchanged. The 19:40 Rosslare to Limerick now arrives at 23:28 (four minutes earlier) due to quicker running from Limerick Junction. The deferral of the 14:55 Heuston to Cork by fifteen minutes means that the latter no longer connects into the 15:55 ex Limerick. The determined passenger must now leave at 13:20 - yet another indication of how little effort is put into services on this route.

Cork to Cobh

A vastly improved service is now provided by the Arrow railcar on the route with trains every hour at 25 past the hour from Cork (06:25 to 23:25*) and 5 to the hour from Cobh (06:55 to 23:55), with journey times being reduced by two minutes from Cork and one minute to Cork. There are additional services from Cork at 07:55 and from Cobh at 08:25, the latter being locomotive-hauled as is the 13:25 ex Cork and the 14:00 ex Cobh. On Sundays there are now eight services each way compared to five in the last timetable. (* There is no 13:55 ex Cobh but see note above re 14:00 departure.)

Farewell to the “A” Class

The June issue of “Nuacht”, a quarterly journal for CIÉ staff contained a picture of 003 at Limerick shed together with all the staff involved in looking after it in recent months. This locomotive worked the 10:20 from Ballybroy to Limerick on 1st April 1995 and was thus the last member of its class to work a passenger train on Irish Rail. It was the end of an era which had begun in a very different Ireland some forty years earlier.

The “A” class were built by a consortium of four English companies in 1954/5, these being Crossley Brothers of Openshaw, Manchester, Metropolitan Cammell Carriage & Wagon Co, English Steel Corporation and the Metropolitan-Vickers Electrical Company. The order was for 60 A class and 34 of

the smaller C class units. Horse Power for the “A” class was to be 1,140 while that for the “C” class was 550.

Al arrived in July 1955 on board the “Westfield” at North Wall whereas the first C class did not arrive until February 1957. The initial livery was aluminium-silver and later this became green. Not all locos were in green, however, as some went straight from silver to all over black.

A feature of the early years was the constant failures and the dirty condition of the locos which produced a pretty miserable environment for maintenance staff working in or around the engine compartment. The B121 class locomotives arrived in 1961 from General Motors and their instant success prompted plans to re-engine the A and C class with General Motors power plant. However, GM were reluctant to agree to such a programme and it took several years to reach a suitable understanding. In the meantime C233 and C234 were selected for re-engining with Maybach MD-650 engines rated at 980 hp. It could be said that these were a slight improvement on the Crossley engines but it was still the intention to install GM plant. The American company eventually relented, no doubt influenced by the purchase of 37 B141 and 12 B181 class locos in the interim. A58 and A59 thus became the first transplants emerging from Inchicore Works in 1968.

The re-engining proved very successful and the remaining 58 locos were similarly re-fitted with A26r completing the program in November 1971. Attention then turned to the C class, the prototypes in this instance being C206 and C222. They received an 8 cylinder, 645E engine in contrast to the 12 cylinder type in the A class. Power was thus doubled to 1,100 hp while the new rating for the Ar locos was 1,325 hp. Two of the Ar locos, A27r and A56r were fitted with re-wound motors and this allowed the power rating to be increased to 1,650 hp, the engine now running at 900 rpm instead of the previous 800. Locos 002, 035, 036, 046, 054 and 059 were similarly treated but were either de-rated or withdrawn by the end of the eighties. Regular travellers on the Belfast line in the mid to late 1970s will remember 027 and 035 as it was rare if one or other of these engines was not at the head of the CIÉ Enterprise.

Although they were referred to as As, sometimes pronounced Ah class, and Cs by the staff these letters were dropped in 1972 in favour of a three-digit all numeric identification. 029 was the only one to be fitted with air brakes and was put to work hauling Shale trains between Kilmastulla and Castlemungret. 008 was destroyed by terrorists at Meigh in October 1973 and was therefore the first to be withdrawn. By the end of 1992 29 locos had been withdrawn and the fleet size had reduced to only a handful by early 1995. The end of March last saw only 003, 012 and 015 in service, all of which were withdrawn by early April although 003 was used subsequently for shunting at Limerick works.

The Ar locos will be remembered for many things, but in particular the haulage of heavy freight trains. They proved very valuable in the 1960s working both traditional loose coupled goods traffic and the new bulk trains which were then emerging to herald the new era. They worked Beet trains of up to 43 open wagons which in due course gave way to the 28 double-deck wagon formations which weighed 868 tonnes. The roar of the A class up Taylorstown bank or on the difficult gradients between Clonmel and Cahir became synonymous with the beet season and will be long remembered. They were no stranger to passenger trains either. The sight of 057 at the head of a 13 bogie GAA special from Mallow in September 1989 was typical enough on busy occasions. Even as recently as 1994 they were hauling 18 bogie Bell liner trains between North Wall and Waterford.

The Cr locos were withdrawn by 1988 except for the six sold to NIR. At the time of writing the latter are all out of traffic although there remains a possibility that one might yet be overhauled for use at Adelaide freight yard.

Private Railways and Museums

Fintown

Passenger trains returned to Donegal on 3rd June with the commencement of public services along the first section of the Cumann Traenach Fintown/Glenties project. The railway, which currently extends for about a mile, was officially reopened by Mr Cathal Mac Suibhne of Údarás Na Gaeltachta, the actual tape cutting being done by Isobel McLoone, daughter of the late Con Greene, the last stationmaster at Fintown. The first train was driven by Joe Curran, son of the former General Manager of the County Donegal Railways.

The station at Fintown is remarkably intact and in addition to the main building comprises the curved platform, goods store and water tower, the tank for the latter being recovered from Gweedore. A few days before operations commenced three refurbished four-wheel tram cars and a diesel locomotive were delivered to Fintown having travelled by low loader from the defunct Shane's Castle Railway at Antrim. The tram cars originated in Belgium and formerly ran in Brussels. The restoration of the railway owes much to FAS with as many as 29 people reportedly employed on the project at the beginning of June. (Incidentally the Stranorlar to Glenties section originally opened on 3rd June 1895 and was closed to passengers on 17th December 1947 and to all traffic on 12th March 1952.)



Fintown, Co. Donegal, 3rd June 1995.

South Donegal Railway Restoration Society

A new railway heritage and exhibition centre was officially opened in the old Donegal town station building on 3rd June by local MEP and TD, Mr Pat "The Cope" Gallagher. As with other similar

projects throughout the country much of the work was undertaken by FAS, the youth employment agency. The SDRRS hope to reopen the nearby three mile section of the former CDRJC Ballyshannon branch, between Ballintra and Rossnowlagh.

Cavan & Leitrim

Public services commenced on 27th May along the 500 yards of restored 3ft gauge track which extends from the C&L station at Dromod towards the former level crossing at Clooncolry. Passenger accommodation comprised ex-West Clare trailer, 47c, hauled by "Dinmor", a Fowler diesel of 40 hp. The Kerr-Stuart 0-4-2T "Dromad" featured on 30th May when a group from Florencecourt, Co. Fermanagh became the first passengers to enjoy steam haulage.

In order to facilitate passengers off the Irish Traction Group's special on 15th July both the Fowler diesel and the 0-4-2T were in use, the steam engine hauling 47c to the end of line and on arrival being followed by diesel which powered the return trip. A form of block working assisted by radio was in operation on the day with traffic direction being controlled by a manual staff. This was presumably deemed necessary as there were two trains on the "main" line, the locomotive hauled trailer and either a steam or diesel light engine depending on direction.

Railway Preservation Society of Ireland

Both 461 and 171 have featured in the making of the Michael Collins film which is presently being shot on location in Ireland. Filming has taken place at Rush station, Laytown viaduct and at Platform 2 at Pearse. Rush was disguised as Granard, a station which never existed in reality, while Pearse was posing as Kingsbridge. The star role fell to 461 and involved numerous takes with the train being required to set back time and again until the scenes had been recorded to the satisfaction of the director. Seven RPSI coaches were repainted to suit the film company with 171 appearing in black. The latter's main function was to mask the workshops on platform one while at the same time creating an impression of activity. (Whether the Kingsbridge of the time would have had two passenger trains simultaneously is a moot point!) Shooting of the scenes at Rush and Laytown took place on 16th July and necessitated possessions of the Down line firstly from Malahide to Skerries and subsequently from Mosney to Drogheda. Filming at Pearse on 30th July took place without interfering with traffic, the scenes being shot between DARTs.

The annual "two day" tour took place this year on 20th and 21st May, the route being Dublin – Cork – Cobh - Dublin featuring ex GNR 4-4-0 No.85 and ex D&SER 2-6-0 No 461. The tour train was formed of Irish Rail stock and consisted of a GSV + 6 Cr + GSV. The final leg of the trip actually took place on 23rd May when No 85 worked from Dublin to Whitehead via the new Cross Harbour link and the Dargan bridge - hence the "The Dargan Railtour". (The Cravens set was replaced by RPSI stock at Dundalk for the remainder of trip North, this being the only portion of the tour route on which the society's stock is permitted to carry passengers.)

Miscellaneous

The Laune viaduct at Killorglin, on the former Valentia branch has been floodlight and a public walkway, protected by safety rails, is now in place.

Discussions are reportedly underway with a view to the possible re-opening of part of the Giant's Causeway Tramway which once linked Portrush with Bushmills. It is understood that a likely source of materials would be the now defunct Shane's Castle Railway at Antrim. There is no doubt that the Giant's Causeway Tramway would now be a tourist attraction of unparalleled merit had it survived the post-war closure mania.



Cork/Cobh service at Glounthaune (Cobh Junction) on 15th May 1995.