

IRISH RAILWAY NEWS

Volume 3 Issue 3

October 1995



078 and 30 empty beet wagons running along the banks of the Suir, east of Waterford, 21/10/1995.

Contents: Editorial
 Irish Rail
 Northern Ireland Railways
 Irish Rail Timetable 1993/4
 Private Railways and Museums

Editorial

First of all, thank you for your patience in waiting for this, the October issue. As you may recall we decided to combine the January and April 1995 issues and this therefore is the final magazine for 1995. As explained at the time all current subscriptions were consequently extended for a further issue although, as the more observant may have noticed, the expiry month/year on the address label was not adjusted. This caused a little confusion as some people were unsure as to the status of their subscription. The address labels have now been adjusted to correspond with the year/month of the issue with which the subscription expires. In any event an expiry notice will also be included with the final magazine of each subscription.

While the basic rates for 1996 are unchanged, it has regrettably been found necessary to raise the sterling subscription to £15 in order to partially compensate for the present exchange rate between sterling and the Irish £.

The period covered by this issue contains much of interest including the commissioning of Great Victoria Street in Belfast, a project which promises to further revitalise rail transport in Northern Ireland. In the Republic the first of the "International" coaches have entered service at a time when passenger traffic is booming and existing rolling stock is severely stretched. There is an urgent need for more electric stock, diesel railcars and mainline coaches so as to allow the railway to retain and expand its market share, something which is desirable from a safety, social, economic and environmental point of view.

The issue of weather and seasons seems to becoming ever more important in Irish railway operations with services apparently more vulnerable to mildly adverse weather than at any previous time in history. The months of October and November of this year saw severe disruption of services despite the weather being such as to barely affect other forms of transport. This looks like being an issue that will have to be satisfactorily addressed if credibility is to be maintained.

Finally I would like to thank you all for your support and assistance during 1995 and to wish you a Happy Christmas and peaceful and prosperous New Year.

A. Gray - 10/12/1995

Irish Rail

(Iarnród Éireann, including CIÉ and DTI)

CIÉ Chief Executive

In a recent frank and hard-hitting interview Michael McDonnell has been speaking of his commitment to the company, of his desire for profitability, for decent working conditions and for vision and leadership within the group. Commenting on rail services he is quoted as saying: “I want to have very specific contracts with the Government for social and uneconomic services. We are pilloried for the cost to the tax-payer of our rail service. However, the fact of the matter is that rail is a high density mode of transport and it is not possible to run financially profitable rail services in a small country like Ireland with its low density population. Rail transport should be - and is world-wide - judged on cost-benefit criteria. I am personally committed to rail on the basis of the benefits we as a nation get from it, for example, the environmental impact, time savings, reduced road congestion and less road accidents.”

“What we have had up to now is a lack of clarity. CIÉ is supposed to be a commercial body but is being required to fulfil social obligations for which we are not compensated. As a result people are confused, demoralised, demotivated and you have the whole dependency culture coming out. I will be looking for total and absolute transparency. If it is commercial, we’ll do it. If it is not commercial, it’s a social service. We expect to be paid for the cost of providing social services.” CIÉ, he states, “is not three independent operating empires. We are a single group providing transport services. That’s our core business, providing an integrated public transport service for the people of Ireland. I’m not in the business of downsizing. I want to get the core business right, making a profit, having a committed workforce and then look to the opportunities for further development.”

Ongoing strains within the CIÉ board and a deteriorating relationship between elements within the Board and the Minister for Transport, Mr Lowry, together with allegations of “cosy cartels” and controversy over the sale of the Horgan’s Quay site in Cork culminated in the Minister demanding the resignation of the entire board, other than Worker directors. Most of the directors complied with the Ministerial request although two were dismissed after the passage of a 27th November deadline. This latest upheaval was triggered by the resignation of the then Chairman, Mr Eamonn Walsh, two weeks previously. He was appointed to a five year term by the Minister some seven months earlier, but did not receive the full support of the board which had been installed by a previous administration. A new board, chaired by Mr Brian Joyce, was appointed on 28th November although legal challenges by the dismissed directors promise to keep the media and political spotlight on CIÉ for some time yet.

Dublin/Belfast Project

Bridges

Extensive repairs to UB 65, the Delvin viaduct, commenced around the middle of September. Work undertaken to date includes renewal of the cross-ties linking the supporting columns as well as the installation of steel decking on the two approach spans. Concerns about the state of this structure, located just south of Gormanston station, led to the imposition of a 40 mph speed restriction in early 1992.

Permanent Way

Almost eleven miles of track was re-laid between mid-July and mid-November as under:

Howth Junction/Portmarnock ¹	MP 4 $\frac{3}{4}$ to MP 6 $\frac{5}{8}$	Down Line
Rush/Skerries ¹	MP 14 to MP 14 $\frac{5}{8}$	Down Line
Rush/Skerries ¹	MP 14 $\frac{7}{8}$ to MP 16	Down Line
Balbriggan/Mosney ¹	MP 23 $\frac{7}{8}$ to MP 24 $\frac{1}{4}$	Down Line
Drogheda/Dunleer ²	MP 32 $\frac{1}{4}$ to MP 33 $\frac{1}{2}$	Down Line
Drogheda/Dunleer ²	MP 35 $\frac{3}{4}$ to MP 38	Down Line
Dunleer/Dundalk ²	MP 46 $\frac{3}{4}$ to MP 47	Down Line
Dunleer/Dundalk ²	MP 47 $\frac{1}{4}$ to MP 47 $\frac{7}{8}$	Down Line
Dunleer/Dundalk ²	MP 50 $\frac{3}{8}$ to MP 52 $\frac{3}{4}$	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 approximately 09:30 to 15:30 on weekdays. Single line working is maintained on the opposite road.

Irish Rail's portion of the Dublin/Belfast line is now 86.1% welded. The only significant portions yet to be relaid are from MP 0 to 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ and MP 47 $\frac{7}{8}$ to 49 on the Down line. On the Up line gaps remain from MP 31 $\frac{1}{2}$ to 30, MP 6 $\frac{5}{8}$ to 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ and MP 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ to 0. Short sections remain to be relaid at Portmarnock station (both roads), Malahide station (Up), OB 44 (Down), OB 46 (both roads), UB 65 (both roads), Gormanston station (Up), OB 78 (Down), Drogheda station (both roads), Dunleer station (both roads), OB 113 (both roads), Castlebellingham station (down) and Dundalk station (both roads).

Work commenced on 18th November re-railing earlier sections of CWR between MP 13 and MP 11 $\frac{1}{2}$ on the Up road and will be followed by similar replacement between MP 18 $\frac{1}{2}$ and MP 19 $\frac{1}{4}$ on the Down road.

Signalling, Layouts and Communications

Preparations for re-modelling the layout at Drogheda are well advanced with much of the cutting separating the mainline from Buckey's sidings now removed. The extensive excavations, which extend south from the station to MP 31 $\frac{1}{2}$, will allow the existing sidings behind the Up platform to be moved northwards. The area vacated will be occupied by a new bay platform, directly accessible from the Dublin direction via a facing crossover which is to be installed on the southern approach to the station. Further changes are understood to involve the removal of the "middle road" through the station as well as the existing facing crossover presently located on the Boyne viaduct. The interlaced track installed through the steel girder spans on the Boyne viaduct in 1932 is to be replaced by plain single track with turnouts at either end, an arrangement which will be operationally equivalent to a pair of crossovers, one facing and one trailing. The removal of the "middle road" and its associated points together with the siding connections trailing onto the Down line at the north end of the station will facilitate the re-alignment of the running lines, thus allowing the existing speed restriction to be raised from 15 mph to 40 mph. Given that facing and trailing connections will exist on both sides of Drogheda station it may reasonably be assumed that bi-directional working will apply through both platforms. (A "middle road" was also provided by the GNR(I) at Clones and Enniskillen and as at Drogheda proved a very useful facility.)

It appears from both the absence of activity and the pegging of signal locations that there will be no crossovers between the south end of Dundalk station and the turnout north of the Boyne viaduct, a distance of 21 $\frac{3}{4}$ miles. Indeed should single line working be required over the Down line, the section would most likely include Dundalk station, given that the facing crossover is just north of the latter. Single line working over the Up road would extend from the Boyne Viaduct to the trailing crossover south of Dundalk station. Markings on the track would suggest that pairs of intermediate distant and

home signals will be provided just south of both Castlebellingham and Dunleer. The block sections will therefore be about seven miles long but as the distant signals will be located about 1½ miles on the approach side of the stop signals to which they apply, the effective headway will be about six minutes for trains travelling at the maximum line speed.

Most, if not all, of the trackwork required for the re-modelling of the layout at Dundalk has been assembled at various points throughout the yard. The new layout will be much simplified and, apart from some siding accommodation, mainly in the “Irish North” yard, will consist of little more than the main running lines, a trailing crossover south of the station, a facing crossover north of the station and a loop on the Up side. Only the more easterly of the two bay platforms, the former “Enniskillen dock”, is to be retained. The new Ardee road freight yard will continue to be accessed via a trailing connection from the Down line as at present.

Cable laying, in connection with re-signalling between Dundalk and Drogheda, commenced in mid-September using Irish Rail’s plough train. This work was completed by mid-October and was comparatively straight forward as the cable route is on the Up side throughout and, as previously reported, had been excavated in advance at the more difficult locations. A further two miles of cabling has been ploughed on the Down side, north of Dundalk, the cable train being observed at this task on 22nd October. At the time of writing in mid-November the installation of insulated joints is well advanced although as yet neither signals nor location cases have yet been erected. Signal and location case bases are presently stored on the Down loading bank at Dunleer and will be brought by rail to their allocated location in due course.

Miscellaneous

- Resurfacing of both platforms, with the now standard red cobble block, has been completed at both Balbriggan and Laytown. At the latter new thick gauge “traditional” style wooden fencing has been installed at back of the Up platform and at the Dublin end of the Down platform. Palisade fencing has been erected on the Up side of the line between MP 27½ and MP 27¼ although as yet the fencing between this point and Laytown station has not been upgraded. The boundary wall at the Dublin end of the Down platform at Balbriggan has been raised and strengthened, while the somewhat ineffective fencing at the Dublin end of the Up platform is replaced by palisade.
- The steps leading to the operating floor of the redundant signal box at Laytown have been removed. This move, however, did not deter a break-in which occurred a few weeks later.
- The pole route has been removed between Balbriggan and Drogheda as the demise of the Block Telegraph in 1994 rendered it redundant.
- The floodlighting on the Boyne viaduct has been turned off following extensive vandalism of equipment cantilevered from the steel girders and located at or near track level. A security company has now been employed to guard the bridge, particularly the approach from the north end.

Permanent Way - General

Dublin/Cork (Double track throughout)

The Up line across Mallow viaduct has been renewed with concrete sleepers and CWR although a temporary speed restriction of 25 mph remains in force pending the installation of check rail. The Down line across the viaduct has yet to relaid and is also currently subject to a 25 mph speed restriction.

Relaying of the Down line from MP 3 to MP 4½ commenced on 11th November and when complete some 98.3% of the Cork line will consist of CWR, almost all of which is on concrete sleepers - the

exception being a short section of both roads through, and immediately approaching, Ballybroy station. By 18th November the section from MP 3 $\frac{3}{4}$ to MP 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ had been completed. This work required single line working on the two dates between Inchicore and Hazelhatch and proved quite disruptive, given the enhanced level of services now operating on Sundays. For instance the 14:50 to Waterford on 18th November, 123/166 + 6 p/p 6105 was held in Heuston until 14:59 and at Inchicore cabin from 15:03 to 15:30, firstly to allow the 14:15 to Galway clear the section and secondly to allow a late running Up Ammonia train, 225 + BW + 6 bogie tanks + BW, to take precedence over the single line.

Portarlington/Athlone (Single track)

The temporary 70 mph speed restrictions embedded within the sections of line cleared for 80 mph running and mentioned in the last issue have now been lifted. Preparatory work, notably the refurbishment of drainage and the provision of ballast retaining walls at various underbridges, is evident between MP 70 and MP 71 $\frac{3}{4}$ although no relaying has yet taken place. A 50 mph speed restriction currently applies to this section of track, which is located just east of Clonnydonnin loop.

Limerick/Limerick Junction (Single track Limerick Junction/Killonan, Double track Killonan Junction/Limerick)

The 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ mile section from MP 12 $\frac{3}{4}$ to MP 15 $\frac{1}{2}$ was relaid with CWR on concrete sleepers. This work commenced in mid-October and was substantially complete by early November. There was some disruption to services with bus substitution of mid-day trains on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and some Saturdays during this period. Down trains now have the benefit of almost eighteen miles of CWR which extends from Oola (MP 19) through Killonan Junction (MP 4 $\frac{1}{4}$) to a point near Ennis Junction. No relaying has yet taken place on the Up line between Limerick and Killonan Junction while a further 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ miles remains to be relaid between Oola and Limerick Junction. Extensive vegetation clearance and drainage work was in hand on the Pallas side of Oola at the beginning of October, preparatory to relaying.

Cherryville Junction/Waterford

Pile driving in connection with the renewal of UB 114/ UB 188, at Newrath, is understood to be complete with the piles capped in readiness for the installation of the new bridge spans. It is understood that over thirty "H" shaped piles were required and that these were driven to a depth of up to 36 metres before a solid foundation was reached beneath the marshy ground. Completion of the bridge renewal has been deferred until January so as to avoid disruption to the beet season which started during the first week of October.

The short section of track immediately north of Athy station, from MP 44 to 44 $\frac{3}{4}$, was relaid with concrete sleepers and CWR during September. (This work was completed without any disruption to services.)

The remaining stub of the Ballylinan branch, which leads to the Asbestos factory on the outskirts of Athy, has been receiving some attention in recent months with sleepers being replaced including the unusual examples on the Barrow bridge which were composed of concrete on either side with steel holding the two sections together.

Limerick Junction/Waterford

See Cherryville Junction/Waterford section (above) for details of the renewal of UB 188.

Dublin/Sligo

Re-railing of existing CWR between MP 83 $\frac{1}{4}$ and MP 85 was in hand at the middle of June although as yet the temporary speed restriction of 50 mph imposed pending re-railing has not been lifted.

More Rail

Irish Rail have sought tenders for the supply of 12,000 tonnes of 54 kg/m UIC standard rail in lengths of 36, 54 or 108 metres. The rail is to be delivered to Waterford.

Signalling, Layouts and Communications

The turnouts at either end of the direct curve at Lavistown were installed over the weekend of 9th/10th September. To facilitate this work the line was closed for a period of just over twenty-four hours which commenced after the passage of the 11:35 ex Heuston on the Saturday and finished in time for Sunday's 14:40 from Waterford. Given that the Bagenalstown/Kilkenny/Thomastown section was closed the opportunity was also taken to close the Thomastown/Waterford West section in connection with the renewal of UB 114 at Newrath. Three passenger trains were affected in either direction and these ran to and from Carlow with bus transfers between there and Waterford. At least one Bell Liner train, 078 + 18 bogies, ran from North Wall to Waterford via Clonmel on the Saturday, being observed passing Kildare at 13:15.



Ballast Train at work on the Lavistown curve, 11/9/1995.

Signalling alterations associated with the commissioning of the direct curve at Lavistown were carried out as under:

24th July: Up and Down distant signals at Thomastown converted to two-aspect colour light operation and re-sited respectively 670 and 1,318 yards further out. Two additional signals are provided, an Up advance starter (TN UAS) and a Down outer home (No.17) as shown on the diagram below.

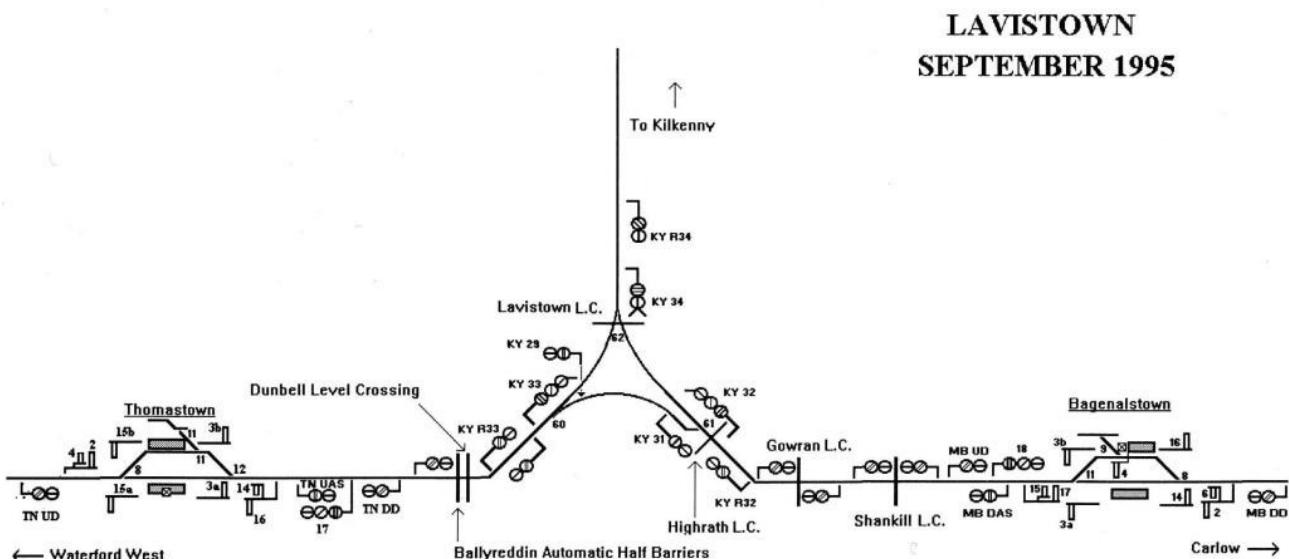
25th July: Up and Down distant signals at Bagenalstown converted to two-aspect colour lights and re-sited respectively 2,010 and 499 yards further away from the signal box. Two additional signals are provided, a Down advance starter (MB DAS) and a new Up outer home (No.18) as shown below.

30th July: Up distant signal for Lavistown (KY R33) and its associated stop signal (KY 33) re-sited 956 and 527 yards further out respectively, the latter change being required because of the positioning of the new turnout, No.60, as shown on the diagram. Down distant signal for Lavistown (KY R32) was re-sited 712 yards further out. Both KY 32 and KY 33 were converted to three aspect signals with route direction indicators at the same time, although pending the commissioning of KY29 and KY31 respectively, neither the additional (yellow) aspect nor the route direction indicators could be displayed.

7th August: ETS working replaced by track circuit block from Bagenalstown to Kilkenny to Thomastown.

10th September: Signals KY 29 and KY31 brought into operation together with the two- new turnouts, Nos. 60 and 61. The new routes and additional aspects on signals KY 32 and KY 33 became operative on this date also.

As of 9th November the direct curve had not been used for revenue earning traffic pending the resolution of certain (minor) issues raised by the Inspecting Officer of Railways. The only movements permitted so far have been engineer's trains which were required for ballasting and associated work. These latter were observed in the period immediately after the installation of the turnouts, but ceased once the track was brought up to the required standard.



As part of continuing efforts to improve safety at accommodation crossings telephones giving contact with the controlling signalman have been provided at the following locations:

Judges	(near MP 88½)	Thurles/Limerick Junction
McCarthy's	(near MP 126)	Limerick Junction/Charleville
Wardrop	(near MP 47½)	Portarlington/Geashill
Tobin	(near MP 46½)	Portarlington/Geashill
Birmingham	(near MP 61¼)	Tullamore/Clara
Coleman	(near MP 35¾)	Cherryville/Athy
Cassin's	(near MP 78)	Bagenalstown/Lavistown

A booklet on the safe use of these crossings has been produced by Irish Rail and is being made available to the parties concerned.

Upgrading of the level crossing at Lisnagry, under discussion with Limerick County Council since 1991, was finally carried out over the October bank holiday weekend. It had apparently been intended to carry out this work over the August weekend but these plans had to be abandoned due to a delay in the issue of the required Ministerial order. This work resulted in the closure of the Killonan Junction/Birdhill section from late Friday 27th October until the following Monday, when the line was re-opened in time to pass the 15:45 Limerick to Ballybroy. The former crossing gates are replaced by four locally controlled skirted lifting barriers, protected on the road side by appropriate warning indications including standard yellow and red flashing lights. This crossing is located at MP 49, approximately a quarter of a mile on the Killonan side of the level crossing at Lisnagry station. Up and Down colour light distant and stop signals are provided and are located in such a way as to protect both crossings, the Down stop signal being located on the Birdhill side of Lisnagry station level crossing and the Up stop signal on the Killonan Junction side of Lisnagry. The crossings were previously protected by separate semaphore distant signals, with a semaphore stop signal sharing the same pole as the innermost distant signal. The Down semaphore stop signal and the Lisnagry Down distant signal were located immediately on the Birdhill side of Lisnagry station crossing while the Up semaphore stop signal was located on the Killonan side of Lisnagry crossing. Oddly enough both crossings continue to be staffed, despite the apparent opportunity for remote operation and monitoring of Lisnagry by the crossing keeper at Lisnagry station.

Stations

Construction of a number of new stations is presently under consideration. The locations most frequently mentioned are Clontarf, Barrow Street and Kilcock, all of which have been mooted for some time. The station at Clontarf may open as early as 1996 if a contribution from the private sector materialises as promised. The station at Barrow Street would be located about halfway between Pearse and Lansdowne Road and is expected to have four platforms organised in such a way as to facilitate the termination of diesel services. The new station at Kilcock would be located at the Clane Road overbridge, some distance on the Dublin side of the original.

- The booking office at Howth has been relocated in temporary accommodation to facilitate modifications to the station buildings, the latter arising from the conversion of part of the premises to a restaurant and public house.
- A new passenger lift, located on Platform 4, is now in operation at Pearse Station and links the latter to street level.

Locomotives

215 worked the early morning Drogheda/Cabra bulk cement train on 25th October, this being the first visit of the class to Cabra depot. Thereafter this train was generally hauled by a 201 class locomotive thus releasing an 071 class for duty elsewhere. These locomotives have also been at work on the branch from Limerick to the Castlemungret cement factory since 24th May 1995.

Modification of a number of 201s to work with push/pull equipment commenced around the beginning of August with 206 being observed on one such trial at Portarlington on 2nd August. Both 206 and 207 were normally employed with push/pull stock by the beginning of September, with 228 appearing on the third Dublin-based set by 28th September. The fourth locomotive to be converted was 230 and this was made available just ahead of the October timetable changes. (The three-piece push/pull based in Limerick still operates with a 121 class locomotive, there being no immediate plan to change this

arrangement.) All of the Irish Rail 201 class locomotives have now been named, some bearing Irish language plates only, others English language plates only and the remainder being dual plated. The next issue will contain an updated list of names.

Both 121 and 122 were undergoing major overhaul at Inchicore in mid-September.

Coaching Stock

Craven standard 1524, damaged in the Belview derailment, has been destroyed by a malicious fire at Inchicore works.

The first two “International” coaches entered traffic on Friday 27th October, being included in the formation of the 13:30 relief to Cork. This train consisted of 230 + 7603 + 6312 + 6301 + 6206 + 6201 on this date and returned from Cork as the 17:10 to Mallow and thence empty to Dublin. These coaches, which were little used by BR, are finished to a very high standard with 54 seats in 6201 and 72 in 6206, the former being laid out in a 2+1 formation of nine bays of tabled face to face seating. The arrangement of seating in 6206 is similar, except that the layout is 2+2. The bogies are new, being supplied by ABB, and give a noticeably smoother ride than the Mk3s. Pending the availability of sufficient equipment to make up a full set, the stock is being used for relief trains as required, the only regular duty being the 14:40 from Heuston to Limerick and 17:50 Limerick to Heuston, both of which run on Fridays only. (This train is typically formed by a Mk3 van and the two International coaches, hauled by a 201 class locomotive.)

Railcars

Irish Rail have invited tenders for the supply of ten power cars with an option for a further seven, the new vehicles to be compatible with the existing railcar fleet and of similar construction and mechanical specification to Mitsui cars. It is understood that these vehicles will be fitted out internally to a standard more suitable for mainline work, although some of them will probably work mainly on outer suburban duties. The closing date for receipt of tenders was 16th October.

Railcar rosters have changed little since the last issue, the only significant alteration occurring on Sundays as a result of the introduction of additional services to and from Limerick. All eight two-car sets are now routinely used on Sundays as indicated below.

Sundays

- 16:30¶ Cork to Dublin (Heuston)
- 13:00¶ Dublin (Heuston) to Limerick, commenced on or before 1/10/1995
- 17:20¶ Limerick to Dublin (Heuston), commenced 17/9/1995 at 16:50 ex Limerick but had been altered to 17:20 by 8/10/1995
- 11:25, 12:35, 13:30, 14:30, 15:45, 16:45, 18:45, 20:15 Cork/Cobh
- 11:52, 13:02, 13:57, 14:57, 16:15, 17:15, 19:15, 20:42 Cobh/Cork
- 18:10§ Portadown Dublin (Connolly), formed by previous day's 18:27 and 19:15 ex Dublin
- 20:15¥ Dublin (Connolly) to Dundalk, then split for 06:05 and 08:05 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)

§ Indicates that train is worked by a six-piece set, but is now more usually a four car set.

¥ Indicates that train is worked by a six-piece set.

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

* Sometimes formed by a push/pull set.

Formation excavation of the Down mainline along the platform at Howth Junction on the night of Saturday/Sunday 4th/5th November resulted in the isolation of the overhead power supply between Raheny and Bayside. As a consequence electric services were suspended between Connolly and Howth on the Saturday evening, the last northbound DART being the 18:30 ex Bray which returned at 19:43 ex Howth as normal. Passengers travelling on the 18:40 ex Bray and subsequent services were required to change at Connolly into substitute diesel services, the first of which departed at 19:17 and returned as the 20:00 ex Howth. Four sets were required to maintain the scheduled service, three two-piece Arrow railcars and a two-piece push/pull. The sets were 2613/10, 2601/2, 2615/16 and 123 + 2 p/p 6103. The first set made five return trips, the other sets each making four return trips. While few of the substitute diesels managed to maintain the DART schedule there were a few outstanding runs which highlighted the degree to which the electric service is handicapped by the limited intelligence of the onboard Automatic Train Protection system. The comparative times reproduced below clearly show that the performance benefits of electric traction are often nullified by the time penalties associated with ATP, particularly around Connolly and on the Howth branch.

Dublin (Connolly) - Howth, 4/11/1995

Railcars 2613/10

	(A) Distance (Miles)	(B) Sectional Allowance	(C) Best DART	(D) Best ARROW	Station Dwell Time
Dublin (Connolly)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Killester	2.39	4.10	3.40	3.26	0.20
Harmonstown	0.61	1.40	1.16	1.35	0.17
Raheny	0.71	1.10	1.18	1.38	0.29
Kilbarrack	0.79	2.40	1.45	1.57	0.20
Howth Junction	0.30	1.40	1.05	1.11	0.27
Bayside	1.00	1.40	1.53	1.45	0.47
Sutton	0.75	2.10	1.42	2.10	0.19
Howth	1.68	5.30	4.37	3.15	
Totals	8.23	20.40	17.16	16.57	2.59
		(B)+(E)		(C)+(D)	
Connolly-Howth	8.23	23.00		19.56	

(E) 20 seconds are allowed at each station, total allowance for this trip was thus 2.20".

Howth - Dublin (Connolly), 4/11/1995

Railcars 2613/10

(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)
-----	-----	-----	-----

	Distance (Miles)	Sectional Allowance	Best DART	Best ARROW	Station Dwell Time
Howth	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Sutton	1.68	2.40	3.10	2.53	0.12
Bayside	0.75	1.40	1.46	1.48	0.24
Howth Junction	1.00	2.10	1.49	1.52	0.18
Kilbarrack	0.30	1.40	0.55	1.07	0.11
Raheny	0.79	1.40	1.20	1.46	0.18
Harmonstown	0.71	1.10	1.17	1.39	0.13
Killester	0.61	1.10	1.13	1.32	0.16
Connolly	2.39	5.30	4.19	4.30 (Sigs)	
Totals	8.23	17.40	15.49	17.07	1.52
(B)+(E)		(C)+(D)			
Howth-Connolly	8.23	20.00		18.59	

(E) 20 seconds are allowed at each station, total allowance for this trip was thus 2.20".

Timetable Changes

Mainline

In order to cope with increasing traffic, particularly at weekends, a number of additional trains are now in operation as detailed below.

Commencing on 24th September a new, non-stop, Sunday only service was introduced from Limerick departing at 16:50 and arriving in Dublin (Heuston) at 19:00. The departure time of this service, operated by a four-piece railcar set, had been altered to 17:20 by 8th October as the original path clashed with the 16:30 from Cork which is due in Heuston at 19:10. (Extended headways continue to apply in the case of Arrow railcar sets operating on the Cork line as movements following these trains are signalled under restrictive regulations which mandate block working between controlled signals except between Kildare and Dublin where normal track circuit block working applies.) The railcar to form this service initially ran empty from Dublin but with effect from 1st October was advertised as a non-stop service from Dublin to Limerick arriving at 15:15. These new services will run until 19th May 1996.

Commencing on 13th October a new, direct, Friday only service was introduced from Dublin (Heuston) to Limerick at 13:05. The journey time is a relatively leisurely two hours and twenty minutes, inclusive of stops at Portarlington and Thurles. The set returns working yet another new service, the 15:40 non-stop to Heuston due to arrive at 17:45. This train is worked by the Mk3 set off the 07:50 ex Galway and subsequently forms the 18:50 from Heuston to Galway. These new services will run until 17th May 1996.

Commencing on 3rd November a new, direct, Friday only service was introduced from Dublin (Heuston) to Limerick at 14:40. The journey time in this instance is two hours and five minutes, inclusive of stops at Portarlington, Portlaoise and Thurles. The set returns working a new, non-stop,

17:50 ex Limerick which is due in Dublin (Heuston) at 19:55. These services were formed by 231 + 2 Mk3 "International" + EGV on 25th November, a formation similar to that used on two previous Fridays. Departure, from Heuston, on this date was at 14:42 and the train ran sharp to time as far as Limerick Junction where it was held on the mainline to cross the 15:40 (FO) ex Limerick and on the direct curve to cross the 15:55 ex Limerick. There was thus an accumulated delay of about seventeen minutes resulting in an arrival in Limerick at 17:02. There were about 130 passengers on board leaving Dublin. The return train was similarly loaded and left Limerick at 17:52. Despite several delays, including a signal stop at Ballybroy, Heuston was reached three minutes early at 19:52. These new services have been advertised to run until 17th May 1996.

DART/Outer Suburban

Suburban services in and around Dublin are currently creaking under the pressure of continually increasingly loads with the result that trivial incidents can quickly mushroom into major delays. This is particularly true of the DART service where a few minutes out of course working means that first affected train, normally a standard four-car formation, becomes grossly overloaded to the extent that station dwell time progressively increases to two or three minutes instead of the twenty seconds allowed. Unfortunately this situation generally deteriorates as passengers build up at stations and the service grinds to a crawl behind one, two or three hopelessly overloaded trains. It is becoming ever clearer that a more pro-active approach is required to address this situation before the reputation of DART is permanently damaged. While additional rolling stock is long overdue and would do much to ease the situation, a policy of running severely overcrowded services non-stop to the first station, where de-training passengers might be expected to outnumber boarding passengers, would minimise disruption to the timetable and get the majority to their destinations at or near the advertised time. Passengers waiting at "by-passed" stations would also fare better as the service would quickly return to normal, instead of descending into almost irrecoverable chaos. Operation of such a policy would probably require a presence on the ground at a number of selected locations, particularly during the morning peak.

Following the replacement of 121 class locomotives by 201 class locomotives on the three "Dublin based" push/pull trains, services operated by these sets were accelerated by between seven and twenty-two minutes with effect from 8th October. Details of the changes are as under:

Original Departure Time	Operates	New Departure Time	Mileage	Time Taken	Number of Stops	Saving (Minutes)
06:00 Connolly/Drogheda	Mon-Fri	06:05 Connolly/Drogheda	31 $\frac{3}{4}$	50	6	10
12:09 Pearse/Drogheda	Mon-Sat	12:25 Pearse/Drogheda	32 $\frac{3}{4}$	55	9	7
13:44 Pearse/Drogheda	Mon-Sat	13:55 Pearse/Drogheda	32 $\frac{3}{4}$	57	10	8
16:52 Pearse/Drogheda	Mon-Sat	Unaltered	32 $\frac{3}{4}$	58	10	7
17:13 Pearse/Newry	Mon-Thu	Unaltered	70 $\frac{1}{4}$	94	9	16
17:13 Pearse/Newry	Fri-Sat	Unaltered	70 $\frac{1}{4}$	98	11	15
17:42 Pearse/Drogheda	Mon-Sat	Unaltered	32 $\frac{3}{4}$	61	11	17
07:16 Drogheda/Pearse	Mon-Fri	07:28 Drogheda/Pearse	32 $\frac{3}{4}$	63	12	12
07:32 Drogheda/Pearse	Mon-Sat	07:43 Drogheda/Pearse	32 $\frac{3}{4}$	63	11	11
07:20 Newry/Pearse	Mon-Sat	07:20 Newry/Pearse	70 $\frac{1}{4}$	103	12	22
13:45 Drogheda/Pearse	Mon-Sat	13:58 Drogheda/Pearse	32 $\frac{3}{4}$	57	9	13
15:31 Drogheda/Pearse	Mon-Sat	15:32 Drogheda/Pearse	32 $\frac{3}{4}$	57	9	11
18:16 Drogheda/Connolly	Mon-Sat	18:24 Drogheda/Connolly	31 $\frac{3}{4}$	53	8	8

Incidentally the table above contains full details of the usage of push/pull sets on Mondays to

Thursdays. On Fridays the 22:00 Connolly to Dundalk is formed by the 18:24 ex Drogheda, the set returning empty from Dundalk to Drogheda to form the 07:43 on Saturday morning. Also on Fridays the set of the 17:42 ex Pearse forms the 19:35 ex Drogheda as the preceding 17:28 ex Pearse continues to operate on Mondays to Thursdays only. One push/pull set is therefore based in Dublin, Drogheda and Dundalk each night, Mondays to Fridays. On Saturdays the 08:08 ex Pearse and 09:50 ex Drogheda are normally worked by a push/pull set in order to provide adequate accommodation on the latter train. (These services are worked by a two-piece Arrow on Mondays to Fridays.) The 09:50 ex Drogheda is back in Pearse in ample time to work the 12:25 to Drogheda. At the time of writing a push/pull set is being used on Saturdays to work the 07:35 relief train to Belfast returning at 16:40, and as a consequence the 08:08 ex Pearse and subsequent workings have reverted to conventional stock hauled by whatever locomotive(s) are available at the time. Empty workings from Newry and Drogheda on Saturdays result in all three sets being in Dublin at the weekend. On Sundays the 10:25 Connolly to Rosslare, the 15:45 Connolly to Longford (winter only) and the 14:50 Heuston to Waterford are formed by push/pull sets as are the corresponding return workings. The stock is generally hauled by 071s on Sundays as neither the Rosslare, Sligo nor Waterford lines are fully cleared for 201s. The sets return to Drogheda and Dundalk on Sunday evenings but do not carry passengers, despite the fact that there is no connecting onward rail service for long distance passengers arriving in Dublin and unable to catch the 20:15 to Dundalk. As can be seen from the table the push/pull sets are not intensively used, the set of the 07:28 ex Drogheda, for instance, normally remains in Pearse all day and forms the 17:13 to Newry before returning (empty) to Dundalk.

In order to relieve overcrowding on both the 06:45 ex Dundalk and the 07:28 ex Drogheda a new (Monday to Fridays) service was introduced from Balbriggan to Dublin (Connolly) commencing on 6th November. The new train leaves at 07:32 and serves Skerries, Malahide and Howth Junction arriving in Connolly at 08:08. The following related alterations also took effect on the same date:

- The 07:43 ex Howth is advanced to 07:42 and runs one minute earlier throughout.
- The 06:45 ex Dundalk is advanced to 06:42, runs three minutes earlier to Howth Junction and arrives in Connolly two minutes earlier at 08:05.

Additionally the 07:55 ex Howth is now formed by a six-car set in order to cater both for passengers transferring from the Balbriggan train at Howth Junction and in order to relieve the exceptionally heavy congestion which has been a feature of this particular DART for several years. Loadings on the new Balbriggan service have been moderate to date, the change to DART at either Howth Junction or Connolly being an obvious disincentive for passengers travelling to the city centre. Nonetheless the new service, formed by the Down morning Sligo set, is carrying between 160 and 200 passengers, the bulk of whom travel directly to Connolly. Prior to the introduction of the new service the combined loading of the 06:42 ex Dundalk and the 07:28 ex Drogheda often approached, or even exceeded, fifteen hundred passengers compared to seating accommodation for about eight hundred and fifty. The emergence of a second six-car DART formation means that nineteen of the twenty two-car sets are now simultaneously rostered for duty during the Monday to Friday morning peak, an availability requirement of 95%. (Apart from the DARTs all of the trains mentioned above run on Mondays to Fridays only.)

With effect from Monday 20th November, the 07:05 ex Portlaoise was altered to run non-stop from Newbridge to Dublin (Heuston) and is now formed by the Mk3 set off the 09:10 to Tralee. The rostered two-car Arrow now starts from Carlow at 06:45 and serves all stations to Dublin (Heuston) arriving at 08:00, just ahead of the Portlaoise service which arrives at 08:05. While the new service is both welcome and innovative it remains to be seen whether or not potential patrons are deterred by the somewhat unattractive departure time. There are now five arrivals in Heuston before 09:00, one each from Kildare, Carlow, Portlaoise, Athlone and Cork. The Portlaoise and Athlone services mentioned

above run on Mondays to Fridays only, while the Carlow service starts from Kildare at 07:18 on Saturdays. The level of current early morning commuter traffic into Heuston can be seen from the details contained in the table below, which shows arrivals on Friday 25th November.

Service	Formation	Heuston	Load	Punctuality
06:50 ex Kildare	2614/17	arr 07:38	90/100	Six late
06:45 ex Carlow	2604/03	arr 08:04	100/110	Four late
07:05 ex Portlaoise	222+7Mk3+EGV	arr 08:07	130/160	Two late
06:37 ex Athlone	233+DV+5Mk2a/b	arr 08:21	160/180	One late
05:20 ex Cork	212+6Mk2+EGV+DV	arr 08:41	270/300	One late

- It is understood that a new experimental service was introduced from Cork to Mallow at 23:15 on Mondays to Fridays, commencing in mid-September.
- Passenger carryings so far this year are understood to be significantly up on 1994, with 6.2% more mainline journeys being recorded in the period up to mid-July. Suburban services are also carrying more passengers with 4.7% extra journeys being made in the period to mid-August. This trend is expected to continue through to the end of the year, reflecting the healthy state of the economy, significant improvements in the reliability of the service, excellent summer and autumn weather, and last but not least the ever deteriorating road traffic conditions in central Dublin.

Cork/Cobh

The results of the internal inquiry into the spectacular buffer stop collision at Cobh station on 5th May have been made public. The principal conclusion of the report is that “The driver was driving too fast and did not have his train under control. On his approach to Cobh he did not apply sufficient brake early enough and, having applied the brake, he released it for a time and then re-applied it”. The report describes the condition of the train’s braking system as adequate and not a contributory factor in the accident, but admits that the locomotives speedometer was inoperative. There was heavy fog in the vicinity of Cobh station at the time of the collision.

According to advertisements placed in local newspapers the 09:25 and 15:25 ex Cork as well as the corresponding return workings were to be substituted by buses from 24th July until further notice, the alterations being necessary to facilitate the upgrading of Fota and Littleisland stations. As of mid-November the Up platform at Littleisland had been raised while both platforms at Fota have been substantially rebuilt. (This work apparently resulted in single line working over the entire section from Cork to Cobh, the cancellations being required in order to create paths for Ammonia trains to/from Marino Point.)

Free trips were offered on the Cork/Cobh service on Sunday 24th September in order to further publicise the already very successful Arrow-based service introduced last May. Carryings on the Cobh line are presently reported to be running at around 30% more than last year.

Radio Train

Contrary to the report in the last issue the Killarney Radio train did in fact operate on 8th August. The program was also supplemented by excursions to Ballina, Galway, Sligo and Armagh. The £29 fare from Dublin to these additional destinations, each of which was visited on one occasion only, was the same as that charged to Killarney.

Passengers travelling on the 10th August trip to Armagh were taken by train to Portadown, with road transfers to Armagh and later from there to the Irish Linen Museum in Lisburn. The return train, 232 +

5 Mk3 + EGV, left from Lisburn at 18:41 but was severely delayed by the 17:37 Bangor to Dundalk, being blocked at Lurgan, Portadown and Newry. Matters were further complicated at Newry by the empty carriages off the 17:13 ex Pearse, which in order to clear the Down line for the 18:20 ex Dublin, had crossed to the Up line after the Dundalk bound train had deputed. The Radio train was thus blocked for 26 minutes and departed at 20:08, after both the 17:37 ex Bangor and the empty train had cleared Dundalk. Some ninety passengers travelled on this trip, about thirty of whom joined at Malahide. While the delays were unfortunate, nobody was unduly discommoded as the train crew maintained a high standard of entertainment and service throughout.

Heavier Trains

The long-planned introduction of Ammonia trains conveying nine laden tankers took place on 20th November, front which date the number of daily movements was reduced from three to two in either direction. Considerable alterations to track, signalling and loading/unloading equipment were necessary to both Shelton Abbey and Marino Point in order to accommodate the new set size. The revised formation weighs some 775 tonnes when laden. The first days of the new service saw considerable delay at the plants due to problems with handling equipment and as a result quite a number of trains were cancelled as the wagons were very much in the wrong place at the wrong time. Some difficulties have also arisen on the severe gradients between Cork and Rathpeacon and a number of trains have had to be assisted. As might be expected these trains are hauled by 201 class locomotives throughout.

The permitted size of general freight trains has been increased to the equivalent of 21 laden bogie wagons, this alteration applying to 201 hauled trains operating between Dublin and Cork (North Esk) only.

The permitted size of laden Tara Mines trains has been increased to 12 bogies, or just under 900 tonnes. These trains are handled by 071 class locomotives throughout.

Timber

Over the last few months timber trains have been operating primarily to Waterford rather than Clonmel. The principal loading points at present are Mallow, Galway, Athenry, Millstreet, Ennis, Killarney, Claremorris, Ballina and Westport. On arrival at Waterford the timber is brought by lorry to the new Louisiana Pacific/Coillte plant at Belview. Trains from Claremorris, Ballina and Westport are invariably routed via Roscommon and Athlone rather than via Tuam, Ennis and Limerick. At the time of writing there are two sets of specially adapted bogie wagons in use, although given the expected increase in traffic to fifteen laden trains per week a third set will be needed and may well appear early in the new year.

Following local objections to heavy goods vehicles using the laneway behind the Down platform, unloading of timber at Clonmel now takes place on the Up side at the Waterford end of the station. (Palisade fencing, parallel to the Up siding at this location, has been removed.)

Grain Traffic

Grain traffic from Waterford to the Avonmore Co-op at Portlaoise is understood to have commenced in early November and is additional to a similar traffic flow from Foynes and North Wall to the same destination. Laden trains are understood to have operated out of Foynes on 17th and 18th November. On Sunday 19th November an empty train consisting of 186/129 + 18 grain containers was preparing to depart for Waterford at 17:00. The train of four-wheel wagons had stabled overnight at Kildare having been worked from Portlaoise the previous day. (The Avonmore plant is located on the stub of the former Portlaoise/Kilkenny line, a short distance beyond the permanent way depot.)

Beet Traffic

The Beet season started towards the middle of October with a similar pattern of services to that provided last year. Trains generally run on a Monday to Saturday basis with between four and five departures each day from Waterford to Mallow. Depending on traffic offering, wagons are frequently attached to both the 19:05 Waterford/Limerick Junction liner and the 03:15 Belview to Cork liner. Haulage was initially dominated by 071s but pairs of Bo-Bos, notable amongst them being 127+129, began to appear as the latter were better able to maintain their grip under conditions of poor adhesion. As elsewhere throughout the system the combination of encroaching trees, gradually shedding their leaves, and the absence of sanding equipment led to much frustration and delay, particularly during late October and early November. When weather conditions are good and loading is uninterrupted at Wellingtonbridge up to 130 wagons will be unloaded daily at the Mallow factory. (In fact the trains are generally unloaded at night when the volume of beet arriving by road is at a minimum.)

Ennis/Athenry/Claremorris

- Following the derailment at Gort station, the points at the north end of the loop have been removed. It is not therefore possible to cross traffic at Gort although the cabin remains operational.
- Repairs to UB 77 were in hand just north of Ennis in early October. A number of other bridges in the Ennis/Athenry section are also receiving attention.
- Selective replacement of timber sleepers was in hand between Crusheen and Tubber at the beginning of October.
- In connection with road improvements the Galway Road level crossing at Tuam has been excavated and renewed.
- A Limerick/Galway liner train is understood to have been operating several times weekly during late July and early August. The train was generally 071-hauled, and utilised the wagons off the incoming Waterford/Limerick Bell liner train. The trains were part of a short-term contract for the delivery of equipment to a new manufacturing facility in Galway.

Derailments

A serious mishap occurred in conditions of poor visibility at Longford on 19th August, when the set of the morning commuter train to Dublin was propelled northwards from the goods yard into the water tank which stood at the Sligo end of the headshunt. The stone column supporting the tank was demolished and 1541, the rear coach of the train, sustained serious damage to the roof and vestibule at one end. Due to the consequent shortage of cravens the 17:15 Connolly to Longford was formed by an EGV + 2 Mk3 on this date.

A minor derailment in Dundalk on 1st September fouled the Up mainline at the Dublin end of the station. As a result it was necessary for trains to set back over the crossover at Dundalk North cabin, from which point they proceeded “wrong line” through the station before regaining the Up road at Dundalk Central cabin. Amongst the trains affected were the 17:00 and 18:00 ex Belfast which were thus delayed 30 and 35 minutes respectively.

A Cork to Drogheda empty bulk cement train came to halt in the Up loop at Portarlington with the second and third wagon of the train derailed just after 17:30 on 28th September. The closely following 14:10 ex Tralee was delayed for over an hour as a result, the locomotive being used to remove the rear wagons of the cement train. There was a further derailment at Portarlington the next day around 13:30 when some of the cement wagons became derailed while being shunted into the Down siding. This incident necessitated single line working over the Up line from the facing crossover at the Dublin end

of the Portarlington station to the trailing crossover at the Dublin end of Portlaoise station. Normal working was restored in time for the Friday evening exodus.

The 20:35 North Wall to Cork liner was derailed at Inchicore on 24th October when an apparent attempted theft of beer kegs went spectacularly wrong. The incident is understood to have occurred as the train pulled away from a signal check at the ground mounted Inchicore starting signal, near MP 2. A beer keg either fell or was thrown from the moving train in such a way as to lodge under one of the bogies of the fourth wagon. Unfortunately this wagon was unladen and became completely derailed, being dragged some distance before the train was brought to a halt. Although damage to plain track was not particularly severe, both the trailing connection from the works and the adjacent facing crossover between the two mainlines were rendered unusable. The derailed wagon came to rest fouling the Up line near the Kylemore Road overbridge. The 19:10 ex Cork was brought to a halt a short distance away and was propelled to Cherry Orchard from which point passengers completed their journey by bus. The line was re-opened at 06:15 the following day. As a consequence intending passengers for the 07:05 ex Portlaoise were brought by bus to Portarlington as the 05:45 ex Heuston did not operate. In order to expedite clearance of the line the derailed wagon was placed on the side of the cutting on the Up side.

The single line section between Carrick-on-Suir and Clonmel was closed to traffic in the early hours of Thursday 23rd November, due to the derailment of a laden beet wagon which occurred a short distance east of Clonmel station. Damage to the track extended over about 1½ miles, with well over a thousand wooden sleepers badly damaged or destroyed. The train involved was the morning Waterford/Cork Bell liner which had a tail of nine laden beet wagons at the rear. First reports suggest a broken axle may have been the cause, although this has yet to be confirmed. The following 04:00 Bell liner from Waterford to Limerick had to be turned back at Carrick-on-Suir while the early morning Limerick to Waterford bulk cement was re-routed via Kildare. The liner was subsequently similarly re-routed as were both empty and laden beet specials. The Cherryville Junction to Waterford section was thus severely congested on Saturday 25th November as in addition to the diverted trains, there was a passenger special from Waterford to Dublin and back as well as at least three Bell liner trains, two from North Wall to Waterford and one from Waterford to Limerick. (The loop at Lavistown, which would have greatly expedited the handling of diverted traffic, remains idle despite the fact that the track, turnouts and associated signalling have been completed for almost two months. All diverted trains had therefore to run round in Kilkenny, a wholly unnecessary complication.) Normal traffic was resumed on the following Monday afternoon, the line being cleared in time to pass the 15:55 Limerick to Rosslare passenger train.

General Traffic and Operations

In anticipation of particularly heavy traffic on the Cork line over the August Bank Holiday weekend, arising from the Féile '95 concerts, a number of trains were designated as requiring boarding cards. The trains involved were:

4th August: The 07:30, 10:45, 11:00, 13:05, 13:20, 14:35, 15:10, 16:30, 17:20, 19:00, 19:10 and 21:00 from Dublin to Cork as well as the 09:10, 13:40, 17:40 and 18:25 from Dublin to Tralee.

5th August: The 07:30, 09:00, 11:00 and 13:20 from Dublin to Cork as well as the 09:10, 11:45 and 13:40 from Dublin to Tralee.

In addition to the requirement for boarding cards, Student, Faircard, Weekender and Family fares were withdrawn over the August weekend on Dublin to Cork trains, while half fare travel was restricted to children under twelve. A return fare of £19 was available for pre-booked tickets valid on the 15:10, 17:20, 19:00 and 21:00 to Cork on 3rd August, the 09:35, 19:30 and 21:00 to Cork on 4th August and

the 07:30, 08:00 and 10:45 to Cork on 5th August. In the event traffic was not as heavy as anticipated and some of the planned reliefs to Cork were not required, particularly on the Saturday morning. Work was found for some of the stock elsewhere with an auxiliary, formed by a hauled push/pull set, running ahead of the 11:10 to Galway. The two trains in question were observed passing the Curragh at 11:30 and 11:38 and were formed by 087 + 6 p/p and 218 + EGV + 9 Mk2 respectively. The Saturday also saw an unadvertised relief train to Rathdrum departing ahead of the 13:35 from Connolly to Rosslare and returning in time to form the regular 17:15 from Connolly to Longford. (This latter arrangement established a pattern repeated on several other Saturdays during August.)

Sunday 6th August saw heavy traffic in connection with the All Ireland Hurling semi-finals, Clare v Galway and Offaly v Down. There were ten special trains to Dublin, four from Ennis, two from Galway and one each from Limerick, Ballinasloe, Clara and Portadown. The Ennis trains departed at 06:40, 07:08, 07:40 and 08:30 with only the last-mentioned serving Limerick station. The special ex Limerick at 09:00 was formed by 86+2+81+4+93, which had worked a Belfast/Cork Féile '95 special the previous Friday. The 07:50 Westport/Athlone was extended through to Heuston on this date so as to relieve the 08:50 ex Galway with which it normally connects. (*A temporary block post was established at Cratloe to split the Ennis/Limerick Check section and thus permit a reduced headway from Ennis. This arrangement was in force for both outward and return specials and was also in operation to facilitate return empty stock workings from Ennis. A pilotman was appointed for both the Ennis/Cratloe and Cratloe/Limerick sections, although naturally most trains travelled under the authority of a pilotman's ticket.*) The day return fare from Ennis and Limerick was £18 for tickets purchased before 3rd August rising to £20 if purchased after this date.

Despite the exceptionally warm summer weather there were no seaside services in the Dublin area on either the Sunday or Monday of the Bank Holiday weekend other than DART and, as in other years, the volume of enquiries precipitated the erection of hastily prepared notices in centre city stations to this effect. (It was possible to travel to Mosney on the Sunday as certain Dublin/Belfast/Dublin trains called as per the regular timetable.)

August Bank Holiday Monday started with early morning departures from Cork to Dublin and Limerick commencing at 02:00, some of which were formed by stock off the previous days GAA specials. There was also an 07:45 relief from Dublin to Belfast formed by a hauled push/pull set, 233 + 5 p/p 6102. This train returned empty on arrival and the stock was subsequently used to form an auxiliary at 14:30 from Dublin and 17:53 from Belfast. Arrow railcars were a feature of arrivals at Heuston on this date with four-car sets being used on the 18:00 relief from Galway, 2614/17/04/03, the 17:40 relief from Cork, 2616/15/12/11, and the 19:35 relief from Cork, 2606/05/10/13.

Gorse fires in the Killiney area seriously disrupted DART services on 9th August with services being suspended between Dalkey and Bray from 18:30 to 21:00.

The All-Ireland football semi-final between Cork and Dublin produced eight special trains in the morning, six from Cork and two from Mallow. In addition the 07:50 Tralee/Cork was diverted to Dublin (Heuston) while a special train was also operated from Thurles to Heuston conveying the President, Mrs Robinson. Details of morning services from the provinces to Dublin on this date are contained in the table below.

20th August 1995
All-Ireland Football Semi-Finals

Train	Formation	Load	Kildare	Dublin (Connolly)
SP ex Cork (2)	2616/15/06/05	220	pass 09:27	arr 10:17
07:50 ex Mallow	082+6p/p 6103	440	pass 09:45	arr 10:29
08:05 ex Mallow	2164-DV+10Mk2a/b+DV	500/530	pass 09:55	arr 10:34
08:00 ex Cork	232+EGV+9Mk2+EGV	550	pass 10:02	arr 10:41
08:10 ex Cork	207+GSV+5Cr	320/350	pass 10:22	arr 10:59
08:20 ex Cork	2604/03/08/07/14/17	360/380	pass 10:37	arr 11:19
S.P. ex Cork (1)	221+6Mk2+EGV		pass 10:41	to Heuston
08:50 ex Galway	201+7Mk3+EGV		11:10/11:11	to Heuston
SP ex Thurles	217+3Mk2+EGV		pass 11:21	to Heuston
10:30 ex Mullingar	175+4Cr+GSV	300/310	Via Clonsilla	arr 11:46
09:10 ex Cork	204+8Mk3+EGV		pass 11:34	to Heuston
08:55 ex Sligo	076+EGV+8Mk2	300	Via Clonsilla	arr 12:00
09:15 ex Rosslare	084+6Mk2+FGV	300/350	Via Bray	arr 12:12
09:35 ex Waterford	083+7Mk3+EGV		11:42/11:43	to Heuston
10:05 ex Limerick	210+GSV+6Cr		12:00/12:02	to Heuston
07:50 ex Tralee	213+6Cr+GSV		pass 12:06	to Heuston
Exec SP ex Cork	230+5Mk3+EGV		pass 12:11	arr 12:52
10:00 ex Belfast	209+10Mk2		Via Malahide	arr 13:08

(1) Returned Empty to Cork to form the 14:30 Cork/Heuston Kildare pass 12:00.

(2) Substitute set, 2611/12/01/02, sent to Cork to form 16:30 Cork/Dublin "Arrow Express", passing Kildare at 11:02. When account is taken of the two-piece set working the service from Cork to Cobh, all Irish Rail Arrow railcars were in traffic. Consequently Portadown based NIR railcars worked the 17:10 from Dundalk to Portadown, the 18:10 from Portadown to Connolly and the 20:15 from Dublin to Dundalk.

While more match traffic could have been handled out of Cork, preference was given to regular trains, thus eliminating much of the inconvenience associated with these occasions in the past. The day return fare from Cork and Mallow was £23 on this date, while those travelling from Charleville benefited from a £1 discount. Although there had been some expectation of a ten-piece Arrow this did not happen, hence the additional railcar service out of Cork. (Although Arrows have yet to operate commercially in sets greater than six units, trials of twelve-car formations were undertaken just prior to the introduction of the equipment in 1994.)

A 14:50 auxiliary ran from Dublin to Belfast on Sunday 27th August. The train which was formed by 2605/6/4/3/8/7 was the first working of an Arrow railcar set beyond Lisburn and was not scheduled to serve any intermediate stations. The return working from Belfast was at 17:25 with stops at Lisburn, Lurgan and Portadown, from which point the set took up the running of the regular 18:10 from

Portadown to Dublin. Passengers intending to travel on the 17:10 ex Dundalk on this date were taken by road transport as the latter train was cancelled.

The Hurling Final between Clare and Offaly produced exceptionally heavy traffic on 3rd September and resulted in Irish Rail borrowing an eighty class set for a special from Ennis to Dublin. This later worked a Dublin/Limerick special in the evening, otherwise it could not have been returned to NIR in time for use the following morning. As on 20th August NIR operated the link commencing with the 17:10 from Dundalk, an arrangement previously described for that date. Return services to Ennis, Limerick, Cork, Tralee, Galway, Westport and the Athlone branch are shown in the first table with Up road traffic during the same period being shown in a separate table.

3rd September 1995, All-Ireland Hurling-Final Day, Down Trains

Train	Formation	Load	Kildare	Portarlington
17:10 Connolly/Cork	223+6p/p 6105	330/370	pass 17:57	Pass 18:08
17:20 Connolly/Ennis	202+6 Mk2a/b+DV	330	pass 18:02	pass 18:14
17:40 Connolly/Limerick	91+2+81+2	430	pass 18:12	pass 18:22 (5)
17:50 Heuston/Cork	220+EGV+8Mk3	500	pass 18:17	pass 18:28
17:50 Connolly/Ennis	221+7Mk2a/b+DV	400/420	pass 18:25	pass 18:36
18:00 Heuston/Westport	201+EGV+8Mk2	500/520	18:35/18:36	18:48/18:50
17:30 Connolly/Athlone	2613/10/7/8/3/4	360/370	pass 18:39	18:57/19:01 (1)
18:00 Connolly/Ennis	224+8Mk3+EGV	600	pass 18:46	pass 19:07 (2)
18:20 Heuston/Waterford	075+EGV+7Mk3	400	18:50/18:51	pass 19:00 (3)
18:10 Connolly/Athlone	2606/5/11/12/15/16	480/450	pass 19:00	19:14/19:16 (4)
18:30 Heuston/Limerick	203+EGV+8Mk3	500/510	19:05/19:07	19:23/19:25
18:20 Connolly/Ennis	225+10Cr+GSV	750/800	19:11/19:14	19:29/19:35
18:50 Heuston/Galway	204+EGV+7Mk2	490	19:18/19:19	19:40/19:43
19:00 Heuston/Cork	211+EGV+6Mk2	400	pass 19:26	pass 19:47
19:20 Heuston/Tralee	218+EGV+8Mk3	470/480	pass 19:45	pass 20:00
SP Heuston/Limerick Junction	214+3Mk2+EGV	160	pass 20:01	20:12/20:14 (6)
20:40 Heuston/Galway	211+5Cr+GSV	330/370	21:11/21:12	

3rd September 1995, All-Ireland Hurling-Final Day, Up Trains

Train	Formation	Load	Kildare
13:35 Tralee/Dublin	205+7Mk3+EGV	300	17:25/17:27
15:10 Westport/Heuston	210+DV+5Cr	350/360	18:16/18:18
14:25 Marino Point/Arklow	219+BW+6+BW		pass 18:28
16:30 Cork/Heuston	2602/01	60	pass 18:39
17:30 Cork/Heuston	222+8Mk3+EGV	360/380	pass 19:28
18:00 Waterford/Heuston	081+6102 6p/p	300	20:10/20:11
17:20 Ennis/Heuston	234+GSV+9Cr+GSV	400	pass 20:16
17:20 Tralee/Heuston	229+7Mk3+EGV	430/450	pass 20:33
18:10 Galway/Heuston	213+8Mk3+EGV	460	pass 20:41
Empty Athlone/Dublin	2604/3/8/7/10/13		Pass 20:49

1. Ran via the Up Platform at Portarlington, but was blocked outside awaiting the departure of the

15:10 from Westport to Dublin.

2. Blocked at Cherryville Junction until 18:56, pending the arrival of the preceding Arrow within the protection of controlled signals at Portarlington. (See note 1 above.)
3. Blocked at Kildare until 18:57 as the preceding train was standing at the Down Home signal at Cherryville Junction. Time shown under the Portarlington column refers to CY190 at Cherryville Junction. (See note 2 above.)
4. Also ran via the Up platform at Portarlington, but was blocked at the home signal until the 17:30 from Cork to Heuston had passed.
5. Ran as a nine-car formation in the morning, this being reduced at Connolly due to a brake defect on 2+98.
6. Formed by the set of the 14:45 ex Waterford.

On the day prior to the match the 14:15 Ennis/Limerick was extended to Heuston arriving at 17:34, the train being formed by 213 + GSV + 7 Cr with between 350 and 400 on board.



A39 + EGV + 7 Mk2 on the 08:40 ex Dublin (Connolly) near Bray Cove, 23/9/1995.

Irish Rail ran an “A” class farewell railtour on 23rd September from Connolly to Rosslare Strand, thence to Waterford, Carrick-on-Suir, Limerick Junction and back to Connolly. The locomotive was renumbered A39 and painted in the attractive, if impractical, silver livery with which they originally ran. The train included a dining car in the consist of EGV + 7 Mk2, although the promised full catering did not materialise as the rostered crew failed to report as scheduled. Off duty catering staff did, however, provide a trolley service throughout the train for the 250 passengers who took advantage of this publicly advertised trip.

The single track section from Waterford West to Carrick-on-Suir was closed on Saturday 2nd

September at around 10:15, preparatory to the diversion of the parallel line from Thomastown to cross UB 114/188, at Newrath, via the latter. While the arrangement to some extent mirrored the approach to the renewal of the Blackwater viaduct at Mallow, the line to Carrick-on-Suir remained closed during the period of the diversion. Normal working resumed at midnight on Tuesday 5th September. The Waterford/Dublin line was thus very busy. For instance on Monday 4th September the early morning Bell liner trains from Waterford to Cork and Limerick ran via Kildare as did the Limerick/Waterford bulk cement and its corresponding return working. There were also two Waterford to Dublin Bell liners as well as a laden timber train from Westport to Waterford and an empty timber train from Waterford to Mallow.

Irish Rail's executive train visited the NCC twice within a week at the beginning of September. On the 8th the train ran from Coleraine to Cork with an Irish Distillers party and was formed by 082 + 4 Mk3 + EGV. This party had travelled the previous day from Cork to Belfast by train, transferring to road transport for the remainder of the journey to Bushmills. The next special, from Dublin to Portrush, ran on the 13th and was formed by 079 + EGV + 5 Mk3 and was scheduled to leave Dublin at 06:50 and Portrush at 20:35.

Evening services from Heuston Station were severely disrupted on 25th September due to the 18:05 to Westport becoming disabled with a brake defect in the Clondalkin to Hazelhatch section. This train and the following 18:25 to Tralee were thus over 1½ hours late on this date.

A special train, chartered by the Irish Traction Group on 7th October, ran from Heuston to Bray and thence to Limerick, Foynes, Ennis, Athenry, Athlone, Portarlington and Dublin, before returning to Heuston via Dun Laoghaire and Bray. This train, which was routed via the direct curve at Limerick Junction and consisted of 6 Cr + GSV, was hauled to Limerick by 088, thence to and from Foynes by 190, the final leg being in the charge of 130+166. To provide a little added interest for the participants, 003 was used to haul the train between Limerick station and Limerick Check. (The junction for Foynes faces traffic from the Dublin direction and while it is possible to run directly from Dublin to Foynes or Foynes to Ennis, it is no longer possible to run directly to Foynes from the passenger platforms at Limerick station.)

The 13:25 Sligo/Dublin train, 081 + 7 Mk2 + EGV, did not reach Connolly until 18:20 on 16th October. The delay of almost two hours was due to the locomotive stalling between Longford and Edgeworthstown, the result of poor rail conditions caused by leaf fall. This was one of very many instances over the next month which could have been avoided had sanding equipment been in use. The worst problems, as in previous years, were in the Cork/Rathpeacon, Islandbridge Junction/Inchicore and Newcomen Junction/Glasnevin Junction sections. Indeed the leaf-fall problem was so acute this year that absolute block working was established for a time between controlled signals over the full length of the Cork line and periodically on parts of the Belfast line between Killester and Malahide. Signalman's agents were appointed at various places notably Killester, Hazelhatch and Sallins, their duty being to report the passage of trains as the build up of scum on the rails was such as to make track circuits unreliable.

The 18:00 Belfast/Dublin, which passed Drogheda almost half an hour behind schedule, was formed by 131/161 + 7 Mk2 + EGV on 17th October. The same locomotives also worked the 15:00 ex Dublin, from Drogheda, due to problems with the original 201 class.

The annual Wexford Opera trains ran on 19th and 26th October, departing from Platform 5 at Pearse station in accordance with well established tradition. The trains were formed by 076 + EGV + 6 Mk2 and 088 + 5 Mk3 + EGV respectively, the first carrying around 130 passengers, the second somewhat over 70.

The 07:05 ex Portarlington failed on arrival in Kildare on 24th October as a result of a brake problem.

The train was overtaken by the 06:37 ex Athlone and the 05:20 ex Cork. There was thus no service from Kildare after the 06:50 to Heuston until the failed railcar eventually got going again at 08:50.

Services on the Dublin/Belfast line and the Howth/Bray DART were severely disrupted by the failure of non-vital supervisory computers at Connolly on 26th October. The scale of the disruption can be gauged by reference to the 07:28 and 07:43 ex Drogheda, which passed Fairview 30 and 69 minutes late at 08:52 and 09:46 respectively. Also on the same morning commuter services out of Newry and Dundalk were cancelled due to block failures between Dundalk and Drogheda, the 15 mph maximum speed ruling enforced by Irish Rail in such circumstances making it impractical to operate trains.

Passengers on the 07:20 ex Newry were taken by road throughout while the 08:00 ex Belfast finally arrived in Connolly at 11:00. This was the second day in succession that the 07:20 ex Newry did not run, the problem on the 25th being a block failure between Newry and Dundalk. (*This type of problem used to be dealt with by issuing a graded caution, the severity depending on whether or not alternative communications were available. Once the line was seen to be unobstructed trains generally proceeded in a near normal fashion.*)

Shopping traffic from Dublin and intermediate points to Belfast has been particularly heavy this year with an 07:35 relief running on Saturdays since 28th October. A similar train, also leaving at 07:35, has been running on Thursdays since 9th November while a second Saturday relief commenced on 11th November departing at 08:05. There was also a 10:40 relief to Belfast on 4th November with a similar train expected to operate to Newry on 11th November. The combination of shopping traffic and passengers returning after the October Bank Holiday weekend resulted in unusually heavy traffic on the 30th as shown in the table below:

Up Trains
Belfast/Dublin
30th October 1995

Train	Formation	Load	Drogheda dep/pass
08:00 Belfast/Dublin	208+10Mk2	180/200	09:39
09:30 Belfast/Dublin	111+8Mk2	160/170	11:30
10:30 Belfast/Cork (1)	211+6104 6p/p	90/110	12:20
11:00 Belfast/Dublin	233+9Mk2+EGV	250/290	12:49
14:40 Belfast/Dublin (2)	2+99	230/250	16:44
15:00 Belfast/Dublin	208+10Mk2	400/440	17:01
17:00 Belfast/Dublin	111+8Mk2	450/460	18:58
17:40 Belfast/Dublin (3)	Six-Car Arrow	360	19:20
18:00 Belfast/Dublin	233+9Mk2+EGV	600/650	20:04
18:30 Belfast/Dublin	89+4+69	270/300	20:29

- (1) This train was formed by the 07:35 ex Dublin.
- (2) The 14:40 ex Belfast returned as an 18:30 relief to the 18:20 Dublin/Belfast.
- (3) Dundalk based railcars, worked empty to Belfast.

DART and North side outer suburban services were badly disrupted on 31st October when the 07:28 ex Drogheda, 6104 6 p/p + 228, became disabled on the loop line at Beresford Place as a result of the locomotive becoming detached from the train. Reversible working was instituted over the Up road from Connolly to Pearse, pending clearance of the Down line at 09:20.

The 07:43 ex Drogheda failed at Balbriggan on 6th November but was able to shunt clear of the mainline into the refuge siding on the Up side. Passengers joined the following 07:20 ex Newry which was itself delayed for about 20 minutes.

Such were the crowds travelling to a soccer match on 7th November that the EGV + 8 Mk2 forming the 13:25 ex Sligo was completely full on departure and had to be supplemented by three buses. A return special departed Dublin at 23:05 and consisted of an EGV + 11 Mk2 + EGV.

Damage to overhead cabling on the Howth branch resulted in the electrical isolation of the Up line between Bayside and Raheny on 20th November. DART trains were thus halted at Bayside and Raheny, the latter blocking the 07:28 ex Drogheda at Kilbarrack. Reversible working was instituted over the Down line from Howth Junction to Killester pending the restoration of power to the Up line between Howth Junction and Raheny. This being a manual exercise, it took almost an hour to organise and in consequence few DART trains operated on the Northside during the morning peak. Up road services at Killester were therefore as under:

20th November 1995

Up Trains at Killester

Train	Formation	Load	Killester
07:43 Drogheda/Pearse (1)(3)			pass 08:50
08:37 Howth Junction/Dun Laoghaire (1)	8113/26	700/750	09:02/09:05
07:28 Drogheda/Pearse (2)	6103 6p/p+228	630/650	pass 09:09
07:20 Newry/Pearse (1)	6104 6p/p+207	600/650	pass 09:11
08:10 Howth/Bray	8127/15	500/550	09:21/09:22
08:05 Dundalk/Pearse	2608/7/12/11	350/400	pass 09:30
From Howth Junction	8133/32	530/550	09:41/09:42

- (1) Wrong Line from Howth Junction to crossovers north of Killester.
- (2) Overtaken by the 07:43 ex Drogheda at Howth Junction.
- (3) Returned wrong line Kilbarrack/Howth Junction.

Early morning services from Newry and Dundalk were cancelled on 21st November due to block failures between Dundalk and Drogheda, affected passengers being taken by bus instead. The 07:20 ex Newry did not run the following day either as a liner train failed in the Dundalk/Newry section and prevented the empty carriages leaving Dundalk. Passengers were taken by road to Dundalk to join the 08:05 to Dublin.

Miscellaneous

- The restaurant and bar at Cork station operated extended open hours over the August weekend in order to cater for passengers travelling to and from the “Féile” concerts. Hours of business were 08:00 until “late” on the 4th, 08:00 to 19:15 on the 5th, 10:00 to 18:45 on the 6th and 23:30 until 03:30 on 6th/7th.
- A catering trolley was reported to be in operation on the 17:26 Connolly/Arklow on 27th July, having started some three weeks previously.
- CIÉ Consult have won a contract to assist Pakistan Railways in improving their current operations

and in developing both the passenger and freight end of the business. The contract is valued at US\$2.2m.

- The long disused goods shed at Bray together with the adjoining 0.8 acre site were placed on the market by CIÉ for sale by Public Tender, the advertised closing date being 30th June 1995.
- A poster seeking five thousand “extras” to take part in the recreation of the events of “Bloody Sunday” 1920 was widely circulated in the Dublin area by producers of the Michael Collins film. A special DART was advertised in connection with the filming and was scheduled to leave Connolly at 12:10.

Northern Ireland Railways

Dublin/Belfast Project

Following the completion of work at Great Victoria Street, NIR have recommenced relaying south of Portadown. At the time of writing in mid-November the Up line had been renewed with concrete sleepers and CWR from MP 86½ to MP 84¼. As part of this work the accommodation crossing at Moneypennys (MP 84½) has been excavated, the opportunity being taken to renew the Down line at this point also. NIR’s portion of the Dublin/Belfast line is now 62.9% welded compared to 56.3% in November 1994, a rate of progress that will have to be supplemented by outside contractors if accelerated services are to commence on schedule in September 1996.

UK mainland based companies, Balfour Beattie and Railtrack, are understood to have tendered for the relaying of parts of the cross-border route between Portadown and the border. As neither company would have equipment suitable for use on 5'3" gauge track both concerns independently approached the Railway Preservation Society of Ireland with a view to the possible hire of equipment, including (steam!) locomotives.

Renewal of the Belfast/Lisburn section has been deferred again, with work not now expected to commence until the new year.

Spot replacement of structurally failed concrete sleepers was in hand on the Down line approaching Moira at the beginning of October.

General renewal of overbridges awaits the approval of the planning and other statutory authorities and at the time of writing it is unclear when this work will commence.

UB 213, which carries the railway over the Newry ship canal and an adjacent minor road, was renewed during a possession which closed the Newry/Poynzpass section from 22:00 on Friday 22nd September to 06:00 the following Monday. The new bridge consists of steel beams resting on precast concrete units, which in turn rest on the slightly lowered abutments of the original structure. Renewal of the bridge, which has a 12.8 metre span, was undertaken by McLaughlin & Harvey Construction Ltd and cost about £180,000.

Work is progressing on the construction of new rolling stock for cross-border services at the De Dietrich plant at Reichshoffen, France. One of the completed body shells was taken to the SNCF test facility at Vitry, near Paris, for compression testing in order to validate compliance with UIC end-loading requirements. It has emerged that the leading end of the driving trailers will be shaped very similarly to a 201 class locomotive thus producing a uniform effect at the front and rear of the train.

A new computerised seat reservation system is to be introduced for both standard and first class travel

on cross-border services. Invitations to tender for the new system have recently been issued by both NIR and Irish Rail.

Cross-border journeys are now running at a level of 700,000 to 800,000 annually, an increase of 50% over the past two years. Current volumes are now understood to significantly exceed the estimates for post-upgrade traffic although, as yet, there seems little prospect of any additional rolling stock being ordered.

Great Victoria Street

In order to facilitate the installation of City Junction and the completion of associated works connected with the re-instatement of services to Great Victoria Street, the Botanic/Adelaide section was again closed from late Saturday 29th July until around 19:30 on Sunday 30th July. Similar closures took place on 5th/6th and 12th/13th August. With City Junction in place the Blythfield curve itself was laid, connected and ballasted, the track being installed on 2nd September. The next significant event was the commissioning of the signalling protecting Central and City Junctions which took place on Sunday 10th September. The remaining signalling in the Great Victoria Street area was commissioned on 14th September. Crew training commenced shortly afterwards and the first passenger carrying trains operated into the station on 28th September, conveying past and present members of staff and their families. Public services started two days later, the first train being the 06:30 to Larne Harbour, driven by Jimmy Donnelly, a Portadown-based driver and one of the last remaining NIR employees whose railway career dates from GNR days. (Jimmy incidentally drove the last train from Great Victoria Street in April 1976.)

The new station, while not overly large, consists of a bright airy concourse with glazed roof which contains a shop, toilets, ticket office, parcels office, telephones, ATM, snack vending machines and a small waiting area with seating accommodation for about fifty people. There are also facilities within the building for both station staff and train crews. The concourse is linked to the "Great Northern" centre, Glengall Street, Great Victoria Street and the world famous Europa Hotel via the bus station. A separate entrance is also provided to Hope Street where there is a small car park and access driveway. This latter area is severely restricted by a line of palisade fencing delineating the boundary of a privately owned car park which encroaches into the area obviously intended to be the station forecourt. The station was officially opened by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Sir Patrick Mayhew, on Tuesday 7th November. The new station is expected to result in an additional 800,000 passenger journeys per annum and will handle around 1.5 million passengers each year.

There are four platforms at Great Victoria, Platforms 2 and 3 are both 151 metres long and can accommodate the equivalent of 7½ Mk2 coaches. Platform 1 is 112 metres long and can accommodate 5½ Mk2 coaches while the shortest, Platform 4, is 79 metres long and can accommodate the equivalent of 4 Mk2 coaches. Foundations, which will allow substantial extensions, are in place from the ends of the existing platforms up to the starting signals.

Operations at Great Victoria Street are complex and intensive. Although the track layout is relatively simple it is comprehensively signalled and quite flexible in operation with many parallel movements being possible. For instance any of the following combination of three simultaneous movements are catered for:

- An arrival or departure to or from the Central direction on either Platforms 1 or 2 may be combined with an arrival from the Central direction on Platform 3 and an arrival or departure from the Lisburn direction on Platform 4.
- An arrival or departure to or from the Central direction on either Platforms 1 or 2 may be combined with a departure towards Lisburn from Platform 3 and an arrival from the Lisburn

direction on Platform 4.

While three simultaneous movements are not particularly unusual, parallel arrivals and departures are extremely common, typical being a Lisburn direction arrival on Platform 3 and a Central direction arrival on Platform 2. Despite the flexibility of the layout conflicting movements are inevitable especially if trains are running even slightly out of course. The reason for this is that through trains from the Central direction towards Lisburn cannot avoid crossing the path of through trains travelling from the Lisburn direction towards Central. Such trains may arrive or depart simultaneously, but they may not do both - a parallel arrival can only be achieved if the train from the Lisburn direction train runs into Platform 3 or 4, from which point it will have to cross the path of the Central/Lisburn service and thus cannot depart at exactly the same time as the latter. Operations at Great Victoria Street are illustrated in the tables below which show details of peak period services on 2nd October. While there were some problems in the morning, notably crew mis-positioning arising from difficulties with the 07:50 Bangor to Lisburn service, the new station, signalling facilities and timetable worked remarkably well, given that this was the first working day of the new timetable. Incidentally the 07:50 ex Bangor eventually terminated at Belfast Central, from which point passengers travelled on the delayed 07:22 ex Larne Harbour thus entailing a delay of slightly over twenty minutes. The evening period worked even better with only one of the thirty departures between 15:20 and 18:10 leaving more than four minutes late.

Great Victoria Street, 2nd October 1995
(08:10 to 09:15)

Service	Set	Time	Pfm	Dwell Time	Load	Punctuality	
						arr	dep
07:30 Bangor/Portadown	2+453	08:12/08:15	3	3:05	130/170	-1	-1
07:50 Lisburn/Bangor	457+2	08:13/08:15	2	1:52	180/200	-2	-1
07:35 Portadown/Larne Harbour	454+2	08:17/08:22	4	4:21	100/120	-1	0
08:12 Lisburn/Bangor	2+455	08:36/08:38	2	1:52	220/240	-3	-2
06:10 Londonderry/Carrickfergus	86+4+91	08:38/08:51	4	12:56	250/260	-2	-11
07:22 Larne Harbour/Lisburn	95+2	08:39/08:41	3	1:46	270	-11	-6
07:55 Bangor/Lisburn	2+90	08:47/08:53	1	5:21	30/40	-10	-12
07:30 Newry/Bangor	2+452	08:47/08:56	3	8:14	270/290	-6	-9
08:15 Bangor/Portadown	93+4+83	08:51/09:01	2	10:30	50/60	-7	-12
08:09 Carrickfergus/Londonderry	96+2	08:56/09:03	4	7:18	90/100	-9	-8
08:20 Bangor/Lisburn	459+2	09:06/09:08	4	1:53	20/25	-5	-3
07:52 ex Larne Harbour	456+2	09:10/----	1		18	-14	
09:02 Larne Harbour	2+456	Dep 09:13	1		2		-11
08:30 Portadown/Bangor	81+2	09:15/09:18	1	1:48	60/70	-4	-2

The first chartered train into Great Victoria Street was an MRSI railtour on 30th September. This train originated at Yorkgate at 09:50 and initially ran to Lisburn to pick up passengers who had travelled on the 07:55 ex Dublin. The special, which was formed by 92+1+98, then ran to Great Victoria Street before continuing to Antrim via Bleach Green Junction. This latter leg featured a non-stop sprint from Great Victoria Street to Kingsmoss No.1 level crossing, just short of the former Kingsbog Junction. The tablet for the Monkstown/Antrim section was picked up as the train passed through Belfast Central, a somewhat unusual if not heretofore unique occurrence. (During the brief period after the transfer of the tablet instrument from York Road to Central, but before the opening of the Cross

Harbour link, the tablet was conveyed by bus on a number of occasions between Central and Yorkgate.) From Antrim the train ran via Lisburn to Dublin stopping at Portadown, Tandragee, Poyntzpass, Dundalk and Drogheda. The special returned to Belfast (Yorkgate) from Dublin at 18:30, but ran directly to Belfast Central and did not serve Great Victoria Street.

The first locomotive hauled passenger train to serve Great Victoria Street was an RPSI steam-hauled special from Whitehead to Dundalk on 1st October. The so-called "Phoenix" railtour consisted of ex GNR(I) 4-4-0 No.85 hauling five bogies. The handling of this train was interesting and illustrates the method of dealing with locomotive hauled trains - a procedure that is useful in an emergency, but clearly impractical for normal operation. The special arrived chimney first, and was then propelled along the Up line to a point clear of signal 503 but on the station side of signal 510. The locomotive was uncoupled from the train at this stage and came back into the station, from which point it ran to City Hospital, before reversing under the control of signal 536 to Central Junction. No.85, with its chimney now facing Dundalk, then set back onto its train and propelled it onto Platform 3 before departing for Dundalk one minute behind schedule at 10:31. The morning service to Londonderry, formed by 87+2 and due to depart Lisburn at 10:30, was blocked for some time and did not leave Great Victoria Street until 10:25. (It is not possible to depart towards Lisburn while the Up line is occupied between signals 503 and 510, hence the reluctance to permit locomotive hauled trains into station.) Passengers travelling on the special train were given the option of a bus trip to Greenore, as No.85 had to travel light engine to Drogheda to be turned. The return train left Dundalk at 15:33 for Whitehead and again served Great Victoria Street en route.

Great Victoria Street, 2nd October 1995

(15:20 to 18:10)

Service	Set	Time	Pfm	Dwell Time	Load	Punctuality	
						arr	dep
13:25 Portrush/Whitehead	2+98	15:22/15:28	3	6:20	18	-3	-3
Empty ex York Road	89+3+99	15:36/----	3				
15:23 Lisburn/Bangor	2+82	15:45/16:02	4	16:56	150/160	-1	-12
15:05 Bangor/Lisburn	2+83	15:46/15:51	2	5:43	50/55	-2	-4
15:47 GVS/Bangor (Express)	99+3+89	Dep 15:50	3		150/170		-2
Empty ex York Road	86+2	15:55/----	2				
15:55 GVS/Larne Town	2+96	Dep 15:58	1		50/60		-3
16:07 GVS/Bangor (Express)	2+86	Dep 16:08	2		12		-1
15:17 Whitehead/Londonderry	93+2	16:09/16:11	3	1:50	160/170	-8	-3
Empty ex York Road	453+2	16:11/----	1				
15:20 Portadown/Bangor	459+2	16:13/16:17	4	3:47	60	-4	-4
16:10 GVS/Whitehead	2+453	Dep 16:14	1		8		-4
15:35 Bangor/Portadown	2+90	16:17/16:19	2	2:00	130/160	-3	-2
15:15 Larne Harbour/Lisburn	2+87	16:22/16:25	3	2:30	80/90	-1	-1
Empty ex York Road	2+452	16:24/----	2				
16:13 Lisburn/Larne Harbour	83+2	16:26/16:31	4	4:36	8	0	-1
16:35 GVS/Bangor (Express)	452+2	Dep 16:36	2		30/40		-1
15:55 Whitehead/Portadown	2+92	16:44/16:45	2	1:55	160/170	-6	-4
16:05 Bangor/Lisburn	457+2	16:46/16:49	3	3:11	90/95	-2	-2
16:02 Crumlin/Bangor	2+455	16:46/16:48	1	1:39	100/120	-2	-1
Empty ex York Road	2+69	16:49/----	4				

16:50 GVS/Larne Town	69+2	Dep 16:51	4		10/12		-1
16:30 Bangor/GVS (Express)	89+3+99	16:57/----	2			+1	
14:40 Londonderry/Bangor	95+2	17:01/17:13	4	11:50	70/90	-1	-3
16:20 Whitehead/Lisburn	2+98	17:04/17:11	1	6:45	80/100	0	-2
Empty ex Lisburn	2+87	17:04/----	3				
17:06 GVS/Portadown	87+2	Dep 17:07	3	2:56	100/110		-1
17:06 GVS/Bangor (Express)	99+3+89	Dep 17:08	2		120/130		-2
16:25 Portadown/Larne Harbour	456+2	17:12/17:14	3	2:23	90/100	-2	-1
16:38 Bangor/Newry	2+82	17:20/17:21	2	1.37	250/260	-3	-1
16:13 Larne Town/GVS	454+2	17:23/----	2		6	-3	
17:25 GVS/Bangor	2+454	Dep 17:26	2		70		-1
16:55 Bangor/Portrush	86+2	17:27/17:31	3	3:34	200/220	0	-1
17:15 Lisburn/Bangor	457+2	17:36/17:41	3	4:45	60	0	-1
17:00 Bangor/Portadown	459+2	17:40/17:44	4	4:01	130/160	-1	-2
17:00 Whitehead/Lisburn	453+2	17:45/17:48	2	2:53	120/140	-1	-1
17:05 Portadown/Larne Harbour	2+90	17:48/17:51	4	2:50	45/50	-2	-1
17:36 Lisburn/Bangor	98+2	Dep 18:01	2		30		-1
17:02 Larne Harbour/Dundalk	96+2	Dep 18:06	2		90/100		-1

Irish Rail stock visited Great Victoria Street for the first time on 11th November, when a push/pull set, 6104 6 p/p + 228, called while working an IRRS special from Monkstown to Balmoral. In order to avoid turning the set the return working from Balmoral to Central also called at Great Victoria Street. The set had earlier been used to work an 08:05 relief from Dublin (Connolly) to Belfast (Central) serving Malahide, Donabate, Rush, Skerries, Laytown, Drogheda and Dundalk. On arrival in Belfast all the passengers other than the IRRS party disembarked before the train continued to Monkstown on the now little used ex NCC mainline, just beyond Bleach Green Junction. It had been the intention to cross onto the Up road via the turnout on the Antrim side of Monkstown, but due to a track circuit failure holding the points in the normal position it was necessary to return via the Down line to Bleach Green Junction, from which point the train continued towards Belfast on the Up line. The IRRS party returned on the 16:30 relief from Belfast (Central) to Dublin (Connolly) which served Dundalk, Laytown, Balbriggan, Skerries, Rush, Donabate and Malahide.

The first direct service from the “new” Great Victoria Street station to Dublin ran on Thursday 16th November when Irish Rail’s Executive train called en-route from Ballymena to Dublin. The train, which incidentally ran via Bleach Green Junction, was carrying railway company management, staff and guests in connection with the Anglo-Irish best stations competition. The outward journey was from Dublin to Carrickfergus and thence to Ballymena via Belfast Central and Lisburn. The special train arrived at a particularly busy period and required some imaginative working as illustrated in the table below.

Great Victoria Street, 16th November 1995

(15:45 to 16:25)

Service	Set	Time	Pfm	Arr	Dep	Notes
15:47 GVS/Bangor (Express)	90+4+86	Dep 15:55	1		-8	Empty set due at 15:39
15:23 Lisburn/Bangor	2+453	15:46/15:57	2	-2	-7	
15:05 Bangor/Lisburn	2+68	15:48/15:56	2	-1	-9	“Call On”
14:25 Ballymena/GVS	111+EGV+5Mk3	15:50/---	3	-3		

LE ex York Road	088	15:55/----	3			
Empty ex York Road	95+2	16:03/----	2			
15:55 GVS/Larne Town	452+2	Dep 16:07	4		-12	Formed by the 14:35 ex Bangor, arr 15:14
16:07 GVS/Bangor (Express)	2+95	Dep 16:09	2		-2	
15:17 Whitehead/Londonderry		Dep 16:13	4		-5	
15:20 Portadown/Bangor	2+457	16:12/16:18	2	-4	-5	
Empty ex York Road	2+67	16:13/----	1			
16:10 GVS/Whitehead	67+2	Dep 16:15	1		-5	
16:10 GVS/Dublin	088+5Mk3+EGV	Dep 16:15	3		-5	
LE to York Road	111	Dep 16:21	3			
15:35 Bangor/Portadown	2+91	16:18/16:22	1	-4	-5	
15:15 Larne Harbour/Lisburn	459+2	16:21/16:26	2	0	-2	
Empty ex York Road		16:25/----	3			
16:13 Lisburn/Larne Harbour	2+68	16:29/	4	-3		

There were actually five trains at Great Victoria Street for a short period from 15:50 to 15:55 on this date, two on Platform 2 and one on each of the other 3 platforms.

Although it is possible to depart to any destination from any platform, arriving trains from the Lisburn direction must cross onto the Up road at Central Junction in order to reach either Platforms 1 or 2.

- The station was officially opened by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Sir Patrick Mayhew, on 7th November.

(See also Signalling, Layouts and Level Crossings and Timetable Changes.)

Bleach Green Junction/Antrim

NIR have invited tenders for the supply of two crossovers and two turnouts for installation between Bleach Green Junction and Antrim. The turnouts are to be installed at either end of the single line section at Monkstown and Antrim while the crossovers are to be located at either end of a new crossing loop to be installed at Templepatrick. The new connections will consist of 113 lb/yard flat-bottom rail resting on cast baseplates and hardwood sleepers. It is understood that tenders have been issued for the installation of track and related civil engineering work. Tenders for signalling work are expected to issue shortly.

Due to the closure of the Botanic/Adelaide section on Sundays 30th July, 6th August and 13th August, the 10:10 from Central to Londonderry was altered to run from Botanic at 10:13 and was diverted to Portrush via Bleach Green Junction. A separate train operated from Lisburn to Londonderry at 10:45, this latter having a connection to Portrush formed by the set of the 10:13 ex Botanic which had returned empty to Coleraine in the meantime. Passengers travelling from Belfast to Londonderry were required to change trains at Coleraine. Oddly enough several other services which could have been similarly diverted started from or terminated at Adelaide with bus transfers to/from Botanic.

In order to facilitate formation repairs and the renewal of OB 25, near Glenavy, the line between Lisburn and Antrim line was closed after the last scheduled train on three consecutive Saturdays commencing on 28th October. Possession on each occasion was due to end at 18:00 the following day with trains being diverted via Bleach Green Junction during the closure period. Passengers travelling between Lisburn and Antrim were conveyed by road transport on these dates. The trains diverted were:

- The 10:00 Belfast Central to Londonderry which was altered to start from Botanic at 10:07,

serving Belfast Central at 10:14 and thence to Antrim from which the normal schedule applied.

- The 14:03 Belfast Central to Londonderry started from Great Victoria Street at 14:13 and served Botanic and Belfast Central before continuing to Antrim, from which point the normal schedule applied. (There was also a service at 14:03 from Belfast Central to Lisburn, formed by an empty railcar en route to Dublin for the regular 17:55 ex Connolly.)
- The 11:10 ex Londonderry to Belfast Central also ran via Bleach Green Junction, serving both Belfast (Central) and Botanic. The train was due to arrive in Great Victoria Street at 13:30, two minutes earlier than normal. (There was also a service at 13:14 from Lisburn, which took up the running of the 13:37 from Great Victoria Street to Larne Harbour.)

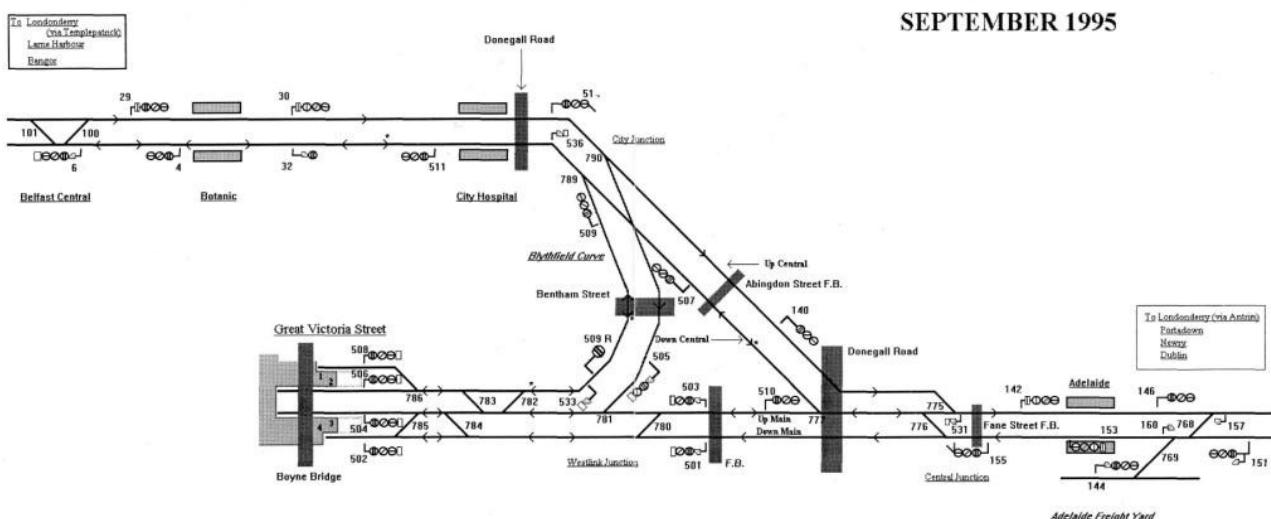
Signalling, Layouts and Level Crossings

Revised signalling arrangements between Adelaide and Belfast (Central) were commissioned on Sunday 10th September, the changes being required to accommodate the new Central and City Junctions. The remaining signalling associated with the Great Victoria Street project was commissioned on 14th September. The new arrangements are shown in the diagram and are detailed below.

Signal 153 is repositioned on the Lisburn side of its previous location and is now suspended from the footbridge at Adelaide station. This signal reads to Signal 155 at Central Junction.

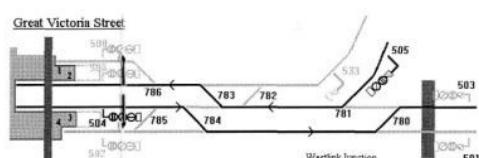
GREAT VICTORIA STREET AND APPROACHES

SEPTEMBER 1995



* Indicates that this direction is available for shunting and emergency movements only.

Overbridges are shown City Hospital/Great Victoria Street/Central Junction/City Hospital only.



A new 3-aspect signal, numbered 155, with position 4 and 5 junction indicators, is positioned on the Adelaide side of Central Junction and reads to either 501, 503 or 507.

The pre-existing Signal No.155 has been repositioned slightly nearer Central Junction so as to allow trains approach to it, even if a movement has been signalled to/from the Blythfield curve. This signal has been renumbered 507.

The existing Signal 159, located on the Botanic side of City Hospital, has been renumbered 511, but is

otherwise unaltered in position or function.

A new signal, No.32, displaying a permanent red running indication, has been provided on the Down line on the City Hospital side of Botanic station. This signal replaces the wrong direction “limit of shunt” board, previously located between Belfast (Central) and Botanic, and allows trains to be routed from Central to Botanic over the Down line. A subsidiary indication reads to signal 536 at City Junction. This latter, in turn, reads to either signal 533 at Great Victoria Street or to signal 142, just beyond Central Junction. Wrong direction movements under the authority of signals 32, 536 and 533 are primarily intended to facilitate shunting and empty stock transfers, but can be used by other traffic should the Up line be unavailable for any reason.

The subsidiary proceed aspects on signals 23, 24, 25 and 33 at the Botanic end of the platforms at Central station now read to signal 32 at Botanic. Trains can also be similarly signalled from the siding adjacent to Platform 1 under the authority of No.27 shunt signal.

A new signal, 514, with a position 4 junction indicator, is provided on the City Hospital side of City Junction and reads to either signal 140 or signal 505.

Signal 31 previously positioned at the Donegall Road overbridge has been moved back a short distance and is now numbered 140.

A new subsidiary signal, 536, is positioned on the City Hospital side of City Junction and as already mentioned controls “wrong line” movements on the Down line towards either Central Junction or Great Victoria Street.

A new subsidiary signal, 531, is located on the Adelaide side of No.775 points and reads from the Up line to either the Down Central line (507) or towards Great Victoria Street (503).

Trains approaching Great Victoria Street encounter the station “home” signals on the approach to Westlink Junction, 501 on the Down main, 503 on the reversible Up Main, 505 on the Up Blythfield curve and 533 on the Down Blythfield curve. 501, 503 and 505, being the last running signals before the station, are capable of displaying only red or yellow aspects, while 533 displays two diagonal white lights when cleared. All four signals have theatre route indicators which display the platform number to which a proceed indication applies. A particularly useful feature applicable to signals 501, 503 and 505 is a “call on” facility, whereby a subsidiary proceed indication may be displayed should the platform to which the train is routed be occupied. This feature is particularly useful if trains are to be combined or passengers are to be transferred from one set to another. It also considerably increases the train handling capacity of the station as more than one train can use the same platform, a practice which will become easier when the platforms are lengthened and more important if, as seems likely, Dublin services begin to serve the station in 1996.

Three-aspect starting signals are provided from all four platform roads, these being numbered 508, 506, 504 and 502. These signals read to either 509, protecting City Junction or 510, protecting Central Junction. These signals are fitted with theatre style indicators which display either a “C” or a “D” when the main signal has been cleared. “C” refers to the Central line and is displayed when the route has been made to signal 509 or beyond. “D” refers to the Dublin line and is displayed when the route has been made to signal 510 or beyond. An interesting feature of the signalling in the station area is that the interlocking will select an alternative route between two points if a conflicting movement is occupying the primary route. For instance there are two routes from signals 504 and 506 to signal 510, one of which can be set up independently of a movement from signal 505 to either Platform 1 or 2. (This routing is illustrated on the diagram.)

Due to severe curvature on the Blythfield curve, signal 509 is preceded by an electronic banner repeater, 509R, located at Westlink Junction. It is understood that a further banner repeater for 509 is to

be located between Westlink Junction and City Junction. This latter will be numbered 509R, the existing 509R will be then renumbered 509RR. (The provision of two successive banner repeaters for the same signal is rare, especially in Ireland, where there is only one other banner repeater in existence - that preceding signal 217 at Yorkgate.)

A new shunt signal, No.160, is provided at Adelaide to control wrong direction movements over No.768 crossover, either during single line working or in the event of Down trains being turned at Adelaide.

“Train Ready To Start” plungers are provided at the ticket barriers in Great Victoria Street in order to speed up the handling of trains and to avoid unnecessary delays which might be caused by the premature routing of departing services.

In order to avoid trains being waved away from the platforms against the starting signal, these latter are repeated by stencil-type indicators suspended from the platform canopy. When a platform starting signal is cleared the word “Off” is displayed on the corresponding repeater.

The signalling at Great Victoria Street was provided by Westinghouse Signals of Chippenham, Wiltshire, and is based on conventional route relay interlocking, controlled from an extended panel at Belfast (Central). Direct control of the layout from a panel, rather than via a computer controlled supervisory system, appears to provide the rapid response times necessary for the successful operation of such an intensively worked location. It is this quite common for a train to be signalled away from the station before a conflicting movement has come to a halt.

No sidings have yet been laid at Fortwilliam although the proposed site, on the Up side near MP 1, has been graded and fenced. The planned sidings at this location are intended to supplement accommodation at York Road and will become more urgent when the new cross-border stock begins to arrive.

Timetable Changes

The commissioning of Great Victoria Street necessitated the introduction of a new timetable with effect from 30th September. From this date almost all internal services in Northern Ireland either pass through or start from Great Victoria Street, the exceptions being a few peak hour services, primarily on the Larne line. In contrast the only cross-border services available are the 17:02 Larne Harbour to Dundalk and the 20:10 Dundalk to Bangor, both of which run on Mondays to Fridays only. On Saturdays there are services at 16:59 from Larne Town to Dundalk and 20:15 from Dundalk to Larne Harbour. There are no Sunday cross-border services.

The number of sets required for the morning peak service is unchanged at 25, these being distributed over 23 links, the figure including the Portrush branch and the two locomotive hauled sets on the Dublin service. One of the latter works the 07:00 Central/Portadown and 08:07 Portadown/Central, both of which by-pass Great Victoria Street. The service frequency contained in the new timetable is summarised below, the figures in brackets referring to the period from 15th May 1995 to 29th September 1995. There are two figures shown under the “Great Victoria Street/Botanic” heading in respect of the current timetable, the first refers to services from Great Victoria Street, the second to services from Botanic. The bracketed figure under the same heading refers to services from Botanic only.

	Great Victoria Street/Botanic			Central		
	Mon-Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon-Fri	Sat	Sun
Bangor	37/37/(32)	24/24/(18)	11/11/(7)	38/(37)	24/(19)	11/(9)
Carrickfergus	31/31/(9)	25/25/(1)	7/7/(1)	37/(37)	25/(23)	7/(8*)
Whitehead	29/29/(8)	24/24/(1)	6/6/(0)	32/(31)	24/(22)	6(7*)
Larne Town	20/20/(5)	15/15/(1)	6/6/(0)	21/(22)	15/(19)	6/(6)
Larne Harbour	16/16/(4)	15/15/(1)	6/6/(0)	17/(17)	15/(15)	6/(6)
Lisburn	55/56/(52)	27/27/(31)	10/11/(12)	57/(52)	26/(31)	12/(13)
Portadown	21/22 ¹ /(22 ¹)	19/19/(17)	7/8/(8)	25/(24)	19/(19)	10/(10)
Newry	2/4 ¹ /(4 ²)	1/3/(3)	0/1/(1)	6/(6 ¹)	5/(5)	3(3)
Dundalk	1/3 ¹ /(3 ¹)	1/3/(3)	0/1/(1)	6/(6)	5/(5)	3(3)
Dublin	0/2 ¹ /(2 ¹)	0/2/(2)	0/1/(1)	6/(6)	6/(6)	3(3)
Antrim	9/9/(10)	9/9/(10)	3/4/(4)	9/(10)	9/(10)	4/(4)
Coleraine	9/9/(9)	8/8/(8)	3/4/(4)	9/(9)	8/(8)	4/(4)
Londonderry	7/7/(7)	6/6/(6)	2/3/(3)	7/(7)	6/(6)	3/(3)

¹ One additional train on Fridays.

² Two additional trains on Fridays

As can be seen from the table, service frequencies are generally improved with most Larne line services extended to operate to and from Great Victoria Street. Other features of the timetable include:

- Excluding empty stock movements there are no less than 130 departures and 131 arrivals at Great Victoria Street on Mondays to Fridays. The average interval between movements is thus under four minutes given that the first departure is at 06:30 and the last at 23:12. During the morning peak the average interval between movements is fractionally over two minutes!
- Many more services than previously call at City Hospital halt, the number of calls, each day, Monday to Friday, is now 132 compared to 71 previously.
- Monday to Friday day time off peak services now generally run to a regular interval pattern. There are hourly services from Larne to Portadown and Whitehead to Great Victoria Street. There is also a half hourly service from Bangor to Lisburn. On Saturdays the general pattern is a train every eighty minutes from Larne Harbour and Whitehead to either Portadown or Great Victoria Street. Services from Bangor depart every forty minutes from 07:00 to 23:00. There is an hourly “all stations” service to Portadown, the origin varying between Larne Harbour, Whitehead and Bangor due to the mismatch in service intervals. Although there is a significant improvement in Saturday services to Larne and Bangor, there is a slight reduction in services to Lisburn. There is no discernible pattern to the Sunday service, the bulk of which operates during the late afternoon and evening when traffic is heaviest.
- The Rail-Link bus service between Belfast Central Station and the City Centre is retained and continues to follow the routing established at the time of the opening of the Cross-Harbour link. With effect from 2nd October there are 79 departures each way on Mondays to Fridays and 64 on Saturdays, there being no service on Sundays as heretofore. It is anticipated that the bus link will be scaled down or cancelled once the new Dublin trains start to call at Great Victoria Street and the promised halt at Donegall Quay becomes a reality. This latter which will be located within easy walking distance of High Street will provide convenient access to the north central business area.

Ferry Changes

Stena-Sealink diverted their Larne/Stranraer ferry service to operate from a new terminal at Albert Quay, Belfast with effect from Sunday 12th November. This move badly disadvantages rail/sea foot passengers as the new site is half a mile from Yorkgate, the nearest station. (P&O continue to operate a service from Larne to Cairnryan, but this is several miles from the rail connection at Stranraer.)

Stations

The structural repair work at Carrickfergus station, mentioned in the last issue, was complete by the middle of August.

Refurbishment of the station buildings at Lisburn is now complete. While much of the work was structural in nature, passenger and staff amenities are much improved. The interior of the station buildings have been brightened considerably and a new oil-fired central heating system has been installed. There is an enlarged concourse on the Up side containing a shop, ticket office, phones, toilets and other facilities. There are also upgraded waiting facilities on the Down island platform, while the decor throughout the station has been completely renewed, the external colours being Green, White and Lime.

Peace Train

What was billed as the final “Peace Train” ran on 14th October, in conditions very different to those which obtained when the first such train ran on 28th October 1989. Terrorist activity against the railway, an easy and virtually unprotected target, peaked in 1989 when Dublin/Belfast services were significantly disrupted on no less than 127 days. Public outrage, expressed in part through the “Peace Trains”, doubtless contributed to the substantial reduction in attacks, to the extent that services were seriously affected on 12 days only during 1993. There has been virtually no disruption since the commencement of the terrorist cease-fires in 1994 and in consequence the “Peace Train” organisation has decided to disband. The final train left Belfast at 08:10 formed by 69+4+86+96+3+83 and arrived in Dublin to an enthusiastic reception at 10:45. A capacity-plus crowd, including the Republic’s Minister for Social Welfare, Mr Prionsais De Rossa TD, departed on the return working which left at 11:29. The train was stopped at Gormanston due to smoke billowing from power car No.96, which had to be shut down before the train restarted. Progress thereafter was rather sedate as a result of inadequate power, permanent way slacks and out of path running, the cumulative effect of which produced an arrival in Belfast at 14:16. A further Belfast/Dublin working was required to bring everybody home. This train was formed by 84+4+92+69+4+86 and left Belfast at 17:43. Progress was severely impeded by a local service which left Lisburn a few minutes before the special passed, as a result of which departure from Portadown was delayed until 18:30. Due to the large crowds waiting for the following and, by now, overdue 18:00 ex Belfast, it was necessary to route the special through No.2 platform at Portadown. Stops at Newry, Dundalk and Drogheda followed with an eventual arrival in Dublin, hot on the heels of a late running DART, at 20:09. (Passengers who travelled from Belfast at 08:10 and had remained in Dublin boarded a further special, formed by the incoming twelve-car set which was due to depart again at 20:45.)

General Traffic and Operations

112 + 5 Mk2s worked the 07:50 Bangor to Lisburn and 08:40 Lisburn to Central on both 4th and 7th August. The same locomotive also worked the 07:05 Central/Portadown and the Portadown/Belfast portion of the 07:30 ex Newry on 5th August. Such substitution, which arises either due to traffic or maintenance requirements in respect of the railcar fleet, has become a less viable option since the

opening of Great Victoria Street as the latter is unsuited to locomotive hauled stock.

A special train, formed by 93+4+91+2+86, ran from Belfast Central to Cork at 08:25 on 4th August in connection with the Feile '95 concert. The set returned empty to Dublin on arrival and, although intended for use on relief trains to Cork later that day and on the following day, in fact ran empty to Limerick on the 5th so as to be positioned for a GAA special on Sunday 6th August. Eventual return to Belfast was at 10:10 ex Cork on the 7th. The substitution of locomotive hauled stock on local services mentioned in the previous paragraph was, in part, due to the absence of this stock.

A series of special trains from Belfast, which commenced on 5th August, brought some 3,500 people to Dublin to attend Saturday matinee performances of Riverdance in the former "Point" depot at the North Wall. Departure from Belfast was at 08:30 returning at 18:30, the trains being generally formed by nine-piece eighty class sets. (Incidentally direct rail access is still available but, as this involves passage over track not signalled to passenger standards, special trains operate to either Connolly or Heuston as appropriate.)

The 09:00 ex Belfast, 111 + 8 Mk2s, failed approaching the Boyne viaduct on 8th August due to a broken air line on the locomotive. The stranded train was retrieved by 082 and double-headed into Drogheda where 111 was removed. Arrival in Dublin was at 12:24, almost an hour late. The 13:00 Dublin/Belfast was worked by 073 which remained on loan to NIR until 10th August.

An 09:25 special train from Dublin to Lisburn on 16th September was formed by 459+4+455. It is particularly rare for this type of DEMU to work south of Dundalk due to the fact that these sets do not have buffers. The reason for using a set of this type was because the wide power doors are particularly suited to conveying passengers in wheelchairs, as was the case on this occasion. The special returned from Lisburn at 19:30.

The Dublin v Down football final on 17th September produced a number of additional trains on the Dublin/Belfast line. Although not as busy as in other years traffic was fairly heavy as can be seen from the table of return trains reproduced below.

Sunday 17th September 1995

All Ireland Football Final, Down v Dublin

Train	Formation	Load	Adavoyle
17:25 Connolly/Belfast	086+6Mk2a/b	270/300	pass 18:39
17:40 Connolly/Belfast	111+8Mk2	380/420	pass 19:01
17:55 Connolly/Belfast	92+4+90+2+82	450	pass 19:21
18:20 Connolly/Belfast	209+12Mk2	550	pass 19:40
18:35 Connolly/Belfast	67+4+87	150/180	pass 19:59
19:05 Connolly/Portadown	81+4+93+2+68	550/600	pass 20:24

Locomotives and Rolling Stock

Driving trailer 739, damaged some time ago in a collision with a tractor near Crumlin, was sent, by road, to Derby for repair on 5th August.

208 became the first of its class to work beyond Bleach Green Junction when it ran from York Road to Carrickfergus to assist a failed DEMU. These locomotives had heretofore been confined to the Dublin line, the Lisburn/Antrim branch and the ex-NCC mainline from Belfast to Antrim via Bleach Green Junction.

Miscellaneous

The redundant signal boxes at Bangor and Greenisland had been demolished by early November. The box at Larne Harbour, still extant as of 11th November, is expected to suffer a similar fate shortly.

There was an outbreak of vandalism at Belfast Central station during the night of Friday 4th August and again the following night. A small portable building on Platform 1/2 was set alight, flower containers were overturned and a number of lights were broken.

“DAY-TRACKER” tickets, valid for Saturday travel were withdrawn after 30th September, the Monday to Friday version having ceased to be available some weeks previously. The Sunday version of the ticket was not withdrawn at this time. (See the previous issue for further details.)

Private Railways and Museums

Railway Preservation Society of Ireland

The RPSI's summer operating season was somewhat restricted by the prolonged dry weather which resulted in Irish Rail requesting the cancellation of the Dublin (Connolly) to Rosslare “Sea Breeze” excursion on 19th August. The earlier “Sea Breeze” trip on 29th July consisted of No.461 + 8 bogies and departed thirty five minutes late at 10:25. Some filming on the DSE section, in connection with the “Michael Collins” film, was also affected by the temporary steam ban, but took place after the panic had subsided. The “Portrush Flyer”, hauled by 4-4-0 No.85, ran into difficulties on 29th July due to contamination of the water tank at Lisburn. The return train was eventually cancelled at Ballymena and the passengers transferred to a following diesel service. The driver, meantime, travelled by taxi to Belfast in order to work a light engine from York Road to assist. The weather again was to blame as the heat had encouraged a healthy growth of algae and water weeds which blocked the filters in the tender and prevented sufficient water reaching the injectors. (It has been pointed out that the two-day “Dargan” railtour referred to in the last issue was so called not just for the Dargan bridge in Belfast, but also in recognition of the fact that William Dargan was heavily involved in the construction of much of the route traversed during the course of the tour.)

Bredin 1327 and laminate 1445 were destroyed in a fire started by vandals at Mullingar on 29th July.

Downpatrick & Ardglass

Tracklaying has progressed considerably since our last report with trains now operating to a new platform near Downpatrick race course. Sleepers are in position on the trackbed of the former Newcastle line for about a mile beyond this point and some work has been done in preparation for the construction of a run-round loop at the end of the partially constructed extension. A turnout leading to the north side of the loop is in place just west of Downpatrick but no track has yet been laid beyond it. The re-assembly of the former Kingsbog Junction signal box has been completed at Downpatrick station, although it will be some time before points and signals are connected.

Reconstruction of the 1902 built GSR third, 836, is approaching completion. This vehicle was built by the Railway Carriage & Iron Company in Manchester and withdrawn in 1963.

Miscellaneous

The Australian Minister for Transport, Mr Paul Brown, was pictured at the controls of the Tralee and

Dingle railway's No.5T at the end of July.



202 heads the 13:00 North Wall/Cork liner through Straffan, 27/9/1995.