

IRISH RAILWAY NEWS

Volume 4 Issue 1

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Artist's impression of proposed Dublin Light Rail Vehicle

Contents: **Editorial**
 Irish Rail
 Northern Ireland Railways
 Private Railways and Museums

Editorial

Welcome to the current issue of Irish Railway News. This issue covers the period from early December to early April and carries the title "January - April 1996". We still hope to produce three more during the course of the year, provided the small voluntary team involved can find the time to do so. We are not publishing a colour cover on this occasion largely because the supply of good quality topical material is limited at this time of year due to the dull days and limited daylight which characterises the winter season! I hope you find the issue enjoyable and up to date and would like to thank you both for your patience and your continued contribution of news items and other material.

The future direction for railways in Northern Ireland seems a little less certain now that a UTA like structure has re-emerged to jointly manage the transport undertakings. The confidence building process has not been assisted by the deferral for an unstated period of the Bleach Green Junction to Antrim upgrading, a project that would greatly strengthen the competitive position of the Belfast to Londonderry line and allow the railway to greatly expand commuter carryings from Antrim, Ballymena, Ballymoney and Coleraine to Belfast. The enthusiasm and determination with which the new joint board pursues this project will be a pointer for the future. There are other investment decisions to be made in relation to NIR, most notably the question of replacing the DEMU fleet which is now over twenty years old and becoming a little less reliable than might be desired. Leaving aside the Belfast/Dublin line to which funds are committed, extensive formation repairs are required on the Bangor line while repairs to damaged sea defences will be required at Cloghan Point to secure the future of the operationally important Up line between Whitehead and Kilroot. We wish the new team well and look forward to the investment in the railway which will be necessary for the government to achieve its stated objective of increasing the role of public transport generally in Northern Ireland.

The decision by Irish Rail to allocate 201 class locomotives to outer suburban push/pull sets in the Dublin area has transformed rush hour services from something of a lottery to a commendably reliable service and has also had the effect of improving the punctuality of the DART service which was being delayed by late running outer suburban services.

With relaying on the Cork, Belfast and Limerick lines almost complete, it is expected that activity will concentrate on the Cherryville Junction to Waterford route although hopefully funding will be available to reverse the decline in permanent way so evident in recent years on the Galway, Westport, Sligo, Tralee and Rosslare lines. Upgrading work on these lines will be more disruptive as the lines are single and must be closed while track machines are at work. Nonetheless the expertise and speed of the relay gangs should see rapid progress as there is only one line to relay!

A. Gray - 21/4/1996

Irish Rail

(Iarnród Éireann, including CIÉ and DTI)

Dublin/Belfast Project

Signalling and Layouts

Most activity over the last few months has centred on Dundalk Station and on the section between there and the border. Trenching for cables was excavated on the Down side in the cuttings north of Mountpleasant, this work being necessary as the plough on the cable train is not capable of operating successfully in the rocky terrain characteristic of this area. With the ground thus prepared further cable laying took place north of Dundalk in early February. Location cases are in place throughout the Dundalk station area and from MP 52 to Mountpleasant. A number of signals have also been erected, mainly north of Dundalk, although the new two-aspect Up Advance starter and Down Distant signals are in place south of the station. To the north of Dundalk section starting signals are in place for both roads while several southbound signals including wrong road Distant and Home signals have also been erected.

Meanwhile installation of track circuit feeds and insulators is in progress between Drogheda and Dundalk with much of the Up road completed and a substantial part of the Down road also done, the latter mainly between Drogheda and Dunleer. No location cases, signal bases or signals have yet been erected in this section.

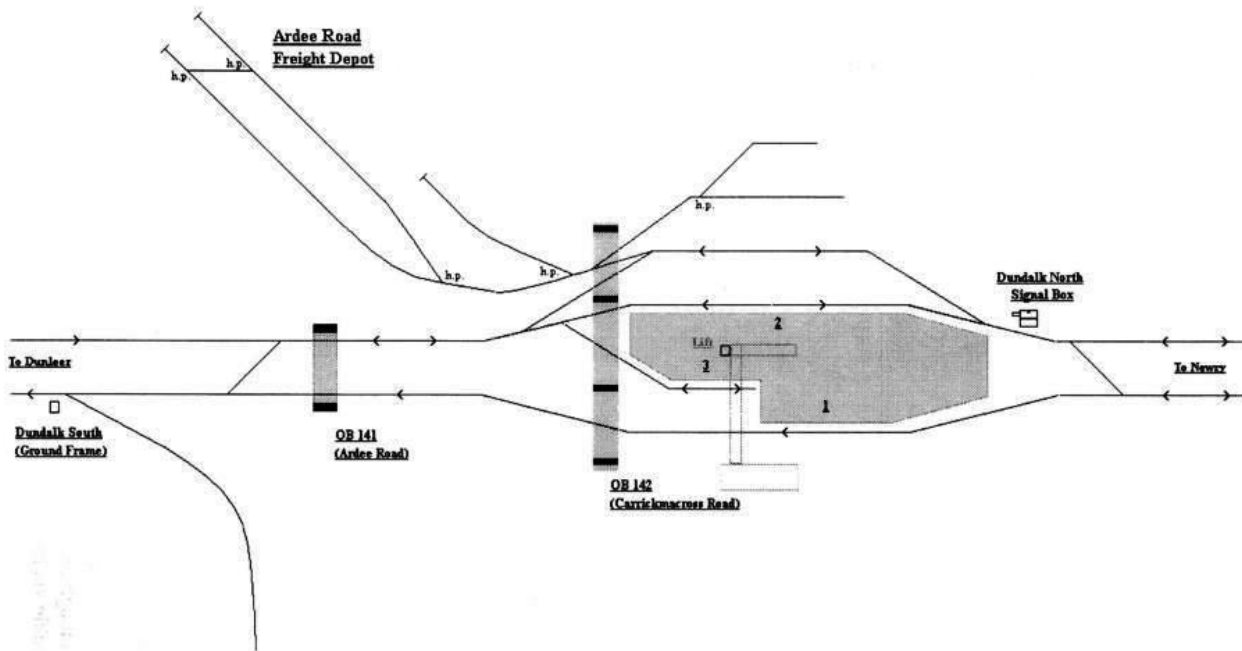
The description of the new layout at Dundalk in the last issue was erroneous in suggesting that the freight yard would be directly connected onto the Down road as at present. In fact the yard will be accessed somewhat differently as indicated in the modified description which follows. "The layout at Dundalk will be much simplified, the signalled portion consisting of the two main lines with a trailing cross-over at the Drogheda end and a facing cross-over at the Newry end, a loop on the Down side, a bay platform on the Up side and a connection from the mid-point of the loop into the yard. The cross-over will be located just south of the Ardee Road overbridge and just north of Dundalk North cabin respectively. The loop will extend from the North cabin to the site of the existing Central cabin. Only one of the south facing bay platforms, No.3, is being retained and this will be accessed via a facing connection off the Down line. Trains will be able to arrive or depart from this platform thus enabling a terminating service to clear the Down line without the requirement to shunt. Trains arriving from or departing to the north will be able to run directly into the freight yard. Trains to and from the south will have to propel into the yard with larger trains having to run through the station before setting back. Storage accommodation will be dramatically reduced although two sidings are being retained on the Down side, parallel to the loop, but only accessible via the connection to the freight yard."

The description of the proposed new layout for Dundalk in the last issue also omitted to mention the partial retention of the "Barrack Street branch", which will be accessed via a ground frame controlled connection trailing onto the Up line at the present location. It is understood that the track will remain to a point just east of Hill Street overbridge, a little beyond the former Dundalk East Junction. The branch will be used for the next few months to gain access to stacks of concrete sleepers which are stored on the former running line. Service rails are in place to accommodate the relaying gantries which will be used to load sleeper feeder trains servicing the Irish Rail gangs working under contract between Poyntzpass and the border.

It is understood that Dundalk Central signal box will be taken out of use and demolished prior to the commissioning of the new signalling and track layout. During the intervening period, most of the yard

will be out of use and absolute block working will be established between Dundalk North and Dunleer. It is expected that services originating or terminating at Dundalk will be particularly affected and that some or all of them may be subject to partial road substitution for a number of weeks. The new Solid State Interlocking, initially controlling the Dundalk area only, will be operated from a supervisory PC in the North cabin which will continue to be staffed pending the introduction of track circuit block working to Drogheda and Portadown.

Anticipated Layout at Dundalk



Assembly of turnouts and crossovers is virtually complete at Dundalk but is only just beginning at Drogheda, where construction of replacement turnouts from the Down line to the Navan branch commenced on recently cleared ground south of the station and adjacent to the Up line, at the beginning of March. The shorter of the three Buckie's sidings has been secured out of use as much of the spoil removed from the station side of the cutting has been deposited on the Buckie's side, thus burying the siding adjacent to the cutting.

Bridges

The stone arch portion of OB 44 and OB 46, located respectively near MP 15 and MP 16, has been demolished and replaced by a concrete structure resting on the original stone foundations. The public road crossing OB 44, Tyrellstown Bridge, was closed from 09:00 on Saturday 9th March to 17:00 on Friday 15th March. OB 113 (north of Dromin Junction) and OB 121 (Castlebellingham Station) have both been demolished and are being replaced by new structures which will carry upgraded link roads associated with the Dunleer/Dundalk motorway. Construction of an entirely new bridge near MP 52 commenced in early February and this similarly is associated with the motorway.

Decking and ballasting of the two approach spans of UB 65, the Delvin viaduct at Gormanston, has now been completed. The larger centre span is expected to be replaced in the near future after which CWR will be installed and the long standing temporary 40 mph speed restriction removed. In preparation for this work the access road paralleling the river has been widened in order to allow cranes to reach temporary promenades which are being constructed on either side of the bridge on the north side.

Permanent Way

Approximately six miles of track, was re-laid between mid-November and the end of March as under:

Dundalk/Dunleer ³	MP 54 to MP 53½	Up Line
Dundalk/Dunleer ²	MP 44¼ to MP 44 ¹ / ₈	Up Line (OB 113)
Drogheda/Laytown ¹	MP 31 ³ / ₈ to MP 30 ³ / ₈	Up Line
Mosney/Balbriggan ¹	MP 24½ to MP 23 ⁷ / ₈	Up Line
Malahide/Howth Junction ¹	MP 6 to MP 5 ¹ / ₈	Up Line
Howth Junction/Killester ¹	MP 4 ³ / ₈ to MP 4	Up Line
Rush/Skerries ¹	MP 14 ⁵ / ₈ to MP 14 ⁷ / ₈	Down Line (OB 44)
Dunleer/Dundalk ²	MP 44 ¹ / ₈ to MP 44¼	Down Line (OB 113)
Dunleer/Dundalk ²	MP 47 to MP 47¼	Down Line (OB 121)
Dunleer/Dundalk ²	MP 47 ⁷ / ₈ to MP 49	Down Line
Dunleer/Dundalk ³	MP 53 ³ / ₈ to MP 54	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.

³ Overnight possession.

Re-railing of the Up line from MP 13 to 11½ and the Down line from MP 18½ to 19¼ has been completed. Similarly older CWR on the Down line between MP 33½ and MP 35¾ was being replaced as of mid-February while a further stretch awaits attention on the Up road between MP 16 and MP 14¾ as well as through Castlebellingham station (47½/47¹/₈).

At the time of writing, in mid-April, 91% of the Irish Rail portion of the Dublin/Belfast line consists of CWR on concrete sleepers. Some twelve miles remain to be renewed, the bulk of it between East Wall Junction and Howth Junction as well as through Portmarnock, Malahide (Up road), Drogheda, Dunleer and Dundalk stations. In addition isolated stretches of track, each less than half a mile in length are, or have been, awaiting the reconstruction OB 46, OB 78 and UB 65, the first two being restricted clearance over bridges, the last mentioned is the Delvin viaduct at Gormanston (see above). Relaying at Portmarnock and Malahide also awaits reconstruction of bridges, in this instance the stone arch structures at each station, OB 22 and OB 27 respectively. OB 78 is presently a cast iron jack arch structure which provides insufficient clearance for a raised ballast bed and is also the subject of a road tonnage restriction. It is to be replaced by precast reinforced concrete portal units resting on concrete bedstones. These latter will be supported by a combination of the existing masonry abutments and steel piles. The soffit level of the new bridge will be some 800mm higher than the existing structure. The parapets will be constructed of reinforced concrete, 1.8m high, with natural stone cladding on both faces and will be topped with steeple shaped coping.

Relaying of the Up and Down roads immediately south of Dundalk station commenced on Saturday night/Sunday 30th and 31st March. The initial stretch, commencing immediately south of the trailing cross-over at Dundalk Central involved excavating the formation under and on either side of the stone arch overbridge, OB 141, which carries the Dundalk/Ardee road. Unusually, it was decided to excavate both lines at the same time and as mentioned elsewhere the work took some nine hours longer than expected and resulted in severe delays to traffic.

Stations

Extensive renovations are in hand at both Drogheda and Dundalk. At the former the main station buildings have been gutted and the booking office temporarily relocated in the parcels office. New facilities, now nearing completion, include a ticket office, waiting area and shop, all of which are contained within a large, airy, high-ceilinged, entrance hall. This in turn is divided into three sections by internal arches which are shaped to harmonise in appearance and dimension with the external windows. On entering from the station forecourt, the section to the left contains the waiting area, that to the right the booking office and shop. The waiting area is delimited by three arches, two of which are glazed from the floor to the ceiling. Similarly, the booking office is located behind two arches, both of which are glazed from the ceiling to the counter level. The area behind the third arch is to be occupied by the shop and this has been fitted with a counter at the same height as the booking office.

Refurbished toilets will include facilities for disabled travellers, who will also benefit from the provision of passenger lifts on either side of the footbridge. The opportunity is also being taken to re-glaze the platform canopy on the Down side, although little has been done on the Up platform pending alterations associated with the extension of the existing bay platform.

At Dundalk the ticket office, waiting areas and toilets are being renewed and remodelled. The station buildings are being renovated internally and externally while the extensive and attractive platform awnings are being re-glazed. The long disused steps leading from the footbridge to the bay platforms have been removed and the area vacated will be used to accommodate a lift for passengers with mobility impairment.

At Dunleer the former stationmaster's house has been re-roofed and is being renovated internally although this work is not thought to be connected with future use by Irish Rail. Nonetheless it would be surprising if this station was not reopened in the next few years as it is centrally located and should generate a reasonable traffic flow, given a suitable service.

The platforms at Gormanston have been raised and the now standard cobble lock installed. Substantial wooden fencing, similar to that at Laytown has been erected at the back of both platforms. Traffic at this station is relatively light at present, given the rural character of its location and the extraordinary fare anomalies which apply to casual travel from stations north of Balbriggan. The day return fare from Drogheda to Dublin, for instance, is £8.50 while £3.50 buys complete freedom of the suburban network from Balbriggan to Kilcoole, Connolly to Maynooth and Heuston to Hazelhatch. (The last mentioned is another anomaly in that Sallins is only 18 miles from Dublin and outside the boundary, while Balbriggan is 21¾ miles from Dublin and inside the boundary.)

The booking office and passenger facilities located in the station buildings on the Up side at Donabate are being refurbished. An access ramp for wheelchairs has been provided on the Up side thus making both platforms accessible to mobility impaired travellers. According to a notice placed in the station, Irish Rail have decided to close the exit from the Down platform with effect from 1st April, a move that is being fiercely resisted by regular users.

Rolling Stock

Delivery of rolling stock from De Dietrich is expected to commence in the next few weeks with an initial tranche of vehicles going to both Irish Rail and NIR. The 28 vehicles, 14 for Irish Rail and 14 for NIR will be made up into seven-coach sets consisting of a driving trailer first, full first, dining car, four standards and one of the dedicated 201 class locomotives, 206, 207, 208 or 209. Each set will have accommodation for 382 passengers, of which 78 places will be in first class. The standard class coaches have 75 seats while the full firsts have 47, both types having an additional space for wheelchair passengers. The driving trailers accommodate 30 first class passengers and like the standards and full firsts have a single toilet dimensioned in such a way as to be suitable for disabled use. Each vehicle is

23m long, is fully air-conditioned and is fitted with power-operated sliding plug doors. First class accommodation will feature an in-seat audio system, individual reading lights and adjustable seats. Telephones will be located in first class and in the dining car. The train will be “No Smoking” throughout.

Permanent Way, Bridges - General

Dublin/Cork

The Down line across Mallow viaduct was relaid with concrete sleepers and CWR on 3rd January. A speed restriction of 50 mph applies on both roads pending the installation of check rail.

Relaying of the Down line between MP 3 and MP 4½ was completed at the beginning of December with the installation of CWR and concrete sleepers between MP 3 and MP 3¾. The entire Dublin/Cork line now consists of continuously welded rail except for the short sections tabulated:

Heuston/Islandbridge Junction	MP 0 to MP 0¾	Up and Down Lines
Portarlinton Station	MP 41¼ to MP 41¾	Down Line
Limerick Junction Yard	MP 106 ⁷ / ₈ to MP 107¼	Up and Down Lines
Kilbarry/Cork (Including Cork tunnel)	MP 164¼ to MP 165½	Up and Down Lines
Portarlinton Station	MP 42 to MP 41¼	Up Line

Replacement of 50kg/m rail has been taking place recently at various locations, notably between Portlaoise and Ballybrophy. Ballast cleaning was in hand on several Sundays during February and March notably on the Down line near both MP 89½ and 96¾, and on the Up line near Dundrum at MP 98¾. This work required single line working from Thurles to Limerick Junction on at least three dates. Selective replacement of deteriorated concrete sleepers has recently taken place in the Clondalkin/Hazelhatch/Sallins area and is presently in hand between Thurles and Limerick Junction where a sleeper changing machine is reportedly in use.

Limerick/Limerick Junction (Double Track to Killonan Junction, Single thereafter)

A little over 3 miles of the Down line, between Ennis Junction and Killonan Junction, has been relaid with CWR and concrete sleepers. This project extended over a period of about seven weeks, commencing on 22nd January. (Single line working was established on Mondays to Thursdays after the passage of the 09:35 ex Limerick and withdrawn in time to allow the 15:10 ex Limerick to operate normally.)

A speed limit of 40 mph has been imposed between MP 19 and MP 21½ pending relaying. Completion of this section will mean that the entire line from Limerick Junction to Limerick, other than the immediate approaches to Limerick station will consist of welded rail throughout.

Athlone/Westport (Single)

Two sections of track totalling 4¼ miles have been relaid over the last few months as follows:

Athlone/Knockcroghery	MP 84 ⁵ / ₈ to MP 86¼
Roscommon/Castlerea	MP 100 to MP 102 ⁵ / ₈

A little under 18% of the Athlone/Westport branch now consists of CWR on concrete sleepers. To facilitate this work, the 08:25 Dublin/Westport terminated at Roscommon on a number of dates at the end of November and early December. Passengers for Castlebar and Westport continued by road while those travelling to Ballyhaunis, Claremorris, Foxford and Ballina were brought by train from Castlerea.

Similarly the 13:30 ex Westport started from Roscommon with the 13:23 ex Ballina being extended to Castlerea.

A recent trip from Athlone to Westport revealed that the maximum continuous length of track currently cleared for 70 mph is no more than $4\frac{3}{4}$ miles long. There are six other 70 mph stretches between $2\frac{1}{2}$ and $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles long, the rest of the line being riddled with miscellaneous restrictions varying in severity from 15 to 50 mph. Although schedules on the branch have been much eased in recent years, the number and spread of restrictions is making time keeping extremely difficult and may yet result in an extension of journey times.

Cherryville Junction/Waterford (Single)

The newly rebuilt UB 114 at Newrath was brought into use during the course of an overnight possession on 9th/10th December. The old structure was cut away revealing the new precast arched construction beneath. Earth fill was then used to cover the top and sides and bring the surface of the new bridge up to track level. The adjacent UB 188 carrying the Waterford/Limerick line has been similarly renewed.

Extensive clearance of lineside vegetation and the construction of fully fenced parallel roadways is in progress at and in the vicinity of MP 69½ and MP 35. The first mentioned location is a short distance south of Bagenalstown, the latter a little north of Thomastown. This work, preparatory to track upgrading, has resulted in the amalgamation of adjacent accommodation crossings and the improvement of visibility at others.

Dublin/Rosslare (Double Track to Bray. Single thereafter)

“Panel Relaying” with second-hand material has been taking place at various locations between Rathdrum and Rosslare. This type of relaying reflects the absence of track upgrading programme on this line.

Dublin/Sligo (Double Line Connolly/Clonsilla, Single thereafter)

Three short sections of track totalling $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles have been relaid over the last few months as follows:

Killucan/Mullingar	MP $46\frac{7}{8}$ to MP 48	Single Line
Mullingar/Edgeworthstown	MP $60\frac{5}{8}$ to MP 61½	Single Line
Mullingar/Edgeworthstown	MP 67 to MP 67½	Single Line

Some 26% of the track mileage between Dublin and Sligo now consists of CWR on concrete sleepers. (This figure includes the double track between Connolly and Clonsilla, none of which has yet been renewed with CWR.)

OB 20, the stone arch overbridge at the east end of Maynooth station, has been demolished and is being reconstructed as a much widened pre-stressed concrete arch structure, giving both a wider road surface and improved vertical and lateral clearances for the railway.

Cork/Cobh (Double Track)

The temporary accommodation at Harpers Island was dispensed with on 15th March following completion of a new road overbridge at this point (MP 171¾).

Islandbridge Junction to Glasnevin Junction (Double Track)

CWR on concrete sleepers has been installed on the Up line through the Phoenix Park tunnel, a distance of approximately half a mile.

Signalling and Layout Alterations

The facing turnout leading from the Up main line into the loop at the south end of Kildare station was renewed and realigned on 10th December. In consequence signals CY194 and CY192, formerly mounted on an overhead gantry, have been re-sited about twenty metres closer to Dublin. CY194 is now ground mounted and is located between the loop and the Up main, while CY192 is mounted on a conventional post on the right hand side of the loop. A new turnout is presently being assembled in the yard preparatory to installation at the north end of the loop.

Time interval working was abolished with effect from 1st January. This type of working, which dates from the earliest days of the railway, was only applicable on double lines worked under absolute block regulations and then only when the block instruments and all forms of communication had failed. The general introduction of public switch telephones in signal boxes in the mid-1970s largely eliminated the necessity for Time Interval Working as the signaller was no longer solely dependent on the block telegraph circuit. *(The only lines currently worked under double line absolute block regulations are those from Drogheda to the border, Cork to Cobh and Waterford Central to Waterford West. Working between the North and South boxes at Limerick Junction is governed by a combination of track circuits and slots.)*

Road improvements in the vicinity of Little Island station will result in the closure of the level crossing at the Cork end. The future of the signal box is also apparently in doubt, although the colour light signals and power points giving access to the nearby North Esk yard would then have to be controlled from elsewhere. Such a change would require considerable signalling alterations especially if control were to be transferred to Cork.

Work on the re-instatement of the turnout at the north end of Gort station was in hand over the weekend of 10th/11th February, but had not been fully completed by mid-March at which stage the points had yet to be connected to the signal box. As is normal practice in such circumstances, the blades were not inserted in the turnout, pending completion of the point rodding.

The direct curve at Lavistown was brought into use in the early hours of Monday 1st April, almost eight months after commissioning. The delay is understood to have been the result of a multi-party dispute involving CIÉ/Irish Rail, the Railway Inspecting Officer and a landowner concerning Cassin's accommodation crossing. The latter is located on the Kilkenny side of Lavistown North Junction and crosses both the original main line and the direct curve, just before the latter turns away towards Lavistown South Junction. *(Lavistown North Junction, Lavistown South Junction and Lavistown West Junction are the points of the triangle nearest Bagenalstown, Thomastown and Kilkenny respectively - see the diagram in the October issue. The loop, which is contained in a cutting up to five metres deep, is mile-posted from Lavistown North Junction with markers at MP 0, 0¼, 0½ and 988 yards.)*

In order to test the installation and remove the rust from the rails a number of trial trains operated on Sundays 24th and 31st March. On the first mentioned date the train consisted of 172 + 4 laden freight bogies and is reported to have traversed the curve up to seven times.

This new facility will primarily handle Bell liner trains, timber trains and other traffic not required to serve Kilkenny. There are no passenger trains scheduled to use the loop, although an empty railcar set from Waterford on Fridays only and empty carriages from Dublin on Mondays only will no longer call at Kilkenny. Irish Rail provided a special train from Dublin (Connolly) to Thomastown on 13th April, outward via the loop and returning via Kilkenny. This publicly advertised train, formed by 228 + EGV + 7 Mk2, carried a small group of enthusiasts and was the first direct laden passenger train from Bagenalstown to Thomastown. There are no plans at present to introduce regular passenger services via the loop, although such a routing would reduce the Waterford/Dublin journey time to under two hours.

In order to facilitate track upgrading between Lavistown South Junction and Kilkenny, it is expected

that some passenger trains will be diverted via the direct curve in the near future thus allowing extended daytime possessions. Affected services will run non-stop between Bagenalstown and Thomastown, in both directions, with connecting buses to and from Kilkenny.

New turnouts have been assembled at Rathmore, preparatory to general renewal of trackwork in the station area. The level crossing at Minish, which carries the main road from Cork to Killarney across the railway at MP 36, has been excavated and the track renewed with concrete sleepers and flat-bottom rail.

Semaphore distant and stop signals are to be progressively fitted with new highly reflective fluorescent materials in order to improve visibility. At present both signal types have rectangular red arms, the distant being characterised by its fishtail end and white chevron. The chevron divides the signal arm into two unequal sections, the smaller area being at the outer end. The stop signal has a straight outer edge and vertical white bar positioned similarly to the chevron on the distant signal. As a consequence of the change of material, the area to the left of the chevron on distant signals will be yellow so as to lessen the risk of confusion between signal types at night.

Cable ploughing has recently taken place between Knockcroghery and Roscommon, Thomastown and Waterford West, and is in hand between Arklow and Enniscorthy. This work will facilitate the elimination of the overhead block telegraph between the points mentioned and thus protect the signalling circuits from storm damage and other hazards.

LRT

Public consultation in respect of the LRT project was launched by Mr Michael Lowry, Minister for Transport, Energy and Communications on 12th December. When this is completed a public enquiry will be held, probably in September 1996, after which a Railway Works Order will be issued authorising construction. This process will necessitate new legislation which is expected to be passed by the Dáil in the first half of 1996. The first phase of the project involves the construction of a 21km double track line from Tallaght to Dundrum at a cost of over £200 million, including depot and rolling stock. Construction of this phase is now scheduled to start in early 1997 and is due for completion in January 2000. There will be 600 jobs during the construction period with some 200 people required to maintain and operate the system thereafter. Phase 2 is scheduled to commence in February 2000 and will take up to four years to complete. This phase will see the construction of the northern leg from the City Centre to Ballymun and the extension of the southern leg to Sandyford or Cabinteely, the latter along the alignment of the former Harcourt Street line. The cost of phase 2 is estimated at £100m. Some 60% of funding for Phase 1 is expected to come from European funds. Phase 1 as described above does not correspond with the DTI proposals which would have seen the elements now proposed for the second phase incorporated into Phase 1. (The rescheduling of the DTI recommendations has its origins in the substantial shortfall in EU funding to Ireland under the Regional and Cohesion programmes, as mentioned in previous issues.)

Phase 1 will start at "The Square" shopping centre in Tallaght, and then follow a route via Tallaght Hospital, Belgard, thence parallel to the Western Parkway to Fox and Geese, thence via the Naas Road, Tyrconnell Road, Emmet Road, Mount Brown, James's Street, Steeven's Lane, Heuston Station, over the Liffey to Benburb Street, Arran Quay Terrace, Chancery Street, Mary's Abbey, Abbey Street, O'Connell Street, Westmoreland Street, Grafton Street, Nassau Street, Dawson Street, St Stephen's Green, Harcourt Street, across the canal at Grand Parade and thence onto the Harcourt Street alignment terminating a short distance beyond the former Dundrum station. A surprising omission in the above routing is any direct interchange with DART or Connolly station, although a spur to the latter has not been ruled out as part of the Phase 1 scheme. There will be 32 stations with low level platforms some 40m long, 3.5m wide and 300mm high. Typical station furniture will include shelter, seating, ticket

machine, information panel, lighting, public address and in some instances CCTV.

Up to eight bridges will be constructed, reconstructed or modified. There is to be an entirely new crossing of the Western Parkway (M50), strengthening of two Liffey bridges and one canal bridge as well as the reinstatement of underbridges along the Harcourt Street alignment, the most notable of the latter being at the Taney Road/Dundrum Road junction, just north of the former Dundrum station.

Thirty articulated trams are to be ordered each weighing 35 tonnes. They will be 30m long, 2.4m wide and 3.7m high with a seating capacity for 60 passengers and overall capacity of 200, including standees. At least 60% of the length of each vehicle will have a floor height of no more than 350mm to facilitate ease of access. The maximum speed will be 70 km/h, which is considered adequate given the rapid acceleration of the vehicles and the relatively short distance between stops (average 650m).

Flush paved, grooved rail will be used on about 50% of the system, the balance to consist of ballasted track constructed using flat bottom rail set on twin-block concrete sleepers.

Power will be supplied from overhead conductors, six metres above the ground and energised at 750V DC. Some 12 substations will be required with power being drawn from the national grid at 10kV.

Services will operate at six-minute intervals at peak periods and fifteen minutes off peak. The peak capacity of the system is quoted as being 2,400 passengers per hour in each direction, i.e. a tram every five minutes in both directions. Forty seconds will be allowed for stops in the city centre and twenty seconds in the suburbs. End to end journey time will be about one hour 38 minutes from Tallaght to the city centre and 22 minutes from there to Dundrum. (The proposed service frequency seems quite low for an LRT and is slightly less than that offered by DART at peak periods. The latter which, of course, offers a much higher capacity.)

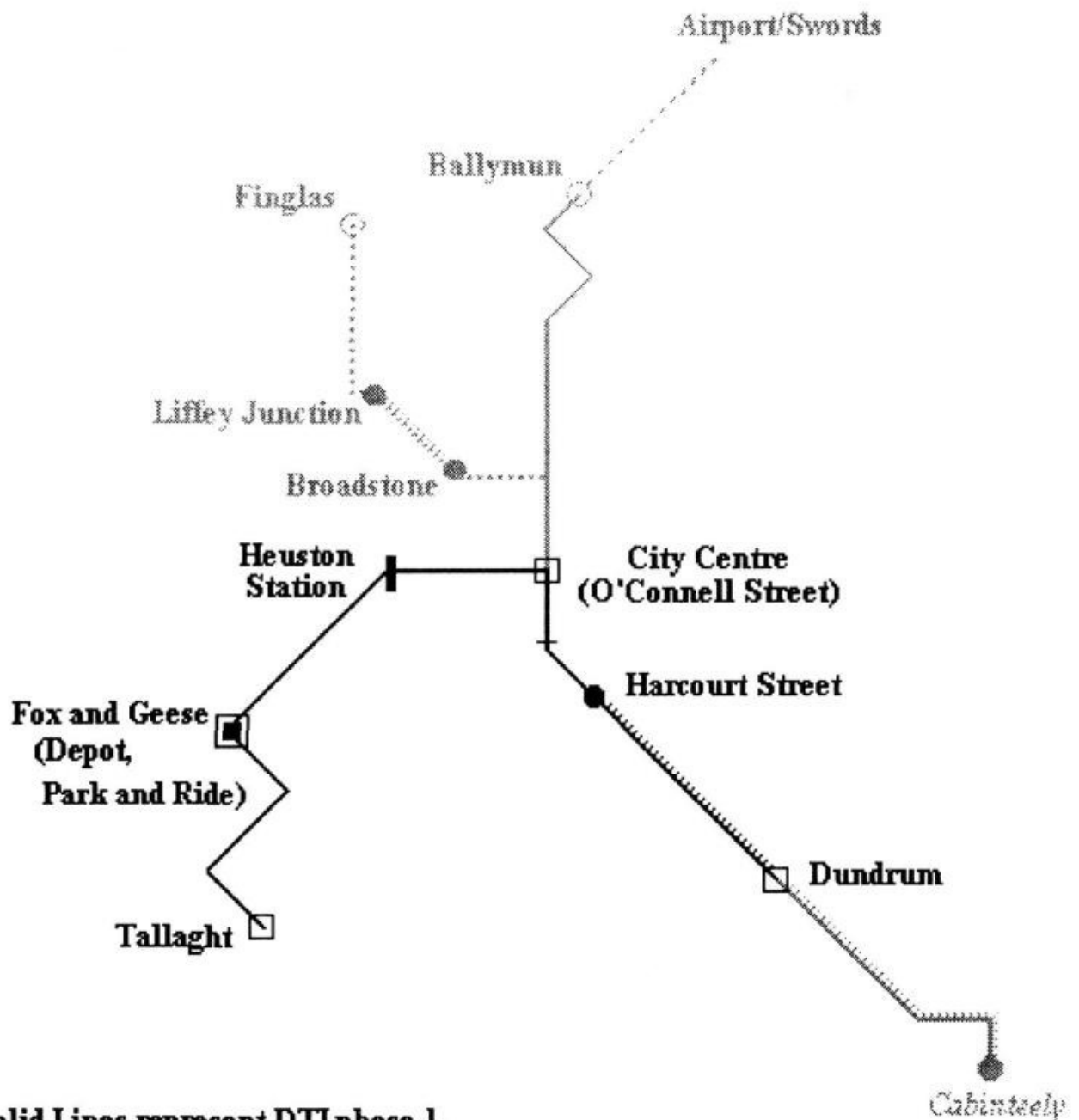
The first phase of the LRT project is expected to carry 20 million passengers per annum and to divert almost 3,000 car users onto public transport in the peak hour each morning. (The projected annual passenger journeys are higher than DART, using fewer vehicles of lesser capacity at a comparable frequency. While LRT journeys will probably be shorter, it will be interesting to see if the system, as announced will have the capacity to handle the numbers predicted.)

While a final decision has not been announced in respect of the depot location, the options are very limited as Phase 1 will not now reach the Sandyford Industrial Estate. The most likely location would seem to be a green-field site near the M50 in the "Fox and Geese" area.

The LRT will not be signalled like a conventional railway, with trams being driven instead on a "line of sight" basis, an arrangement facilitated, in part, by the superior braking characteristics of LRT vehicles compared to a conventional train. There will, however, be signalling at road intersections as well as local interlocking at points and crossings. LRT vehicles are to be given priority at road intersections although they will not necessarily always have the right of way. An automatic vehicle location system will be provided to assist in the operation of the LRT while all vehicles will be linked to the control centre by radio. A computerised management system will monitor power supplies, vending machines and passenger information.

Some exploratory clearance work has been undertaken along the Harcourt Street alignment, notably between the former underbridge at Charleston Road, Ranelagh, and the former underbridge at Taney Road in Dundrum. Some test boring has also taken place at the Charleston Road end. These recent excavations have revealed the remains of the Up platforms at Ranelagh and Milltown, both of which had long disappeared into the undergrowth.

DUBLIN LRT PROPOSALS



Solid Lines represent DTI phase 1.

Black lines represent lines to be operational by the year 2000.

Construction of solid grey lines to commence in 2000.

Broken grey lines represent DTI phase 2.

Quite an amount of opposition has been voiced to the rather surprising proposal by CIÉ to remove the elevated section of the line between Grand Parade and Beechwood Avenue. The effect of such a move would be to bring the future LRT line down to street level eliminating grade-separated crossings at Dartmouth Road, Northbrook Road, Ranelagh Road, Charleston Road and Dunville Avenue. The arguments cited in favour of this proposal include cheaper and less complicated access to LRT “stations” together with the elimination of the requirement for new bridges at the locations mentioned. The disadvantages of widespread disturbance to residential areas which would arise from the associated earthworks together with the otherwise unnecessary ongoing conflict between LRT vehicles and road traffic will hopefully see this suggestion abandoned either before or during the upcoming public enquiry. A further disadvantage of removing the embankment would be the virtual elimination of any prospect of future upgrading of the LRT line to a DART-style high capacity rapid transit route. Given that the Harcourt Street alignment would be an obvious component of a north-west/south-east rapid transit axis it would be imprudent to do anything which would make this option impossible in the future, should traffic warrant and resources permit. The question of track gauge should also be considered in this context, although reports would suggest that the European Standard gauge of 4’8½” is likely to be chosen in preference to the Irish Standard of 5’3”.

A conflict has arisen between the Dublin City Centre Business Association and the Chamber of Commerce over the LRT proposals, specifically over the anticipated disruption to trade during the construction of the street sections. The former takes the long term view that LRT is an essential and highly desirable part of the city’s infrastructure while the latter seems to have adopted the view that “articulated buses” or a partially underground LRT would be a better solution largely because there would be little or no disruption to trade.

It has emerged that construction of the LRT may involve the demolition of properties on Arran Quay Terrace and Mary’s Abbey. Residents in the area are being offered newly built houses set back from the existing street alignment.

- It has been announced that funding is to be provided for the development of an integrated ticketing system covering DART, LRT, Suburban Rail and buses throughout the Dublin area. This long overdue development should see continental style, time limited, zonal ticketing covering all public transport in the Dublin area as recommended by the DTI.
- The working tide presently in use for the LRT system is LUAS, the Irish word for speed. The public are to be given the opportunity of selecting a permanent title by means of public competition which was to have been held in January.

(The north-west component of such an axis might include an upgraded version of the existing Maynooth suburban service, which would be diverted onto the original and still intact alignment of the former MGWR from Liffey Junction to Broadstone and thence underground through the City Centre to join the Harcourt Street line. The DTI phase 2 LRT proposals envisage a line from the City Centre to Broadstone which would be routed via the Broadstone/Liffey Junction alignment. DTI also envisages Maynooth services being extended from Connolly to Pearse, a move that will be facilitated by the construction of Barrow Street and associated signalling alterations between Tara Street and the southern approaches to Barrow Street. This already authorised investment would not be wasted by creating a north-west/south-east axis, as the Barrow Street facilities would then have the capacity to handle local trains from the Kildare direction which currently terminate on the periphery of the City, at Heuston station.)

LRT Update

Despite the Minister’s announcement of the route elements that would constitute Phase 1 of the LRT

project, as described above, it has now emerged that the European Commission requested a socio-economic evaluation of the scheme last November which would include “comparative studies of the various route options”. This study will take at least three months to complete and will involve the appointment of consultants acceptable to the EU. There has been considerable speculation in media and political circles that the commission may insist on the Ballymun and Tallaght lines taking priority over that to Dundrum as expenditure in these areas may better fit the objectives of the structural funds, in particular the creation of infrastructure which will create an environment conducive to the reduction in long-term unemployment. Ironically it appears likely that the EU would have been happy to co-fund the entire DTI Phase 1 recommendation had the government chosen to submit the LRT project in that format. (DTI Phase 1 included the lines to Ballymun, Tallaght, and Dundrum as well as the extension to Cabinteely.) There is little doubt that the Dundrum line would be most successful both operationally and from the point of view of attracting car users to public transport, the latter a fundamental objective of DTI strategy. The Ballymun route has little reserved right of way, will therefore be slower and because of relatively low levels of car ownership is likely to attract fewer new public transport users.

Stations

Irish Rail are understood to have applied for EU funding under the INTERREG scheme in respect of the proposed redevelopment of Dun Laoghaire station. The proposed development would be integrated with the recently opened £45m ferry terminal and would allow access to the platforms from ground level. This project has been on the drawing board for years and may well remain there for some time yet despite the wholly inadequate and run-down nature of the present station.

Mr Emmet Stagg TD and Minister of State at the Department of Transport, Energy and Communications announced on 6th March that funding had been approved under the Operational Programme for Transport in respect of a new station at Kilcock. The station which will be located on the Dublin/Sligo line between Maynooth and Enfield, will cost about £250,000 and is expected to open in early 1997. It will be located a little over half a mile on the Maynooth side of the previous station which had disappeared from passenger timetables by the early 1950s. The single platform station will be in the centre of the village, close to the Clane Road overbridge and adjacent to the canal, 8 miles from Enfield and approximately 3½ miles from Maynooth. The level of service to be provided has not been announced although it might reasonably be expected that the 06:20 ex Longford will stop and that the 08:09 ex Maynooth will be extended to operate from Enfield. In the evening the 17:15 to Longford will probably stop and the 18:00 Connolly to Maynooth is likely to be extended to Enfield. Quite a good service could be provided during the daytime, without additional resources, by extending the Arrow operated Connolly to Maynooth service as far as Kilcock although such short workings might be vetoed on the grounds that Kilcock is not a block post, the ETS-operated single line section being from Maynooth to Enfield. Extending the Arrow service to Enfield during the day would require either the commitment of another set or the pruning of services between Maynooth and Dublin.

The construction of a new station at Fairview was formally announced by the Minister for Transport, Energy and Communications, Mr Michael Lowry TD, on 15th February. The new station will be located adjacent to Fairview DART depot with access for cars and buses being provided off the Alfie Byrne Road. Pedestrian access will be available from the Clontarf Road, where the station building will be located. The station is expected to handle some 250,000 passengers annually, will cost £1.4m and will include both a booking office and ticket vending facilities. The platforms will be connected by a ramped footbridge with access available for disabled passengers. There will be no car parking facilities. It is expected that the new station will open in a matter of months, certainly before the end of 1996.

The Minister for Transport, Energy and Communications, Mr Michael Lowry TD, announced a package of measures on 6th March valued at some £17m, of which 65% will come from EU funds

under the Operational Programme for Transport. The package includes the following:

- Construction of a new station at Barrow Street, between Pearse and Lansdowne Road, which is projected to handle some 2,500 passengers daily. Perhaps more important than passenger potential, the new station will be designed to handle terminating trains from the Connolly direction and its construction will be accompanied by track and signalling alterations which should go some way towards alleviating the delays to DART trains caused by the termination of southbound outer suburban traffic in the Boston Yard at Pearse. (*Southbound trains entering this yard must cross the northbound line and, if held to do so at peak periods, can cause southbound traffic to queue back as far as Fairview.*) Some preliminary work has already been carried out at the site of the new station, notably the erection of a number of new masts which will allow for the conversion of portal style overhead support structures into cantilever structures. These alterations will result in an enlarged area unobstructed by masts, thus freeing space for the station and the proposed layout modifications. Further space will be made available by demolishing the former locomotive works at Canal Street and transferring the maintenance of permanent way machines to Inchicore.
- The provision of a station between North Strand Junction and Glasnevin Junction, on the high level line, at Drumcondra. The new station will be in the same location as that closed some eighty years ago and used for a period as a Headquarters by the IRRS until the latter was asked to vacate the premises to facilitate reopening in 1981! The Minister in his statement said “I look forward to thousands of GAA supporters having the facility of arriving adjacent to Croke Park by train for important matches”. It will be interesting to see if this sentiment translates into platforms capable of handling trains of ten or more bogies, given that Departmental regulations require that all new stations have platforms sufficiently long to fully accommodate any trains which may be scheduled to call. Regular services at Drumcondra will be provided by trains to and from Maynooth, although in the longer term some commuter services currently terminating in Heuston may also be diverted to Connolly or Pearse, via Drumcondra. (There are currently eleven trains to and from Maynooth on Mondays to Fridays with eight on Saturdays, a frequency which is unlikely to generate a large volume of city-bound business, although passengers travelling further afield may be attracted by the opportunity to connect with DART and other services at Connolly.)
- The refurbishment of Kilbarrack station, a decision which would seem to suggest that long standing plans to replace both Howth Junction and Kilbarrack with an entirely new station, midway between the two, will not now proceed. The allocation of funds to Kilbarrack follows several years of agitation by local community groups in the area.
- Park and ride facilities are to be developed along the DART corridor to encourage commuters to switch from private cars to public transport although the proposed locations have not yet been announced.

The transparent panels in the overall roof at Pearse Station are currently being renewed thus brightening up the concourse, eliminating leaks and removing the danger posed by falling materials during windy conditions. At the time of writing this work has been largely confined to the Down side although the roof over Platforms 1 and 2 has been repaired by replacing glazing with non-transparent sheeting. Other developments include the commissioning of a lift between the Down platform and the street level concourse. New toilets, accessible to disabled passengers are to be provided in the near future. The volume of traffic at this station has so far attracted a newsagent/snack bar, a shoe repair/leather shop and a dry cleaning outlet on the street level concourse. There are also manned mobile coffee and light refreshment stands in operation on both platforms as well a plethora of vending machines.

The through platforms at Cork, formerly No.5 and No.6, have been re-designated No.4 and No.5

respectively. More importantly both have been extended, mainly at the Cobh end, and can now accommodate a nine-piece Mk3 set. The booking office annex on the main concourse at Cork was removed on 25th March and tickets are presently being sold from two positions in the main building.

The platform at Ballina has been raised and cobble-locked as part of a general upgrade to passenger facilities at the station. At Mullingar the booking office, waiting room, toilets, parcels office and staff facilities have been transferred into the area formerly occupied by the long abandoned Newbrook buffet, which has been refurbished for its new role. The attractive station entrance is being retained although the single storey structure between the main station building and the goods store has been demolished. It is understood that the entrance portico, new booking hall and subway entrance will be linked by an open glazed walkway. The subway linking the Up and Down Sligo platforms is also being renovated, although naturally enough that linking the little used Galway platforms will not be receiving attention. As is now standard, the station refurbishment includes the provision of disabled toilets. The canopies on the Sligo line platforms are also being refurbished, that on the Up side has been partially re-glazed.

Campaigners seeking the reopening of Avoca and Glenealy stations have been told that the cost would be some £260,000 per station and would require the Arklow/Dublin commuter service to depart eight minutes earlier. The latter is surprising given the extremely leisurely timing of this train between Arklow and Bray.

Cork Suburban Expansion

The Cork Examiner reported in early March that Irish Rail are interested in reopening Kilbarry and Tivoli to passenger traffic, although such developments are dependent on EU funding. It is also proposed that the Cork/Cobh and Cork/Mallow services be more closely integrated, especially in the context of the proposed new station. The reopening of the line from Glounthaune (Cobh Junction) to Middleton also remains a possibility. The cost of the latter is put at £3m, a small sum when compared to the massive road investments in Cork City and the surrounding area.

Locomotives

229 has been modified to work with Mk3 push/pull stock and was observed on one such duty, near Carlow, with a GAA special on 17th March. The other modified locomotives are 206, 207, 228 and 230.

Repair work is continuing at Inchicore on 165, the engine damaged in last year's buffer stop collision at Cobh. 156 is currently stored out of use at Inchicore awaiting replacement of its power unit.

Only four 001 or "A" class locomotives are still in existence following the cutting up of 001, 011, 012, 016, 036 and 051 at Inchicore in November. 003 and A39 are now the property of the Irish Traction Group, the first mentioned being stored at Limerick while the latter is stored in Diesel No.2 at Inchicore. Irish Rail have indicated their intention to preserve 015 and this locomotive is also currently stored in Diesel No.2 at Inchicore. 055 is to be gutted prior to transfer to Castlerea where it will be preserved as a static exhibit at the "Hells Kitchen" public house in the town.

071s continue to visit Ballina on a weekly basis working the 16:50, Friday only, service from Heuston. It is understood that special dispensation has been granted in respect of passage over the Moy bridge at Foxford, an arrangement that avoids the use of less reliable motive power on the only through service in either direction between Dublin and Ballina. Asahi liner trains from North Wall to Ballina continue to be hauled by pairs of Bo-Bos, but are frequently accompanied by maintenance staff in order to have expertise immediately available should locomotive problems arise.

Restrictions on the use of 201 class locomotives between Kilkenny and Waterford have been lifted as a

result of the reconstruction of UB 114 at Newrath. The first use of the class into Waterford is understood to have taken place on 17th February when 206 worked the 14:45 Heuston/Waterford and 18:20 return. Subsequent appearances of the class on this line have been few and far between with 071s continuing to dominate haulage as of the end of March.

Coaching Stock

Two further Mk3 “International” coaches, 6203 and 6205, entered traffic on the Thursday before Christmas and were joined on 15th March by 6204 and 6401, the latter being the dining car. Work is continuing at Inchicore on 99520, 99522 and 99528 which will emerge as 6501, 6202 and 6207 respectively. 6201/3/4/5/6 and 6401 were 99521/524/525/526/527 and 99523 respectively. Despite having the same route availability as other Mk3 stock the “Internationals” are not overly busy, their only regular links being the 14:40 to Limerick and 17:50 return on Fridays only and the 06:00 ex Waterford on Mondays only. They are, however, used on relief trains and have visited Ballina on a number of occasions working the 14:15 Bank Holiday Monday service to Pearse. However, commencing with the new timetable on 20th May, the set will be allocated to the Galway line and will make two return trips each weekday, operating to accelerated schedules and in push/pull mode if the driving trailer is completed in time. The conversion programme received a set-back on 21st January when an electrical fire caused considerable damage to 6203, while stabled at Heuston valeting plant. Each coach in the table below is fitted with two toilets which drain into retention tanks. Seating accommodation is also indicated:

6201	30 first and 24 standards
6202	54 standard
6203-6207	72 standard

Maximum speed is 100 mph where the line limit allows.

As is now standard practice on new vehicles the “communication cord” no longer activates the train brakes, but instead triggers a steady red light in the button which has been pressed, a flashing red light on the exterior of the coach concerned and a steady red light in the vestibule. In addition an alarm sounds over the public address system to attract the attention of the guard. Passenger activated push buttons are located in the saloon over each entrance doorway as well as behind a breakable screen in each of the toilets. An amber light appears on the side of each coach when the doors are released. When a “door close” request is initiated by the guard the amber lights extinguish once the doors on that particular coach have been detected closed and locked.

See also the July 1994 issue for further details.

DART

The expected announcement of funding for additional DART rolling stock was made on 6th March as part of the £17m package of measures mentioned elsewhere. It is believed that an additional five two-car sets are to be purchased thus increasing the size of the fleet by a useful, if modest, 12.5%. At present DART services are saturated during the morning rush hour with no spare capacity to absorb potential growth on the existing system, let alone cater for the either the authorised extension to Greystones or that proposed to Malahide.

New cameras have recently appeared at Howth Junction, Connolly, Tara Street, Blackrock, Salthill, Dun Laoghaire and Shankill. This equipment is intended to facilitate the more general introduction of six-car DART sets as well as the use of six-piece push/pulls. Monitors, intended for driver use, are positioned as tabulated below:

Howth Junction	South end of Up branch platform
Connolly	Both ends of Platforms 6 and 7
Tara Street	North end of Up platform, south end of Down platform
Blackrock	North end of Up platform
Salthill	North end of Up platform, south end of Down platform
Dun Laoghaire	South end of Down platform
Sandycove	North end of Up platform (in position for some time!)
Shankill	North end of Up platform

Cameras have been in place for some time at various barrier crossings in the Dublin area, including Merrion gates. These latter are intended to provide evidence for prosecution of road users who choose to ignore the warning lights and thus risk colliding with barriers.

Timetable Matters

Local services in the Dublin area were considerably curtailed over the Christmas period. The 17:28 Pearse/Balbriggan was cancelled on 21st December and the stock utilised on mainline services as is the practice on Fridays. On 24th and 31st December DART services ceased with the 21:10 ex Howth and 21:05 ex Bray, both of which terminated at Connolly. No trains ran on the 24th or 25th while a Saturday service was provided from the 27th to the 29th inclusive. The 06:37 ex Athlone, 06:42 ex Dundalk, 06:45 ex Carlow and 07:05 ex Portlaoise, however, ran in their normal Monday to Friday paths. Similarly the 16:50 Heuston/Athlone and 17:26 Connolly/Arklow ran in accordance with their normal schedule, the former being extended to Ballina as usual on the Friday.

The Sunday only 19:00 Heuston/Cork was altered to serve Portarlinton with effect from 17th December. This change gives passengers travelling on the 16:45 ex Claremorris connections to Cork, Limerick and Tralee.

The 15:18 Limerick Junction to Limerick was advanced to depart at 15:10 with effect from 3rd January. In consequence there is no connection to Limerick off the Friday only 13:40 Heuston/Tralee. This alteration will allow the 15:10 ex Limerick to take precedence at Dromkeen and should improve overall punctuality. (There are direct Friday only trains from Heuston to Limerick at 13:05 and 14:40.)

The 15:55 Limerick to Rosslare Harbour terminated at Limerick Junction on Easter Monday 8th April. The return service at 19:40 ex Rosslare was similarly curtailed and ran between Limerick Junction and Limerick only. There was thus no passenger service between Limerick Junction and Rosslare as the 07:15 Rosslare/Waterford and 17:00 return were also cancelled. This is the first time that this potentially busy and long-neglected cross country route has been deprived of a service on Easter Monday, a day when additional ferry bound traffic might have been expected.

The 20:15 Connolly/Maynooth was deferred to 20:35 with effect from 12th February. The return service now departs Maynooth at 21:25 instead of 21:05. This change is to avoid delay at Clonsilla in the event of the 17:40 ex Sligo running behind schedule.

The 23:50 Howth/Connolly was extended to Pearse station with effect from 8th April. This change applies daily, including Sunday. The altered service does not serve Tara Street.

The 17:13 Pearse to Newry was altered to terminate at Dundalk with effect from 9th April. This alteration is to apply for a period of "several months and is due to upgrading work on the Northern line". Alternate road transport is being provided.

Railcars

No announcement has yet been made in respect of an order for additional railcars although it is believed that sufficient vehicles will be acquired to eliminate the use of locomotives and hauled coaches on both Dublin suburban services and on local/branch services based in Limerick, Cork, Ballina, Tralee and Waterford. Principal trains from Dublin to the provinces will continue to be formed of hauled Mk2s and Mk3s.

Ammonia Traffic

The modified arrangements for the handling of Ammonia traffic in nine-car formations was suspended for a time in December and early January pending refinement of the terminal arrangements. During this period trains reverted to a shorter formation, which generally consisted of a bogie barrier wagon + six bogie tankers + bogie barrier wagon. The number of round trips between Marino Point and Shelton Abbey was increased to three on weekdays and as required on Sundays. At the time of writing the formation of these trains normally includes nine tanks, although trains with only seven or eight are not uncommon. There are now generally two return workings each day, including Sundays. Trials of three recently delivered Ammonia tank cars commenced in February although as yet none of the new wagons have been reported in traffic.

Tara Mines

These trains continue to operate three times daily, Monday to Friday, from Navan to Dublin (Alexandra Road). One or both sets are generally made up to twelve bogies, a gross laden weight of 900 tonnes. The maximum permitted weight of a Tara Mines train is actually 942 tonnes and it is thus possible to increase the size of the train to fourteen bogies, provided two of the wagons are empty. (The weights quoted apply to haulage by 071 class locomotives only.)

Timber

This traffic is expected to increase as the recently opened Louisiana Pacific/Coillte plant at Belview builds up to full capacity. At present most trains continue to originate in Westport, Ballina, Claremorris, Galway, Athenry, Ennis, Roscommon, Tralee and Killarney, although there are occasional movements from Sligo and elsewhere. It is reported that a third set of wagons is now nearing completion and that additional centres will come on-stream during the course of the year. Possible new locations include Gort, Tuam and Dundalk in addition to resumed traffic from Kingscourt and the North Donegal area.

Cross-Border Freight

There has been a very noticeable increase in fertiliser traffic originating at Adelaide for various destinations in the Republic. These trains are sometimes made up to twelve bogies and generally contain a mixture of 40 tonne and 48 tonne capacity wagons. Bulk Cement as well as palletised kegs of Smithwicks, Harp and Guinness continue to feature prominently although container traffic remains depressed. Nonetheless the 09:20 ex North Wall can still be an impressive sight as on 28th March when this train was formed by 080 + 18 bogies. All spaces were occupied with traffic consisting of a mixture of mainly 40ft containers carrying the Bell, P&O and Maersk brands.

Grain

Grain trains were reported to be operating up to six days a week into the Avonmore facility in Portlaoise as of mid-February. Traffic primarily originates at Foynes although there was generally one

train a week from North Wall and Waterford.

New Ross

This branch is currently severed at Rosbercon level crossing, just outside New Ross. Although out of use for over a year due to the deteriorated condition of the track, the line has not been formally closed and indeed was to have been included in this year's weed-spray programme.

New Mineral Traffic?

The developers of the lead and zinc mine at Lisheen in Co Tipperary, which is expected to become operational in 1998, have indicated that the company plans to move processed ore by road, but is looking at the feasibility of rail transport. If the company were to opt for rail the most likely scenario would see ore being taken by lorry to Thurles for onward conveyance to Foynes. The not too distant Galmoy development is bringing its ore by road to New Ross, although a branch from Lisduff is understood to have been considered.

Beet Traffic

The 1995 beet campaign ended on 8th January. The official count of wagons delivered to the Mallow factory was 8,207 - an increase of 11% on 1994. Pairs of Bo-Bos were still prominent on beet trains at the end of November with mixed pairs of 121s and 141s dominating haulage.

Killarney Closure

The proposed development of a factory shop complex by Killarney Company Stores, which is to be located on CIÉ property at Killarney station, is expected to result in the removal of much of the track in the yard and the cessation of all rail freight activity. Reduced yard capacity will also affect the ability of the railway to deal with abnormally heavy passenger traffic such as the Munster Football Final as there will be little or no space to stable rolling stock. Freight business is healthy enough at present as can be gauged by activity on 12th April when apart from regular Guinness traffic, Killarney originated a timber special and was served by a bagged cement train. Other movements on this date included a fertiliser special destined for Tralee and a special working of the Executive train from Heuston to Killarney.

Derailments

The chemical portion of the 02:50 Asahi Liner train from Ballina to North Wall was completely derailed as the train passed over the turnouts at the west end of Tullamore station, at around 07:55 on 6th January. The initial derailment took place on recently relaid track at MP 61¼, some ¾ miles from the station and would appear to have involved a single wheelset on one of the leading four-wheel wagons. The train consisted of 127/129 + (9) laden bogies + (2) empty bogies + barrier + (1) methyl acrylate + (8) acrylonitrile, the last ten wagons being four-wheel flats dedicated to Asahi traffic. Damage was extensive with both turnouts at the Clara end being destroyed in addition to much of the trackwork on the mainline between the turnouts and the centre of the Down platform. The trailing end of the rear bogie wagon was derailed and the four-wheel barrier following it rebounded off the platform face and overturned to the left. The methyl acrylate container mounted on the next wagon was thrown off to the right and came to rest on its side some distance from the line, at the west end of the station, near the point where the general derailment occurred. The remaining eight four-wheel wagons were also derailed but remained upright. All the chemical containers on the train were empty and remained intact. There was no release of dangerous substances. The cause of the initial derailment is believed to

have been the result of a wagon defect rather than a permanent way defect. The line was reopened around 19:00 and the first train past the scene was the somewhat delayed 18:05 to Westport which reached Tullamore at 19:25. Through trains were required to use the loop pending reinstatement of the turnouts and relaying of the more severely damaged track in the station area. This situation persisted until Tuesday evening, 16th January, after which normal working resumed. During the intervening period trains were required to cross at either Geashill or Clara, resulting in delays of about 30 minutes to one or other of the services concerned. Empty bulk cement trains were required to propel out of the goods loop at the Dublin end before continuing to Clara in order to run-round.

General Traffic and Operations

The following relief trains, some of which started in mid-November, ran on Saturdays only until 16th December:

Outward	Return	Notes
07:20 Cork/Dublin	16:50 Dublin/Cork	Formed by 16:30 ex Dublin (Friday)
08:00 Waterford/Dublin ¹		Formed by 16:55 ex Dublin (Friday)
09:00 Thurles/Dublin	17:25 Dublin/Waterford	“International” set
08:45 Longford/Dublin ²	17:15 Dublin/Sligo ³	17:05 ex Dublin (Friday)

¹ The 08:00 ex Waterford was generally formed by a two-piece Arrow, the remainder of the four piece set returning empty to Dublin on the Friday evening.

² The 08:45 ex Longford actually ran empty from Sligo to Longford as the 28 mile block section between Sligo and Boyle makes a non-timetabled relief impractical.

³ Formed by extending the regular 17:15 Dublin to Longford but initially ran as a separate train at 17:05, in the Friday only path.

208 worked the 21:00 North Wall/Ballina liner at least as far as Athlone on 4th December in place of an Irish Rail engine sent to Belfast, due to an earlier defect with 208. The NIR locomotive is understood to have then worked the 00:40 Athlone to Galway liner before returning to Dublin on the 07:50 ex Galway on 5th December.

Traffic on the Belfast line continued at a high level in the run up to Christmas, with additional trains from Dublin to Belfast each Saturday until 16th December at 07:35 and 08:05, returning at 16:40 and 17:40 respectively. The 07:35 relief also operated on Thursdays until 21st December, returning at 17:15. Overcrowding on other weekdays was relieved by operating additional trains in the “Thursday path” on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays between 6th and 20th December inclusive. NIR ran a 17:15 Belfast/Dublin relief on 5th December which was formed by 68+3+90. Day return fares from Dublin and Dundalk to Belfast were £14 and £7 respectively (Fridays and Sundays excepted). NIR also operated an 07:45 relief from Belfast to Dublin on Saturdays from 18th November to 16th December inclusive, returning initially at 17:45 and latterly at 18:00. There was an 09:00 relief to Dublin on both 18th and 25th November returning at 18:30. These additional workings were generally formed either by six or nine piece 80 class DEMUs. One of the busier days was 2nd December, details of which are shown in the table:

Dublin/Belfast line 2nd December 1995

Train	Formation	Load			Notes
07:35 Dublin/Belfast	230+6p/p 6103	330/360	Connolly	dep 07:37	
07:55 Dublin/Belfast	223+EGV+9Mk2	550/560	Connolly	dep 07:58	
08:05 Dublin/Belfast	225+GSV+7Cr	360/370	Connolly	dep 08:09	
18:00 Dublin/Belfast	90+4+93+2+89	360/420	Drogheda	dep 19:23	CAWS stop
18:20 Dublin/Belfast	222+12Mk2	350/400	Drogheda	pass 19:41	
18:27 Pearse/Dundalk	Four-Car Arrow		Drogheda	dep 20:02	
19:15 Connolly/Dundalk	2611/12	20	Drogheda	dep 20:18	
15:00 Belfast/Dublin	112+12Mk2	480/500	Laytown	pass 18:05	
17:48 Drogheda/Dublin	2612/11	40	Laytown	dep 18:11	
16:40 Belfast/Dublin	6103 6p/p+230	300	Laytown	pass 18:25	
18:24 Drogheda/Dublin	186+3p/p+EGV	30/35	Laytown	dep 18:35	
17:00 Belfast/Dublin	208+8Mk2	360/420	Drogheda	18:44/18:49	About 110 off
Empty Push/Pull	6104 4p/p+228		Drogheda	dep 18:53	Formed 17:42 ex Pearse
17:40 Belfast/Dublin	223+9Mk2+EGV	400/430	Drogheda	19:31/19:33	About 10 off
18:00 Belfast/Dublin	225+7Cr+GSV	250/280	Drogheda	pass 19:52	

The 15:00 ex Belfast was delayed as the result of a coupling failure at Lisburn as described elsewhere. The late running resulted in there being no set for the 18:20 return and no driver for the 18:00 relief. Both of these trains were given precedence at Connolly over the 18:27 Pearse/Dundalk which was held outside until the 18:30 to Rosslare had vacated Platform 5. As the Rosslare train was being held to take connection off the Up Belfast the Bray/Howth DART service was also delayed until the Belfast train arrived, the Rosslare train departed and the Dundalk train reached the platform! The 18:15 Connolly/Sligo was also held to connect. The sets intended to work the 17:40 and 18:00 ex Belfast were swapped due to a brake problem with the Cravens which was quickly resolved. Due to pressure on rolling stock, local trains featured some unusual formations which included a four-piece push/pull as well as loco-hauled push/pull intermediates.

A series of points failures in Bray on 18th December resulted in the suspension of DART services south of Dalkey for over an hour during the height of the evening rush. The 15:00 ex Rosslare terminated at Bray while the 17:26 to Arklow had not reached Bray by 19:13, already 68 minutes late.

The Christmas shut-down was accompanied by freezing conditions throughout the country and in consequence there were some difficulties restarting services on 27th December, this despite most lines being traversed by light engine movements in the early hours of the morning. The principal difficulties occurred in the Limerick area with simultaneous locomotive failures reported at Cratloe, Castleconnell and Killonan. In consequence the connections out of the 09:10 Heuston/Tralee at Ballybrophy and Limerick Junction were both provided by road transport.

The 09:15 ex Rosslare was expected to start from Enniscorthy on 31st December due to flooding of the line near Wexford. However a block failure between Enniscorthy and Arklow resulted in the train operating empty at 15 mph with passengers being taken by road throughout. The 07:30 ex Rosslare failed near Wexford the previous day as a result of which passengers were yet again transferred to road transport.

Due to the closure of the NIR system for much of New Year's day cross-border trains were unable to operate other than for a short period during the afternoon and early evening. In consequence Irish Rail ran services from Dublin to Dundalk at 07:55, 11:00 and 20:15. Trains operated from Dundalk at

11:00, 12:14 and 13:00, the latter being a six-piece Arrow which then worked the 14:30 relief to Belfast, 17:30 relief to Dublin and thence back to Dundalk at 20:15. (See also NIR section.)

The 16:50 Heuston/Ballina, hauled by 071, failed between Islandbridge Junction and Inchicore on 5th January and was hauled back onto the North Wall branch. Although some services escaped relatively unscathed, others were delayed by an hour or more as shown below:

Service	Kildare	Delay (Minutes)
17:20 Heuston/Cork	pass 18:04	18
17:30 Heuston/Ennis	pass 1:810	14
17:40 Heuston/Tralee	18:17/18:18	10
16:55 Heuston/Waterford	18:47/18:50	75
16:50 Heuston/Ballina	18:54/18:56	89
18:05 Heuston/Westport	pass 19:00	29
17:45 Heuston/Kildare	arr 19:09	44
18:25 Heuston/Tralee	pass 19:12	21
18:30 Heuston/Kildare	arr 19:20	10
18:10 Heuston/Waterford	19:28/19:30	46
18:50 Heuston/Galway	pass 19:35	27
19:00 Heuston/Cork	19:41/19:43	9

Storm force winds and high tides on 6th January resulted in damage to the Wexford line at several points in addition to flooding at MP 92. Part of the wooden wharf on the quay at Wexford was damaged and the track littered with debris. Further storm damage occurred at Newcastle (MP 19½), south of the Crescent Quay in Wexford and at MP 5 near the former Wexford South station. The block section from Enniscorthy to Rosslare Strand is reported to have been closed from 18:00 on Saturday 6th to 16:30 the next day. All services south of Enniscorthy were cancelled on the Sunday except the 18:30 from Dublin which reopened the road. A Mk2 set which was trapped overnight in Rosslare Harbour ran to Dublin (Connolly) via Wellingtonbridge, Waterford, Kilkenny and Cabra arriving at 13:39. The carriages were then added to the weekday Belfast set in order to form the 13:40 to Sligo! (*This is actually the normal link, the Dublin-based weekday Rosslare set works the 09:00 to Sligo and 14:35 return on Sundays. This set then works the 18:30 from Connolly to Rosslare. The 13:40 to Sligo and 18:10 return generally consists of a 13-piece Mk2 set formed by the combination mentioned above. Meanwhile the 08:55 ex Sligo works the 15:00 to Belfast and 18:15 return, while the 10:15 to Belfast and 14:30 return are formed by the Dublin-based weekday Sligo set. This latter then forms the 18:15 to Sligo. The 10:25 to Rosslare and 18:30 return is formed by an 071-class hauled push/pull set. The latter set, still in push/pull mode, is also used for the 07:45 and 08:30 Connolly to Dun Laoghaire which return at 08:05 and 09:00. These four trains are the only remaining remnant of the former Dun Laoghaire Pier "Boat Train" service and are also the only passenger trains regularly employing 201 class locomotives on any part of the former DSER system.*)

The Ireland v Scotland Rugby International on 21st January produced heavy traffic, particularly on the Belfast line. Apart from the executive train from Cork there was also an 07:20 relief to Heuston returning at 18:20. The regular 08:25 ex Limerick ran non-stop and was followed by an 08:35 relief which served Thurles, Ballybrophy and Portlaoise. This train returned ahead of the 19:00 Heuston/Cork, departing at 18:55 and running non-stop to Limerick. Return trains to Belfast were at 18:00, 18:20, 18:30, 20:00 and 20:15. There was also a 20:20 relief to Dundalk serving Skerries, Balbriggan and Drogheda. The 18:00 to Belfast overtook the 17:42 Pearse/Drogheda at Skerries

although it was the Express which operated via the Up road rather than the local. This entailed both services being delayed as the local was held on the Down platform for about seven minutes and the express had to negotiate the cross-over at both ends of Skerries station. As is now normal DART services were not permitted to stop at either Sandymount or Lansdowne Road immediately before the match and were suspended for about 20 minutes after the game ended. This arrangement necessitated the 16:00 ex Bray turning at Sydney Parade and the 15:55 ex Howth turning at Pearse. Some of the morning trains are detailed in the table below:

Ireland v Scotland Rugby International, 21st January 1996

Train	Formation	Load			Notes
08:05 Dundalk/Pearse	2616/15/12/11	230/250	Malahide	dep 09:13	
07:45 ex Belfast	96+4+98+2+95	500/550	Malahide	pass 09:50	
08:00 ex Belfast	208+12Mk2s	480/510	Malahide	pass 10:04	
09:50 ex Drogheda	6103 6p/p+228	250/270	Malahide	10:25/10:26	
10:05 ex Maynooth	157+GSV+4Cr	50	Connolly	arr 10:49	
07:50 ex Sligo	075+8 Mk2+EGV	450/460	Connolly	arr 11:06	
08:30 ex Belfast	94+3+89+2+85	550/580	Connolly	11:1/11:20	Empty to Pearse Yard
10:10 ex Dundalk	202+3Mk2+EGV	160/170	Connolly	11:23/11:26	
Exec Special ex Cork	231+4Mk3+EGV	70/90	Connolly	arr 11:36	
09:00 ex Belfast	209+10Mk2	380/450	Connolly	arr 11:41	
09:30 ex Belfast	84+4+92	350/380	Connolly	arr 12:06	
11:00 ex Belfast	225+7Mk2+EGV	300	Connolly	arr 13:21	

Flooding, caused by strong winds and high tides, closed the Blackrock/Seapoint section around lunchtime on 23rd January. The 13:38 Connolly/Rosslare is understood to have departed around 14:30 and to have terminated at Bray due to flooding at Newcastle. The set later continued empty to Enniscorthy to take up the running of the 18:00 ex Rosslare.

The 07:30 ex Tralee partially failed just north of Thurles on 27th January. The partially disabled locomotive, 223, was able to propel the train into Thurles where passengers joined the following 09:00 ex Cork, which served the Down platform. Snow caused points problems in Tullamore on the same date, causing a delay of about 45 minutes to both the 07:50 ex Galway and 07:25 ex Westport. The weather is also believed to have played a part in an incident in which the Limerick to Waterford Bell liner ran through Grange level crossing. The train was formed by 128/146 + 11 bogies.

A block failure between Drogheda and Dundalk resulted in the Irish Rail operated 15:00 from Dublin to Belfast running some 90 minutes late on 29th January. The NIR operated three-piece 17:02 Larne Town to Dundalk, motor coach 69, was held at Central until 18:00 and extended to Dublin on this date in order to provide some service to the travelling public. The extended local service operated via Great Victoria Street as normal. *(Irish Rail regulations require 15 mph operation in such circumstances irrespective of the length of the section or the availability of alternate communications. Meanwhile traffic on the nearby Dunleer by-pass zooms past at speeds of up to 100 mph if recent sovietises are anything to go by!)*

The "Executive" train visited Belfast again on 30th January, this time working a Dublin/Belfast charter formed by 215 + EGV + 4 Mk3. The train, which left Dublin around 14:30, was stabled at York Road overnight and was due to return from Belfast (Central) at 08:25 the following day.

The 16:58 Bray/Howth was delayed for over half an hour at Whiterock on 31st January after becoming

entangled in an obstruction placed on the overhead line by vandals. A number of southbound services were cancelled before reaching their destination in order to plug the gap in the northbound service and avoid trapping too much equipment in Bray.

The 15:45 Bray/Howth, 8140/26, became disabled at Harmonstown on 1st February due to problems encountered after leaving Killester which either caused, or were caused by, damage to the pantograph of the leading unit. As the problem arose south of the paralleling switch-house at Raheny the electrical section was isolated between there and Fairview as a result of which the cross-over at Killester could not be used by electric trains. Reversible working was therefore introduced over the Up line between Fairview and Howth Junction and remained in force from about 16:40 until 18:55. Northside DART services were severely curtailed while outer suburban trains were delayed by up to 50 minutes. Services observed at Killester between 17:50 and 18:45 were as shown below:

Notes	DART	(1)	DART	(2)	DART	DART	DART	(3)	(4)	DART
Direction	NB	NB	SB	SB	NB	NB	NB	NB	NB	NB
Pass/Dep	Dep	Pass	Dep	Pass	Dep	Dep	Dep	Pass	Pass	Dep
Time	17:52	17:58	18:12	18:14	18:23	18:27	18:30	18:38	18:41	18:44
Delay (Mins)		14		16				14	49	

(1) 17:28 Pearse/Drogheda; (2) 17:12 Drogheda/Pearse; (3) 18:20 Connolly/Belfast; (4) 17:42 Pearse/Drogheda.

The 17:20 Heuston/Cork came to a halt at MP 12 on 7th February, due to a damaged air brake reservoir line. The following 17:30, 17:40, 17:45 and 18:05 services left Heuston but were blocked until repairs were completed around 20:00. Passengers on the Cork train subsequently received an apology from the company and a free ticket for use on another occasion. Given that the main brake pipe was intact, it seems surprising that train was unable to proceed to Sallins so as to clear the line for other traffic.

An overhead line problem on the Howth branch caused breakers to open at Bayside and Raheny around 19:50 on 26th February. DART services were suspended between Howth Junction and Howth for about two hours until 22:00. All DART trains ran over the Up line from Killester to Howth Junction for almost an hour, after which manual switching enabled the restoration of power on the Down line between Howth Junction and Killester.

Ireland v Wales Rugby International

2nd March 1996

Train	Formation	Load			Notes
16:52 Pearse/Drogheda	207+6p/p 6102	120	Skerries	17:34/17:35	
17:13 Pearse/Dundalk	230+6p/p 6105	120	Skerries	17:48/17:49	
17:42 Pearse/Drogheda	228+6p/p 6104	120	Skerries	18:21/18:22	Balbriggan 18:29/18:30
18:00 Connolly/Belfast	83+4+84+2+98	630/650	Skerries	pass 18:23	Balbriggan pass 18:26
18:20 Connolly/Belfast	209+12Mk2	400	Balbriggan	pass 18:49	
18:30 Connolly/Belfast	91+3+89+2+94	450/460	Balbriggan	pass 19:01	
Empty Cement	072+29 wagons		Balbriggan	pass 19:06	Looped Skerries
18:27 Pearse/Dundalk	2617/13/03/04	180	Balbriggan	19:13/19:14	
19:15 Connolly/Dundalk	2613/10	50	Drogheda	20:17/20:18	
20:00 Connolly/Belfast	112+11Mk2	300/330	Drogheda	pass 20:35	
20:15 Connolly/Belfast	95+4+99	300/330	Drogheda	20:53/20:54	
20:20 Connolly/Dundalk	207+6p/p 6102	90/110	Drogheda	21:07/21:08	

The Ireland v Wales Rugby International on 2nd March resulted in a similar programme of trains to that operated for the Scottish match, although traffic was a little lighter. Trains on the Belfast line after the match were fairly standard although there was some imaginative use of signalling facilities in the Skerries and Balbriggan areas. The 18:00 special passed Skerries within a minute of the departure of the 17:42 ex Pearse, the latter running on the Up line between Skerries and Balbriggan. (See above.)

086 failed due to traction motor problems while working the 07:50 ex Sligo on 5th March. The locomotive was able to propel the train back into the station where the engine was swapped for that of the empty oil prior to departing again at 08:55.

In connection with the production of the Marriage of Figaro at the Grand Opera House on 7th March, Irish Rail ran an excursion from Dublin to Belfast offering return travel, dinner on the outward journey, tickets for the opera and supper on the return trip at an "all in" cost of £85. The train ran to Great Victoria Street leaving Dublin at 16:20 and returning at 23:00, served Malahide in both directions and consisted of 222 + 4 Mk3s + EGV.

Passengers travelling on the 18:30 ex Rosslare on Sunday 24th March are understood to have been bussed from Enniscorthy, due to the failure of the block telegraph circuit between there and Arklow. More delay and inconvenience ensued when one of the substitute buses broke down near the Tara Towers Hotel at Booterstown.

The set of the 07:28 ex Drogheda failed before departure on 29th March and the service was thus delayed until 07:33 and was formed by the set of the 07:43 ex Drogheda. The latter service did not depart until 07:58 and consisted of 149 + 6105 6 p/p + 229 and was in turn followed by the 07:20 ex Newry, 6104 6 p/p + 228, which departed at 08:03. Not surprisingly the Newry train quickly caught up and got progressively later as the hopelessly overloaded 149 lost more and more time. The 07:43 was eventually announced as running non-stop from Skerries, although further problems arose as a result of a computer failure at the suburban signalling centre in Connolly. This latter caused delays of up to 30 minutes to both DART and outer suburban trains and necessitated the manning of some of the ECPs and the use of override equipment at Howth Junction and elsewhere. Later the same day the Arrow operated 15:40 Pearse/Drogheda collided with a number of beer barrels which had been placed on the line north of Howth Junction. The train was not seriously damaged but was disabled at the scene of the incident for almost 90 minutes and was subsequently terminated in Malahide at about 17:45. The 16:32 Connolly/Drogheda was cancelled while the 16:52, 17:13 and 17:42 ex Pearse reached Drogheda at 18:34, 18:41 and 18:47 respectively. Both the 17:12 and 17:48 ex Drogheda were cancelled and partially substituted by road transport.

Dublin/Belfast services were severely disrupted on 31st March due to an overrun in excavation work at OB 141, just south of Dundalk. Single line working was introduced over the Down line between Dundalk North and Dunleer at approximately 12:30 at which point the 10:15 ex Dublin was able to leave Dunleer. The 10:10 ex Belfast left Dundalk around 13:00 and was a little short of two hours late reaching Dublin. The 14:10 ex Belfast, 98+4+86, departed Dunleer at 16:07 thus clearing the single line for the 15:00 ex Dublin, 203 + EGV + 9 Mk2s, which departed at 16:11. The 14:30 ex Belfast, 219 + 7 Mk2 + EGV, left Dundalk at 16:41 already almost an hour late. The 17:55 ex Dublin was little delayed although the 18:20 and 20:15 ex Dublin, the 18:10 ex Portadown and the 18:15 ex Belfast were each delayed about thirty minutes.

A shortage of railcar sets, reportedly the result of a programme of modifications, resulted in all push/pull vehicles being pressed into service at the beginning of April when there were three six-piece sets and two three-piece sets in use. The additional three-piece sets as of 9th April were 6103 3 p/p + 123 and 6101 3 p/p + 122, the latter in Limerick and the former based in Connolly and generally used on the Maynooth services. 123 failed at Maynooth the following day, prior to departure of the 09:15 to Connolly, and its place was taken by 128. The link beginning with the 06:05 ex Dundalk has been

locomotive hauled since at least 25th March, again due to problems with railcar availability.

Miscellaneous

The operating subvention paid to Irish Rail from state funds, in accordance with European Union regulations 1191/69, 1192/69 and 1107/70 is expected to be cut by £7m in 1996.

Mainline rail carryings for 1996 exceeded eight million for the first time since 1979 reflecting both increased buoyancy in the market and a generally more reliable service. Traffic on the Belfast and Cork lines increased by 37% and 10% respectively. Interestingly, the Operational Programme for Transport predicts annual carryings on mainline services of 8.7 million in 1999, after completion of the upgrade programme which was detailed in the October 1994 issue.

The office building at the entrance to the new Ardee Road freight depot has been selected by adjudicators from the Association of Architects in Ireland as one of the outstanding developments of 1995. The aluminium and stainless steel structure is described as a cross between a shiny railway carriage and a classic American diner. The building was designed by David Hughes, one of Irish Rail's own architects.

Some promotional fares were increased from 4th January 1996. The "Day Saver" from Limerick to Dublin rises from £14 to £16 while the corresponding fares on the Galway line were increased by between 50p and £1. All cross-border fares were adjusted on this date, the increases reflecting an earlier rise in internal NIR charges.

Inchicore works celebrates the 150th anniversary of its opening in June with a series of events including an open day on 16th June, which will feature an exhibition of steam and diesel locomotives as well as rolling stock. In this connection B113, a 1951 Inchicore built Sulzer engined diesel of 960hp, is to be cosmetically restored to join a silver "A" class and possibly a green liveried "C" class. A steam hauled excursion will run from Heuston to Athy on 9th August to commemorate the first service which operated 150 years earlier.

The Green Party organised a petition at the end of February seeking improvements to the Northern outer suburban service from Dublin to Drogheda/Dundalk and intermediate points. The petition seeks: 1) a reliable service; 2) the restoration of Sunday and Bank Holiday trains; 3) a service leaving Pearse Station between 23:15 and 23:30; 4) the introduction of a fare incentive scheme to encourage inter-town usage in North Dublin, Meath and Louth. In fairness to Irish Rail the reliability of these services has improved out of all recognition thanks to the introduction of the Arrow railcars, the commissioning of new signalling and most important of all the introduction of the 201 class on the push/pull sets. Nonetheless off-peak and weekend service frequency is Spartan with empty stock movements a particular feature of Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays.

Howth Railway Refreshment Rooms Limited, owned by the Wright family, has been granted a seven day public house licence and restaurant certificate in respect of its new facility located in the refurbished station buildings at Howth. Space within the building has been made available to the company by CIÉ under the terms of a twenty year lease.

The former dormitory at Inchicore was placed on the market by CIÉ in mid-February and will be sold by tender. The property includes five former houses at North Terrace dating back to the 1850s and a detached period house on about a third of an acre.

The recent opening of the final phase of the Dundalk inner relief road which extends the existing bypass to the new Ballymascanlon roundabout evoked memories in the area of the Dundalk, Newry and Greenore Railway in that the new road crosses the Castletown River at almost exactly the point used by the railway, which closed on 31st January 1951. The railway viaduct was known as the "Metal bridge"

or “First metals”, the nearby Ballymascanlon viaduct being referred to as the “Second Metals”.

D&SER style mileposts have recently been refurbished, with long-missing posts being reinstated as required.

Northern Ireland Railways

Dublin/Belfast Project

Relaying of the Up line between Portadown and Poyntzpass, from MP 86½ to MP 77, has been completed with 2¼ miles, from MP 84¼ to MP 82 being relaid since mid-November. The Down line has also been relaid from MP 77 to MP 77⁷/₈ and from MP 84¾ to MP 85³/₈. Some 66.3% of the line between Belfast (Central) and the border now consists of CWR on concrete sleepers. Flash-butt site welding of 20-metre lengths into LWR strings was in hand between MP 83 and MP 85³/₈. In order to reduce the disruption associated with site welding of 20-metre lengths, LWR strings intended for installation on the Down line were prepared on the Up line in parallel with other work on that line.

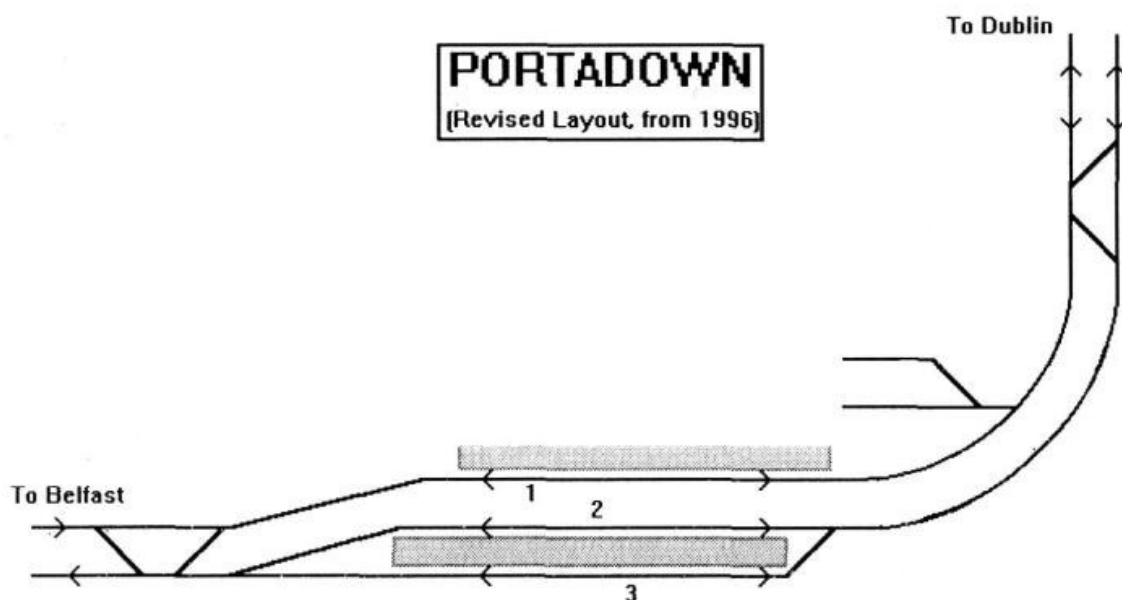
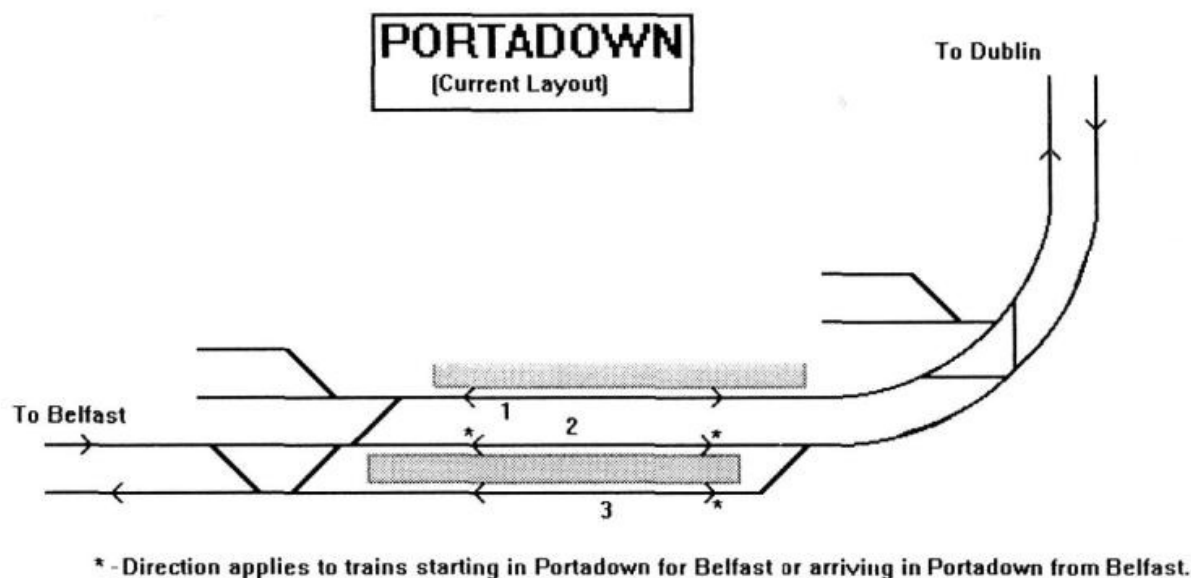
Relaying of approximately ten miles of the Up road between Poyntzpass and MP 66 is expected to commence in mid-April. This work is to be carried out by Irish Rail under the terms of a £2.2m contract recently agreed with Northern Ireland Railways. It is expected that the contract will extend over a period of about three months and that the relaying gangs would be based in Dundalk. The NIR relaying squad will finish the Portadown to Poyntzpass section and then turn their attention to the Portadown/Lisburn section which, although relaid some years ago, is in need of formation repairs at a number of locations and also awaits the installation of CWR on the Up road between MP 100 and MP 98¼. The Up and Down roads through Lurgan station also need to be relaid while extensive alterations are planned in the Portadown station area, as mentioned elsewhere. (Single line working is to be introduced between Poyntzpass and Newry over the Down line with effect from 22nd April and will remain in operation on a continuous basis until relaying of the Up road has been completed.)

Stone-Arch overbridges Nos. 165 (Grant's bridge), 224 (Anderson's bridge), 233 (Knock bridge) and 265 (Kerr's bridge) have been completely demolished and are being rebuilt from the foundations upwards. These structures are located near MP 60¾, MP 80¼, MP 84¼ and MP 95¾ respectively and are the first of up to twenty such bridges which are to be reconstructed as part of cross-border project. There has been quite an amount of discontent locally about the extended closure of public roads associated with these renewals. For instance, Knock bridge was closed to traffic on 18th March and was to have been closed for fifteen weeks. Following representations from local MP, David Trimble, and the Rev Ian Paisley, the Department of the Environment reduced the closure period to twelve weeks. (Similar bridge renewals on Irish Rail have generally retained the original foundations and in consequence, closure of the public road has rarely exceeded five days.) The smoke deflectors attached to OB 198 have been removed in order to increase overhead clearance. This bridge is located just south of Goragwood at MP 71¼.

Macrete Ireland Ltd, of Toomebridge, Co Antrim, have been awarded a contract for the design, manufacture and delivery of pre-cast, pre-stressed, concrete flat deck bridge beams for seventeen overbridges. Farrans of Dunmurry have been awarded the contract for demolition and reconstruction in addition to associated road works.

There is as yet little evidence on the ground of re-signalling activity although details of the layout changes at Portadown, Poyntzpass and Newry have become available. At Portadown both roads are to

be slewed at the Belfast end in order to simplify the routing of through trains. The basic problem at this location is the physical discontinuity in the alignment of the main lines which occurs at the station, whereby the Down line at the Dublin end becomes the Up line at the Belfast end. Down trains are therefore normally routed through Platform 3 via a 15 mph turnout while Up trains normally run through Platform 1 via a 15 mph cross-over. Slewing the road will eliminate the necessity to use these connections, the transition being achieved more gently on plain track between the Bann bridge and the station.



Under the new arrangements Down trains will operate via Platform 2 and Up trains via Platform 1. Reversible working will be available through all three platforms with facing and trailing cross-overs at both ends of the station as at present. The cross-overs at the Dublin end are to be re-positioned on straight track near MP 86½, thus permitting an increase in the cant of the curve immediately south of the station. The cumulative effect of these alterations will permit trains to approach and transit the Portadown area at 40-50 mph, a considerable improvement on the 15 mph restriction which currently

applies through the station and on the curvaceous southern approach. It is understood that the little used sidings on the Up side between the station and the Bann bridge are to be removed although those at the Dublin end are to be retained.

At Poyntzpass the existing emergency trailing cross-over, located beside the signal box, is to be removed and replaced by a facing cross-over at the Portadown end. This will be positioned sufficiently far north of the trailing cross-over to allow trains to run round. The ballast siding, which trails onto the Down line at the north end of the station is to be retained. Meanwhile, the facing catch points previously located on the Portadown side of the Poyntzpass Down advance starter were removed in March, consequent on track renewal at this location.

At Newry a new facing cross-over is to be provided on straight track about three-quarters of a mile north of the station near MP 70.

Reversible working will be available over both roads from Dundalk to Portadown although intermediate mid-section signals are not being provided in the “wrong” direction. Apart from the added operational flexibility this facility will greatly reduce delays due to track maintenance and minimise disruptions in failure situations.

It was reported in early December that the level crossing at Meigh will be re-opened to road traffic in the near future. This will entail the installation of automatic barrier equipment and the removal of the large concrete obstructions which currently block the road to vehicular traffic. The crossing was closed some fifteen years ago, following a collision engineered by terrorists who had abandoned a lorry across the railway at this point.

Recent information would suggest that the initial Dublin/Belfast/Dublin journey time will be 100 minutes non-stop and 115 minutes with four stops. These timings are based on 90 mph operation and would appear to reflect the likelihood that NIR will be unable to complete its track upgrading programme, especially the Lisburn/Belfast section, in time for the launch of the new service towards the end of the year. (The non-stop journey time was initially projected to be 90 minutes and later 95 minutes. While the faster timings are readily attainable within the proposed 90 mph limit, achieving them reliably will require the completion of upgrading between Belfast and Portadown, improved operation of the level crossings in the Lurgan area and proper traffic regulation at Howth Junction. The routing of Dublin/Belfast services into the new Great Victoria Street station would not only shorten the route and reduce the journey time, but would also deliver passengers into the heart of the city. All or some services could be extended thence to serve Botanic, Central and Yorkgate depending on capacity at Great Victoria Street, demand for services to the other stations and servicing requirements at York Road.)

Bleach Green Junction/Antrim

The upgrading of this section, announced in November 1994 and due to be completed in 1997, is expected to be delayed due to public expenditure constraints in Northern Ireland and “other unforeseen commitments” which have to be met by Northern Ireland Railways and the Northern Ireland Transport Holding Company. A press release in mid-January from the railway company states that “preparatory work is continuing with a view to commencing physical work when resources are available”. The delay is surprising and a little depressing given that the Northern Ireland administration is required to contribute only £2 million with the remaining 75% of the cost being financed from European Regional Development Funds. It is understood that the European Commission has warned that an undue delay in proceeding with the project could result in funding being withdrawn or reallocated.

The Belfast Telegraph has claimed that part of the reason for “shelving” the project is an anticipated overspend on the NIR portion of the cross-border upgrading which, it is claimed, may now cost as

much as £50m compared to the original £32m estimate. It is unclear how such an over-run might arise although there are suggestions that the railway company is being charged for the re-construction of overbridges to an elaborate Department of the Environment Road Services standard. As mentioned elsewhere this involves demolition of entire bridge structures in situations where both Irish Rail and British Rail would have re-used the original foundations.

Although the project has now been stalled, tenders had already issued for signalling, points and track laying. It is understood that a small quantity of materials have already been ordered.

Signalling, Layouts and Level Crossings

A new electronic banner repeater signal was installed on the Blythefield curve between signals 509R and 509 on 24th March. The additional signal, designated 509RR is mounted on the wrong side of the line and is attached to the concrete retaining wall of the cutting. There are thus two successive banner repeaters leading up to signal 509, an arrangement not found anywhere else in Ireland. The repeaters are required as otherwise a train leaving Great Victoria Street with a yellow on the platform starter would have to approach signal 509 with utmost caution as the latter only becomes visible when the train is almost on top of it. In such circumstances the repeaters update the driver in the event of a proceed aspect being displayed in signal 509 after the train has passed the platform starters. This arrangement thus expedites the movement of trains and helps to avoid unnecessary congestion at busy periods. (Please refer to the diagram in the October 1995 issue.)

The new sidings at Fortwilliam, adjacent to the Up Larne line near MP 1, are now taking shape. The headshunt and a number of sidings were in place by mid-February as was the trailing connection onto the Larne line. Five sidings are being provided initially although there is space for more, if required, at a later date. This new facility, which is enclosed within palisade fencing, is required to supplement the somewhat restricted storage accommodation at York Road.

New Rail

A notice placed in the Belfast Telegraph on 13th February by NIR invites tenders for the supply of 5,400 tonnes of rail and 276,000 tonnes of sleeper shoulders to be delivered to either Belfast or Ballymena during the period from mid-1996 to March 1999. The rail would be sufficient to renew about 31 miles of single track.

Management Changes

The new senior management team which is to run both NIR and Ulsterbus/Citybus has been announced. They are Andy Watt (Operations), Alan Mercer (Human Resources), Malachy McGreevy (Chief Mechanical Engineer), Karen Beckett (Marketing Executive), Brian Delaney (Finance) and John Barnett (Infrastructure and Property). Four of the above named come from Ulsterbus and two from NIR. The Board of both Ulsterbus and NIR have been abolished and replaced by a joint board under the non-executive chairmanship of Neville Whitehead. The new board has seven members and is composed of the persons highlighted above as well as two non-executive directors and Mr Ted Hesketh, the latter appointed Managing Director (Group Operations) last August.

A Belfast newspaper carried a report on 16th April suggesting that the British bus company, Stagecoach, had been in discussions with the Northern Ireland Department of the Environment concerning the possible privatisation of public transport undertakings in Northern Ireland. The report went on to say that an announcement concerning a sale could be made "in a matter of weeks". A government statement, which was issued in response to the report, said that while privatisation remained a core policy objective "there is no current timetable for privatisation of public transport

service provision in Northern Ireland". Stagecoach dismissed reports that it was interesting in purchasing NI transport undertakings as "complete hot air".

Fare Increase

Internal fares on NIR increased by an average of 2.2% with effect from 1st April, the second increase within a year. Following complaints from commuters, particularly on the Larne line, the Belfast stations have been grouped together into a single fare zone. Fares charged to Yorkgate, Central, Botanic, City Hospital and Great Victoria Street are thus the same, irrespective of which Belfast station is used.

Traffic

The 15:00 Belfast/Dublin was brought to a halt at Lisburn on 2nd December when 209 became detached from the 12-bogie train. There was no damage as a result of this incident although the service suffered a delay of over 75 minutes, being worked forward by 112 which ran light from Belfast, having arrived on the 13:00 from Dublin. Also affected were the 18:00 and 18:20 from Dublin, the former awaiting a driver travelling on the Up train, the latter awaiting the set. These trains, formed by 90+4+93+2+89 and 222 + 12 Mk2s, did not leave Drogheda until 19:23 and 19:42 respectively. (This incident severely disrupted Irish Rail services, as detailed elsewhere.)

The 07:05 Belfast (Central) to Londonderry was failed at Great Victoria Street on 7th December following a fire in the engine compartment of motor coach 82. The latter returned to traffic on 6th March following overhaul at York Road workshops.

A special charter ran from Londonderry to Great Victoria Street on 10th December. The return working was formed by 85+4+90 and departed at 16:35, the set then being used to form the 19:00 Londonderry to Carrickfergus. This latter was increased to a nine-car formation by the addition of a 3-car set (power car 92) at Coleraine.

112 was failed on arrival in Dublin on 15th December having worked the 17:00 from Belfast. The return 20:15 service was hauled by 234 which remained on loan to NIR for several days, 112 in the meantime working to Inchicore for repairs. The annual Christmas shut-down of the NIR system occurred as usual on 25th and 26th December. The weather over these few days was particularly cold (-10° C at times) with heavy snowfalls. Wednesday 27th saw widespread disruption of services with sets based at Londonderry, Coleraine and Portadown rendered inoperative and most early morning services either cancelled or seriously delayed. Least affected were trains to Dublin although the 08:00 ex Belfast, 209 + 11 Mk2s, was over 35 minutes late on this date. Later the same day the 18:20 ex Dublin, 209 + 10 Mk2s, was delayed by the failure, at Broomhedge, of the 19:00 from Portadown to Whitehead, which it propelled to Belfast. The Irish Rail set for the 07:20 Newry/Dublin, 230 + 6 p/p (6103), actually formed the 07:30 Newry/Bangor as far as Portadown, from which point passengers were reportedly taken by road. The set then returned to Dundalk and took up the running of the delayed 08:05 Dundalk/Pearse. The railcar set which normally works the latter service ran in the path of the Newry/Dublin service leaving Dundalk around 07:50. Other casualties included an empty train heading for Coleraine to replace one of the disabled sets there and the 16:10 Belfast (Central) to Londonderry, both of which failed at Crumlin. Both units, 83 and 84, were hauled back to York Road by 111.

Although matters had improved somewhat by the following day there was nonetheless widespread disruption. As of mid-morning there was still only one through line available for use at both Coleraine and Portadown, the other lines being obstructed by failed sets which had last moved on 24th December. At Londonderry, only the Belfast end of the landward platform was available, there being three dead sets occupying the remaining platform space. The 14:15 ex Londonderry on this date was formed by 2+90+2+455, the latter set having been resuscitated by maintenance staff. The trailing unit was

detached at Coleraine to work the Portrush branch. Some time later, 111, which had earlier worked light engine from York Road, worked 99+2+456+2 from Londonderry to Coleraine where the now operative 456+2 was substituted for 2+455. Two further failed sets, 81+2 and 2+87 were attached at Coleraine before the cavalcade resumed its journey. (The final set, 459+2, was removed from Londonderry on the 30th being hauled by another Castle class unit which had worked empty from York Road.) The failed units at Portadown were also removed or resuscitated on the Thursday, some of them being included in a partially operative twelve car cavalcade of eighty class sets which was assembled for the purpose. Meanwhile services gradually began to return to normal although there were quite a few failures during the course of 28th December, including the 06:53 Central to Portadown and 15:04 Great Victoria Street to Portadown. Trains cancelled included the 09:15 from Portrush to Belfast, the 11:00 from Londonderry to Belfast and the 17:06 from Great Victoria Street to Portadown. In the case of the latter, passengers were brought by train to City Hospital where they joined the 17:00 from Belfast to Dublin. This train, 112 + 8 Mk2s, then served all stations to Portadown and was delayed about 25 minutes as a result.

The 14:30 Dublin/Belfast and 17:30 return on 1st January were formed by a six-piece Arrow set, 2608/7/16/15/5/6. These trains are a comparative rarity in Belfast although a set visits Portadown every Sunday and they also occasionally work the 07:20 ex Newry as far as Dundalk.

Services between Portadown and Lisburn were disrupted on 4th January after the leading locomotive, 189, of a double-headed early morning freight train suffered a seized axle near Moira. Single line working was introduced until such time as the obstruction could be removed.

The 20:15 Dublin/Belfast, 112 + 9 Mk2s, came to a halt about a mile south of Poyntzpass on 11th January, due to a broken air pipe. Following emergency repairs it was found that 112 was unable to haul the train and 209 was summoned from York Road. This latter brought the train to Portadown, from which point 112 was able to continued unaided to arrive in Belfast around 02:15. 209 closely followed running light engine. The following day the 09:30 ex Belfast, 209 + 9 Mk2s, came to halt shortly after leaving Newry due to a brake problem and was thus delayed for about an hour. (At least one passenger experienced both delays!).

The 17:00 Belfast/Dublin on 22nd January, 91+3+83, was delayed en route by problems with power car 83 which was shut down at Drogheda. The service continued to Dublin where the train was reduced to a three-car formation for the return journey.

The 17:00 Belfast/Dublin, 2+98, was diverted to operate via Great Victoria Street on 27th January due to snow blocking the points at City Junction. This diversion was possible as the train was formed by a railcar set because of train heating problems on the rostered locomotive hauled set. These difficulties and subsequent diversion resulted in a delay of almost 50 minutes, although the later 18:00 ex Belfast was only 17 minutes behind schedule at Drogheda.

The 18:48 from Newry to Bangor terminated at Lurgan on 26th January after a fire was discovered in the rear of the power car, No 85. The incident was attended by the local fire brigade after which the train was able to continue (empty) to York Road.

Snow blocked points at Central Junction on 21st February resulted in the locomotive hauled 08:07 ex Portadown being diverted into Great Victoria Street. 112 was sent from York Road and the 09:30 Belfast (Central) to Dublin commenced from GVS, the first working from this station of a locomotive hauled train on a scheduled passenger service. Intending passengers from Central and Botanic travelled to Great Victoria Street by local services.

The Irish Traction Group hired a special train from Dublin (Heuston) to Londonderry via Bray on 23rd March. The return train from Londonderry ran to Great Victoria Street and thence to York Road depot before returning to Heuston, again via Bray. The train, consisting of eight Cravens and a GSV, was

hailed from Heuston to Portadown by 112 at which point 111 was added for the next leg to Lisburn. 130+135 then took over and worked the train first to Londonderry and then back to Great Victoria Street. Hunslet locomotive 102 followed from Westlink Junction and hauled the tour train the short distance to Belfast (Central) before continuing light to York Road. 208+209 then took charge and brought the train first to York Road and then back to Portadown where 209 was detached. Meanwhile the Irish Rail engines, 135+130, worked the 17:00 from Belfast to Dublin, the return working at 20:15 being hauled by 208. This was the first occasion that two 201 class have been used in multiple on a passenger working and the first visit of a pair of 121 class locomotives to Londonderry, although single locomotives of the latter class are understood to have worked Dublin to Portrush excursions in the 1960s. In order to position locomotives in advance of the tour, 112 worked the 18:50 Liner ex Adelaide on 22nd March in place of 130+135, which were stabled in York Road overnight. (*Double heading of 201 class locomotives is only permitted between York Road and the border, between Central Junction and Great Victoria Street and between City Junction and Great Victoria Street.*)

A signalling failure at Belfast (Central), apparently caused by accidentally severed cables, resulted in considerable disruption to services after the morning rush on 28th March. Great Victoria Street Station was closed for several hours and emergency working introduced between Lisburn and Belfast. A temporary block post was established at Dunmurry and both Central and City Junctions were scotched and clipped for through movements between Adelaide and City Hospital. The 11:00 ex Belfast, 207 + 7 Mk2 + EGV, was one of many services affected and did not leave Drogheda until 13:27, some 45 minutes behind schedule.

A special train formed by 213 + EGV + 5 Mk3s operated from Blackrock to Ballymena on 30th March in connection with a Rugby League fixture. The train was hauled from Lisburn to Ballymena and back by 111, as 201 class locomotives are not permitted beyond Antrim.

Civil Disturbances and Related Problems

The empty carriages, (6102) 6 p/p + 206, which had formed the 17:13 from Dublin (Pearse) to Newry on 1st February, were attacked by a mob as the train awaited "line clear" to Dundalk at the Newry Up advance starter. Two windows were broken in the rear cab of the locomotive and a small fire was started which caused scorch damage to the interior of the cab and damaged the supervisory computer terminal mounted on the bulkhead. The incident was attended by four fire brigade appliances. For some time after this incident it became the practice for the empty carriages off the 17:13 ex Pearse to continue to Poyntzpass before crossing onto the Up road for the return trip to Dundalk. (The train cannot remain on the Down platform at Newry as to do so would block the 18:20 ex Dublin.) The line was closed later that night, or early the following morning, due to a hoax bomb alert at or near Poyntzpass. As a consequence trains from Dublin ran to Newry only until about 14:00 on the 2nd, after which normal services resumed. Incidentally the 07:20 Newry/Dublin service was formed by an Arrow railcar set with passengers being required to change at Dundalk into the normal set which had to be hauled as there was no replacement push/pull equipped locomotive readily to hand. Later the same day, following examination at Dundalk, 206 ran light to Connolly before being towed to Inchicore on 3rd February.

The Newry/Dundalk section was closed to traffic at 20:00 on 9th February as a result of a bomb alert at or near the "Red Bridge", just south of Newry. The line remained closed until 17:45 on the 12th, during which time passengers were conveyed around the affected section by bus. Two NIR sets were trapped in Dundalk, 112 + 9 Mk2 and 91+2, while 201 was unable to complete its journey with the 18:50 ex Adelaide yard. This incident occurred within two hours of the ending of the IRA cease-fire.

Storm Damage

The Larne line was closed, east of Ballycarry, from 18:00 on 8th January until around 15:00 on 14th January. The disruption followed storm damage to the causeway near Glynn. Most services terminated at Whitehead although a number of trains, scheduled to serve Ballycarry, continued as far as that station.

Timetable Matters

An additional Sundays only service was introduced on 19th November departing Belfast (Central) at 14:10, serving Portadown at 14:46 and thence non-stop to Dublin arriving at 16:35.

On Fridays only, commencing in October, a relief train has been operating to Newry from Belfast (Central) departing at 14:50 serving Botanic and Portadown only. The 15:00 to Dublin departs at 15:05 on Fridays but continues to arrive at 17:17 despite stops at Botanic, Portadown, Newry, Dundalk and Drogheda. The relief train is normally formed by a 3-car Castle class set and returns empty to Great Victoria Street to form the 16:50 to Larne Town.

The Christmas period saw the usual shut-down on 25th and 26th December. A slightly reduced Sunday service ran on 24th and 31st December while a Saturday service was provided from 27th to 30th inclusive. A skeleton service ran on New Year's day with the first trains commencing around 13:00 and the last services reaching their destinations before 21:00. There were two trains each way to Londonderry, four local trains each way to Portadown, six to Bangor and three to Larne Town, only one of which ran to and from Larne Harbour. On the Dublin line trains left Belfast at 14:30, 15:00, 17:30 and 18:00. Trains from Dublin departed at 14:30, 15:00, 17:55 and 18:20.

Modified services will operate on 8th and 9th April, both dates being Bank Holidays in Northern Ireland. There will be an approximately hourly service from Larne Town to Belfast (Central) from 06:53 until 22:15 with most departures on the hour. Services from Belfast (Central) start at 07:03 with the last train being at 22:03. Only four trains operate to and from Larne Harbour. There is an approximately hourly service from Bangor to Portadown starting at 07:15 and finishing at 22:35 with all bar the first and last departures being at twenty-two minutes past the hour. The 21:22 from Bangor, however, only runs to Lisburn returning to Bangor at 22:35, roughly an hour behind the 21:00 from Portadown. Larne services arrive in Central just ahead of Bangor/Portadown trains and depart just after Portadown/Bangor trains thus giving a connection time of four minutes in the Up direction and two minutes in the Down direction. A supplementary service is provided hourly from Central to Bangor from 09:32 to 17:32 returning hourly from 10:00 to 18:00. These latter trains, which neither take nor give connections to Botanic or beyond, serve Sydenham, Holywood and Helen's Bay only. A further train operates non-stop from Bangor to Central at 23:00.

Services between Belfast and Londonderry were considerably modified on these dates and with the exception of the 06:55 ex Coleraine all trains ran non-stop from Botanic to Lisburn in each direction thus by-passing Great Victoria Street. The full service was as follows:

08:15, 09:25 (8th only), 10:20, 11:15, 17:20 (9th only), 18:15 Belfast to Portrush
14:20, 20:20 (9th only) Belfast to Londonderry
20:20 (8th only) Belfast to Coleraine
09:40§, 12:40§, 18:45 (8th only), 19:45§ Portrush to Londonderry
11:27, 16:45 (8th only), 17:40, 18:30, 19:30 Portrush to Belfast
08:00, 14:10 Londonderry to Belfast
06:55 Coleraine to Belfast
11:00¶, 17:10¶ Londonderry to Portrush

§ - Connection at Coleraine with Belfast to Portrush service.

¶ - Connection at Coleraine with Portrush to Belfast service.

Only a skeleton service was scheduled to operate on the Dublin line on 8th April with departures at 08:00, 15:00 and 18:00 ex Belfast and from Dublin at 11:00, 15:00 and 18:20. In contrast to previous years the normal weekday service was scheduled to operate on Easter Tuesday, 9th April, although local services to Newry and Dundalk from the Belfast direction were cancelled.

Locomotives and Rolling Stock

107 and 224, the latter still owned by Irish Rail, were cut up at Ballymena towards the end of January. 104 to 108 inclusive were formally withdrawn in August 1995. 106 and 108 have been stored for some time at Lislea Drive, near Adelaide while 104 and 105 are presently at York Road.

113 is understood to be out of traffic at York Road following damage sustained when an attempt was made to start the locomotive at Portadown on 27th or 28th December, following a period of intense cold which corresponded with the annual Christmas shut-down. 111 is now normally based at Portadown and is used on permanent way duties, while 112 usually works the 07:00, 09:30 and 17:00 ex Central, the 08:07 ex Portadown and the 13:00 and 20:15 ex Dublin.

Hunslet Locomotive 102 entered York Road workshops for minor repairs on 4th March and re-entered traffic on 23rd March when it worked a short section of an Irish Traction Group outing as mentioned elsewhere. The locomotive emerged in a blue livery similar to that carried by the General Motors fleet and featuring yellow rectangular warning panels front and rear as well as red buffer beams. 102 is normally confined to pilot duties and is generally to be found at either Adelaide or York Road. The other two locomotives of this class are stored, out of use, at Lislea Drive (101) and Ballymena (103).

It is reported that Irish Rail wish to re-purchase the eight-cylinder 645 power units born withdrawn Metrovick locomotives 104, 105, 106 and 108.

The buckeye couplers have been removed from 208 and 209 as a result of a number of problems including that at Lisburn on 2nd December.

Transportation in Northern Ireland - "The Way Forward"

The Department of the Environment for Northern Ireland published a report with the above title on 3rd October 1995 setting out the proposed medium term direction for transport policy. Unfortunately details were omitted from the last issue. While there is considerable emphasis in the document on encouraging the use of public transport and a recognition that unrestrained growth in the use of the private car is no longer practical from an economic, environmental and quality of life viewpoint, there is little of substance in terms of development or investment, particularly in the rail network. Points made by the report include the following:

- There will be an investigation of all practicable options for public transport development.
- Improvements to public transport services, outside the existing rail network, are most likely to be delivered by bus based measures.
- There is unlikely to be a transfer of freight from road to rail because the majority of movements are of limited size and between dispersed origins and destinations, many of which are not served by the rail network.
- There will be a study of the feasibility of providing "Park and Ride" facilities at rail (and bus) stations.
- Steps will be taken to ensure that public transport becomes more accessible to people with mobility

handicap.

- There will be a new policy framework requiring the public transport operating companies to co-operate and co-ordinate services within a commercial framework. (This is the motivation behind the appointment of a joint management team to run NIR, Ulsterbus and Citybus.)
- The Northern Ireland Transport Holding Company has been asked to involve the private sector in both the financing and delivery of public services. In order to achieve maximum value for money, non core activities are to be sold or contracted out where the opportunity to do exists.
- The standards set in the passenger charters are to be reviewed.

More Consultants

The Northern Ireland Transport Holding Company and the Department of the Environment are to jointly appoint consultants:

- “To evaluate the impact of the transport infrastructure improvements implemented in the Transportation Programme 1989-93 in terms of how it met the needs/demands of freight operators, importers and exporters in Northern Ireland, along with business users located outside the province who used NI’s transport infrastructure.”
- “To identify from freight operators and importing and exporting companies, both inside and outside Northern Ireland, any current weaknesses relating to the province’s transportation infrastructure which are inhibiting their business, along with any suggested improvements.”
- “To undertake a Passenger User Survey and Analysis that will evaluate the impact of transport infrastructure improvements implemented in the Transportation Programme 1989-93 in terms of how it met the needs/demands of the travelling public. In particular the approach should seek to establish the views of passengers who use the province’s transport infrastructure, in relation to improvements made at the ports, airports and bus stations as well as to the railways and strategic road network under the Programme.”

Miscellaneous

- Free rail travel was made available within Northern Ireland between 18:30 and close of business on 22nd/23rd December and again on 29th/30th December. This offer was advertised using the slogan “After the Dark” and was jointly sponsored by the Northern Ireland Transport Holding Company, the Department of the Environment and Guinness.
- Ireland’s first female train driver, Ms Pauline Gardener, commenced her training at York Road in late January.

Private Railways and Museums

Giant’s Causeway Revival

Some two miles of the pioneer 3ft gauge electric tramway is to be re-opened between Bushmills and the Giant’s Causeway. The promoters hope to acquire the former tram depot at Bushmills for use as their operations base. The project has received a grant of £700,000 from the Millennium Commission with additional funding of £500,000 expected from the International Fund for Ireland and the Northern

Ireland Tourist Board. The balance of some £200,000 is to be raised privately. The original line ran from Portrush and closed in 1949. The reopened tramway will be locomotive operated, with most of the rolling stock coming from the now closed Shane's Castle Railway at Antrim. Amongst the items purchased from the latter are steam locomotives, 0-4-0T No.1 "Tyrone" and 0-4-0WT No.3 "Shane". A simplex diesel, 0-4-0 "Rory", has also been purchased along with some twelve items of passenger rolling stock. Services are expected to commence in time for the 1997 tourist season.

Downpatrick Steam Railway (Downpatrick & Ardglass Railway)

A £77,000 grant has been obtained from the (UK) National Lottery to partially fund the relocation of the former goods shed at Maghera to a new home at Downpatrick. The total cost of the project is expected to be about £155,000, the balance of which is expected to come mainly from Down District Council and the Northern Ireland Tourist Board.

The railway suffered severe flooding in early January, particularly in and around the Downpatrick end of the triangle.

The new station mentioned in the last issue was Magnus's Halt. As a matter of interest a platform was provided by the Belfast & County Down for Downpatrick race-course, but this was a short distance away, on the Ardglass branch. The new halt is adjacent to the grave site of a Viking King, Magnus Barefoot.

Bord Na Mona

Passenger trains are expected to operate on the Bellacorrick system this year commencing on 1st May and continuing daily until 30th September. This 3ft gauge system is located in North Mayo, about twenty miles west of Ballina, on the Belmullet road, and uses standard Bord Na Mona diesel mechanical locomotives hauling a railcar trailer formerly used on the "West Clare Railway" from Ennis to Kilrush and Kilkee. Both locomotive and trailer carry a light grey livery with a green waistband.

The Clonmacnoise & West Offaly Railway, which operates from the Blackwater Works of Bord Na Mona now boasts two specially built coaches which are used on the popular bog tours which operate from April to October. (A party from the Irish Traction Group required both coaches, one hauled by LM322 and the other by LM323, to accommodate a group of some 65 passengers who travelled from the Boora works to the Blackwater works, via Ferbane and Lemanaghan, on 24th March.)

Cavan & Leitrim

The Dromod based Cavan & Leitrim Railway is issuing "Rolling Stock Shares" in an attempt to speed up the restoration of a number of bogie coaches. The vehicles involved are F21, built in 1894 for use in the Isle of Man, No.7 and No.10, both built in 1890 for use on the Tralee & Dingle. Restoration costs are estimated at £8,000, £11,400 and £15,000 respectively. Details of the scheme, which offers a number of concessions to shareholders, may be had from Joe Carroll, C&L Railway, Narrow Gauge Station, Dromod, Co Leitrim, Ireland.

Foyle Valley Railway

Ex-CDRJC railcar No.12 was officially returned to service during the course of an open day at Foyle Road in Londonderry on 18th November. This vehicle, which was built in 1934 by Walkers of Wigan, has had a complete rebuild of bodywork and refurbishment of internal fittings. During the course of the afternoon railcars 18 and 12, coupled back to back, made a number of trips along the 1¼ miles of track so far laid along the alignment of the former GNR(I) line from Portadown. The long term intention is to run services as far as St. Johnston, which lies just across the border in Co Donegal. The open day was

supported by Derry City Council who provided a reception and buffet in the museum building. The railcars subsequently featured on the annual “Santa” trains during the pre-Christmas period.

Fintown

The railway at Fintown was operating over the October Holiday period and again in the run up to Christmas with Santa trains featuring on 9th/10th December and again on the 16th/17th. Some 500 people reportedly travelled on the first weekend.

Railway Preservation Society of Ireland

Restoration of the former state coach, 351, has begun at the FAS workshop in Cabra. The vehicle was moved from Inchicore by low-loader on 13th January.

The RPSI ran steam hauled “Santa” trains, featuring 461, from Pearse to Maynooth on both 3rd and 10th December. Trains departed at 10:45, 14:03 and 16:28 on both dates. Similar trips operated from Belfast (Central) to Whitehead on 3rd, 9th, 10th, 16th and 17th December. These trains were hauled by No 85 and departed at 11:30 and 14:30.

Driver training took place on Irish Rail at the end of January and early February. This resulted in steam hauled empty stock movements born Dublin (Connolly) to Mullingar on 24th, 25th and 26th January and to Drogheda on 7th, 8th and 9th February. The locomotive used was 461 and one return trip was made each day.

West Clare Railway Company

It is understood that this company, formed some twelve years ago, has bought the former station house at Moyasta Junction aided by a £63,000 grant from the Leader Programme. The initially plan is to restore a mile of track immediately west of the former Junction station although the ultimate long term objective is to rebuild the entire section from Moyasta Junction to Kilrush. The company hopes to bring 0-6-2T No.5 “Slieve Callan” from Ennis and to acquire a number of former West Clare vehicles from Bord Na Mona.