

# IRISH RAILWAY NEWS

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*112 + 8 Mk2s departing Dundalk on the wrong line, 5<sup>th</sup> April 1996.*

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## Editorial

Firstly an apology for the very late appearance of the current issue, which was due to a combination of circumstances including disruption caused by a recent illness. Consequently this edition is a double issue covering the period from May to December. There will be one further issue in Volume 4, hopefully towards the end of January 1997 and this will contain both current material and some items which have been omitted from this issue due to constraints of time and space.

The past seven months have seen several important announcements in regard to future investment together with clear evidence of progress on the ground. The Irish Rail portion of the Belfast line is almost ready for the introduction of accelerated services although late delivery of rolling stock and delays in the Drogheda/Dundalk re-signalling project will probably delay introduction of the new service until May or June 1997. It is not yet known if the NIR track upgrading program will be completed by then although it must be hoped that the extraordinary scale of engineering-related disruption experienced on NIR during the summer and autumn will not be a feature of remainder of this project.

The Inchicore works of the former GS&WR celebrated 150 years of operation with spectacularly successful open days on the weekend of 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> June. The huge numbers attending, particularly on the Sunday, was just reward for the obvious effort and enthusiasm that went into the planning of the event and the preparation of exhibits.

A passionate debate on the merits, or otherwise, of the Luas proposals has been raging in both media and political circles, especially since the intervention of Dr Garret FitzGerald in the controversy. A strong lobby has built up in favour of tunnelling although the motives for advocating this approach seem to vary from a desire to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the proposed LRT to a desire to ensure that street space is not surrendered to public transport at the expense of the motor car. If tunnels are to be part of the solution to Dublin's chaotic transport problems then they should be for DART style services and should be built in such a way as to maximise the utility of the existing rail network. For instance a 3.9km tunnel from Ranelagh would join the former Harcourt line to Broadstone and thence over still extant right of way to Liffey Junction and the Maynooth line. Such a link, routed via Tara Street, would provide an interchange with existing services and permit the eventual establishment of a Maynooth to Carrickmines DART line thus greatly enhancing the potential of the Harcourt Street alignment and providing an infrastructural base for developing the Maynooth service. A further 2.1km of tunnel would provide a spur to Heuston Station and allow the operation of a Heuston/Carrickmines DART service. These proposals together with the development of a DART route to Tallaght would clearly cost more than Luas although the scale of the problem is now such that radical and imaginative action is necessary if this means finding extra funding to do the job properly.

**A. Gray - 18/12/1996**

# Irish Rail

*(Iarnród Éireann, including CIÉ and DTI)*

## EU Funding

A £73.3m program of investment in mainline and suburban rail services was announced on 29<sup>th</sup> July by Mr Michael Lowry TD, the then Minister for Transport, Energy & Communicators. Some 85% of the total amount comes from the EU cohesion fund which has now invested almost £113m in mainline rail projects since 1993. The new investment will be utilised between 1996 and 1999 as under:

<b>Track Upgrading</b>	<b>£43m</b>
(Dublin/Galway	£20m
Dublin/Sligo	£12.5m
Dublin/Waterford	£6.5m
Dublin/Tralee	£4.5m)

**Re-signalling** £14m

(Installation of a centrally controlled signalling system on the Galway, Waterford, Tralee and Sligo lines)

**DART Extensions** £16.3m

(Bray/Greystones and Howth Junction/Malahide)

These investments are very significant, particularly in the case of the Galway line where funding should be sufficient to install modern track and signalling over the entire route from Portarlington. (CTC currently extends to Ballinasloe while track upgrading to date has been largely concentrated on the Portarlington/Athlone section.) These funds should also permit substantial progress on the Waterford and Sligo lines where upgrading has been in progress on and off for the last few years. The least advanced of the four routes in terms of track upgrading is the comparatively busy Tralee line which surprisingly receives the smallest allocation. It is believed that the proposed re-signalling schemes may go to tender in the new year and that a simplified, cost effective, form of CTC will be specified. The opportunity may also be taken to increase line capacity in the Sligo/Boyle, Ballinasloe/Athenry and Thomastown/Waterford sections, so as to reduce the delays and under-utilisation of resources caused by impractically long block sections.

Completion of the Bray/Greystones DART extension is due by 1998, while the northern extension from Howth Junction to Malahide is to be completed by 1999.

## Cost Cutting Proposals

Irish Rail announced a series of cost cutting proposals on 7<sup>th</sup> October aimed at saving £30.18m in the annual cost of running the company. It is proposed to implement the required changes in the cost structure of the company over the next two years. The purpose of the exercise appears to be the generation of sufficient cash flow to fund future investment programs from internal resources and thus reverse the trend towards increased borrowings which has been evident in recent years, the main points are:

- A reduction in staff numbers of 786 made up of 198 in mechanical engineering, 182 in rail freight, 148 in mainline and suburban passenger services, 114 in infrastructure and 144 in clerical,

administrative and managerial grades. Total savings of £16.6m are anticipated as a result of these redundancies.

- Changes in work practices and reductions in overtime and overtime rates are expected to yield a further £6m in savings. This is probably the area where confrontation with the trade unions is likely to arise as some of the proposals would result in swingeing cuts in earnings, a scenario unlikely to be accepted by staff at any time, let alone in the middle of an economic boom.
- Savings of £6m are anticipated in procurement costs with Irish Rail expecting its suppliers to cut the costs of materials and services by 20%. Suppliers' organisations have reacted savagely to overtures from the company and demanded that the Minister for Transport, Energy & Communications instruct Irish Rail to withdraw letters seeking such cuts.
- Miscellaneous cuts in catering, advertising and expenses are targeted to yield £1.6m in cuts.

In terms of services it would appear that the heavily subsidised Sundries business is to be abandoned entirely and the number of freight terminals further reduced. The future of the Athenry/Claremorris section appears to be in doubt, despite being reopened in a blaze of publicity in September 1994. This line was supposed to be a conduit for timber traffic although self imposed and highly restrictive signalling regulations have limited its usefulness to date. Nonetheless the line costs little to maintain and offers a direct route from some of the principal timber producing areas to Waterford and Clonmel, via Limerick. The previous closure in 1991 added considerably to the cost of operating the Foynes/Ballina "coal and oil" train due to additional mileage, extra crews and pathing difficulties.

Some of the CIÉ subsidiaries attempted to implement similar plans with little or no negotiation. This stance together with an attempt by the CIÉ companies to link the 2.5% increase due under the PCW with acceptance of the cost cutting proposals led to a threat of industrial action throughout the organisation with effect from 6<sup>th</sup> December. Labour court intervention averted this scenario and resulted in the PCW being paid and both parties agreeing to negotiations on the cost cutting package.

## **Dublin/Belfast Project**

### ***Signalling and Layouts***

An area was cleared just north of the signal box at Malahide towards the end of October to provide space for the prefabrication of a new facing crossover to replace the present one which was installed second-hand in 1982. The new crossover was installed during an overnight possession on 16<sup>th</sup>/17<sup>th</sup> November.

The connection to the Boyne Road branch at Drogheda, which trailed onto the Up Belfast line at MP 32½, was disconnected and removed on Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> October. The branch fell into disuse with the cessation of the Boyne Road/Platin oil trains in the early 1980s but was brought back into use for ballast loading as far as former "Fields" marshalling yard in 1993. The elevated disc signal controlling movements from the branch onto the Up line (DA64) has been removed, although the corresponding signal formerly controlling entry onto the branch (DA63) remains in place and marks the limit of shunt on the Up road.

The two facing turnouts off the Down Road onto the Navan branch at the south end of Drogheda station were renewed during the night of 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> October. These connections which are "like for like" replacements had been prefabricated on the Up side some time ago and were beginning to get in the way. In fact, some weeks previously, the new pointwork was craned onto the top of the cutting in order to allow earth moving machinery to spread rough stones and ballast in preparation for track laying. Other activity in this area includes the laying of a stabilising fabric on the bare earth forming the side of the modified cutting at this location. This will reduce the risk of slippage and encourage the natural

vegetation to re-establish itself. An area was cleared in mid-October on the Up side adjacent to the former Cement Factory Junction to provide space for the assembly of trackwork to be installed at the north end of the Boyne viaduct. Similarly space has been cleared on the Dublin side of OB 80 for the assembly of the new facing crossover which is to be installed nearby.

The cable train was at work north of Drogheda on 22<sup>nd</sup> September ploughing new cables between the Up distant signal and the Boyne Viaduct, the section from Dundalk having been completed some months earlier. Much of the work associated with the re-signalling between Drogheda and Dundalk was complete by mid-November with the majority of location cases, signals and insulated joints already in place. Little signalling-related activity is yet evident at Drogheda although bases are in place for signals R285, 285 and 286, respectively the Up distant, Up home and Down section starter. The disconnection of the Boyne Road branch means that there is no requirement for a signal protecting the junction and hence the first stop signal on the Up road approaching Drogheda will be No.285 which is to be located close to the site of the existing home signal (DA61). As a consequence of the proposed removal of the Up outer home (DA65), the new Up distant (R285) will be about 100 yards inside the existing distant (DAR65). Signals R285 and 285 will nonetheless be separated by a distance of almost two miles. Signal bases are also in place on the southern approach to Drogheda to accommodate the proposed relocation of the Up advance starter (321) and the Down home (presently DA62), both of which are being moved slightly towards Laytown in order to accommodate the new facing crossover (218).

The new, simplified and somewhat inflexible layout at Dundalk was commissioned on 26<sup>th</sup> May following much preparatory work during the course of the preceding few weeks. Platform 4, the Greenore Dock, was taken out of use on 28<sup>th</sup> April and the associated points and traps removed, as was the platform starting signal. On the same date all colour light signals in the Dundalk area, except the Up advance starter, had their green aspect disabled and thus could display at best a single yellow, irrespective of circumstances. Incidentally signalling alternations at the time of the closure of Dundalk (South) in 1962, and subsequently, resulted in all running signals on the Up and Down main lines being converted to colour light operation except for the Dundalk (North) Down starter and Up distant, both of which remained semaphores. The latter, strangely enough for such a location, was fixed at caution and thus acted as no more than a marker for Up trains.

On 10<sup>th</sup> May the North trailing crossover (No.6 in the North Cabin) was disconnected pending removal. The protecting Up home signal (No.3) was fixed at danger on the same date as were various shunt signals in the vicinity. The new trailing crossover (No.201), located at the south end of the station, was installed during an overnight possession on 10<sup>th</sup>/11<sup>th</sup> May while the following night saw the installation of the new north facing crossover (195) and the trailing turnout from the loop onto the Down line (196). Following the installation of the new connections, the Down starting signal (No.18 in the North Cabin) was also fixed at danger. Trains were flagged through both No.3 and No.18 signals on the authority of the North Cabin signalman until 23<sup>rd</sup> May.

With effect from 12<sup>th</sup> May the existing connections to the Down loop and associated sidings were taken out of use at both ends, while access to the Up yard was severed at the north end. Signals reading into, along and out of the Down loop were also removed as was the Down main home (Central Nos. 2/3). The Down outer home (Central No.1) was fixed at danger on this date and all Down trains were hand signalled past it until 23<sup>rd</sup> May. Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> May saw the final demise of the Up yard with the removal of the connections at the south end. The trailing turnout onto the Up road from the "Barrack Street" branch was also taken out of use on this date after which the operational layout consisted of the south trailing crossover, the two trailing turnouts onto the Down line from the "Irish North" yard and the connection from Platform 3, the Enniskillen Dock, onto the Up main. All trackwork remaining in use was thus concentrated in the area physically adjacent to the Central Cabin where the running lines

would shortly be realigned. The switch-operated Central Cabin Up starting signal (US), which afforded signal protection to the Barrack Street branch, was another casualty of the 19<sup>th</sup> May changes. The connection to the Barrack Street branch, at the site of the former Dundalk South Cabin, was renewed during the course of an overnight possession on 18<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> May but was not restored to use until 26<sup>th</sup> May after which date operation was by means of a ground frame released from Dundalk (North).

Four days later, at or around 09:30 on 23<sup>rd</sup> May, the Central Cabin was closed and all remaining points and signals were taken out of use except the North Cabin Down semaphore starter (No.17), the North Cabin Up home (No.3) and the North Cabin Up semaphore fixed distant. Signal No.3 was altered at the same time so as to display either a red or green aspect, and this signal thereafter acted as the Up section starting signal pending commissioning of the new layout. In the Down direction a (new-style) fixed semaphore distant was provided at MP 53½ reading to signal No 17. Following closure, the upper portion of the Central Cabin, together with the lever frame, was recovered and is to be re-erected in the station area in due course. The brick base was then demolished and the site cleared to facilitate the relocation and realignment of the Down line and the installation of the facing turnouts leading to the bay platform (198) and the loop (199). A special goods left for Belfast around 08:30 on the 23<sup>rd</sup> after which no trains either terminated at, or started from, Dundalk until the following Sunday, 26<sup>th</sup> May. Following closure of the Central Cabin the block sections became Dunleer/Dundalk North/Newry. Signals R101/101, which are located on the Down road protecting the automatic half barrier crossings at Commons and Dromiskin, are now controlled from the North Cabin which has taken over responsibility for monitoring the two crossings. R101/101 are not block signals and were erected some years ago not only to provide emergency cover, but also to allow the supervising signalman to authorise unusual movements over the crossing even if there was a train in the section. This facility was important as the twenty-two miles between Drogheda and Dundalk was generally worked as one block section. Protection on the Up road was afforded by the Central Cabin Up advance starter, a task now performed by signal 279. These signals will become redundant when R282 and 282 are commissioned as although the latter are further away they are sufficiently close to meet the requirements of the Railway Inspectorate.

The 17:13 and 18:27 ex Pearse as well as the 19:10, 21:00 and 22:10 ex Connolly terminated at Drogheda on both 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> May. This arrangement was apparently deemed operationally more convenient than the alternative of continuing to Newry despite the fact that the first two mentioned both provide service between Dublin and Newry in any event. Drogheda station was thus somewhat congested when the 18:00 ex Belfast paused briefly at the Down platform at 19:46 on 23<sup>rd</sup> May. There was a locomotive hauled set and a push/pull on the Up road, a second push/pull in the middle road and a third push/pull in the back sidings. Lack of space on this date resulted in one of the two Tara sets stabling in Navan with the other being stored overnight in Buckie's sidings. On Friday 24th, the 06:04, 06:40, 07:35 and 08:07 ex Dundalk started from Drogheda with bus connections departing fifteen minutes earlier than the advertised train times. The 07:10 Newry/Dundalk was also replaced by road transport on this date, although the substitute bus waited to take connection off the 06:50 Portadown to Newry and thus passengers did not reach Drogheda in time to connect with the continuation of the 07:35 ex Dundalk. On Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> May Dundalk based local services again operated to and from Drogheda while the 20:15 Dublin/Belfast was substituted by buses between Drogheda and Newry. In order to facilitate commissioning the line through Dundalk was closed entirely from around 20:00 on the Saturday until about 18:00 on the Sunday. In consequence the 10:10, 14:10 and 14:30 ex Belfast as well as the 10:15 and 15:00 ex Dublin were bus substituted between Drogheda and Newry on 26<sup>th</sup> May. The 17:00 Dundalk/Portadown was replaced by road transport entirely thus leaving NIR to produce a set for the 18:10 ex Portadown and the 18:15 ex Belfast, both of which returned later that evening, the former as the extended 20:15 Dublin/Dundalk and the latter as empty carriages. Irish Rail operated the 18:20 Dublin/Belfast on this date and the set later returned to Dublin as empty carriages.

The evening Larne/Dundalk local service and its return working on 23<sup>rd</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> May terminated at Newry and worked back from there. As the connecting Irish Rail services were also affected there was a substitute bus provided between Newry and Drogheda in each direction. Also on these dates the 20:06 Dundalk/Connolly was altered to start from Drogheda apparently departing as advertised at 20:31.

Although the new signalling was commissioned on 26<sup>th</sup> May, the two sidings parallel to the Down loop were not ready at this time. Upgrading of the platforms also meant that the surface of Platform 3 was such that the latter was unavailable for general use. Further, the Down Main and Down loop had been considerably realigned and the track was thus subject to a severe temporary speed restriction. The signalled portion of the new layout consists of the two running roads on either side of the island platform, the Down running loop and a south facing bay platform. There are two crossovers, trailing at the south end (201) and facing at the north end (195). The stub of the former Barrack Street branch is accessible via a ground frame controlled connection, while the Ardee Road freight yard and the sidings parallel to the Down loop are accessible only via the loop and No.197 crossover. Trains passing in either direction over No.197 crossover are controlled by ground disc signals with all other movements within the freight yard and sidings being hand signalled. There was much congestion and considerable delays to trains in the first few weeks following commissioning, although the provision of the two Down sidings and the completion of the alterations to the station platforms has eased matters somewhat.

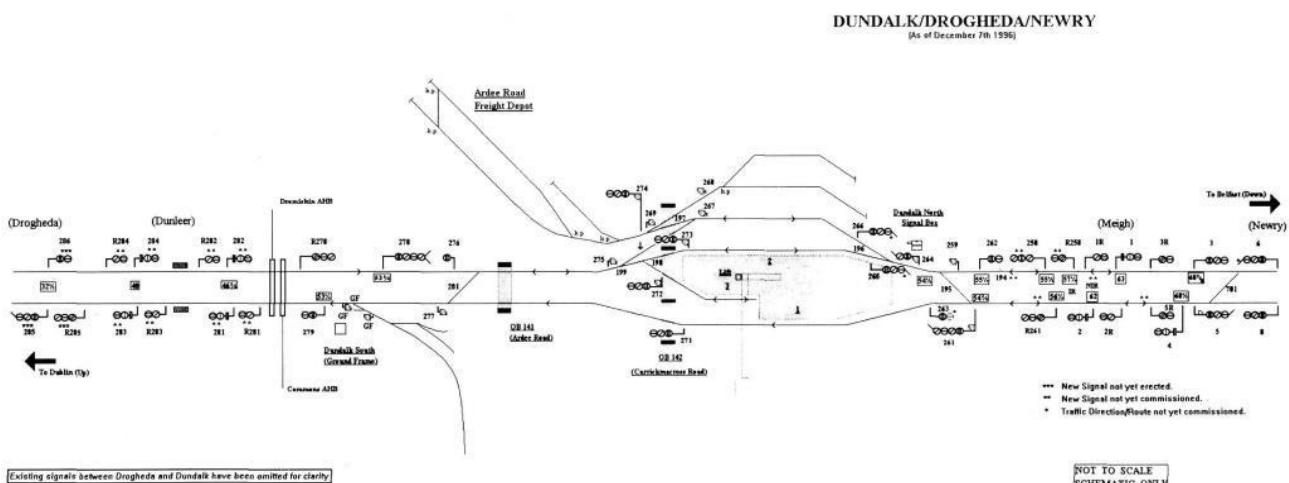
The Down main line (Platform 2) and the adjacent loop are signalled for trains in either direction, those travelling north having the option of continuing on either road as soon as the new signalling system between Dundalk and Newry is commissioned. Usage of Platform 1, the Up side of the island is in effect restricted to southbound traffic although when bi-directional working is commissioned to Newry it will be possible to depart northbound on the Up line. The south facing bay platform, No.3, can be used for arrivals and departures and is just capable of accommodating a six-piece push/pull set. It is not at present fitted with trap points.

Down trains approaching Dundalk encounter a distant signal (R278) near MP 52, a green indicating that the line is clear at least as far as signal 262 with a double yellow indicating that 278 is also showing proceed and that the line is clear to signal 266. A single yellow will be displayed if 278 is at danger or if the route is set for either the loop or the bay platform. A green on signal 278 implies that both 266 and 262 are displaying proceed aspects and that the line is clear at least as far as the intermediate automatics on the Down line at Meigh. Signal 266 reads either to 262 or alternatively via the Up road to signal No.5 at Newry. Southbound trains approaching Dundalk on the Up road first encounter a distant (R261) at MP 56¼, a green indicating that the line is clear at least as far as signal 279, a double yellow indicating that 261 is also displaying a proceed aspect and that the line is clear to signal 271. A single yellow will be displayed if 261 is at danger or if the route is set over the facing crossover. A green on signal 261 indicates that the line is clear at least as far as the intermediate automatic on the Up road at Castlebellingham (signal 281). Southbound trains approaching Dundalk on the Down road will first encounter signal R258 which if green indicates that the line is clear to signal 273 at the south end of the Down platform. A yellow on R258 indicates that signal 258 is either at danger or is itself displaying a single yellow aspect. If the latter is the case then signal 264 will be at danger or the route will be set for the loop. Incidentally signals 273 and 274 will not display a proceed aspect unless a train is closely approaching them and is inside the signal in rear. Neither 258 or 264 are capable of displaying a green aspect as there are no circumstances in which it would be appropriate for them to do so. *(At the time of writing, following the closure of Newry as a block post but prior to the commissioning of track circuit block working on either side of Dundalk, a proceed aspect on signal 262 indicated line clear to the semaphore Down outer home at Poyntzpass while a proceed aspect on 279 indicated line clear either to the Up semaphore home signal at Dunleer or the colour light Up outer*

home at Drogheda, depending on whether or not Dunleer was 'switched in'. Also since commissioning of the new layout and pending completion of track upgrading and other work in the station area it has been the practice to hold signals 261 and 278 at danger until an approaching train is well inside the respective distant signal thus causing R261 and R278 to function as fixed signals.)

Both the Up and Down roads through Dundalk have been realigned, the most significant change being to the Down road which new passes under the centre span of the Carrickmacross Road bridge instead of under the western span as formerly. This altered path was made possible by the removal of the Central Cabin, the disconnection of Platform 4 road and the demolition of the Dublin end of Platform 3, each of which partially blocked the new alignment. The transition at the northern end of Platform 3 has been considerably eased by moving the track westward although an awkward looking kink remains immediately north of the trailing turnout from the loop. Finalisation of the new alignment may well require the widening of UB 144, a small underpass located adjacent to the North Cabin. As of early November, the Down line between No.199 turnout and No.195 crossover had yet to be welded although concrete sleepers have been installed for some time. The Up road has also been somewhat realigned primarily by easing the transition curves onto the island platform at either end of the station although as with the Down road the alignment at the north end seems somewhat constrained by UB 144.

Trap points were installed at both ends of the Down loop at Dundalk towards the end of October, that at the north end (196A) being brought into use on 22<sup>nd</sup> October followed by the south end (199B) on 24<sup>th</sup> October.



the new trackwork was being installed on the Up road. The new trackwork is a direct replacement of the existing junction, the only difference being the conversion of the fixed diamond crossing on the Up road to a moving switch diamond similar to that at Howth Junction. The 1983 re-signalling of the Connolly area included provision for a switch diamond (No.117 points) but as the junction had only been renewed a few years previously it was not modified at that time.

The north and south trailing crossovers at Dunleer, Nos. 10 and 5 respectively, were taken out of use and disconnected over the weekend of Saturday/Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> November/1<sup>st</sup> December. The Down sidings and associated traps (No.8) were taken out of use at the same time and as a consequence there are now only six working levers in the cabin controlling distant, home and starting signals in each direction (Nos. 1, 2 and 3 on the Down line and Nos. 14, 13 and 12 on the Up line). There are thus no crossovers in the twenty-two mile Drogheda/Dundalk section, a situation that will persist after the commissioning of the new signalling between these two points. The absence or even an emergency crossover will make this section extremely vulnerable in the event of any disruption which might require single line working and will also make it extremely difficult to schedule track maintenance.

### ***Bridges***

Irish Rail decided to defer renewal of OB 22 at Portmarnock and OB 27 at Malahide pending the outcome of an application to Fingal County Council for planning permission. This process introduced a further delay in these long pending renewals and ironically may not have been necessary. (The requirements of state agencies in regard to planning permission are unclear following a recent Supreme Court ruling concerning the Mullaghmore interpretative centre.)



***16:48 Drogheda/Pearse Arrow passes over UB 65 at Gormanston, 20<sup>th</sup> July 1996.***

The two steel sections intended to replace the centre span of UB 65, the Delvin viaduct, were craned onto a prepared base adjacent to the bridge over the weekend of 22<sup>nd</sup>/23<sup>rd</sup> June. During the course of

the next few weeks, with the new sections still resting on their beach base, the superstructure, including decking, hand rails and cross-bracing were added. The new structure was thus as complete as possible in advance of renewal, which took place over the weekend of 20<sup>th</sup>/21<sup>st</sup> July. Work started early on the Saturday morning when the Up line was closed to traffic and single line working introduced between Mosney and Balbriggan over the Down line. Prior to the renewal the centre span comprised three cross braced riveted beams with the middle one being shared by both roads. Saturday morning and early afternoon was spent removing the old superstructure and cutting the bracing between the seaward beam and the centre beam. The former, with the bulk of the bracing still attached, was lifted clear around 15:30 and placed temporarily on the beach. The removal of the seaward beam facilitated some final preparatory work on that side of the bridge and allowed access to other parts of the structure which had hitherto been enclosed. Traffic continued to use the bridge at 5 mph until around 21:15 when a complete possession was taken. The remainder of the centre span was removed in a single lift around 00:35 the following morning. The two new steel sections, each weighing sixty tonnes, were craned into position in two lifts, the first of which took place around 03:30, the second around 05:40. The Down road was restored in time to pass the 10:15 Dublin/Belfast on Sunday morning after which single line working was in force pending restoration of the Up road around 17:00 (The last movements over the old structure were three closely spaced Down trains, the 20:15 Dublin/Belfast and two following empty cement workings. These were formed respectively by 112 + 8 Mk2s, 076 + 22 Bulks + 13 Blues and 152/173 + 9 bogie bulks.) The bridge deck is now fully ballasted and both lines have been relaid with CWR on concrete sleepers although at the time of writing in early November, a 25 mph restriction was still in force on the Down road pending final stressing. This renewal is reported to have cost some £350,000 which, if correct, is a remarkably modest figure for the work undertaken. The new girders were manufactured by Thompson Engineering Ltd of Carlow.

The cast iron overbridge at Colp (OB 78) was removed on the night of 22<sup>nd</sup>/23<sup>rd</sup> June and the existing masonry abutments reduced in height and levelled to take concrete bedstones. Over the next few weeks steel piles were driven to support the extended abutments needed to accommodate a coincident road widening scheme by Meath County Council. Renewal of this bridge was originally planned for November 1992, but was deferred as a result of the intervention of the County Council. Despite the rapid renewal of the bridge by the railway company, the road was still closed as of early November pending modifications to the approach ramps by the local authority.

A temporary footbridge was erected parallel to the Carrickmacross Road overbridge (OB 142) on 9<sup>th</sup> October, preparatory to the commencement of alterations to this structure which is located immediately south of Dundalk station. The existing spans were removed over the weekend of 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> November with rebuilding being well advanced by the following Saturday, 9<sup>th</sup> November. The original masonry abutments together with the two intermediate piers have been retained, but have been raised somewhat by means of concrete bedrock sections which have been placed on top of them. Each of the three replacement spans are made up of a parallel assembly of pre-stressed concrete 'I' beams and with a vertical height somewhat less than the original structure, it has been possible to retain the level of the public road despite the additional clearance above the railway.

The stone arch overbridge at Portmarnock station (OB 22) was renewed over the weekend of Saturday/Sunday, 30<sup>th</sup> November/1<sup>st</sup> December. The new bridge is a flat deck structure composed of 'I' beams resting on concrete bedstones. The latter in turn rest on the abutments of the original structure which was demolished as far as the spring points for the elliptical arch. The cost of such renewals is relatively modest and normally somewhat less than £100,000. Relaying of the Down road through the station took place during the same possession, commencing at 08:00 on the Sunday morning.

New refuges have been constructed on the steel girder portion of the Boyne viaduct in order to provide a safer environment for staff working on the structure. Other recent work includes the provision of new

cable conduits and the erection of railings on the stone parapets close to the centre of the viaduct.

#### **Permanent Way**

Approximately seven miles of track was renewed with concrete sleepers and CWR between early April and the middle of December. Details are contained in the table below:

Through Dundalk	(1)	MP 54½ to MP 54	Up Line
Through Dunleer	(2)	MP 42 to MP 41½	Up Line
Dunleer/Drogheda	(3)	MP 32½ to MP 32¼	Up Line
Drogheda/Laytown	(3)	MP 30 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub> to MP 30	Up Line (OB 78)
Gormanston/Balbriggan	(3)	MP 23 <sup>7</sup> / <sub>8</sub> to MP 23 <sup>5</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	Up Line (UB 65)
Skerries/Rush	(3)	MP 16¼ to MP 16	Up Line (OB 46)
Malahide/Howth Junction	(3)	MP 6 <sup>7</sup> / <sub>8</sub> to MP 6 <sup>5</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	Up Line (Portmarnock and OB 22)
Malahide/Howth Junction	(3)	MP 5 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>8</sub> to MP 4¾	Up Line
Howth Junction/Killester	(4)	MP 4 <sup>5</sup> / <sub>8</sub> to MP 4 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	Up Line (Kilbarrack)
Howth Junction/Killester	(5)	MP 4 to MP 3¾	Up Line
Howth Junction/Killester	(4)	MP 3¾ to MP 3 <sup>5</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	Up Line (Raheny)
Howth Junction/Killester	(6)	MP 3 <sup>5</sup> / <sub>8</sub> to MP 3 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	Up Line
Killester/East Wall Junction	(7)	MP 1¾ to MP 0 <sup>7</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	Up Line
East Wall Junction/Killester	(8)	MP 0 <sup>7</sup> / <sub>8</sub> to MP 1¾	Down Line
Howth Junction/Malahide	(3)	MP 6 <sup>5</sup> / <sub>8</sub> to MP 7	Down Line (Portmarnock and OB 22)
Rush/Skerries	(3)	MP 16 to MP 16¼	Down Line (OB 46)
Balbriggan/Gormanston	(3)	MP 23½ to MP 23 <sup>7</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	Down Line (UB 65)
Laytown/Drogheda	(9)	MP 30¼ to MP 30 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	Down Line (OB 78)
Through Dunleer	(2)	MP 41½ to MP 41 <sup>7</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	Down Line (Dunleer)

- (1) Traffic routed via the Down line as required.
- (2) Work undertaken during weekday possessions generally lasting from 09:30 to 15:30 with SLW on the opposite line.
- (3) Work undertaken during Sunday daytime possessions - typically involving the renewal of about half a mile of track in a single session. Single line working is maintained on the opposite road.
- (4) Work undertaken during Saturday night/Sunday morning possessions.
- (5) Work took place in parallel with the renewal of East Wall Junction which commenced around 21:00 on 23<sup>rd</sup> November and finished about 06:00 on 25<sup>th</sup> November. DART services were diesel substituted on the Saturday evening and suspended entirely between Howth Junction and Connolly on the Sunday. Traffic operated over the Down line from Connolly to Howth Junction during the course of this work. The DART operating the half-hourly Howth/Howth Junction shuttle on Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> stabled overnight in Howth in order to form the 06:30 Howth/Bray the following day.
- (6) Work undertaken during the course of a possession of the Up line from around 21:00 on Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> November until early Monday 18<sup>th</sup> November. DART services were cancelled between Connolly and Howth Junction on Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> November and replaced by a reduced frequency diesel service between Connolly and Howth on the Saturday evening. All traffic was routed over the Down road in both directions between Howth Junction and Killester crossovers during the course of this work. (Preparatory work in connection with the renewal of East Wall Junction was

also in progress and resulted in the closure of the Up line between Killester and Connolly on 17<sup>th</sup> November.) The DART set operating the half-hourly Howth/Howth Junction shuttle on the Sunday stabled that night in Howth and formed the 06:30 Howth/Bray the following morning.

- (7) Work undertaken during the course of a possession of the Up line from approximately 21:00 on 2<sup>nd</sup> November until around 05:30 on 4<sup>th</sup> November. DART services between Connolly and Howth Junction were cancelled on Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> November and replaced by a reduced frequency diesel service between Connolly and Howth on the Saturday evening. All traffic was routed over the Down road in both directions between Killester crossovers and the approaches to Connolly for the duration of the work and over the Up road between Killester and Howth Junction. (Alterations to the Down platform at Raheny were also in progress.) The DART operating the half-hourly Howth/Howth Junction service during Sunday the 3<sup>rd</sup> stabled overnight in Howth in order to form the 06:30 Howth/Bray the following morning.
- (8) Work undertaken during the course of a possession of the Down line from approximately 21:00, 26<sup>th</sup> October to approximately 05:30, 29<sup>th</sup> October. DART services were cancelled between Connolly and Howth Junction on Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> and reduced in frequency for the remainder of the possession. All traffic was routed over the Down line through Howth Junction and over the Up line in both directions between Killester and the approaches to Connolly. (Alterations to the Up platform at Howth Junction and the Down platform at Raheny were also in progress, the latter resulting in all traffic in both directions being routed via the Up road on the Sunday.)
- (9) Work undertaken during mid-week overnight possessions with SLW on the opposite line.

At the time of writing, on 14<sup>th</sup> December, almost 96.5% of the Irish Rail portion of the Dublin to Belfast line consisted of CWR on concrete sleepers. Short stretches of track through Malahide and Drogheda remain to be renewed and these together with jointed track at Dundalk, between Howth Junction and Kilbarrack (Up line) and on both roads between East Wall Junction and Connolly aggregate a little over four miles. Relaying at Malahide awaits the reconstruction of the stone arch overbridge at the station while work at Drogheda is closely tied to the progress of re-signalling scheme which is described elsewhere. At the time of writing CWR had yet to be installed on the Down road through Dundalk station although the track has been relaid temporarily using jointed flat-bottom rail on concrete sleepers.

Considerable effort is now being expended on the replacement of CWR which does not fully conform to the present 54 kg/metre standard, the lengths being replaced consisting largely of lighter rail, much of which was second-hand at the time of installation. The following sections have been re-railed since last April:

Drogheda/Dunleer	MP 33½ to MP 35¾	Down Line
Dunleer/Dundalk	MP 45½ to MP 46¾	Down Line
Dundalk/Dunleer	MP 47½ to MP 47 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	Up Line (Castlebellingham)

New long-welded rail strings are presently in place, awaiting installation, on the Up road approaching Dundalk and south of MP 16¼, between Skerries and Rush.

The renewal of the Up and Down roads between East Wall Junction and Clontarf was undertaken during continuous possessions as detailed above, with traffic being maintained on the opposite road on each of the two weekends. The amount of relaying, just under a mile each weekend, was particularly impressive given that the line from East Wall Junction to the Clontarf road underbridge had to be excavated before new track was put in place. Two sets of Donelli gantries were employed on each occasion, one working on either side of the Clontarf road underbridge. Power was cut off on both lines

from around 21:00 on the Saturday until the early hours of the following Monday. Special reduced length concrete sleepers were placed on the Howth Road underbridge (UB 6) in order to fit between the bridge girders which protrude through the formation at this point.

Extended possessions of the Up road took place over the weekends of 16<sup>th</sup>/18<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup>/25<sup>th</sup> November. On the first date the Up road south of Raheny from MP 3<sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub> to MP 3<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> was excavated and relaid, the work taking place in parallel with alterations to the south end of the station platform.

The general speed limit between Howth Junction and the border with Northern Ireland was raised to 90 mph with effect from 20<sup>th</sup> May although temporary 70 mph restrictions were imposed at a number of locations where relaying, re-railing or platform modifications had yet to be completed. Lower limits apply on the curves north of Mountpleasant, through Commons and Dromiskin AHBs and through and approaching Drogheda station where permitted speed gradually decreases from 90 mph to 30 mph. The restrictions below 90 are as follows: 30<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> to 31<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub> (Down line) remains at 70 mph, 31<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub> to 31<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> (Down line) reduced from 70 mph to 50 mph, 31<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> to 32<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> (Up and Down) increased from 15 mph to 30 mph. 47<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> to 49<sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub> (Down line) increased to 80 mph and MP 58<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> to MP 59<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> (Up and Down) increased to 85 mph. Restrictions applicable to the Up road only are: 51 to 49<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub> (AHBs), 33<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> to 32<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> unchanged from 70 mph, 32<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> to 32<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> reduced from 70 mph to 50 mph and 32<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> to 31<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> increased from 15 mph to 30 mph. The speed limit through Dundalk station is thus raised to 90 mph in both directions although, as of mid-November, some further work clearly remained to be done before this becomes a reality. In particular the final alignment at the north end of the station, where the Up and Down roads separate to run on either side of the island platforms, may well require the widening of the underpass, UB 144, which is located immediately on the Newry side of the North Cabin.

### **Stations**

Re-roofing of the train shed at Connolly started towards the end of October and is part of a £3.5m refurbishment program announced by the Minister for Transport & Communications on 5<sup>th</sup> November. There will be a new ground floor entrance from Amiens Street, re-organised access from the carriage ramp, an enlarged concourse, some five thousand square feet of retail space and a forty thousand square feet office block. It is understood that some of the retail space will be located below concourse level, in the vaulted area beneath the station. The concourse will become a “maintained environment” and will be sealed from the train shed by glazed screens similar to those already in place in Limerick. Restaurant and bar facilities will be contained within the original Italianate buildings and will feature public access to the terraces facing onto Amiens Street. Other aspects of the redevelopment are understood to include the upgrading of the bare concrete surface on Platforms 3 and 4 as well as the exposure of the original red brick forming the walls of the train shed. The future of the suburban entrance and ticket office located opposite Buckingham Street and widely known as “the bunker” is unclear. The closure of this facility is clearly desirable from the point of view of eliminating duplication and increasing passenger flows through the enlarged concourse, although access to the loop line platforms from the main station would have to be radically altered and improved. Another item not mentioned is the long disused footbridge linking Platforms 2 and 4 which, if refurbished, would obviate the trek faced by suburban passengers arriving on Platform 1 and intending to travel onwards via DART to the city centre (Tara Street). Indeed while the former GNR(I) and city of Dublin Junction Railway have been well integrated in terms of track layout, the same can not be said of the mainline and suburban stations which are barely interconnected, and to a great degree retain their separate character, almost forty years after the dissolution of the GNR. Development costs are to be funded from CIÉ’s own resources and are expected to be recouped from profits arising from the office development. The latter will extend from the concourse end of Platform 2 along the side of the station and into part of the area currently occupied by the carriage ramp. The office development will be located close to the financial services centre and will qualify for the tax incentives associated with the Custom House

Docks Development area. The Minister in his statement of 5<sup>th</sup> November referred to both Heuston and Connolly stations as “cold, forbidding, cheerless and unfriendly places that have changed little in the past century and a half since they were built”. He went on to say that when “people arrive at these stations in the future, I want them to feel they are stepping forward into the 21<sup>st</sup> century ... these flagship terminals should be a symbol of rail travel in the next century”.

Construction of the new Clontarf Road station, at MP 1¼, between East Wall Junction and Killester, commenced in mid-November. The development will cost some £1.4m and is unlikely to open much before the commencement of the new timetable in May 1997. The main station building will be located on the Up side at street level and will be linked to the Clontarf Road via both a pedestrian path and a new access road. A further roadway is to be built to link the station forecourt and the Alfie Byrne Road although use of the latter will be restricted to shuttle buses linking the station to the new East Point business park, located nearby. Access to the platforms will be via a multi-landing stairway housed within a tower-like structure, the latter directly connected to the Up platform and via a footbridge to a corresponding tower on the Down platform. Both towers will also contain lifts for mobility impaired passengers. Car parking is to be provided for 40 cars. The planning permission stipulates that no public address system is to be provided without the express consent of the planning authority.

The portion of the Down platform at Raheny, under and north of Grange Road overbridge, was demolished and reconstructed using prefabricated platform retaining walls, the bulk of the work taking place over the October bank holiday weekend. The platform coping stones south of the bridge have been replaced and set back somewhat so as to provide additional clearance for the De-Dietrich stock. The platform is being resurfaced with the now standard red cobble lock.

The south end of the Up platform at Howth Junction was demolished and subsequently reconstructed using prefabricated platform retaining walls, the work taking place during the course of the October Bank Holiday weekend.

The southern end of the Up platform at Portmarnock was reconstructed using prefabricated sections which were placed in such a way as to increase the clearance between the platform and passing traffic. This station has been much run down in recent years and offers few facilities to passengers availing of the small number of trains which currently call. The advent of DART will no doubt change matters considerably as, although the station is not particularly well-sited, there is a considerable population nearby with decidedly limited public transport options.

A new waiting room, booking office, toilets and other facilities have been opened in the main station building on the Up side at Donabate. These facilities combined with recent improvements to the platforms and the earlier restoration of the signal box combine to produce a most attractive station environment.

The platforms at Rush were considerably altered in September with both being demolished north of the road overbridge. Compensating extensions have been built at the Donabate end and in addition a significant portion of the Down platform, alongside the awning, was demolished and rebuilt rising prefabricated retaining walls similar to those used at Dundalk and elsewhere. The coping stones on the Up platform have been renewed and set back and both platforms have been resurfaced using red cobble lock. The signal box, which was located at the south end of the original Down platform, has been moved some distance from the track so as to provide minimum clearance between the structure and the platform edge. While considerable effort was expended in preserving the 1892 built signal box it looks rather sad and vulnerable in its new position with the base of the cabin only barely protruding above the surface of the platform. CCTV is provided for the convenience of drivers stopping on the Down platform. The associated colour monitor is bracketed from the abutment of the overbridge and positioned in such a way as to allow the locomotive to stop under the bridge without the driver losing the ability to see what is taking place on the platform. The car park at this station has been substantially

enlarged utilising the levelled ground behind the Up platform extension.

The appearance of the main station building at Laytown, the last of its type still in railway use, has deteriorated significantly due to the attention of vandals and is now largely boarded up and extremely uninviting in appearance. This station was unattended and unsupervised for much of the summer and suffered severely in consequence. As elsewhere, in the absence of staff or the means to contact any, there is no way of establishing the status of the service or of raising the alarm in the event of an emergency.

At Dundalk, in addition to the work mentioned in the last issue, a bright and airy waiting room is now available on the main island platform, the walls of which are adorned with photographs of railway interest mainly relating to the former GNR(I). The decor is two-tone magnolia/cream with wooden panelling on the lower half of the walls complemented by a varnished wooden floor. The traditional fireplace is retained as a focus point and is adorned with a floral display of potted plants. As is becoming standard throughout the system the facility is monitored from elsewhere in the station by closed circuit TV. The realignment of the Up and Down roads through the station has resulted in considerable alterations to the platforms, particularly No.2 which has been extended at the south end by bringing the face of the former No.4 platform out to meet the re-aligned Down mainline. The resultant combined platform is over 300m long and can thus easily accommodate a locomotive and 12 Mk2s or a 12-piece 80 class railcar set, the largest set sizes likely to be encountered in normal circumstances.

Neither the Up face of the island platform or the remaining bay platform has been altered in length. All platform faces except Platform 3 have been rebuilt using pre-fabricated concrete retaining walls. The entire island platform has been resurfaced with standard red cobble block and looks particularly impressive especially at the north end where alterations to the track have resulted in a much broader platform than formerly.

### ***Rolling Stock***

The first two De Dietrich coaches, destined for use on cross-border services, were unloaded from the RMS Anglia at the North Wall extension dock on 13<sup>th</sup> May. These two vehicles, 9201 and 9203, were followed by 9202 and 9205 on 11<sup>th</sup> June and 9204, 9206, 9207 and 9209 on 24<sup>th</sup> June. Further deliveries were made in July with the first driving trailer, 9002, arriving in the company of 9101 on 19<sup>th</sup> August. At the time of writing in early December eighteen vehicles had reached Ireland, 14 standards (9201-9214), 2 driving trailers (9001-9002) and 2 firsts (9101-9102). The coaches are understood to have commenced their journey from Reichshoffen and to have been taken by rail to Zeebrugge for shipment to Dublin, a routing which involved both SNCF and SNCB.

A gauging trial for the new De Dietrich coaches took place on Friday 20<sup>th</sup> September using a Mk3 generator van which had been kitted out in such a way as to represent the profile of the new stock. It is understood that the trial visited Great Victoria Street and York Road before returning to Dundalk.

Trial running of the new French stock commenced in September. One of the first trials observed was that on 18<sup>th</sup> September when 206 worked a seven-piece push/pull formation from Inchicore to Portlaoise. This train was observed passing Sallins on the Down line at 10:37 and Monasterevin on the Up line at 13:39. A further trial took place on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> September when 206 worked a five-piece set to Limerick Junction where the train was turned on the triangle. These workings were preceded a few days earlier by clearance trials which took place in the small hours of the morning so as to avoid disrupting regular traffic. The first appearance of the De Dietrich stock on the Belfast line was two days later, on 23<sup>rd</sup> September, when a two-bogie clearance trial was observed at Drogheda. The first cross-border trip took place on 25<sup>th</sup> September when 206 worked eight coaches to Belfast leaving Connolly around 10:30, the set comprising 9203/4/10/12/8/9101/9207/06.

Trial running has continued up to the time of writing with 206 and an eight-piece push/pull formation

being observed on the Belfast line in early December.

### **Permanent Way And Bridges**

Unless otherwise stated alterations to speed limits mentioned in the paragraphs below are applicable from 20<sup>th</sup> May, although in many instances temporary restrictions have already been in place for some time previously.

#### ***Athlone/Galway (Single Track)***

The amount of track subject to 50 mph speed restriction has been increased by 3½ miles to just over 10½ miles with the result that apart from one section of 7¾ miles, the longest uninterrupted stretch of 70 mph track is now four miles. Three of the four new restrictions are between Athenry and Galway, the fourth being on the Athlone side of Woodlawn. The affected mileages are 99½/100¼, 115/116, 120/121½ and 125/125¼.

A further mile of track, from MP 107 to MP 108, has been relaid with CWR and concrete sleepers. This work was done during the course of overnight possessions in mid-July and resulted in the closure of Attymon Junction station for about a week as well as some minor alterations to freight services. Some 20% of this line now consists of CWR.

#### ***Athlone/Westport (Single Track)***

The amount of track restricted to 50 mph has been increased by 2¾ miles to almost twenty-eight miles. Recent renewals, however, mean that the longest stretch of uninterrupted 70 mph running is now just under nine miles, an improvement from just under six miles in 1995. The speed limit has been increased (from 50) to 70 mph between MP 81 and MP 82 and from MP 84½ to MP 88. Reductions from 70 to 50 mph apply as follows: 97½/98, 110½/112¼, 116¾/118, 120½/122, 125½/126, 139/140 and 142¾/143¾.

At the time of writing in early December work was in hand on the installation of 2¼ miles of CWR on concrete sleepers in the Roscommon/Castlerea section, from MP 103¾ to MP 106. When this latest section is completed somewhat over 20% of this line will consist of CWR.

This work is being undertaken during midweek, daytime possessions, and on days when relaying is actually taking place, the 08:25 ex Heuston terminates at Roscommon and the 13:20 ex Westport starts there. A substitute bus service operates to Castlerea, Castlebar and Westport with passengers for Ballyhaunis, Claremorris and Ballina being taken by train from Castlerea. Similarly for the return trip, the 13:10 ex Ballina is extended through to Castlerea from whence connecting buses are provided to Roscommon. Passengers travelling from Westport and Castlebar are required to travel by bus to Roscommon when these arrangements are in force.

#### ***Cherryville Junction/Waterford West (Single Track)***

In common with other routes extensive upgrading of accommodation crossings is evident on this line particularly between Thomastown and Lavistown South Junction.

An additional three miles of track has been renewed with concrete sleepers and CWR, from MP 57¼ to MP 58¾ and from MP 51½ to MP 53. These renewals are contained in the Carlow to Bagenalstown and Thomastown to Waterford sections respectively. The latter involved formation excavation through both the level crossing and the closed station at Mullinavat. Most of the above work was undertaken during the course of midweek daytime possessions although some Sunday morning closures were also required at Mullinavat. The 11:40 ex Heuston terminated at Carlow between 8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> October.

Similarly the 10:55 ex Waterford ran to Kilkenny only on the same dates with bus transfers bridging the gap. On 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> November, the 07:40 and 11:40 from Heuston turned back at Kilkenny. Passengers continuing to Thomastown and Waterford as well as those

intending to travel on the 10:55 and 14:55 ex Waterford were taken by bus in either direction between Kilkenny and Waterford. The completion of these latest renewals brings the proportion of CWR on the line to some 40% of the total mileage.

Following recent renewals a little under three miles of additional track have been cleared for 70 mph, all of it between Bagenalstown and Lavistown North Junction. The affected mileages are 69/69 $\frac{3}{4}$  (previously 50) and 76 $\frac{1}{4}$ /78 $\frac{3}{8}$  (previously 60). The speed restriction on the Dublin/Kilkenny line immediately approaching, and through, Lavistown West Junction has been reduced from 60 mph to 50 mph and is now the same as that applicable to trains routed to and from Waterford.



*081 + 18 bogies approaches Lavistown South Junction on 6<sup>th</sup> April 1996.*

#### **Dublin/Rosslare Strand (Double track to Bray, single thereafter)**

Approximately 1 $\frac{1}{8}$  miles of the Bray/Greystones section has been renewed with CWR on concrete sleepers in recent months, the first significant advance on the ground since the announcement of the DART extension from Bray. The relaying has taken place in two sections, from the Greystones end of the running loop in Bray to the recently demolished platform at Bray Cove and from MP 16 to MP 16 $\frac{5}{8}$ , the latter on the Greystones side of No.4 tunnel. In addition extensive drainage upgrading has been completed between the southern portal of No.4 tunnel and MP 16, preparatory to relaying. Almost 22% of the track between Dublin and Rosslare Strand is now CWR, although none has been installed south of Arklow.

The speed limit through Ferrycarrig tunnel, MP 90/90 $\frac{1}{2}$ , has been raised from 30 to 40 mph, this change being brought about as a result of formation repairs and track relaying carried out in April 1995. A speed limit of 40 mph has been imposed through Gorey station, from MP 59 $\frac{1}{4}$  to MP 59 $\frac{1}{2}$ . This change reflects the fact that trains could otherwise attempt to negotiate the station at line speed (60 mph) as no staff exchange is required when the signal box is out of circuit. (While Gorey Signal

box is not routinely manned, few trains actually pass without stopping.)

In an effort to reduce trespassing a substantial new pedestrian footbridge has been erected about three quarters of a mile south of Shankill station, close to the former Shanganagh Junction.

#### ***Dublin/Sligo (Double track to Clonsilla, single thereafter)***

A further two miles of CWR on concrete sleepers has been installed at three separate locations on this line as under:

Liffey Junction/Glasnevin Junction	MP 0 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub> to MP 0 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	Up Line § (Down Liffey Branch)
Liffey Junction/Clonsilla	MP 1 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub> to MP 3 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	Down Line
Boyle/Sligo	MP 127 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> to MP 127 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	Collooney Station

§ This section is part of the Liffey Junction to North Wall branch and is mile-posted from Liffey Junction.

The most recent renewals, which were largely undertaken overnight and on Sundays, bring the CWR total on this route to 36 miles or just over 25% of track mileage.

The total mileage cleared for 70 mph running has been increased by one mile. The longest uninterrupted stretch of 70 mph remains the 11<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> miles from MP 34<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> to MP 45<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>, although trains must slow for manual staff exchange at Killucan (MP 41<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>). The stretch of CWR between MP 83<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> and MP 85 is now authorised for 70 mph although some three quarters of a mile of track at Multyfarnham, including the level crossing and former station, are now restricted to 50 mph.

Kildare County Council are proposing to raise and widen Louisa Bridge at Leixlip and Shaw Bridge at Kilcock. Work is scheduled to commence in March 1997 and take six months to complete.

#### ***Dublin/Cork (Double track throughout)***

The Down line between MP 8<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> and MP 9<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> was renewed in April, the existing CWR on concrete sleepers being replaced with new material. Large scale re-sleepering commenced between Hazelhatch and Sallins at the beginning of December, this being necessary as a result of the structural failure of a high proportion of existing concrete sleepers, many of which are in place for between twelve and fifteen years.

Check rail has been installed on both roads across Mallow viaduct and as a consequence all temporary speed restrictions had been lifted by the beginning of July.

A further sixteen miles of track were cleared for 100 mph operation with effect from the commencement of the new timetable on 20<sup>th</sup> May 1996. The total length of track authorised for 100 mph is now just over sixty-eight, divided almost equally between the Up and Down lines. The latest section cleared covers most of the Portarlington to Portlaoise section and extends on both lines from MP 42<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> to MP 50<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>. (Track previously cleared for 100 mph consists of most of the Cherryville Junction to Portarlington and Limerick Junction to Charleville sections.)

The 60 mph speed limit on the Up road, across Mallow viaduct and through the station, from MP 145<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> to MP 144, has been raised to 80 mph. The corresponding restriction on the Down line applied to Mallow viaduct only and extended from MP 144<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> to 145<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub>. This latter has also been raised from 60 mph to 80 mph. The existing 80 mph restriction from MP 145<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> to MP 147 is retained, but applies to the Down road only, as heretofore.

Restrictions below 90 mph continue to apply in the immediate vicinity of Cork and Dublin as well as through the stations at Ballybroy (70), Lisduff (80) and Limerick Junction (60). There are also restrictions through the curves at the Curragh (70), Portarlington (60), Thurles (70), Charleville (80),

Shinanagh level crossing (Up road, 85), Rathduff (70) and in the vicinity of "Two Pot House" (80). The last mentioned restriction covers a total of four miles in the Buttevant/Mallow section, from MP 140 $\frac{1}{4}$  to 138 $\frac{1}{2}$  on the Up road and from MP 138 $\frac{1}{2}$  to 140 $\frac{3}{4}$  on the Down road.

In addition to all of the above restrictions some 1 $\frac{1}{4}$  miles of track on the approach side of the automatic half barrier crossings at Grange (MP 103 $\frac{3}{4}$ ) and Emly (MP 113 $\frac{1}{2}$ ) are restricted to 80 mph in accordance with standard Irish Rail practice. (British practice allows 100 mph operation through AHBs although certain conditions must be complied with so as to ensure road vehicles will be not be obstructed driving clear of the crossing.)

### ***Limerick/Rosslare Europort***

#### ***(Double track to Killonan Junction, Waterford West to Waterford Central, otherwise single)***

Speed restrictions were considerably revised with effect from 20<sup>th</sup> May, the principal change being the clearance of an additional 4 $\frac{1}{4}$  miles for 80 mph operation. The mileages affected are 1-2 $\frac{3}{4}$  (Down), 3 $\frac{1}{4}$ -4 $\frac{1}{4}$  (Down) and 12 $\frac{3}{4}$ -14 $\frac{1}{4}$  (single track, near Pallas). A further 4 $\frac{3}{4}$  miles of single track from MP 14 $\frac{1}{4}$  to MP 19 has had the previous 60 mph restriction raised to 70 mph while the long standing 40 mph restriction on both roads between MP 2 $\frac{3}{4}$  and MP 3 $\frac{1}{4}$  has been raised again to 60 mph. Some 2 $\frac{1}{2}$  miles between Oola and Limerick Junction, from MP 19 to MP 21 $\frac{1}{2}$ , is temporarily restricted to 40 mph pending renewal. Drainage repairs and accommodation crossing improvements in the latter section were in hand in May while long-welded rail strings were being laid out at the time of writing in early December.

As part of the ongoing program of selective rail replacement throughout the system, a mile of older CWR was renewed between MP 16 $\frac{1}{2}$  and MP 17 $\frac{1}{2}$  towards the end of October.

The speed restriction through "Snow Hill" tunnel and across the Barrow viaduct, from MP 81 $\frac{3}{8}$  to MP 82, has been reduced from 30 mph to 15 mph. (A speed of 50 mph was permitted across this impressive 2,131ft structure into the 1960s although this has been gradually reduced over the years in order to extend its life and reduce maintenance costs.)

### ***Mallow (Killarney Junction)/Tralee (Single line throughout)***

Extensive upgrading of accommodation crossings has been undertaken at various locations on the branch and in particular between Rathmore and Killarney and between Farranfore and Gortatlea. Overgrowth has been cleared on the approach to many crossings in order to improve visibility for road and rail traffic. A sizeable open space is typically provided on the railway side in order to simplify the proper use of such crossings by road vehicles. As is widely known this was rarely done and it was quite common to find such gates open so that vehicles could drive across without stopping if they chose to do so. The modified crossing design, with ample space on either side of the track on the railway side of the gates, encourages road users to operate these crossings in a responsible way - open the first gate, drive through, stop short of the track, close the gate, drive across clear of the track, open the second gate, drive through, stop and close same.

Relaying commenced immediately west of Rathmore station (MP 25 $\frac{7}{8}$ ) in early October and was completed as far as Freemount level crossing (MP 28) before the end of the month. This section of the line has been heavily slacked for some time, in particular the stretch from MP 27 $\frac{1}{2}$  to MP 28 where a temporary restriction of 15 mph was imposed due to the condition of the embankment. This latter problem has been addressed by dumping rock and spoil on either side of the embankment in order to provide additional stability prior to the renewal of the track. Work was in hand during November on the relaying of a further mile of track from MP 16 to MP 17, between Banteer and Millstreet. The completion of this latter section brings the mileage of CWR on the Killarney Junction/Tralee line to just under seven miles or somewhat over 11% of the branch total.

Although there were some Sunday morning closures, most of the above work took place during midweek possessions and resulted in the 08:55 ex Heuston, the 09:10 ex Cork and the 12:55 ex Cork terminating at Rathmore on 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> October. The 11:45 and 14:10 ex Tralee started from Rathmore on these dates with connecting buses from Tralee and intermediate stations. The 09:20 ex Tralee was bus substituted between Killarney and Rathmore only. On 12<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> November, in connection with work between Banteer and Millstreet, the 08:55 Heuston/Tralee terminated at Banteer while the 09:10 ex Cork ran to Mallow only. Passengers travelling on the 08:55 ex Heuston completed their journey by bus while those on the 09:10 ex Cork were taken by bus from Mallow to Rathmore and thence by train to Killarney, Farranfore and Tralee. Arrangements for Up trains were similar with the 09:20 ex Tralee running to Rathmore only while the 14:10 ex Tralee started from Killarney, the set having worked empty from Banteer. The 09:10 ex Cork and 09:20 ex Tralee were partially bus substituted on some fourteen other occasions between 8<sup>th</sup> October and 30<sup>th</sup> November in order to facilitate completion work.

At Farranfore the level crossing at the Tralee end of the station has been excavated and renewed. (As mentioned elsewhere the adjacent turnout has also been renewed.)

#### ***Portarlington/Athlone***

Speed limits on this line are little changed although a further half mile of track, from MP 77 to MP 77½ has been restricted to 50 mph. Slightly over twenty-three miles of the thirty-nine mile branch are currently cleared for 80 mph with 70 mph allowed on a further eleven and a half miles.

Some 2½ miles of track have been recently renewed with concrete sleepers and CWR, from MP 49½ to MP 50¼, from MP 70 to MP 70¾ and from MP 77 to MP 78. This work was undertaken during a series of overnight possessions in July and August and apart from some modifications to freight schedules did not interfere with normal traffic. Considerable preparatory work preceded these renewals and, in the case of the last mentioned section, the embankment was substantially reinforced between MP 77½ to MP 77¾. Bridge parapets were also raised, some quite substantially, in order to accommodate a deeper bed of ballast. Where required accumulated vegetation has been removed, drainage systems reinstated, accommodation crossings upgraded and new fencing erected.

Almost 60% of the branch is now welded although some 2¼ miles of this, from MP 59 to MP 61¼, is subject to a temporary speed restriction of 50 mph pending the replacement of sleepers damaged in last January's derailment of an empty Asahi train.

#### ***Manulla Junction to Ballina (Single track)***

The Moy River bridge at Foxford has been completely reconstructed, the work commencing in earnest at the beginning of June. The first step was the construction of an access road to the somewhat isolated site and the establishment of a working base north of the river on the Down side of the line. Further preparatory work saw the construction of an operating platform, parallel to the bridge and sufficiently robust to support a modestly sized tracked crane/pile driver. This latter was used to drive steel piles close to the existing bridge support columns in order to provide a foundation for the four concrete piers which now encase, and replace, the original supports. Work on the reconstruction of the abutments on both sides of the river was in progress at the end of August and this together with final preparatory work was completed towards the end of October. The new spans were erected during the course of a three-day possession which was due to commence after the passage of the 02:50 Ballina to North Wall Asahi liner on Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> November. Normal traffic was due to resume with the 22:10 Ballina/North Wall Asahi liner on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> November. A feature of this project was the relatively minimal disruption of normal traffic, the principal casualties being the 11:40 Manulla Junction/Ballina and the 13:10 Ballina/Manulla Junction. Both of these trains were generally cancelled on Mondays to Fridays from mid-June to mid-October. (This renewal is expected to result in the removal of the 10 mph speed

restriction which has applied across the Moy bridge for many years and should lead to a slight reduction in journey time between Manulla Junction and Ballina.)

### ***Cork Cobh (Double track)***

The Up line from Little Island (MP 169) towards North Esk was being renewed at the time of writing in early December. The materials are second-hand and were recovered from the Knocklong/Limerick Junction section of the Up Cork line in 1994.

### ***Miscellaneous***

Panel relaying has been continuing at various locations between Greystones and Rosslare principally between Arklow and Enniscorthy and between Rosslare Strand and Rosslare.

Extensive hedge cutting is currently in progress in the Dublin area and should go some way towards reducing the delays and disruption arising from excessive wheel slip during the leaf fell season. This latter problem particularly affected Maynooth services this year with a litany of cancellations and delays being reported.

### **Signalling and Layout Alterations**

The cable train was employed on the Navan branch on the weekend of 27<sup>th</sup>/28<sup>th</sup> April to plough a new ETS circuit from Platin to Navan. Ploughing of ETS cable has also taken place in recent months between Rathdrum and Arklow, Banteer and Millstreet, Killarney and Tralee, and is currently in progress between Rathmore and Killarney.

The cable train was at work on the Kerry road towards the end of August and was used to bury the ETS circuit from Banteer to Millstreet and from Killarney to Tralee. The section from Killarney Junction to Banteer is worked by a combination of track circuit block and axle counters and does not use ETS. The block telegraph between Millstreet and Killarney remains on an overhead pole route but is carried on heavy duty cabling rather than on an exposed bare copper wire.

Removal of redundant telegraph poles continues throughout the system. For instance a large portion of pole route in the Waterford area, from Carrick on Suir to Grange and from Dunkitt to Mullinavat had been removed by early May.

As a result of the upgrading and realignment of the main Cork/Killarney road (N22), the latter now passes over the Mallow/Tralee railway by means of a new level crossing some 230 yards west of the former Minish No.1. The new crossing, also designated Minish No.1, is protected by four lifting barriers interlocked with colour light distant and home signals in each direction. The Up distant is sited just under a mile from the crossing while the Down distant is just over a mile and a quarter away. This disparity arises due to the gradient of the line which falls almost continuously from Headford Junction to Killarney. The crossing is presently manned but this will not be necessary once CCTV facilities have been commissioned in Killarney signal box. These changes became effective on 14<sup>th</sup> July.

Glanduff level crossing, which is located at MP 853<sup>1/4</sup> in the Athlone to Knockcroghery section, was upgraded to AHB operation with effect from 17<sup>th</sup> November. The crossing had been previously unattended.

New turnouts have been installed at the Tralee end of Rathmore and Farranfore stations, the former reportedly previously used during temporary single line working over the Blackwater viaduct at Mallow in 1995. Further prefabricated trackwork is stored at the Mallow end of Rathmore station awaiting installation.

The trailing turnout leading from the Up loop onto the Down main line at the Dublin end of Kildare station was renewed and realigned on the 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> October. In consequence signals CY193 and CY195

have been repositioned on a new gantry located a short distance on the station side of the original. The improved geometry of the turnout has also resulted in a slight shortening of the Up platform.

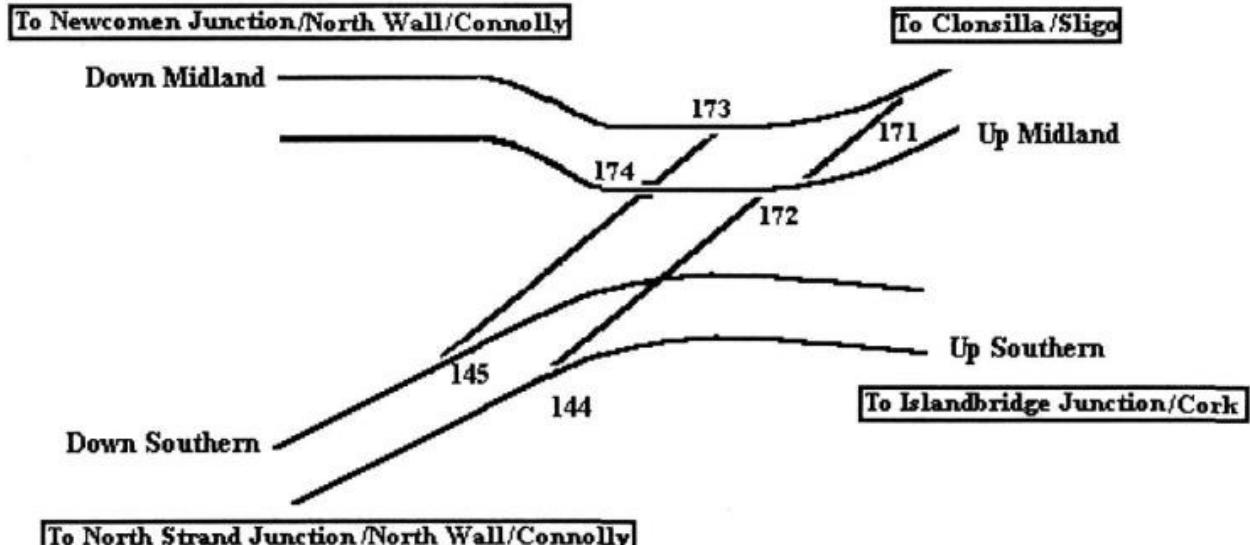
The Midland end of Glasnevin Junction was renewed over the last weekend of October and the first Sunday of November. The bulk of the work took place on the October weekend and resulted in the cancellation of all services between Connolly and Maynooth from midnight on Friday 25<sup>th</sup> October until around 16:00 on Monday 28<sup>th</sup> October. Passengers travelling on Sligo trains were taken by bus between Dublin and Maynooth during this period. No alternate arrangements were made for local traffic or for Saturday's 06:15 Longford/Dublin and 17:15 Dublin/Longford. The first phase of the renewal saw the replacement of the turnouts on the Midland line with a new turnout off the Up road (172) and a new trailing crossover between the Up and Down Midland lines (173), the latter located in such a way as to permit a movement from the Up Midland to the Up Southern in parallel with a movement over the crossover. The second phase of the renewal took place on Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> November when a second turnout (174) was installed on the Up Midland connecting the latter to the Down Southern. During the intervening period the Up Midland was disconnected at Glasnevin Junction and slewed into the lead from the Down Southern. Traffic between Newcomen Junction and Glasnevin Junction was suspended for some time with both lines still out of use on 7<sup>th</sup> November. The Up road end of No.173 crossover together with No.174 turnout replace the former switch diamond, the end result being a somewhat more flexible track layout. For instance it is now possible to institute single line working over the Up line between Glasnevin Junction and Clonsilla, a useful facility not previously available. The revised junction layout has resulted in a considerable realignment of the Midland lines. The Down road has been straightened and is returned to the alignment which would have applied when the line was originally built. The Up road in contrast now deviates more significantly from a straight alignment and has been considerably kinked in order to accommodate the altered trackwork. (*Please see the diagram showing the above changes.*) Passengers on the 08:35 ex Sligo, the 08:40 and 13:30 to Sligo, and the 15:45 to Longford were bussed between Connolly and Maynooth on 3<sup>rd</sup> November in order to facilitate the second phase of the renewal.

The third phase of the Glasnevin Junction renewal program took place over the weekend of Saturday/Sunday, 30<sup>th</sup> November and 1<sup>st</sup> December when the turnouts on the Southern line, Nos. 144 and 145, were replaced. The North Strand Junction/Liffey Bridge Junction section was closed all day Saturday and as a consequence services to and from Liffey Junction had to transit Platform 7 at Connolly in order to access the former MGWR "Liffey Branch" via Newcomen Junction. In order to avoid congestion and unnecessary shunting virtually all Up trains ran to the Boston Yard at Pearse although passengers were forced to disembark and await a connecting DART service. Local trains to Maynooth and Enfield started (empty) from Pearse and picked up their passengers on Platform 7 although at least some Sligo trains were loaded on the mainline platforms before being shunted to Platform 7. Installation of the new trackwork was sufficiently advanced to allow the introduction of single line working on the Up Southern around 10:00 on Sunday morning. It was necessary to have at least one line available by this time in order to pass several empty passenger trains which were required to form mid-morning workings from Heuston. (Suburban push/pull and railcar sets are used on Sunday services to/from Cork, Tralee, Limerick and Waterford but are not available for transfer until Saturday evening at the earliest.)

A new friction buffer stop was installed at Cobh over the weekend of 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> December. This work also involved excavation of part of the platform road and the renewal of the turnout and associated traps between the platform line and the locomotive release road. The turnout is relocated 42 yards nearer Cork although the buffer stops have only been moved about half that distance. There is thus sufficient space for a 201 class locomotive to stand between the buffer stops and the turnout, a change which will allow their use on Cork/Cobh services when and if required.

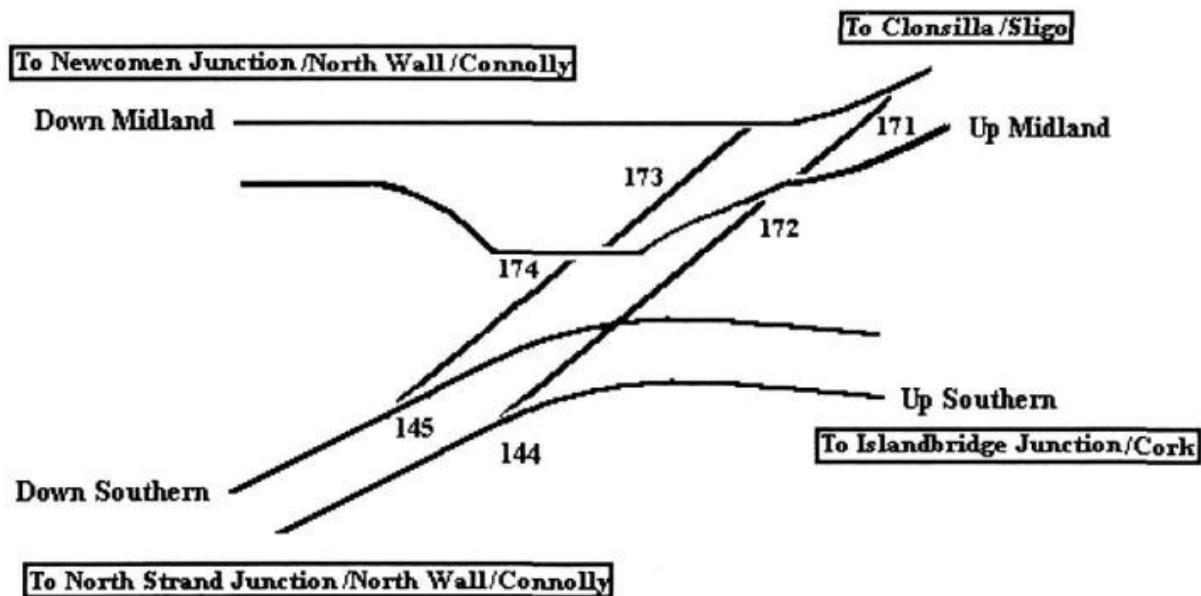
# GLASNEVIN JUNCTION

(Prior to Renewal)



# GLASNEVIN JUNCTION

(After Renewal)



## **DART Extension**

UK based consultants, Mott McDonald, have been appointed to carry out design work on the 7.7 km extension from Bray to Greystones. Tenders for various aspects of the work are expected to issue shortly with contractors commencing on site in June 1997. Completion is now anticipated for 1999.

## **Annual Report**

The CIÉ and Irish Rail annual reports for 1995 reveal a worsening in the financial position of the railway company by almost £10.5m during the course of the year, thus turning the 1994 surplus of £2.03m into a deficit of £8.4m. Operating costs, exceptional items and interest charges rose by £22m swamping revenue growth and the increase in state grants. The additional costs relate to voluntary severance payments, "third party and employers liability claims", increased infrastructure maintenance costs and additional depreciation charges. Some of the increased depreciation charge relates to the thirty-two recently purchased 201 class locomotives, the total cost of which was £64.3m. Revenue from most sectors of the company was buoyant in 1995 as shown in the table below:

	<b>1995 (IR£000)</b>	<b>1994 (IR£000)</b>	<b>1993 (IR£000)</b>	<b>% Change 1994-95</b>	<b>% Change 1994-95</b>
Mainline Passenger	53,603	49,494	49,433	+8.30%	+0.12%
DART Passenger	12,649	11,780	11,594	+7.38%	+1.60%
Rail Freight	17,398	18,412	18,439	-5.51%	-0.15%
Road Freight	20,673	18,580	18,077	+11.26%	+2.78%
Rail Catering	8,858	7,677	7,126	+15.38%	+7.73%
Rosslare Harbour	6,009	5,510	4,913	+9.06%	+12.15%
Miscellaneous	2,722	2,699	2,451	+0.85%	+10.12%
Total Revenue (A)	121,912	114,152	112,033	+6.79%	+1.89%
State Grants (B)	97,000	93,180	94,053	+4.09%	-0.93%
Profit on Asset Disposal (C)	60	77	107	-22.07%	-28.03%
Total Operating Costs (D)	214,165	193,877	184,309	+10.46%	+5.19%
Interest (E)	13,211	11,495	16,368	+14.92%	-29.77%
Surplus/Deficit (A+B+C-D-E)	(8,404)	2,037	5,516		

Traffic volumes increased significantly in 1995. There was strong growth in passenger traffic as well as in the carryings of General Freight, Fertiliser, Cement and Beet products. Increases in the tonnage of other freight carried were more modest although additional traffic was recorded under all headings other than "Ale, Beer and Stout". The relevant figures are reproduced below:

	<b>1995 (000)</b>	<b>1994 (000)</b>	<b>1993 (000)</b>	<b>% Change 1994-95</b>	<b>% Change 1994-95</b>
Mainline Passenger <sup>1</sup>	8,312	7,850	7,903	+5.88%	-0.67%
Howth/Bray (DART) <sup>1</sup>	16,656	15,904	16,150	+4.72%	-1.52%
Dublin Outer Suburban <sup>1</sup>	2,156	2,059	2,090	+4.71%	-1.48%
Ale, Beer, Stout <sup>2</sup>	209	209	215	+0.00%	-2.79%
Beet and Beet Pulp <sup>2</sup>	173	166	1562	+4.21%	+6.41%
Cement <sup>2</sup>	679	659	583	+3.03%	+13.03%

Fertiliser <sup>2</sup>	192	177	169	+8.47%	+4.73%
Mineral Ores <sup>2</sup>	628	618	675	+1.62%	-8.44%
Petrol and Oil <sup>2</sup>	49	48	50	+1.02%	-4.00%
General Freight <sup>2</sup>	1,249	1,136	1,215	+9.90%	-6.50%
Total Passenger Journeys	27,124	25,813	26,143	+5.08%	-1.26%
<b>Total Freight Tonnes</b>	<b>3,179</b>	<b>3,015</b>	<b>3,061</b>	<b>+5.43%</b>	<b>-1.50%</b>

<sup>1</sup> Passenger traffic in thousands of journeys.

<sup>2</sup> Freight traffic in thousands of tonnes.

The average number of staff employed by Irish rail in 1995 was 5,313 compared to 5,412 in 1994 and 5,539 in 1993. The deployment of staff across the various activities of the railway company was as follows:

Railway Operations	4,710
Road Freight	235
Rosslare Harbour	71
Catering	297
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,313</b>

## LRT

The last number of months have seen protracted debate on the merits of Luas and the desirability or otherwise of placing some of the proposed routes in tunnel. It would appear that capacity concerns have prompted a rethink of the proposed Light Rail Vehicles with 40m long articulated trains being proposed in order to increase vehicle capacity to over 300 people, including standees.

The EU commission has reached an agreement with the Irish Government which confirms EU grant aid for the Dundrum and Tallaght routes, the only proviso being an irrevocable commitment by the Government to commence construction of the Ballymun line as soon as the other two routes are completed. One of the major factors dictating this outcome was the inevitable delay which would occur if the Ballymun route were to be substituted at this late stage in the planning and design process.

Reports circulating at the beginning of December suggested that the Minister for Transport, Energy & Communications, Mr Michael Lowry TD, was about to announce Luas extensions to Connolly station and Sandyford, a development which appears to have been stalled by his resignation. The new Minister, Mr Alan Dukes TD, is expected to take a more sympathetic line with the tunnel proponents and could well initiate a review of the overall Luas strategy. (The statutory framework for the Luas project is now in place although the enabling legislation was the subject of acrimonious Dáil debate and was initially voted down in that chamber, much to the embarrassment of the Government.)

## Stations

The long mooted redevelopment of Heuston station is to go ahead according to a statement by the Minister for Transport, Energy & Communications dated 5<sup>th</sup> November. The plan will see a dramatic increase in both circulation and retail space with the concourse being extended to include the little used area between the train shed and the former GS&WR headquarters. The existing 19<sup>th</sup> century train shed is to be retained and re-glazed with the extension to the concourse being built in a similar style. The latter will have a glazed roof supported on replica cast iron columns and beams. The main entrance to

the station will be via the front of the headquarters building rather than from the sides as at present. Four or the existing windows are to be removed so to create two arched entrances on each side of the present doorway. The ticket office will continue to be located at the St John's Road entrance although a supplementary "peak hour" facility is to be provided on the main concourse near the site of the existing bar. A one acre plaza is proposed for the area in front of the main buildings at which will be located an LRT stop and bus boarding point. The removal of buses from the train shed will be a quantum leap forward given the wholly unacceptable exhaust emissions and other pollution associated with such vehicles. The re-development scheme also envisages two additional platforms although the latter are unlikely to be commissioned in advance of the proposed Heuston re-signalling scheme which is expected to include both the station area and the mainline as far as Hazelhatch. The £4.5m being spent at Heuston is to be recovered from the income generated from the 12,000 square feet of retail space which will be provided. Over 4 million journeys begin or end at Heuston every year, more than Cork and Shannon airports put together and some 60% of the total for Dublin airport. Work on the first phase of the scheme, the enlargement of the concourse, is scheduled to start before the end of 1996.

The concourse at Limerick has been greatly improved by sealing it off from the remainder of the train shed, with a partition consisting of heavy duty tinted glass supported within steel framing. Electronic indicators, similar to those at Heuston and Cork, are now provided on the concourse and at the entrance to the platforms. These replace the previous display which consisted of a panel with a number of squares, each of which could be individually illuminated, the combination of squares conveying the essential detail including destination, route and platform.

The tastefully refurbished station at Ballina was officially opened on 10<sup>th</sup> May in the presence of local public representatives and the Chief Executive of Irish Rail. The platform has been raised to full height and has been extended so as to comfortably accommodate four Cravens or equivalent. As elsewhere passenger facilities have been upgraded, disabled access improved and new toilets provided. The station frontage is also much improved with floral displays and a semaphore signal adorning the approach from the public road.

Irish Rail is to receive some £600,000 EU funding under the INTERREG (Maritime) scheme in respect of the proposed redevelopment of Dun Laoghaire station. The project, costing £1.2m, will commence shortly and entails the construction of an overhead concourse to house the booking office and other facilities. Lifts will be provided between the platform level and concourse although despite the source of funding a covered link is not being provided to the nearby ferry terminal and interchange passengers will still have to negotiate a gap of some seventy-five metres between the two facilities. This development is nonetheless particularly welcome given the wholly inadequate nature of the current facilities at this busy location. Planning permission has been sought for this development.

Planning permission has been sought by Irish Rail for the construction the new stations at Drumcondra and Kilcock, mentioned in the last issue. No application had been lodged in respect of Barrow Street up to the time of writing in mid-November.

Work was expected to start in November on the construction of a new "factory shop" complex in the goods yard at Killarney station. Goods traffic ceased on 20<sup>th</sup> May to facilitate this redevelopment which, apart from the sale/lease of property, appears to offer no advantage to the transport company and even less to its patrons.

Improvements to passenger facilities are continuing throughout the system with some of the more recent changes being mentioned below.

- At Banteer the renovation of the station buildings, including partial re-roofing and the refurbishment of passenger facilities, was in hand in August.
- At Mallow refurbished waiting and toilet facilities are provided on the Down platform and feature

the corporate grey, green and cream decor which constitutes the current corporate colour scheme.

- The unstaffed stations at Campile and Ballycullane, on the Waterford/Rosslare line, were reportedly repainted in May.

Further to the report on Mullingar station in the last issue, the canopy and buildings on the Up Sligo platform have been repainted, but not re-glazed as stated. The subway to the Galway platforms has been closed off and new lighting provided on the Sligo platforms. A very attractive open courtyard feature has been created between the entrance portico and the main station buildings which are located in the “V” between formed by the junction between the Galway and Sligo lines.

It is reported that £475,000 is to be spent refurbishing the terminal station at Kilkenny, a move no doubt designed to allay fears that the city might eventually be served by a “parkway” station on the new Lavistown curve. (Such a move would reduce the Dublin/Waterford journey time by 20 minutes.)

Dalkey Railway Refreshment Rooms Limited have sought planning permission for a change in use, alterations and extension to part of the station buildings at Dalkey. Both licensed and restaurant facilities are proposed, presumably along the lines of the extremely successful development at Howth station.

Re-glazing of the overall roof at Pearse Station recommenced towards the end of October. The latest work is concentrated on the Down side over Platform 3 and is part of a program of phased renewal.

Planning permission has been sought for the development of park and ride type facilities on a 0.7 hectare site at Shankill station. The development, if it goes ahead, will be monitored by CCTV and will accommodate 237 cars. The expected cost is in the region of £400,000.

With effect from 20<sup>th</sup> May 1996 Rosslare Harbour is renamed Rosslare Europort. From 15<sup>th</sup> May 1995 Mostrim reverted to Edgeworthstown, the name still faithfully borne by the station signal cabin.

## **Locomotives**

The report in the last issue of 206 working into Waterford on 17<sup>th</sup> February transpires to have been incorrect, the first visit is now believed to have been a trial working towards the end of March.

Although there appears to have been an initial reluctance to roster the class for duties on the Waterford line they are now a regular feature on all services although the 071 class were never entirely displaced even before the onset of serious problems which have affected the availability of the 201 class in recent months.

201 class locomotives are no longer permitted to operate on the Dublin/Sligo line beyond Edgeworthstown, even in an emergency situation. None of the class is thought to have ventured onto any part of the Sligo line to date.

Following the renewal of UB 887, the Moy River bridge at Foxford, both 071 and 201 class locomotives are permitted on the Manulla Junction/Ballina branch. The first working of a 201 class locomotive is understood to have taken place on Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> November when the 18:10 Heuston/Westport was diverted to Ballina to cater for a large party. The following Friday 213 worked the 16:40 Heuston/Ballina service. Meanwhile 071s now generally power the North Wall/Ballina Asahi liner train which would previously have been hauled by two small GMS drawn from the fleet of 121s, 141s and 181s.

206 has been modified to work with the new De Dietrich stock, the modifications including the repositioning of Head End Power connections, alterations to the buffers and the raising of the buckeye couplers. Other locomotives to be similarly modified include 222, 224 and 226. The 201 class is now effectively subdivided into three categories due to the differing coupling and electrical requirements of

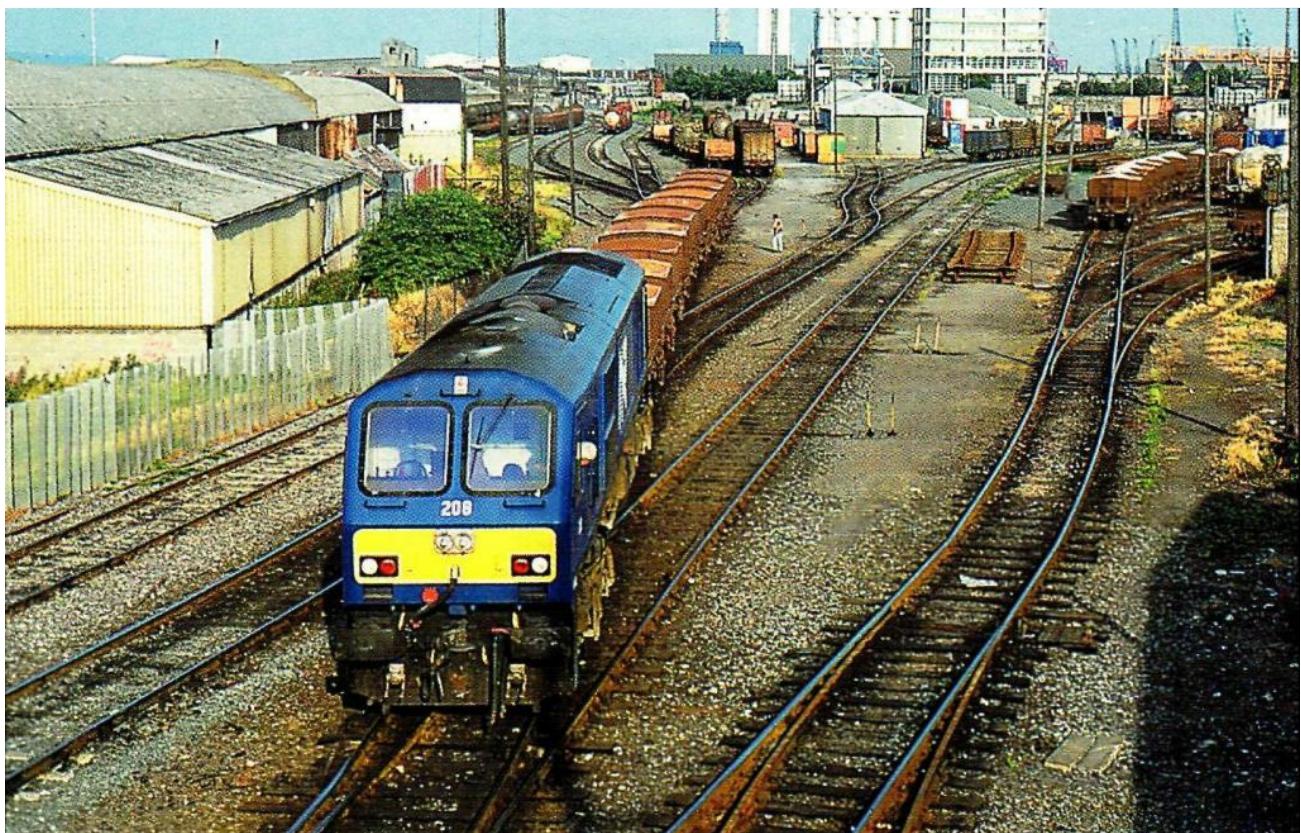
the De Dietrich stock, the Mk3 push/pulls and conventional trains with only modified locomotives able to operate with either of the first two types.

Irish Rail have re-acquired a number of 8-645E power packs from withdrawn NIR MVs. These units will be used to displace some of the remaining 567 engines.

Major refurbishment of the eighteen strong fleet of 071 class locomotives has commenced with 074 which was in the works from mid June to mid November. This locomotive spent a considerable period of time in Diesel 2 undergoing extensive body repairs.

202 lost one of its buffers and sustained body damage on one side, beneath the leading cab, when it was involved in a collision with an empty timber train at Ballinasloe in the early hours of 6<sup>th</sup> September last. The locomotive was partially derailed and one of the timber wagons destroyed in this incident which is thought to have been due to the timber train standing foul of the loop points at the Athlone end of the station. 202 was working the Up Galway to Athlone liner at the time.

219 is reported to have suffered damage to its power plant as a result of a serious mechanical failure which disabled the 05:20 Cork/Dublin train near Dundrum on Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> December last. The train was eventually hauled back to Limerick Junction with single line working being introduced for a time on the opposite road. The failed train eventually reached Dublin at 11:30.



*208 and 19 empty gypsum wagons departing North Wall for Platin, 15<sup>th</sup> August 1996.*

The availability of the 32 strong fleet of 201 class locomotives has varied dramatically since May with the national press reporting up to eighteen of the fleet being unserviceable at one stage. The major problem appears to be excessive wheel wear with the under-floor wheel lathe at Inchicore unable to keep pace with the demands being made on it. At the time of writing in mid-December the situation seems to have improved little with the result that smaller engines are appearing singly and in pairs on

services which had previously been operated by either 071s or 201s. The extent of the problem was well illustrated on 13<sup>th</sup> December when 133 was pressed into service with a six-piece push/pull. A side effect of these problems has been the extensive use of NIR locomotives notably 111, 112 and 208. The latter worked to Limerick and Galway on various dates while 112 has been in Cork, Millstreet, Rosslare, Waterford, Platin, Cabra and other places. 111 worked the Esso oil train to Sligo on 9<sup>th</sup> December having visited Navan the previous week on at least one occasion while working a Tara mines train.

### **Coaching Stock**

Callcard operated mobile pay phones have been fitted to a number of Mk2 dining cars, the recently out-shopped 5411 being observed with this facility at the end of April. With Mk3 sets already equipped and most Mk2 sets fitted out by mid-summer, public phones are now generally available on mainline services to and from Dublin, although prospective users often find that the equipment had been removed for repair! At least two Telecom Éireann callcards have recently featured railway themes, one a 201 hauled mainline train, the other a DART.

Work on the Mk3 "International" set, with the exception of the driving trailer, was completed by 18<sup>th</sup> May when 6202 emerged from Inchicore as part of a trial train which included all eight vehicles, 6201-6207 and 6401. The full train, with a Mk3 generator van attached, formed the 07:20 and 14:25 Heuston/Galway and the corresponding return trains on 20<sup>th</sup> May, the first day of the new timetable. The set was extremely well presented and attracted much favourable comment, a noticeable feature being the "Cu Na Mara" legend which appears both externally and internally. The inaugural run of the 07:20 to Galway was somewhat of a disappointment as the train was already 27 minutes late passing Kildare due to a crew change with the 05:30 ex Galway at Sallins. A better performance was observed on 24<sup>th</sup> May when the same train, hauled by 205, covered the Heuston/Portarlington section in exactly thirty-six minutes, despite permanent way and signalling checks between Sallins and Cherryville Junction. A maximum speed of just under 99 mph was recorded near Monasterevin on this occasion.

Work on the driving trailer had yet to commence as of mid-September at which time the coach was on jacks in the recently rebuilt carriage shops, sporting a patchwork of liveries including the one applied to the De Dietrich stock. The success of the International set has reportedly prompted Irish Rail to acquire the tenth Mk3 International vehicle, 99529, which was not part of the original purchase and had remained at Adtranz in Derby.

### **DART Stock**

The much needed additional DART rolling stock has not yet been ordered although it is known that ten cars are to be acquired and these may be powered intermediates rather than driving trailers or motor coaches. Such a move would allow the deployment of four six-car sets, ten five-car sets and three four-car sets during the morning peak although the additional accommodation provided will probably be absorbed ahead of the opening of the proposed extensions to Malahide and Greystones. (Acquisition of new stock may well be delayed to avoid this occurrence although a larger order would probably be more sensible if the authorities actually wish to increase the use of public transport in the Dublin area.)

### **Inchicore Open Days**

A large number of exhibits were assembled at Inchicore Works for the open days which were held on 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> June in connection with the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations.

Items on display included standard gauge steam locomotives Nos. 85, 186, 90, 461, 171 and a steam crane, as well as diesels A39 (silver livery), A3r (black and tan), G601 (silver), B113 (green), E428

(black and tan), 074 (awaiting overhaul), 231 (green), G611 (green), 015, 156, 130, 185, 220 and railcar 2609, the latter out of traffic since 15<sup>th</sup> June 1994. Both the crane and No.85 were manned and in steam.

Rolling stock on display included the Executive set, the state coach (5408), Mk3 International 6202, De Dietrich 9201, a DART set, Craven 1520, Mk3 7168, Mk2 5202, Mk2a/b 4402, GSV 3183. Preserved rolling stock supplied by the RPSI included 1916, 2421, 1335, 238, 91, 1383 and 88.

The narrow gauge was represented by LM111 (Bord Na Mona) as well as Cavan & Leitrim No.1 and 47c.

To mark the occasion GM 150 was named “Inchicore Works” with the subtext 1846-1996. Four plates were attached to the locomotive, two in Irish and two in English.



*A3r at Inchicore open day, 15<sup>th</sup> June 1996.*

### **Timetable Matters**

A number of minor changes took effect on 24<sup>th</sup> June. The 17:50 Connolly/Maynooth was altered to depart at 17:55 while the 08:40 Connolly/Sligo was deferred to 08:43, the latter change being to avoid clashing with the incoming 08:02 Maynooth to Rosslare Europort. Both trains are normally routed via North Strand Junction.

### **Railcars**

A contract was signed on 6<sup>th</sup> June between CIÉ and GEC Alsthom Transporte for the supply of 27 diesel railcars which will be built at the new GEC plant at Barcelona in Spain. The new railcars will cost £23m and are to be delivered between December 1997 and January 1999. Included amongst the unsuccessful bidders was a joint venture between the Japanese company which built the Arrows

(Mitsui/Tokyo) and Irish Rail. The new railcars will be “a more luxurious version of the existing Arrow trains with improved seating and interior fittings, including side tables” and are to be mechanically and electrically compatible with the existing Arrow sets. Preliminary information suggests that sixteen of the new railcars are to be allocated to the Dublin suburban area, six to Limerick and two to Ballina. It is reported that two of the new railcars will be fitted with cabs at either end thus permitting the operation of single cars sets, an arrangement which would be particularly suited to the Ballina branch and would probably be adequate for the Limerick/Ballybroy line where traffic has declined greatly due to the indifferent service and lack of frequency. It appears that the new railcars will provide little additional overall capacity as Irish Rail intend withdrawing Cravens as the new equipment comes into service.

The new railcars will have similar performance characteristics to the existing Arrow fleet and will have a top speed of 120 kph. There is no information currently to hand in respect of the bogie design although the present type does not adequately compensate for routine track irregularities. Incidentally GECAT supplied the Madrid/Seville AVE trains for RENFE and are also producing stock for use on overnight services through the Channel Tunnel.

2603/04 has returned to traffic following serious damage to underfloor equipment caused by obstructions encountered while working the return leg of a Friday only Heuston/Waterford service.

### **Ammonia Traffic**

These trains have again reverted to six-tank formations and appear destined to operate in this format for the immediate future. As a consequence services now follow the former pattern of three weekday trains each way between Cork (Marino Point) and Shelton Abbey with Sunday services operating as required.

The three new tank cars mentioned in the last issue are numbered 32021-32023. Built by Bombardier Prorail in Wakefield, they are leased from London based Storage and Transport Systems (STS) and augment the existing fleet of twenty wagons which were built by the French company, Fauvet Girel. These latter are also leased from, and maintained by, STS.

### **Timber**

A test train operated from Galway to Clonmel consisting of 071 + 15 laden timber wagons, the route taken being via Portarlington and Limerick Junction. The normal timber train consist remains at ten wagons although three sets are now in traffic. The busiest locations are currently Galway, Athenry, Ennis, Westport, Ballina, Mallow and Millstreet although timber traffic has resumed from Sligo with specials reported on 5<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> December. There are presently three sets of wagons dedicated to this traffic. Several timber trains have been loaded out of Killarney station since the 20<sup>th</sup> May, the date on which freight services were formally withdrawn. It is expected that these trains, typically at least one every week, will be loaded at Millstreet despite the lack of run round facilities and severely limited siding accommodation. (Trains originating in Millstreet and destined for the Mallow direction must proceed to Rathmore in order to run round, before retracing their steps through Millstreet.) Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> September was a busy day for timber traffic with laden trains from both Galway and Ennis and an empty set at Mallow destined for Millstreet.

### **Grain**

Grain traffic to the Avonmore Co-Op, which is located on the stub of the former Portlaoise to Kilkenny line, continues to operate from North Wall, Foynes and Waterford. 26<sup>th</sup> April saw this train formed of 160 + 17 containers, mounted on four wheel flats, depart Foynes at 12:45 and Limerick at 16:10. The train arrived in Portlaoise station at 18:20 and was, as usual, propelled to the co-op premises. On 30<sup>th</sup> April, 083 worked 15 wagons from the R&H Hall premises at Waterford to Portlaoise, departing at

13:30. The same locomotive had earlier worked a twelve-bogie fertiliser train into Waterford. The following Friday saw the train increased to 20 wagons, hauled by 148 and still awaiting a path from Limerick at 16:30 A slot was found around 16:50 as far as Dromkeen where it was held to cross both the 14:40 ex Dublin, 218 + 5 Mk3i + EGV, and the 16:55 ex Limerick Junction, (6101) 3 p/p + 122. The next hop was to Thurles where precedence was given to the 17:50 ex Limerick and 17:30 ex Cork.

### **New Ross Branch**

Irish Rail has applied for planning permission to construct a new rail link connecting the Waterford/New Ross line to the Louisiana Pacific plant at Belview. The plan proposes a 1,165m long connection which would commence some two miles from Abbey Junction and terminate at the timber processing plant. This latter is located on high ground above the Belview Container terminal and could not be easily connected to the Waterford/Rosslare line. A level crossing will be required over a minor road at Gortees, Co. Kilkenny.

The level crossing at Rosbercon, just outside New Ross has been excavated and relaid although the track on either side of the crossing is at a different level and has not been reconnected. The future of the bulk of this branch looks bleak at present with Irish Rail maintaining that it cannot justify track repairs on a line which prior to last year's closure was handling no more than a dozen trains each year.

### **Derailments**

There have been numerous minor derailments throughout the country, several involving 201 class but almost all of which occurred in station yards. There were no reported injuries to staff or members of the public.

The most disruptive of all was that which occurred at East Wall Junction on 18<sup>th</sup> November when the 04:50. Mondays only, empty carriages from Connolly to Dundalk derailed as it travelled wrong road through the junction. There was extensive damage to the trackwork, notably the Up side of East Wall Junction, the trailing crossover just north of it and the turnout off the Down line into Fairview depot. Traffic resumed over the Down line from Fairview to Ossory Road Junction around 11:30 and over the Up line shortly after 19:00. There was much chaos and confusion especially at Killester which was used for a time as a temporary terminus. Thousands of passengers, including some off a limited DART service were off-loaded at the station with no prospect of onward conveyance other than on foot. In fact at one stage around 09:45 the station became so congested that several subsequent DARTs unloaded their passengers at Raheny where there was a marginally better chance of getting a bus into the city. The train involved consisted of 227 + 3164/1505/20/10/52/32/08.

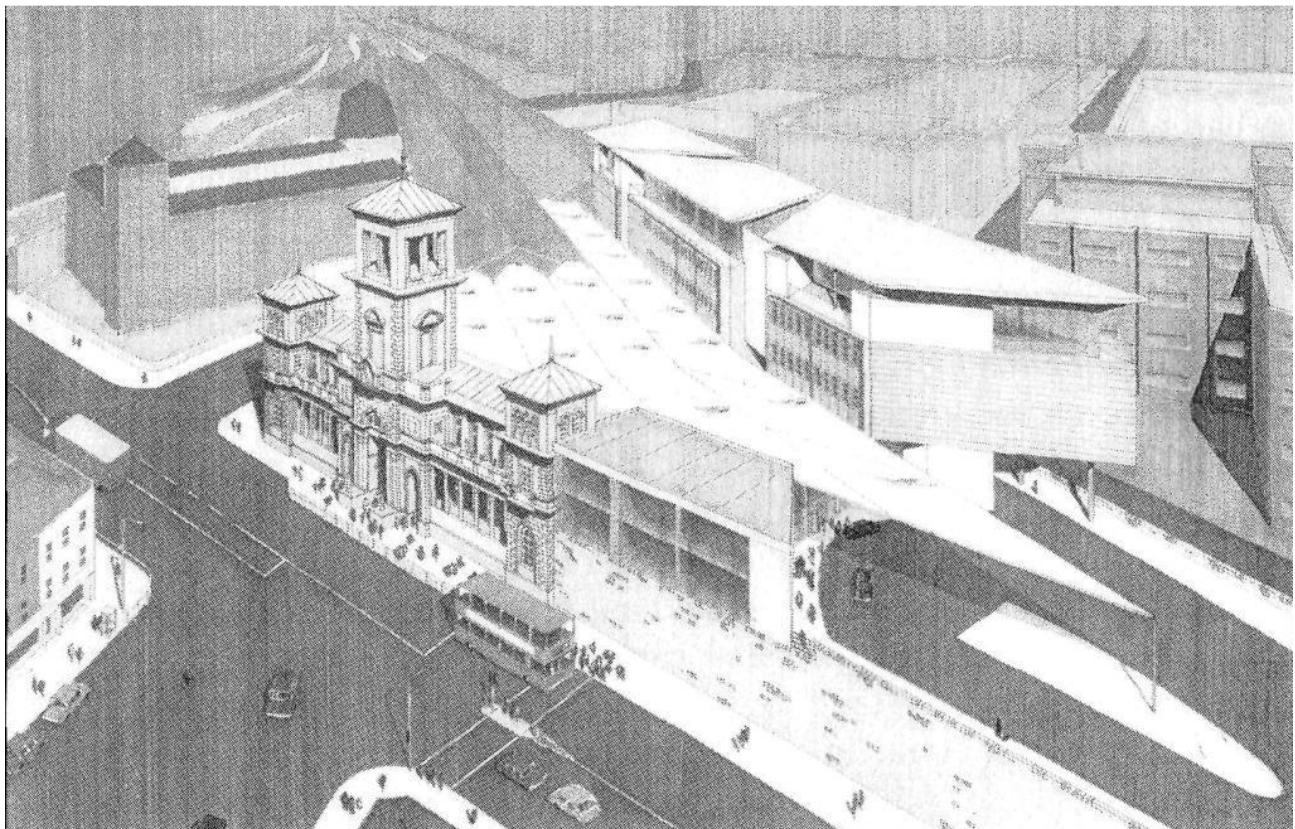
### **Radio Opera and Pilgrimage Trains**

A series of "Radio Train" excursions operated during the summer. As previously the principal destination was Killarney with trains operating every Tuesday from 22<sup>nd</sup> June to 20<sup>th</sup> August inclusive. Other destinations included Armagh (4<sup>th</sup> July), Ballina (13<sup>th</sup> July), Bunratty (18<sup>th</sup> July), Galway (1<sup>st</sup> August), Cobh (15<sup>th</sup> August) and Tralee (27<sup>th</sup> August). Planned trips to Cultra (25<sup>th</sup> July) and Armagh (8<sup>th</sup> August) were cancelled due to the widespread civil disorder which afflicted Northern Ireland during and after this year's "marching season". Fares were somewhat higher than last year at £35 for the return trip which included tea and biscuits on the outward trip and "High Tea" on the return leg. The Armagh, Bunratty and Cultra trips were advertised at £39, the additional charge being for road transfers from Portadown and Limerick to Armagh and Bunratty respectively. The Cultra fare presumably included admission to the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum.

The traditional and ever popular Wexford opera trains ran from Platform 5 at Pearse station on 3<sup>rd</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>

and 24<sup>th</sup> October departing at 16:20 and returning from Wexford at 23:15.

Special trains to Claremorris, for Knock, once such a distinctive feature of Sunday operations between Easter and October have all but disappeared from the scene. Only three specials are thought to have operated this year, two from Waterford (one via Clonmel and Portarlington, the other via Kildare) and another from Drogheda. Dates of operation were 5<sup>th</sup> May, 13<sup>th</sup> October and 29<sup>th</sup> September respectively.



*Artist's impression of the proposed redevelopment of Connolly station.*

### **General Traffic and Operations**

The 14:55 Heuston/Galway failed at Woodlawn on 25<sup>th</sup> April. The failure was assisted by the locomotive intended to operate a timber train ex Athenry and eventually arrived in Galway 90 minutes late at 19:10.

The 18:50 Heuston/Galway, 212 + EGV + 7 Mk3s, failed outside Portarlington on Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> April. It was assisted into the Up loop where it was overtaken by a number of trains including the 19:00 Heuston/Cork, 218 + EGV + 6 Mk2s, which left Portarlington at 21:01. It was also overtaken by the 20:40 to Galway 21:31 before finally departing at 22:02, hauled by 087.

The late running of the 13:20 Heuston to Cork on 3<sup>rd</sup> May meant that it missed the 15:18 Limerick Junction to Limerick service, the set of which was required back in Limerick for the 15:55 to Rosslare. A special train formed by (6101) 3 p/p + 122 therefore left for Limerick at 16:03, the set returning empty at 16:37 to form the 16:55 ex Limerick Junction. The extra movements compounded by late running caused some congestion on the single line and resulted in the 16:03 special crossing the 15:40 Limerick/Dublin, 213 + 7 Mk3 + EGV, and the 15:55 Limerick/Rosslare, 167 + 2 Cr + GSV, at Dromkeen. The push/pull was stopped at Dromkeen for about three minutes to allow the 15:40 to pull

away and the 15:55 to draw forward into the station, the latter having been blocked at the home signal. The 14:30 Cork/Heuston was delayed until 15:06 due to a shunting mishap at the station on 5<sup>th</sup> May. There was no injury to passengers as a result of the impact which apparently occurred as the locomotive was being attached to the train.

A three-piece push/pull set was reported on the 08:20 ex Cork on 7<sup>th</sup> May as part of a driver training exercise which was being undertaken in connection with the new timetable due to take effect on 20<sup>th</sup> May.

A special train ran in connection with the annual race meeting on the strand at Laytown on 16<sup>th</sup> May. The train which departed at 20:46 was formed by (6105) 6 p/p + 207 and served Skerries, Malahide, Howth Junction, Connolly, Tara Street and Pearse. Patronage was relatively light reflecting reduced attendance at the event itself which had been deliberately scheduled outside the main holiday season due to crowd control problems on the beach.

The executive train was used to convey about 150 passengers from Cork to Kilcoole on 21<sup>st</sup> May in connection with the Golf Classic at the nearby Druids Glen course. The train continued to Wicklow and thence back to Heuston for servicing. The return service was scheduled to leave Greystones at 21:30.

143 failed or Dunleer on 19<sup>th</sup> September while working an empty bulk cement train from Belfast to Drogheda. The 17:00 ex Belfast, 208 + 10 Mk2s, did not leave Drogheda until 19:46 and was closely followed by the 18:00 ex Belfast, 213 + 6 Mk2 + EGV, which passed at 19:57. The 19:35 Drogheda/Connolly was looped at Skerries for the 17:00 and routed via the Down platform at Malahide for the 18:00.

Services in the south-east and south-west of the country were badly disrupted by storms and high winds on Bank Holiday Monday, 28<sup>th</sup> October. The 11:40 Heuston/Waterford hit a tree near Mullinavat and was reportedly worked forward in two portions. The return service, due to depart Waterford at 14:55, was thus 82 minutes late arriving in Heuston. Other trains which hit trees included the 15:25 ex Galway and 17:30 ex Cork (near MP 98). Delays to these two trains was modest amounting to 30 and 15 minutes respectively, this despite some damage sustained to door handles and other external fittings on the Galway train. Trains following the 17:30 ex Cork fared less well with the 17:40 ex Cork and 16:55 ex Tralee being delayed by over two hours. The latter arrived at Heuston with neither heat nor light in part of the train, a state of affairs almost traditional on Bank Holiday Mondays. The railway was particularly busy on this date with many additional services operating including the following: 12:00, 13:50, 14:00, 17:40 and 19:20 Cork/Dublin, 16:55 and 17:40 Tralee/Dublin, 14:00 Killarney/Dublin, 17:25 Galway/Dublin, 17:25 Ballina/Dublin, 17:25 Ennis/Dublin, 16:35 Limerick Junction/Dublin and 18:15 Boyle/Dublin. In addition the 14:10 ex Tralee was altered to run non-stop from Limerick Junction to Dublin while the 19:00 ex Cork was booked non-stop from Thurles. In the event these trains were badly delayed by prevailing conditions and thus did not arrive in Heuston until 18:58 and 23:19 respectively.

High winds on 28<sup>th</sup> October also affected operations at the Belview container terminal and resulted in the two gantry cranes being secured out of use to await improved weather conditions. Unfortunately the wind was sufficiently strong to cause a crane to break from its moorings after which it was propelled along the gantry rail before collapsing in a heap of twisted steel. Not alone was this crane a total write-off but the second crane was also damaged as the first one fell. The falling crane also blocked the Waterford to Rosslare railway as well as damaging containers stored beneath, including a number containing chemical materials. Clearance of the railway had to await confirmation that the site had been made safe and as result the line was closed until Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> November. There were two beet trains trapped in Wellingtonbridge and these were worked to Mallow via Wexford and Dublin, the first following the 18:00 ex Rosslare from Rosslare Strand on the 29<sup>th</sup> and the second, 087 + 23 wagons,

departing Enniscorthy around 10:00 on the 30<sup>th</sup>. This latter crossed the 13:35 to Rosslare at Greystones and reached the North Wall shortly after 15:30, from whence it worked to Mallow around 01:35 on the 31<sup>st</sup>. A number of trains operated via Wexford over subsequent days although the greatly extended route mileage combined with minimal signalling capacity between Wellingtonbridge and Enniscorthy meant that no more than two trains operated daily instead of the normal four or five. For instance on Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> November trains left Wellingtonbridge around 13:45 and 16:15, the first consisted of 080 + 25 wagons and departed Rosslare Strand around 16:25, having crossed the 13:33 ex Dublin. This train subsequently passed Enniscorthy at 17:18 and Wicklow at 18:50. The second train, 072 + 22 wagons, followed the 18:00 ex Rosslare as the first available slot at 17:20 would not have allowed sufficient time to clear Enniscorthy in advance of the passenger train which is due to leave Rosslare Strand at 18:05. Incidentally the 13:33 Connolly/Rosslare and 18:00 Rosslare/Connolly were hauled by 112 on this date and consisted of a six-bogie Mk2 set. Another slightly unusual feature of the day was the staffing of Gorey signal box thus splitting the 28½ mile Arklow/Enniscorthy section into two more manageable segments (Irish Rail are understood to have had three bogie container wagons damaged beyond repair at Belview as a result of parts of the damaged crane falling on them.) Bell traffic was diverted to Tivoli (Cork) and Dublin although the latter was only used for a few weeks. Limited activity had resumed at Belview by early December although operations were dependent on the use of forklift trucks to move containers between trains and quayside cranes.

A shunting mishap at Heuston around mid-day on 2<sup>nd</sup> November blocked access to the station and resulted in serious disruption to services for the remainder of the day. The 11:00 ex Cork and 13:30 ex Westport were diverted to Connolly while intending passengers for the 13:05 to Westport, 13:20 to Cork, 14:25 to Galway, 14:35 to Limerick, 15:05 to Waterford and 15:25 to Cork were taken by bus with most joining trains at Hazelhatch, although it is reported that Waterford passengers were bussed throughout. A number of Up trains also terminated at Hazelhatch including the 10:55 ex Waterford and 10:50 ex Galway. Services resumed with the 17:20 to Cork which departed at 17:40, while the following 17:30 to Ennis and 17:40 to Limerick operated as one train. Up trains resumed around 18:00.

An unprecedented series of disruptions afflicted Northern outer suburban services in the latter half of November as under:

14<sup>th</sup> November: North Dublin SSI interlocking failed around 05:55. No passenger services ran in either direction between Drogheda and Howth Junction until 08:20. The principal element in this failure is believed to have been a component of the UPS supplying the interlocking computers.

18<sup>th</sup> November: Derailment at East Wall Junction, all services terminated at Killester in the morning and were subject to severe delay pending the restoration of double line working between Ossory Road Junction and Connolly (see under Derailments). 07:10 ex Newry did not run due to problems with the new signalling between Dundalk and Portadown.

19<sup>th</sup> November: Block failure between Dunleer and Drogheda occurred around 06:30 and delayed the 06:40 ex Dundalk which departed from Drogheda in the 07:43 path. Passengers travelling on the 07:35 ex Dundalk were conveyed by bus to Drogheda, but the promised train was already gone when they arrived. Services were disrupted throughout the rest of the day. The 21:00 and 22:10 Connolly/Dundalk terminated at Drogheda.

20<sup>th</sup> November: 06:04, 06:40 and 07:35 ex Dundalk cancelled due to Irish Rail's insistence on running all trains at 15 mph during a block failure irrespective of the line being clear or not. Intending passengers from Dundalk either drove to Drogheda or Dublin with a small number using the alternative bus service which entailed delays of at least twenty minutes. (Incidentally the roads were extremely icy and represented a far greater risk than running trains at normal speed would have done.) The 21:00 and 22:10 Connolly/Dundalk terminated at Drogheda.

21st November: 06:04, 06:40 and 07:35 ex Dundalk cancelled between there and Drogheda as on the previous day. The continuation of the 07:35 ex Dundalk, 233 + 6 Cr + DV, failed between Raheny and Harmonstown and thus did not reach Pearse until 10:15.

23<sup>rd</sup> November: A second SSI failure brings halts all trains between Drogheda and Dublin between 11:50 and 12:50 approximately. 09:30 ex Belfast blocked at Malahide while the 11:50 and 12:50 ex Drogheda get away at 13:01 and 13:11 respectively.

### **Miscellaneous**

The annual weed-spray program commenced at the end of April and continued into May. Most lines were sprayed although no attempt was made to traverse the New Ross branch which is currently severed on the approach to New Ross station.

The former “Restaurant Na Mara” at Dun Laoghaire station has been revamped and is, since June, trading as “Brasserie Na Mara”. The new operation offers a somewhat more populist menu with a four course meal for two costing around £27.50.

Clonmel station is understood to have been closed to freight traffic other than timber, the reason given being that of persistent vandalism with pallets of fertiliser stored in the open being a particular target.

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## **Northern Ireland Railways**

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### **Dublin/Belfast Project**

Substantial progress has been made in the last few months particularly in respect of track renewal, bridge reconstruction and layout re-modelling. This work has, however, resulted in unprecedented disruption to services with lengthy line closures being a particular feature of layout alterations.

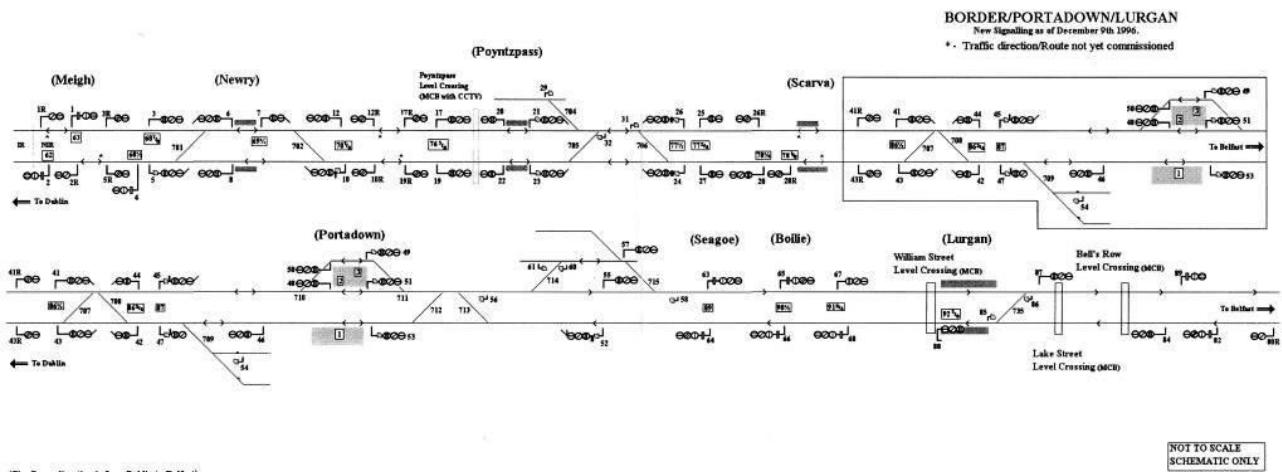
Possessions of almost 48 hours were routinely taken to install a crossover on plain track, a task which seems to have been hampered by lack of equipment and a rather time consuming installation technique (Trackwork was not pre-assembled on site prior to installation and thus each component had to be individually handled as opposed to being placed as part of a prefabricated unit.)

### ***Signalling and Layouts***

Resignalling work commenced towards the end of April with the contractors, Westinghouse, establishing a base on the Down side at the north end of the former station at Tandragee. The first evidence on the ground was the appearance of wayside location cases between Tandragee and Newry towards the end of April. The Irish Rail cable train was used to lay signal cables along 36½ miles of track from the border to MP 96¼, the latter point located between Lurgan and Moira. Work commenced on or around 20<sup>th</sup> May and was completed by 7<sup>th</sup> June with the cable train being based at Adelaide during much of this period. The positioning of ploughed cable varies from location to location with a distinct preference evident for the “six foot way” between the two running lines. It was necessary to turn the entire train on at least one occasion, this being achieved on 30<sup>th</sup> May by running from Adelaide yard to Great Victoria Street and back, outward by the direct route and returning via City Junction. To facilitate this working 111 was attached at one end and 102 at the other end. Two locomotives were used on at least one other occasion, again at either end of the train, with 111 and 112 being employed south of Portadown, on 1<sup>st</sup> June. Signals gradually appeared at Meigh, Newry, Poyntzpass, Portadown, Seagoe and Boilie with work generally progressing in a south to north direction. Next to appear were the pre-assembled relay interlockings which were craned onto prepared

sites at Newry, Poyntzpass and Portadown. The new signalling panel was delivered to Portadown at the beginning of August and when fully commissioned will have Dublin and Belfast as fringe cabins. It will eventually control the line from Derriaghy to the border and will replace existing panels at Lisburn, Portadown and Newry as well as the 24-lever mechanical signal box at Poyntzpass. All equipment controlled from Portadown will carry the prefix "PD" although the existing numbering between Lurgan and Derriaghy is being retained.

Newry ceased to be a block post on 2<sup>nd</sup> September at around 09:30 after which time the section became Dundalk (North) to Poyntzpass. The closure was to allow contractors freedom to modify track circuiting and signalling in and around the station area preparatory to expected commissioning of the new arrangements then scheduled for 26<sup>th</sup> October.



The existing facing and trailing crossovers, located just south of Portadown, were taken out of use with effect from 9<sup>th</sup> September and single line working established over the Up road between Poyntzpass and the Belfast end of Portadown station. This arrangement allowed the signalling contractors access to the Down line and also facilitated the partial removal of the redundant connections. Single line working was maintained for a total of four weeks although trains were later routed via the new 707 crossover so as to approach Portadown on the Down line. During the latter period the remaining sections of the two crossovers were removed and signalling contractors had the opportunity to alter track circuiting on the Up line to suit the new arrangements. All existing signals at, and approaching, the south end of the station were gradually removed including the Down distant, Down outer home, Down home, Up starters and Up advance starter. Hand signalling was instituted pending the commissioning of the new arrangements at the south end of the station over the weekend of 4<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> October.

The Bann sidings, located on the Up side at the east end of the station, were taken out of use after 20<sup>th</sup> September. The following weekend all remaining pointwork at the Belfast end was disconnected and the Up line slewed so as to pass through Platform 1. All Down trains were thereafter routed through Platform 3 as Platform 2 was only connected at the southern end. Over the weekend of 4<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> October both the Up and Down lines were realigned so as to give a smooth transition at the Belfast end of the station. This work compensates for the distorted alignment which was created by the construction of the existing Portadown station in 1969/70 after which through trains had to negotiate sharp, short-lead, connections at one or other end of the station. As at the south end existing signals were gradually removed and hand signalling instituted pending commissioning of the new arrangements which were operative as far as signals 63 and 64, near Seagoe, by 13<sup>th</sup> October. Signal 66, on the Up road at Boilie, was commissioned a little later and at present merely acts as a repeater for signal 64. Pending commissioning of signals 65 and 67, No.63 is acting as the section starter for Lurgan and reads to signal 83. Signal 65 is already in place on the Down road at Boilie while signal 67 will occupy the site

of the existing Lurgan Down distant (81R). The commissioning of signals 65, 67 and 68 will result in the removal of the existing 3-aspect Down home at Lurgan (83) and the conversion of the Up platform starter (88) to 3-aspect operation.

As can be seen from the diagram the new layout at Portadown is extremely flexible with bi-directional working available through all three platforms, an arrangement facilitated by the provision of facing and trailing crossover pairs at both the Dublin and Belfast end of the station. The realignment of the mainlines at the Belfast end, between the Garvagh Road underbridge and the station, together with the removal of the crossovers on the southern approach curve means that the speed of through trains will be limited only by the degree to which the curve can be super elevated. It is anticipated that the existing 15 mph speed restriction between MP 87 and MP 87½ will be increased to between 40 and 50 mph. The elimination of the Bann sidings is compensated for by the new facing connection from the Down line into the civil engineers sidings located on the site of the old Portadown station. This latter connection in fact creates a moderately sized loop which should be capable of stabilising Belfast bound freight trains should an onward path be unavailable. Signalling on the southern approach to Portadown reflects the fact that both running lines on the Poyntzpass side are to be bi-directional and in consequence each signal is replicated on the opposite road. East of Portadown, continuous multiple aspect signalling is to be provided in the section to Lurgan and thus will eventually apply on Down line from the southern approach to Portadown as far as signal 89 in the Lurgan/Moira section. Continuous multiple-aspect signalling on the Up line will extend from signal 80R, near Moira, to the southbound section signals for Poyntzpass, Nos. 42/44, south of Portadown.

At Poyntzpass the layout consists of a facing and trailing crossover, located on straight track to the north of the station. The crossovers at Poyntzpass are positioned in such a way as to permit trains to run round as and when required. Additionally the connection to the ballast loading bank on the Down side has been renewed. Running signals are provided to protect the level crossing (four in total, one per direction per road), to protect the northern approach to the facing crossover (two, one per direction) and to protect the southern approach to the trailing crossover (two, one per direction). Northbound advance starters are provided on both roads near Acton accommodation crossing and read to signals 41/43 at Portadown, resulting in a block section of some 8¾ miles. The section from Portadown starts at signals 42/44 and is 8½ miles long on the Up road and 9¼ miles long on the Down road, the former being shortened by the provision of an additional intermediate (No.28) which is not replicated on the Down road. Four two-aspect distant signals are provided, one per direction per road - the northbound distants being located just inside the existing semaphore Down distant. The level crossing at the Dublin end of the station, which is currently operated from a wheel in the cabin, is being fitted with four lifting barriers which will be controlled from Portadown and monitored by CCTV. Pending commissioning of the new signalling arrangements Poyntzpass remains as a block post although none of the new pointwork is connected to the lever frame. The emergency trailing crossover adjacent to the cabin is, however, still in use.

At Newry the layout consists of a new facing crossover just north of the Craigmore viaduct, while at the south end the existing trailing crossover is retained. Apart from the additional flexibility provided by the new crossover in terms of platform usage and bi-directional working it will also be possible to "run round" if and when the need arises. As at Portadown and Poyntzpass signals are generally paired. The existing Down "distant" and "home" signals (3R and 3) are retained and are replicated on the Up road by signals 5R and 5, the latter reading across the trailing crossover onto the Down road. A new signal (7) is provided at the north end of the Down platform to protect the facing crossover. This signal also reads to Poyntzpass (7¼ miles) via either road. The existing section signal which was located some three quarters of a mile further north has been removed. Signal 7 is not replicated on the Up road and in consequence signal 5 acts as the section starter for trains travelling "wrong line" through Newry. New southbound "home" signals (Nos. 10/12) are provided on the approach to the facing crossover, that on

the Up road reading to either platform as required. These signals also allow southbound trains to enter the Poyntzpass/Newry section irrespective of platform occupancy at Newry or of conflicting movements routed into the section from the Dundalk direction. The existing southbound Up platform starting signal (8) is retained and replicated on the Down road by signal 6. The latter reads either to Dundalk along the Down road or to signal 4 on the Up road. The existing Up road section signal for Dundalk has been moved further from the station so as to allow both signals 10R and 10 to display a green aspect even if the section to Meigh is occupied. This latter signal has also been converted to automatic operation. Pending commissioning of the new signalling arrangements, all signals at Newry are extinguished and crossed out of use. The section from Poyntzpass to Dundalk (North) is currently being worked as one section under absolute block regulations using Harper's instruments.

Intermediate signals are provided at Meigh/Adavoyle, northbound on the Down road (1R/1) and southbound on the Up road (2R/2). These signals are automatic intermediates.

Track circuit operated automatic audible warning devices have been installed in the rock cutting at the top of the Wellington Bank and on the Craigmore viaduct in order to provide greater protection for staff required to work at these locations where clearance/refuge is not immediately to hand. This equipment is expected to become operative with the introduction of track circuit block working between Portadown and Dundalk.

#### *Update to the above*

- Commissioning of the Newry and Poyntzpass interlockings took place on Sunday 17th November after which track circuit block working was instituted between Dundalk and Portadown. Poyntzpass ceased to be a block post on this date and all remaining signals were removed, the last to go being the Down distant which was demolished shortly after the passage of the 15:00 ex Dublin, 215 + EGV + 7 Mk2s. (This was the first Down train after the commissioning and it ran under clear signals from Dundalk to Portadown. The first Up trains were the 14:10 and 14:30 ex Belfast which were formed by 89+4+68 and 209 + 10 Mk2s respectively.) Poyntzpass cabin was still manned at the beginning of December as supervision of the crossing had yet to be transferred to Portadown.
- Control of the Derriaghy/Moira and Lisburn/Ballinderry sections were transferred from the Lisburn panel to the new Portadown panel on the weekend of 23<sup>rd</sup>/24<sup>th</sup> November. Portadown is now a fringe box to Belfast (Central), Dundalk (North) and Antrim. The next step in the cross-border re-signalling scheme will see the conversion of the gated level crossings at Lurgan to barrier operation and the commissioning of the remaining intermediate signals between Portadown and Lurgan. At the time of writing in late November relay rooms were in place at Lake Street and Bell's Row level crossings. A new gatehouse is also being built at the latter and is located on the same side of the railway, but on the opposite side of the road. Other work not yet complete includes the installation of British Rail (Railtrack) style AWS and the commissioning of patrolman lockout facilities between Portadown and Dundalk. The latter will permit track walkers to disable reversible working while they are carrying out their periodic inspections.
- Control of the Portadown/Moira section was transferred from the existing (1982) panel in Portadown onto the new panel over the period from 1<sup>st</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> December. This work also involved the commissioning of the remaining intermediate signals between Boilie and Lurgan as well as the conversion of two gated crossings at the latter to Manual Controlled Barrier operation. In view of the special circumstances at Lurgan all three crossings in the town, William Street, Lake Street and Bells Row, will continue to be attended by gatekeepers for the foreseeable future. (William Street was already a locally controlled full barrier crossing.) In order to facilitate this work absolute block working was introduced between Lurgan (83) and Moira on the Down road and between signal 78,

at Moira, and signal 88, at Lurgan, on the Up road.

Incidentally the now retired installation at Portadown was somewhat unusual in that it was essentially a powered implementation of traditional semaphore signalling. While the station area and approaches were fully track circuited and the points power operated, all colour light signals were two-aspect, the stop signals displaying either a red or green indication. In consequence no signal was able to display a proceed aspect unless either the signal ahead was also displaying a proceed aspect or an approaching train had occupied the berth track circuit. The "distant" signals also followed semaphore practice and cleared only if all stop signals through the station had also been cleared. A green on the distant also implied that the forward block section was clear in that the advance starting signals were interlocked with the block instruments. Consequent on the destruction of Lurgan signal box an additional panel was installed at Portadown in 1981 to control the Portadown/Moira section. This scheme resulted in the introduction of track circuit block working between Portadown and Moira but did not address the lack of capacity between Portadown and Lurgan as no intermediate signals were provided.

#### **Permanent Way**

Irish Rail, operating under contract to NIR, have relaid 11½ miles of track between Portadown and the Border as under:

<b>Section</b>	<b>Line</b>	<b>Mileage</b>	<b>Single Line Working</b>
Poynzpass/Newry	Up	MP 76½ to MP 73¾	22/4/1996 to 19/5/1996
Poynzpass/Newry	Up	MP 73 to MP 69	10/6/1996 to 12/7/1996 24/7/1996 to 28/7/1996
Newry/Dundalk	Up	MP 69 to MP 66	5/8/1996 to 1/9/1996
Poynzpass/Portadown	Down	MP 83 to MP 84¾	7/9/1996 to 6/10/1998

This relaying was undertaken with great efficiency and speed and was facilitated by continuous single line working which avoided the necessity to leave the line in a fit condition for traffic at the end of each day's work. Although tablet instruments were placed in both Newry and Poynzpass cabins they were not commissioned and single line working was controlled by pilotman throughout.

In addition NIR gangs have installed CWR from MP 100 to MP 98¼ on the Up road and have been engaged in the extensive replacement of defective concrete sleepers on both roads between Moira and Damhead. (This work was undertaken during possessions of one or other road at off-peak times, generally from 10:00 to 15:00 Mondays to Fridays and for extended periods on Sundays.) CWR has also been installed on the Down road through Maze station although work remains to be done to bring the formation up to standard at this location.

NIR have started the pre-qualification stage for the renewal of the seven mile section of double track between Lisburn and Central Junction. Competent contractors with proven practical railway experience are invited to register their interest by 29<sup>th</sup> October and those meeting the conditions will be invited to tender for the work. The contract will involve the removal and disposal off-site of the existing track, including the track bed, and the installation of CWR and concrete sleepers resting on a new bed of ballast.

At the time of writing in early December long-welded rail lengths had been assembled on the Up line between the level crossing at Poynzpass and MP 76½ with relaying expected to commence on or around 8<sup>th</sup> December. Work is also expected to commence shortly on the installation of welded rail on the Down line between MP 75<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub> and MP 76<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub>. This latter section was relaid with concrete sleepers and flat-bottom rail in 1978/9 and is in generally good condition, although a short length of track on the Poynzpass side of Augheraner accommodation crossing still bears the scars of a minor derailment

which occurred a few years ago. Other tasks in hand include the laying of additional ballast on older sections of CWR so as to deepen the existing formation and allow the track to be raised at a number of locations.

NIR have started the pre-qualification stage for the appointment of consultants to produce a report on the City Hospital/Central Station section. Interested contractors must register their interest by 29<sup>th</sup> October. The work will entail the preparation of a report on: *1) the current track condition; 2) the optimum method of restoring the track to a condition fit to pass trains at increased speed and tonnages; 3) the optimisation of future maintenance requirements; 4) the cost of the optimum method of restoration.* It is understood that renewal of this 1 1/4 mile section of double track might require closure of the line for a period of three months during which Dublin services would be diverted to Great Victoria Street. Such diversions will only become practical when the service is operated by push/pull equipment as Great Victoria Street can not comfortably handle locomotive hauled trains.

A seemingly unending series of weekend closures, which commenced in June, severely disrupted services throughout the busy summer months. These possessions resulted in extended journey times, much annoyance and considerable loss of goodwill. On those occasions when the line was open south of Portadown, but closed at some point between there and Lisburn, cross-border passengers were conveyed by bus directly to/from Newry with Lurgan passengers being conveyed by bus to/from Portadown. When the Dundalk to Portadown section was closed, Newry, Portadown, Lurgan, Lisburn and Belfast passengers were conveyed by bus directly to/from Dundalk. The weekend closures generally extended from late Friday/early Saturday until 19:00 on Sundays although arrangements were made to pass some additional southbound traffic on 18<sup>th</sup> August, 1<sup>st</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> September. On Saturdays, when Dundalk/Portadown traffic was suspended, the 07:10 from Newry to Dublin was the only revenue earning service to cross the border and started from either Poyntzpass or Newry depending on circumstances. Similarly the connecting 06:40 from Portadown ran to either Poyntzpass or Newry, except during the October closures when a substitute bus was used. The dates concerned are shown in the table below together with a summary of the work undertaken:

<b>Section Affected</b>	<b>Date Closed</b>	<b>Work Undertaken</b>
Portadown/Moira	22 <sup>nd</sup> /23 <sup>rd</sup> June	Relaying Up and Down platform roads at Lurgan. Excavation of Bells Row and Lake Street level
Portadown/Moira	20 <sup>th</sup> /21 <sup>st</sup> July	Excavation of the Up road immediately east of Lurgan station resulting in the partial removal of the trailing crossover. Installation of a new facing crossover from the Down road into the sidings at the Dublin end of the old Portadown Station (714).
Portadown/Moira	27 <sup>th</sup> /28 <sup>th</sup> July	Excavation of the Down road immediately east of Lurgan station including the removal of the remainder of the old trailing crossover. Renewal of the existing trailing turnout onto the Down road at the Belfast end of Portadown station (715).
Portadown/Lisburn	3 <sup>rd</sup> /4 <sup>th</sup> August	Renewal of the existing ground frame connected emergency trailing crossover at the Belfast end of Moira station. Installation of a new trailing crossover (735) at the Belfast end of Lurgan station. This replaces the former crossover which was removed during the course of excavation works.

Dundalk/Portadown	17 <sup>th</sup> /18 <sup>th</sup> August	Installation of a new facing crossover (706) at Poyntzpass.
Dundalk/Portadown	31 <sup>st</sup> August/ 1 <sup>st</sup> September	Installation of a new facing crossover (702) at Newry.
Dundalk/Portadown	7 <sup>th</sup> /8 <sup>th</sup> September	Installation of trailing crossover south of Portadown (707).
Dundalk/Portadown	14 <sup>th</sup> /15 <sup>th</sup> September	Installation of facing crossover south of Portadown (708).
Portadown/Lurgan	21 <sup>st</sup> /22 <sup>nd</sup> September	Installation of facing crossover east of Portadown (713).
Portadown/Lurgan	28 <sup>th</sup> /29 <sup>th</sup> September	Realignment of the Up line on temporary track at the east end of Portadown station. (The “Bann” sidings were taken out of use on or after 21 <sup>st</sup> September.)
Portadown/Lurgan	4 <sup>th</sup> , 5 <sup>th</sup> , 6 <sup>th</sup> October	Realignment of Down line at the east end of Portadown station. Installation of new trailing crossover (712) and new trailing turnout from Platform 3 to Down main (711). Final realignment of Up line.
Dundalk/Portadown	12 <sup>th</sup> /13 <sup>th</sup> October	Installation of a new trailing crossover at Poyntzpass (705).
Dundalk/Portadown	19 <sup>th</sup> /20 <sup>th</sup> October	Renewal of trailing turnout from the Down siding onto the Down line (704). Disconnection and removal of the existing north trailing crossover.

**Summary of the more significant alterations to services arising from single line working and the closure of Newry as a block post:**

**(A) 22<sup>nd</sup> April to 19<sup>th</sup> May (SLW, Poyntzpass/Newry. Up road closed)**

06:50 Portadown/Newry terminated at Poyntzpass at 07:02 and then empty to Newry at 07:21.  
 07:20 Newry/Pearse extended to run from Poyntzpass departing at 07:05.  
 17:13 Pearse/Newry cancelled at Dundalk (bus Dundalk/Newry).  
 16:38 Bangor/Newry (MF) cancelled at Poyntzpass (bus Poyntzpass/Newry).  
 18:43 Newry/Bangor (MF) altered to leave from Poyntzpass at 18:45, bus ex Newry 18:10.  
 18:20 Dublin/Belfast altered to pick up as required at Newry and Poyntzpass.

**All other services between Portadown and Dundalk subject to variable delay.**

**(B) 9<sup>th</sup> June to 12<sup>th</sup> July and 24<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> July (SLW, Poyntzpass /Newry. Up road closed)**

06:40 Portadown/Newry terminated in Poyntzpass at 06:52 and thence empty to Newry at 07:12.  
 07:10 Newry/Dundalk extended to run from Poyntzpass departing at 06:55 (normally an Arrow).  
 17:13 Pearse/Newry cancelled at Dundalk (bus Dundalk/Newry).  
 16:38 Bangor/Newry (MF) cancelled at Poyntzpass (bus Poyntzpass/Newry).  
 18:43 Newry/Bangor (MF) altered to leave from Poyntzpass at 18:45, bus ex Newry 18:10

18:20 Dublin/Belfast altered to pick up as required at Newry and Poyntzpass.

**All other services between Portadown and Dundalk subject to variable delay.**

**(C) 5<sup>th</sup> August to 1<sup>st</sup> September (SLW, Newry/Dundalk, Up road closed)**

07:55 Dublin/Belfast deferred to 08:12 and retimed to arrive Belfast at 10:50 (07:55 departure time reinstated from 19<sup>th</sup> August but train was then held in Dundalk from 08:58 until 09:25 awaiting the 08:00 ex Belfast which was routed through the Down running loop).

11:00 Belfast/Dublin deferred to 11:30 and retimed to arrive Dublin at 14:00.

15:00 Belfast/Dublin deferred to 15:30 and retimed to arrive Dublin at 18:08.

17:02 Larne Town/Dundalk (MF) cancelled at Newry (bus Newry/Dundalk), empty to Dundalk later for 20:10 to Bangor.

16:59 Larne Harbour/Dundalk (SO) cancelled at Newry (bus Newry/Dundalk), empty to Dundalk later for 20:10 to Bangor.

17:13 Pearse/Newry cancelled at Dundalk (bus Dundalk/Newry).

18:20 Dublin/Belfast deferred to 18:30 and retimed to arrive Belfast at 20:50.

17:55 Dublin/Belfast (Sundays) advanced to 17:50.

18:20 Dublin/Belfast (Sundays) deferred to 18:40.

18:10 Portadown/Dublin (Sundays) advanced to 17:50.

**All other services between Portadown and Dundalk subject to variable delay.**

**(D) Commencing 2<sup>nd</sup> September (Consequent on the closure of Newry signal box) \*effective 3/9/1996**

06:40\* Portadown/Newry terminates in Poyntzpass at 06:52.

07:10\* Newry/Dundalk extended to run from Poyntzpass departing at 06:55. (Normally an Arrow)

07:30\* Newry/Bangor runs from Poyntzpass only with bus connection at 07:20 from Newry.

17:13 Pearse/Newry initially cancelled at Dundalk (bus Dundalk/Newry), but was reinstated and extended (empty) to Poyntzpass from 7/10/1996. (Normally a push/pull)

16:38 Bangor/Newry (MF) cancelled at Poyntzpass (bus Poyntzpass/Newry).

18:43 Newry/Bangor (MF) altered to leave from Poyntzpass at 18:53, bus ex Newry 18:10.

(A further variation applied for much of November, up to the date of commissioning, whereby the 06:40 Portadown/Newry was formed by an Irish Rail (Arrow) set which then took up the path of the 07:10 Newry/Dundalk. The NIR set normally used for the 06:40 service followed empty to Newry, operating over the Down line south of Poyntzpass. The 07:30 Newry/Bangor was thus able to operate as per its normal schedule.)

**Other services subject to delay due to extended block section.**

**(E) 7<sup>th</sup> September to 6<sup>th</sup> October. (SLW Poyntzpass/Dundalk, Down road closed)**

16:38 Bangor/Poyntzpass (MF) terminated at Portadown, bus to Scarva, Poyntzpass and Newry.

18:43 Newry/Bangor (MF) starts from Portadown. Newry, Poyntzpass and Scarva passengers by bus to Portadown to connect with either the 19:53 or 20:10 departure from Portadown.

17:13 Pearse/Newry cancelled at Dundalk (bus Dundalk/Newry).

20:10 Newry/Bangor (Sundays) cancelled between Newry and Portadown, passengers by bus.

**All other services between Portadown and Dundalk subject to variable delay.**

***Bridges***

The following stone-arch overbridges have been demolished since the end of April and like those mentioned in the last issue have been replaced by featureless concrete structures providing improved vertical and lateral clearances:

OB 254 (MP 92½ - Silverwood Bridge, near Lurgan), demolished June 1996

OB 264 (MP 95½ - Pritchard's Bridge, near Moira), demolished April 1996

OB 274 (MP 101½, at the former Broomhedge station), demolished May 1996

OB 290 (MP 106¾, near Lambeg station), demolished August 1996

OB 298 (MP 109, near Dunmurry), demolished June 1996

The longest closure was that of Grant's bridge (OB 265) which had still closed to road traffic on 24<sup>th</sup> November. More typical was Silverwood bridge which was demolished on 22<sup>nd</sup> June and re-opened to road traffic on or around 14<sup>th</sup> October.

OB 186, a low flat decked cattle overpass some two miles south of Newry, was demolished in August and is not to be replaced.

OB 220, the stone-arch overbridge at the south end of Scarva station, is to be retained following a determined campaign mounted by the local community. The campaign was boosted by extensive media publicity, much of it ludicrous and ill-informed, but nonetheless effective in swaying the railway company into an apparent u-turn. The alternative of lowering the trackbed is likely to be equally costly, highly disruptive and technically unsatisfactory. As the bridge is so close to the station the platforms may have to be rebuilt or partially removed in order to accommodate the new track level. A major factor influencing the campaign appears to have been the aesthetically unappealing "motorway" style architecture employed in the replacement of OB 224 and OB 233, located nearby. The alternative of rebuilding the bridge as a stone-clad portal arch retaining the original abutments and parapets does not seem to have been seriously canvassed.

***Miscellaneous***

The Up and Down platforms at Goraghwood have been virtually obliterated in order to facilitate track renewal on the Up road and formation improvements on the Down road. Traces of the Up platform remain at the Portadown end while a small portion of the Down platform survives at the Newry end.

**Bleach Green Junction/Antrim**

In a parliamentary reply in the House of Commons on 11<sup>th</sup> July the Northern Ireland minister, Mr Malcolm Moss MP, stated that the Bleach Green Junction/Antrim upgrade is to go ahead. Work is scheduled to commence in 1997 (the original completion date) and take 18 months to complete. The Government contribution to this project is around £2m, the remaining 75% coming from European Union funds.

The long term future of the Lisburn/Antrim branch has been the subject of speculation recently as the re-routing of Belfast/Londonderry traffic will remove all but local business. The possibility of constructing a short spur to Belfast International Airport, at Aldergrove, is being canvassed again although such a project does not seem to be immediately on the horizon. Such a link coupled with the imminent upgrading of the Belfast/Lisburn line would allow a Great Victoria Street/Airport shuttle service to complete the trip in around 20 minutes.

The 07:05 Central to Londonderry ran via Bleach Green Junction on 25<sup>th</sup> October due to flooding on

the Central line at Ormeau Road.

18<sup>th</sup> November saw an inspection train consisting of 99+2+67 operate a number of trips on the Bleach Green Junction/Antrim line. The following day a special train, consisting of 456+2, conveyed a party of VIPs from Belfast to Antrim via Bleach Green Junction.

### **Signalling Layouts and Level Crossings**

The closure of Poyntzpass signal box, as a block post, and the decommissioning of the mechanical signalling there means that there are now only two mechanically operated signal boxes on NIR, these being located at Castlerock and Portrush. Absolute block working continues to apply between Coleraine and Castlerock (tablet), between Castlerock and Londonderry (key token) and between Coleraine and Portrush. The latter section is controlled by tablet instruments when Portrush is switched in, with "One Train Working" applying at other times. Re-signalling of these lines has been postponed several times in recent years thus reprieving the handsome, if somewhat weathered somersault signals at Castlerock and Portrush. Manned panels presently exist at Londonderry, Coleraine, Antrim, Belfast and Portadown. When the re-signalling of the Bleach Green Junction to Antrim, Coleraine to Portrush and Coleraine to Londonderry sections are completed there will be just three signalling centres controlling the entire system - Belfast, Coleraine and Portadown. (The Monkstown/Antrim section is presently worked by tablet instruments which are located in Belfast and Antrim. The gated level crossings on this line are still protected by somersault signals although none are in working order as the gates are normally operated by the train crew. On occasions when Belfast/Londonderry traffic is being diverted over this route the crossings are usually staffed with trains being flagged through gate signals as required. Working by pilotman generally applies in such circumstances so as to avoid the necessity for trains to carry the tablet while travelling over the track circuit block controlled section between Belfast Central and Monkstown.)

### **Linkline Services**

In order to give practical effect to the promise of improved public transport services as a result of the recent merger of NIR, Ulsterbus and Citybus, a number of stations became designated Linkline locations with effect from 24<sup>th</sup> June. The stations concerned are Antrim, Ballymena, Ballymoney, Coleraine, Bangor, Lisburn, Lurgan, Newry, Larne Town and Carrickfergus. Leaflets have been produced detailing bus services available at each location although in many instances the bus neither calls at the station nor makes a connection which most people would find useful. Amongst the better services are those from Lurgan station to Craigavon Shopping Centre and from Newry station to Newry Town. Services generally operate on weekdays only, and as yet through ticketing is unavailable.

For example the service from "The Mall" to Newry station is as follows:

07:00, 09:00, 10:20, 11:40, 12:10, 14:10, 15:40, 16:10, 17:45

Return times from the station are:

09:30, 10:45, 12:00, 12:35, 14:30, 16:00 (MF), 16:30, 18:15

While the Newry service is a welcome improvement, the 07:00, actually a Bessbrook service, operates erratically and can not be relied upon to connect with the 07:10 train to Dublin. There would also seem to be accommodation problems at busier times with the diminutive little bus being overwhelmed by day trippers on more than one occasion!

## **New Timetable**

### ***(Mondays to Fridays only)***

The new NIR timetable which became effective on 3<sup>rd</sup> June is little changed from that introduced on 30<sup>th</sup> September 1995. The failure to co-ordinate the date of introduction with Irish Rail caused a number of difficulties most notably in respect of the 07:10 ex Newry which was delayed on several occasions between 20<sup>th</sup> May and 1<sup>st</sup> June awaiting the 06:50 ex Portadown. This latter now leaves Portadown at 06:40 in order to maintain the connection with the 07:10 Arrow to Dundalk, from whence a further connection is available to Dublin (Pearse). These services operate daily except Sunday.

As a consequence of the transfer of Stena Sealink operations to Belfast there are now only eleven services from Belfast to Larne Harbour, a reduction of six on the previous timetable. The “boat trains” are generally retained but no longer run to a limited stop schedule. Early morning services have been somewhat altered in order to improve punctuality. The first Up train leaves Larne Harbour at 06:25 instead of 06:15. The former 06:35 ex Larne Harbour now leaves at 06:50, arrives in Belfast Central at 07:43, and forms the 07:50 to Larne Harbour rather than the now cancelled 07:38 to Carrickfergus. The 07:15 from Whitehead which was due in Belfast Central at 07:51 and back out again as the 07:54 to Larne Harbour is also cancelled, the set being used for a new 07:20 to Whitehead. This latter returns at 08:00 and takes up the running of former 08:09 from Carrickfergus. The 10:21 Great Victoria Street to Carrickfergus and the return working at 10:57 no longer run, the calls made by the latter being covered by the 10:10 ex Larne Town, previously a limited stop service.

The frequency on the Portrush branch has been slightly increased with the addition of a new service at 12:23 from Coleraine returning at 12:40 from Portrush. The former 12:50 from Coleraine has been altered to depart at 12:56. The 12:23 ex Coleraine takes a connection off the 11:40 ex Londonderry and saves University and Portrush bound passengers almost half an hour.

A number of services on the Larne line which previously started from Great Victoria Street have been cut back to Belfast Central, the affected trains being the 14:51 to Whitehead, 20:05, 21:05 and 21:53 to Larne and 23:10 to Carrickfergus. Intending passengers for these services must now travel on Bangor trains departing Great Victoria Street at 14:48, 20:02, 21:00, 21:47 and 23:07 respectively. Similar cuts have been made in the opposite direction.

### ***(Saturdays)***

The 14:15 Londonderry/Belfast now departs at 14:40 and operates as on Monday to Fridays as far as Great Victoria Street before continuing in a slightly earlier path to Belfast Central. The 17:10 ex Londonderry is advanced to 17:05 and operates as on Mondays to Fridays as far as Lisburn before continuing in a slightly earlier path to Belfast Central via GVS. The former 14:15, 16:05 and 20:10 from Belfast Central to Londonderry now depart at 13:30, 15:56 and 20:30 respectively. These trains leave Great Victoria Street at 13:41, 16:08 and 20:40 and operate in the same path as on Mondays to Fridays.

Services on the Bangor and Larne lines after 18:00 have been recast in such a way as to reduce the number of Down workings on each line from eight to six, those to Larne running from Belfast Central only. Similar changes have been made in the Up direction although onward connections from Central to Great Victoria Street entail a wait of between nine and twenty minutes. Outbound connections are generally better with Larne and Bangor trains generally departing with one minute of each other.

### ***(Sundays)***

Morning and afternoon trains on the Bangor and Larne lines have been recast in such a way as to give paired arrivals and departures at Central. This arrangement allows the curtailment of the Larne line service at Central with Bangor trains providing connections to and from Great Victoria Street. These

changes have resulted in a slight increase in Larne line frequencies and a reduction from eleven to nine in the number of trains running to Bangor. The first train from Larne Harbour now departs at 09:00 instead of 10:15 and connects at Central with the 09:55 to Londonderry and the 10:00 to Dublin.

### **Traffic**

The 11:00 Belfast/Dublin service, 202 + 7 Mk2s + EGV, was held at Lisburn from 11:17 to 11:29 on 6<sup>th</sup> May awaiting a taxi from Belfast. Apparently a passenger had been given incorrect information, and as there is no further service until the 15:00 ex Belfast it was decided to hold the train!

A combination of attractions on 18<sup>th</sup> May including the North West 200 cycle race, the Ireland v Barbarians international rugby match and a Neil Diamond concert helped produce a great deal of extra activity on NIR. Both the concert and the rugby match were in Dublin while the cycle race was centred around Portrush and Coleraine. The regular 08:00 and 09:30 ex Belfast were formed by 209 + 12 Mk2s and 208 + 11 Mk2s respectively. A relief train also operated leaving Belfast at 08:35 and Dublin at 18:30, the Up train formed by 95+4+82 while the return working consisted of 82+4+95+2+84. A concert special which was due to leave Belfast at 12:00 was formed by borrowed Irish Rail stock and consisted of 080 + GSV + 8 Cr. The return working serving, Newry, Portadown, Lurgan, Lisburn and Belfast, was advertised to depart from Dublin (Connolly) at 23:55 and consisted of 085 + EGV + 9 Mk2s. A fare of £13.50 was charged from Belfast and intermediate stations. It is reported that the empty Irish Rail stock was used to form a Lisburn/Bangor special before taking up its booked duty on the 12:00 to Dublin. Most services on the Belfast/Londonderry line were strengthened with many trains being diverted to run to and from Portrush. Relief trains ran from Belfast (Central) to Portrush at 09:03, formed by 89+4+92, and also from Ballymena at 08:50. In the evening there was an additional Portrush/Belfast train at 18:25. There was also a shuttle service in operation between Portrush and Dhu Varren. The full schedule on this date from Portrush was **06:44, 08:20, 09:15** (Belfast), 10:20, **11:20** (Belfast), 12:15, **12:35** (Belfast), 13:35, 13:50\*, **14:35**, 14:50\*, 15:50, 15:50\*, 16:30 (Ballymena), 16:50\*, **17:35** (Belfast), **18:25** (Belfast), 18:40, 19:20, **19:37** (Belfast), 20:20, 21:40 and 22:20. Trains other than these with a bracketed destination operated to Coleraine, while these flagged with an asterisk made the half mile trip as far as Dhu Varren only. (**Emboldened** times indicate either a connection or through service to Belfast). Some 8,000 additional passengers were carried throughout the system on this date with regular and special trains requiring the use of no less than twenty-seven out of the fleet of thirty railcar sets.

An 09:30 special operated from Portadown to Londonderry on 2<sup>nd</sup> June formed by a nine-car 80 class set, motor coaches 81, 94 and 84. The following 09:50 from Portadown was an eight-car set, motor coaches 93, 92 and 67, and also operated to Londonderry. These trains, which operated via Lisburn and Antrim, were carrying Armagh GAA supporters to a fixture in the maiden city. Return trains departed at 18:20 and 19:00, the latter a regular service to Carrickfergus which was diverted at Lisburn on this date. The previous day, a Saturday, featured an 08:50 Portadown/Portrush special for Sunday school excursionists. This train returned at 18:35 and remained in Portadown to form the 09:30 to Londonderry. Other specials on 1<sup>st</sup> June included an 07:30 from Dublin to Londonderry formed by 087 + 7 Mk3 + EGV, including the vehicles of the Irish Rail executive train. This train, which was carrying a party of IRRS members and guests, was the first working on the Belfast line scheduled to operate at speeds of up to 90 mph although various slacks limited the potential for high speed running. Nonetheless the eight miles from MP 38 to MP 46 was covered in 5'17", an average of almost 91 mph. A slow transit through the Dundalk area was followed by more mundane running as the traditional 70 mph limit is still applicable on NIR. The return IRRS special departed at 15:05 after a civic reception in the Guildhall.

The traditional specials for Sunday School and other parties operated throughout June with most groups

heading for Portrush, Mosney or Crawfordsburn. A slightly unusual working was the 08:30 from Poyntzpass to Portrush on 8<sup>th</sup> June which consisted of a nine-car set, motor coaches 84, 89 and 96. This train conveyed groups from Poyntzpass, Portadown, Belfast Central, Ballymena and Cullybackey, with some 300 joining at Portadown alone. Passengers from Belfast travelled on an 09:00 special to Lisburn (92+2). The return train left Portrush at 18:35 and repeated the procedure in reverse, the Belfast group changing at Lisburn into the regular 20:00 ex Portadown. On Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> June the 09:30 ex Belfast called at Scarva to pick up a group for Mosney who returned on a special train at 15:55.

A lightning Ulsterbus strike in the Newry area on 4<sup>th</sup> November meant that the advertised 07:20 bus from Newry station to Poyntzpass did not operate. As a consequence passengers intending to travel on the 07:40 Poyntzpass/Bangor were delayed by between twenty and thirty minutes while arrangements were made to work the train from Newry.

A new 14:50 Belfast (Central) to Newry service has been running on Fridays only since 8<sup>th</sup> November. The new train stops at Botanic and Portadown only and returns empty to Great Victoria Street in time to form the 16:50 to Larne Town. As there were no signalling facilities at Newry on either the 8<sup>th</sup> or 15<sup>th</sup> November it was necessary to use the Down line between Poyntzpass and Newry on both these dates so as to avoid blocking the following 15:00 Belfast (Central) to Dublin service.

### **Locomotives and Rolling Stock**

Driving trailer 739 was returned to traffic at the end of May following repairs at Adtranz facility in Derby.

Hunslet locomotive 102 resumed pilot duties at Adelaide at the beginning of April.



***Hunslet 102 shunts locomotives 101, 106 and 108 at Adelaide on 14<sup>th</sup> September 1996.***

201 class locomotives have had their route availability within Northern Ireland further restricted and are no longer permitted on either the Lisburn/Antrim branch or the York Road to Antrim line. This change essentially confines the locomotives to the cross-border route, Great Victoria Street and approaches, Adelaide yard and Central Station to York Road depot. Operation was never permitted between Bleach Green Junction and Larne Harbour, between Lagan Junction and Bangor, or north of Antrim. The locomotives are also forbidden to the enter the Down sidings at Portadown, all sidings at Lisburn, certain sidings at Adelaide and the remnants of the "third road" which links Adelaide to the Guinness compound. Similarly the Down loop at Lisburn and the outer faces of the two island platforms at Belfast Central are also out of bounds.

### **Portrush Branch**

Two interesting developments have taken place recently on the Portrush branch involving land formerly in railway ownership. The most novel of these is at the University station where a narrow triangular strip of land between the Cromore Road and the railway has been used for the building of houses of residence for university students. The site for the residences was made larger by also taking in ground on the other side of the railway and linking the two with a footbridge. Obviously both sites would have been unsuitable for private housing due to the proximity of the railway and the small amount of land involved.

The second development is taking place at the site of the old B&NCR station at Portstewart where the main station building has been converted into three apartments and the forecourt developed into a courtyard with further apartments on either side.



*Portstewart station takes on a new role as an apartment complex.*

### **Civil Disturbances And Related Problems**

Services between Dublin and Belfast were disrupted on 8<sup>th</sup> July by a bomb scare at Poyntzpass which closed the line from 16:00 to 07:45 the next day. The 06:55 ex Poyntzpass to Dundalk started from Newry. Further bomb scares, disruption and intimidation occurred on the 10<sup>th</sup> July with services throughout Northern Ireland being disrupted to a greater or lesser degree until 15<sup>th</sup> July at which stage all lines had been reopened, the barricades at Lurgan being the last to be dealt with. Many special trains were cancelled and there was a near collapse in cross-border business in the immediate aftermath of these disturbances. There were yet further bomb scares in the Lurgan area which closed the line from late Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> October until early Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> October and again from Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> October to late Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> October.

### **Miscellaneous**

Weekly tickets were finally introduced from Newry (and Portadown) to Dundalk, Drogheda and Dublin with effect from 2<sup>nd</sup> September. The Newry/Dublin fare is £28 for Adults and £20 for students, the corresponding fares to Dundalk being £10 and £7 respectively. Publicity leaflets indicate that these tickets are only available at Portadown and Newry stations between **07:20 and 16:00**, Mondays to Saturdays.

Day tracker tickets, valid for unlimited return travel on the NIR network, were available from 1<sup>st</sup> July to 30<sup>th</sup> August with the exception of 12<sup>th</sup>/13<sup>th</sup> July and 10<sup>th</sup> August. Fares were £12.50 for families, £5 for Adults and £2.50 for children. These fares were further reduced to £5, £2 and £1 respectively on Sundays. These tickets were valid for use on all trains on Saturdays and Sundays but were not generally valid on until after 10:00 on Mondays to Fridays (09:19 ex Newry, 09:55 ex Londonderry and 09:51 ex Central).

Seven days unlimited travel is available on NIR, Ulsterbus and Citybus for £30. Unlimited travel for one day on the services of the same three undertakings is available for £9.

The Irish Rail weed-spray train toured the NIR system between 13<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> May and was hauled on this occasion by 112.

Plans for the proposed retail development at the Belfast Harbour estate are understood to include a new station on the Bangor line between Sydenham and Holywood.

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## **Irish Rail Mainline Timetable Review 1996/7**

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The new mainline timetable, introduced on 20<sup>th</sup> May contains many positive features although there are some depressing alterations particularly on the Westport line. The main improvements are as follows:

- Reduced journey times on some weekday Cork line services, notably the 10:45 and 15:25 ex Heuston.
- Additional through trains in either direction from Limerick to both Cork and Dublin.
- New early morning service at 05:30 from Galway, new early evening service to Galway.
- Consolidation of weekend relief trains into the main timetable and the introduction of a number of additional services particularly on Sundays.
- Introduction of Mk3 International coaches on the Dublin/Galway line with the first departure from

Dublin advanced to 07:20.

### ***Dublin - Cork (Down direction)***

The MO 05:40 ex Heuston is advanced to 05:35 with the same stops and overall timing (the TS 08:00 Mallow to Cork is advanced to 07:55). The Arrow formed 06:50 Heuston - Portarlington is advanced to 06:40 and extended to Portlaoise. Cork passengers on the morning Heuston - Tralee service leave 15 minutes earlier at 08:55, arriving in Cork, after a change at Mallow, 20 minutes earlier at 12:00. While the FO 10:45 to Cork is advanced to 10:35 and decelerated by 5 minutes, the 11:00 ex Heuston is deferred to 11:25, runs non-stop to Thurles, and arrives in Cork at 14:02 (an acceleration of 18 minutes), this being due to the introduction of a new 10:45 Heuston - Limerick to act as a sweeper service in front. No change is made to the 13:20 ex Heuston, while the 15:10 is deferred to 15:25, runs non-stop to Limerick Junction and arrives in Cork five minutes earlier at 17:50, this again being due to the introduction of a Heuston - Limerick sweeper service in front. No change is made to the FO 16:30 or 17:20 ex Heuston, while the 19:00 is deferred to 19:05 with no change in its 3 hour 5 minute journey time. The 21:00 is unchanged except on Saturdays when an accelerated path results in a Cork arrival time of 00:05. On Sundays Cork passengers leave 20 minutes earlier on the morning Heuston - Tralee service at 08:30. The 10:15 direct service is 20 minutes slower due to engineering works, whilst a new 11:30 ex Heuston service is introduced serving Portlaoise, Thurles and Mallow, arriving in Cork at 14:15. Another new service is the 12:15 non-stop Arrow service which arrives in Cork at 14:50. The 13:20 is accelerated by 5 minutes whilst retaining the same stops. No changes are made to the 17:50, but the 19:00 is deferred 15 minutes, retaining its overall timing. Finally the 21:30 is advanced 15 minutes and again retains its overall timing.

### ***Cork - Dublin (Up direction)***

The first major change here is the alteration of the former 08:10 Portarlington - Heuston to depart from Portlaoise at 07:58. The 19:10 ex Cork is advanced to 19:00 and is accelerated by five minutes. On Sundays the former 09:10 becomes the 08:50, arriving in Heuston correspondingly earlier. The 18:40 ex Cork is deferred to 18:45 and runs non-stop from Thurles, arriving in Heuston at 21:25, this change being made possible by the introduction of a following Limerick - Heuston service serving all stations.

### ***Dublin - Limerick & Ennis (Down direction)***

The earlier departure of the morning Heuston - Tralee service results in a Limerick arrival time (following a change at Limerick Junction) of 11:13 - previously 11:38, with Ennis being reached at 12:25. A new service operates at 10:45 from Heuston to Limerick via the Limerick Junction direct curve and serves all mainline stations except Ballybrophy, arriving in Limerick at 13:07. On Fridays only there is a new 12:50 Heuston - Limerick observing the same stopping pattern as the 10:45 ex Heuston and arriving in Limerick at 15:15. Yet another new service leaves Heuston at 14:35 for Limerick (via Limerick Junction) arriving at 17:13 and in addition to a stop at Limerick Junction serves all mainline stations except Ballybrophy. No connection is now provided to Limerick off the 15:25 Heuston - Cork, although the preceding 14:35 is scheduled to depart at 16:47, four minutes before the arrival of the Cork train. The Fridays only 16:30 Heuston - Cork has an earlier connection from Limerick Junction, with a Limerick arrival time of 18:52. No change is made to the 17:30 Heuston - Ennis as far as Limerick although Ennis is reached five minutes earlier at 20:20. The FX 17:40 Heuston - Limerick is unaltered to Limerick Junction, but now leaves that station at 20:07 resulting in a Limerick arrival time of 20:53. On Sundays Limerick is reached at 10:40 by connection off the 08:30 Heuston - Tralee, and a new 12:45 Arrow formed non-stop service is provided from Heuston arriving at 14:50, this train operating from 22<sup>nd</sup> September to 17<sup>th</sup> May only. The connection to Ennis is now provided off the 13:45 Heuston - Limerick, rather than via the 13:20 Heuston - Cork, Ennis being reached at 17:10, 20 minutes later than before. The advancement of the late evening Heuston - Cork service by fifteen minutes to 21:15 results in a correspondingly earlier Limerick connection arrival time

of 23:52.

#### ***Ennis & Limerick - Dublin (Up direction)***

Some changes are made to the departure times of connecting trains for Cork - Dublin services, the most significant being the advancing of the former 12:00 Limerick - Limerick Junction to 11:30. New direct Limerick - Heuston services are introduced at 14:45, 15:45 (FO), and 17:45, all of which run non-stop to Heuston except the 17:45 which serves Thurles only. Dublin arrival times are 16:52, 17:45 and 19:50 respectively. The afternoon Ennis - Limerick train now departs at 13:50, and connects with the 14:45 service to Dublin and the 15:10 to Cork. No connection is now provided from Limerick into the 17:30 Cork - Heuston service. On Sundays the advancement of the Up morning Cork - Dublin Service by 20 minutes results in a similar advancement for Dublin bound passengers ex Limerick. The direct Limerick - Heuston service is also 20 minutes earlier at 09:45, retaining its overall schedule of 2 hours and 31 minutes. A new Arrow formed non-stop service runs between 22<sup>nd</sup> September and 17<sup>th</sup> May, departing Limerick at 17:20 and arriving in Heuston at 19:30. Another new direct service is introduced year-round at 19:30 to Heuston via Limerick Junction serving all mainline stations, and arriving in Dublin at 22:10.

#### ***Dublin - Limerick via Nenagh (Both directions)***

A tedious, unimaginative and uncompetitive service continues to be provided with only minor alterations made, these being of a negative nature.

#### ***Dublin & Cork - Tralee (Down direction)***

The MO 06:30 Cork - Tralee service is discontinued, and the 09:10 ex Cork is decelerated by five minutes between Mallow and Tralee, to arrive in that station at 11:25. (From 15<sup>th</sup> July the 09:20 ex Tralee was altered to serve Killarney from 09:59 to 10:12 and in consequence the 09:10 ex Cork is delayed correspondingly at Rathmore and now arrives in Tralee at 11:34, a cumulative deceleration of fourteen minutes. This change was apparently made to provide a connection off an incoming bus service, a rare occurrence these days.) The morning service ex Heuston is advanced by 15 minutes to 08:55, giving a correspondingly earlier Tralee arrival time of 13:10. Passengers on the re-scheduled 11:25 Heuston - Cork arrive in Tralee at 15:25 (having changed trains at Mallow), an acceleration of 25 minutes. On Sundays the 08:50 ex Heuston now leaves at 08:30 and arrives in Tralee correspondingly earlier at 12:30. A new limited stop Heuston - Killarney service is introduced at 13:05, serving Thurles, Mallow and then all stations to Killarney, where it arrives at 16:15. The evening service is retimed to 19:00 (20 minutes earlier) and is decelerated by 5 minutes to arrive in Tralee at 22:55.

#### ***Tralee - Cork & Dublin (Up direction)***

The 10:00 Tralee - Cork (a through train to Heuston on Fridays only) is retimed to 09:20, while the 12:05 Tralee - Cork is altered to depart at 11:45, arriving in Cork at 14:15. The 17:50 Tralee - Cork departs at 17:45, with Dublin passengers reaching Heuston at 22:00. On Sundays the 07:50 Tralee - Cork is altered to depart at 07:30 so as to connect with the earlier Cork - Heuston service. A new 17:00 Killarney - Heuston is introduced serving all stations to Mallow, thence Thurles only, to arrive in Heuston at 20:15. The evening Tralee - Cork service is deferred 5 minutes to 17:40, arriving in Cork at 20:00.

#### ***Dublin - Waterford (Down direction)***

No major changes here except that the 14:45 Heuston - Waterford is retimed to 15:05, arriving in Waterford at 17:40, having been decelerated by 5 minutes. The evening service from Heuston now departs 5 minutes later at 18:15, with no change in overall timing.

### **Waterford - Dublin (Up direction)**

The MO “Early Bird” service is advanced to 05:20, one hour earlier, arriving in Heuston at 08:00, a deceleration of 10 minutes. This appears to be an economy measure designed to avoid running two early morning trains on Monday mornings. The 05:20 ex Waterford takes up the path of the 06:45 ex Carlow which operates on Tuesdays to Fridays. The evening service from Waterford now departs at 18:25, and is accelerated by 2 minutes to arrive in Heuston at 20:58. A new FO 19:55 Waterford - Heuston is introduced formed by the Arrow set off the FO 16:50 ex Heuston. This new train serves all mainline stations, except Thomastown and Newbridge, to arrive in Heuston at 22:26.

### **Dublin - Westport & Ballina (Both directions)**

A general easing of schedules is made in both directions so as to allow for more speed restrictions, most trains being allowed between 5 and 15 minutes extra to complete their journeys, with minor adjustments being made to the departure time of Up (Dublin bound) trains. The only positive feature is the Fridays only 16:40 Heuston - Ballina (previously 16:50) which apart from calling at Portarlington runs non-stop from Heuston to Athlone, resulting in a 10 minute reduction in journey time, Ballina now being reached at 20:35. On Sundays the 07:40 Westport - Athlone is advanced to 07:30 so as to connect with the earlier Galway - Heuston service.

### **Dublin - Galway (Both directions)**

The introduction of the Mk3 International set has led to some modest reductions in overall timings of some services, with one notable exception. This set works the 07:20 and 14:25 ex Heuston, and the 10:50 and 18:05 ex Galway. The 07:50 ex Heuston is advanced to 07:20, no longer stops at Kildare and arrives in Galway at 10:00, an acceleration of 10 minutes. The 11:10 Down is advanced by 10 minutes, but still takes 2 hour and 50 minutes to complete its journey. A new 11:30 limited stop summer Saturday service operates between 6<sup>th</sup> July and 31<sup>st</sup> August as a relief to the 11:00 Down. This new train serves Tullamore, Athlone, Ballinasloe and Athenry to arrive in Galway at 14:18. The set returns as a 14:50 service to Heuston, serving Athenry, Ballinasloe, Athlone and Portarlington, with a Dublin arrival time of 17:28. The 14:55 Down is advanced to 14:25, and is accelerated by 5 minutes to give a Galway arrival time of 17:05. A new Monday to Thursday 16:50 (FO 17:00) operates from Heuston to Galway, and is in fact an extension of the former Athlone service. This train arrives in Galway at 19:45 having served all stations from Hazelhatch to Galway except Woodlawn and Attymon. The 17:00 service on Fridays only runs non-stop from Heuston to Kildare and takes up 16:50 path from Kildare. This set returns as a new MF 05:30 ex Galway (again the former Athlone service extended) arriving in Heuston at 08:20 with a similar stopping pattern to the Down 16:50 service. On Saturdays only this set returns from Galway as a new 11:30 to Heuston, serving Athenry, Ballinasloe, Athlone, Clara and Tullamore to arrive in Dublin at 14:07. The 18:50 ex Heuston is deferred by 5 minutes, and suffers a 2 minute deceleration to arrive in Galway at 21:32. In the Up direction the 07:50 ex Galway is advanced to 07:45 and is decelerated by 3 minutes to arrive in Heuston at 10:18. The 11:20 Up is accelerated by 4 minutes, but now omits its former Clara stop, while the 15:25 ex Galway is decelerated by 3 minutes to arrive in Heuston at 18:13. Most disappointingly the 18:20 ex Galway is advanced to 18:05 and suffers a deceleration of 13 minutes despite being formed of 100 mph Mk3 (International) stock. On Sundays the Down 09:25 is advanced to 09:10 with no change in journey time, whilst in the opposite direction the 08:50 Up is advanced to 08:35, and is accelerated by 5 minutes to arrive in Heuston at 11:15.

### **Dublin - Sligo (Both directions)**

Only minor changes here with the 17:15 Connolly - Longford accelerated by 10 minutes due to the elimination of a crossing with the Up evening Sligo passenger service. The Down 18:30 is advanced to 18:20 with no change in journey time. In the Up direction the MO 04:50 ex Sligo arrives 5 minutes

earlier at 08:27 while the Tuesdays to Fridays 06:20 ex Longford is advanced to 06:15 (this is formed by the 04:50 on Mondays only). Both the 07:50 and 13:25 ex Sligo are accelerated by 3 minutes, while the 17:40 ex Sligo is deferred to 18:15, but has an unaltered journey time of 3 hours and 10 minutes. On Sundays in the Down direction the 09:00, 13:40 and 18:15 ex Connolly become the 08:40, 13:30 and 18:20 respectively, with insignificant changes to journey times. In the Up line direction on Sundays the 08:55 ex Sligo is advanced by 20 minutes with an acceleration of 2 minutes, while the 18:45 winter service from Longford is deferred to 18:50 with no change in journey time. The 18:10 ex Sligo is advanced to 18:00 but decelerated by no less than 17 minutes to arrive in Connolly at 21:27. (This train is generally composed of thirteen Mk2s.)

#### ***Dublin - Rosslare (Both directions)***

This service is now shown in the public timetable in a single year-round format, without separate columns for Sunday services, a positive change which should be done on other routes. New afternoon Sunday services are introduced and operate in established weekday paths. There are other slight alterations to services, but overall journey times remain very uncompetitive. The 09:35 Down (Sundays excepted) is advanced to 08:45 and operates as a through service from Maynooth. This train now calls additionally at Tara Street, Pearse, Sydney Parade and Blackrock and arrives in Rosslare at 11:50, an unsurprising 10 minute deceleration. The 13:38 ex Connolly becomes the 13:33 daily service, the 18:30 Down operates on a similar basis, in the Up direction the 07:35 (Monday to Saturday) ex Rosslare is advanced to 07:25 with no change in its 2 hour and 55 minute schedule. The 15:00 ex Rosslare becomes a daily 14:55 service, and is accelerated by 5 minutes to arrive in Connolly at 17:55. The Up daily evening service now departs at 18:00, arriving in Connolly at 20:50. New summer Saturday relief trains operate on 3<sup>rd</sup> June and 3<sup>rd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> August, departing Connolly for Gorey at 12:53 and 16:25, arriving at 14:45 and 18:15 respectively. These trains return at 15:20 and 18:40 ex Gorey, arriving in Connolly at 17:17 and 20:26.

#### ***Limerick - Rosslare (Both directions)***

The summer only (4<sup>th</sup> June to 31<sup>st</sup> August) weekday service from Limerick to Rosslare now leaves 30 minutes earlier at 10:10, leaving Limerick Junction at 10:55 (formerly 11:15) and arriving in Rosslare at 13:35. No other changes are made to the poor level of service on this line. Passengers travelling from Dublin to intermediate stations between Limerick Junction and Waterford must now depart Heuston at 13:20 in order to connect with the 16:35 departure from Limerick Junction to Rosslare. (The 14:35 and 15:10 ex Heuston are scheduled to arrive in Limerick Junction at 16:36 and 16:51 respectively.)

#### ***Cork - Cobh (Both directions)***

The extra late evening trains introduced after the previous timetable was published are retained at 22:25 and 23:25 ex Cork, returning at 22:55 and 23:55 ex Cobh. Sunday services are altered somewhat with departures from Cork at 11:25, 13:00, 14:00, 15:00, 16:00, 17:00, 18:45 and 20:15. Corresponding workings depart Cobh at 11:55, 13:30, 14:30, 15:30, 16:30, 17:30, 19:15 and 20:45.

#### ***Limerick - Cork (Both directions)***

A new direct service is introduced at 15:10 ex Limerick, serving all stations to Cork. The return working is at 17:10 arriving in Limerick at 18:52, again serving all stations. On Sundays there is a new 16:45 Limerick - Cork service arriving at 18:20, while in the opposite direction there is a new 16:45 Cork - Limerick, both trains serving all stations en route.

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# Dublin Suburban Timetable Review 1996/7

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A new timetable became effective on 20<sup>th</sup> May and features a number of innovative changes, most notably an increase in the number of six-car DART sets deployed during the morning peak, the extension of several push/pull operated Northern outer suburban services to Bray and the extension of several Maynooth services over the loop line to serve Pearse and Tara Street. The latter change establishes a direct link to the more popular city centre stations and by so doing avoids some of the delays which are liable to occur when several hundred Maynooth line passengers descend on an already overloaded DART at Connolly.

There are also some additional off-peak services on the Northern and Western suburban routes including the provision of a mid-morning service to and from Enfield.

(Unless explicitly indicated to the contrary the discussion below under the various headings relates to services on Mondays to Fridays only.)

## **DART**

A new “Boat Train” is provided from Connolly to Bray at 05:55 on Mondays to Saturdays stopping at Dun Laoghaire only and connecting with the 06:40 HSS from there to Holyhead. The set used to form the new service previously ran empty from Fairview to Bray.

Northbound Monday to Friday services are somewhat recast in the morning as a result of which there are now four rather than five departures from Bray between 07:30 and 08:02. Although the 07:50 ex Bray is a six-piece set the former 07:58 ex Bray was also a six-piece formation and there is thus an 18% reduction in capacity during this period. This change releases a four-car set which has been used to strengthen two other sets to six-piece formations. The 08:08 and 08:26 ex Howth, both of which could have done with additional accommodation ten years ago, are the beneficiaries and this change combined with alterations to the Maynooth service has noticeably improved the general punctuality of north/south traffic during the morning peak. The reduction in departures from Bray earlier in the morning is reflected in the cancellation of the 08:37 from Howth Junction to Pearse, the path south of Connolly being used by the 08:02 Maynooth to Rosslare Europort. The former 08:53 from Howth Junction to Dun Laoghaire, which was a six-piece set, has reverted to a four-car formation and now starts from Howth at 08:47 and runs through to Bray. There is an additional service from Howth at 09:27, although the 09:13 ex Howth Junction no longer operates, its absence being compensated for by altering the 09:00 and 09:18 ex Howth to depart at 09:03 and 09:17 respectively, the former being the return of the 07:50 ex Bray and therefore a six-car formation.

There are now very few short DART workings with only one train scheduled to commence at Howth Junction, two at Dun Laoghaire and none at Dalkey. No DART trains start from Pearse although the 08:52 and 09:27 ex Howth terminate there. A small number of trains start from, or terminate, at Connolly at the beginning or end of the day or on either side of the morning and evening peak periods. On Saturdays and Sundays there are no short workings other than to and from Connolly at the beginning and end of the day.

The Monday to Friday morning peak DART service now utilises seventeen sets, four of which are six-car sets. Seventy-six of the eighty-car fleet are thus in service every morning representing an availability factor of 95%. Six-piece sets are little used in the evening peak or on Saturdays, although they were frequently employed this year to accommodate the large crowds which are such a feature of

DART on a warm summer Sunday. The more extensive use of six-piece sets has been made possible by the provision of CCTV screens at stations where the driver's visibility would otherwise be compromised.

In order to accommodate new stations at Clontarf Road and Barrow Street, the latter not yet the subject of a planning application, DART schedules have been extended to 62 minutes northbound and 61 minutes southbound. These times are extended during the peak periods to 64 minutes northbound and 65 minutes southbound. The additional allowances are presently providing a margin of recovery during the peak periods thus compensating for delays arising from overcrowding and increased station dwell time. At other times the additional running time has proven to be a major headache with services in some instances departing from intermediate points up to seven minutes ahead of schedule. (A DART set is easily capable of completing a Bray/Howth or Howth/Bray trip in under 55 minutes and with some modifications to signalling and ATP timers could probably complete the trip in 51 minutes or less.) The extended schedule built into the current timetable has further distorted the irregular service pattern which applies at off-peak periods. While there are still four trains per hour in either direction, the interval between trains varies erratically and could be anything from 10 to 25 minutes depending on the time of the day. Departures from Bray at 14:10, 14:25, 14:45, 14:58, 15:15, 15:28, 15:40, 15:58 and 15:12 clearly illustrate the nature of the problem. The additional running time has further exacerbated the shortage of sets during the morning peak although this has been partially alleviated by the use of push/pull sets to form services from Bray at 08:53 and 09:20. The shortage of sets appears to be responsible for the gap in southbound DARTS between the 07:34 and 07:53 ex Howth, although given that the previous service is at 07:26 and the following service is at 07:58 a revised pattern of departures at 07:26, 07:39 and 07:52 would seem more sensible even if this involved running the 07:39 non-stop from Dun Laoghaire to Bray in order to allow sufficient time to take up the running of the 08:44 Bray/Howth service.

Saturday DART services follow the Monday to Friday pattern except that services are significantly less frequent before 10:00 and between 16:00 and 19:00. During the two periods mentioned service patterns are very irregular with gaps of up to 27 minutes between trains.

Sunday DART services are little altered although, as on weekdays, the service interval is now less regular than formerly. A new service operates at 09:15 from Howth to Bray to connect into the 10:00 Connolly/Rosslare Europort which previously departed at 10:25. The 13:10 ex Howth and 17:20 ex Bray are both deferred five minutes in order to accommodate new mainline services at 13:33 from Connolly and 14:55 from Rosslare Europort.

### **Northern, Western, South Western and South Eastern Diesel Services**

The major change here is the re-introduction of morning peak services between Northern outer suburban stations and Bray for the first time since the inauguration of DART in 1984. The 06:40 ex Dundalk and 07:28 ex Drogheda both of which previously operated to Pearse, now run to Bray serving Lansdowne Road, Sydney Parade, Blackrock, Dun Laoghaire, Dalkey and Killiney. Return workings serving the same intermediate stations between Bray and Pearse depart at 08:53 and 09:20, the former to Drogheda and the latter to Connolly.

There are a number of new services including the 08:53 Bray/Drogheda (09:25 ex Pearse on Saturdays), the 10:55 Drogheda/Pearse (MS) and the 21:00 Connolly/Dundalk (MF). A new 20:00 Dundalk/Connolly runs on weekdays taking connection off the NIR local service from Larne Harbour which arrives in Dundalk at 19:34 on Mondays to Fridays and 19:41 on Saturdays. The 19:35 ex Drogheda now runs additionally on Saturdays thus utilising one of up to three empty carriage workings which previously ran on Saturdays evenings. Up local services from Drogheda, on weekdays, have been altered in such a way as to give an approximately hourly service from 09:50 to 17:55, although

there is no 14:50 departure. The weekday 06:57 ex Arklow was again extended to Dundalk during July and August although this year the additional mileage was worked as empty carriages. The stock then formed a 10:30 departure from Dundalk which took up the path of the 10:55 ex Drogheda, due in Connolly at 11:48 and Pearse at 11:54. The 09:30 Pearse/Mosney and 10:30 Mosney/Pearse have been cancelled and are replaced by the new Drogheda services. The two Mosney trains, which ran on weekdays during the summer season, were introduced a few years ago to compensate for the depletion in off-peak local services which had left the holiday complex almost inaccessible to day trippers from the Dublin direction.

Peak period services from Newry, Dundalk and Drogheda are decelerated, the worst affected being the 07:20 ex Newry which now leaves at 07:10 and involves a change of trains at Dundalk from an Arrow railcar set to Cravens. This train which is due in Pearse one minute later at 09:04 invariably spends several minutes in Drogheda, Laytown and Balbriggan waiting for time but seldom reaches its destination as scheduled due to congestion between Connolly and Pearse. The push/pull previously employed on this service now forms the 06:40 ex Dundalk as the latter tends to be more heavily loaded and in any event cannot be formed by hauled stock as running round in Bray would be both disruptive and time consuming. In the evening the push/pull formerly employed on the 16:52 Pearse/Drogheda now works the 15:40 Pearse/Drogheda, 16:48 Drogheda/Pearse and 18:27 Pearse/Dundalk. The four-piece Arrow which was formerly used on the 15:40 from Pearse now works the 16:52 Pearse/Drogheda, 17:55 Drogheda/Connolly and 19:10 Connolly/Dundalk. The last mentioned service was formerly worked by a two-piece Arrow set which was not otherwise used during the evening peak. This Arrow now finds employment on the Maynooth line as part of the 4-piece set forming the 14:00 ex Connolly, 16:10 ex Pearse, 17:55 ex Connolly, 15:05, 17:05 and 19:10 ex Maynooth. This Maynooth set then splits, the first portion forming the 20:55 to Maynooth, the second portion the 22:10 to Dundalk.

The 16:32 Connolly/Drogheda (MF) now runs from Pearse as has been the case on Saturdays for some time. This long overdue change means passengers can now leave Tara Street and Pearse stations thirteen minutes later than would otherwise be the case. Unfortunately a number of other well patronised trains continue to start from or terminate at Connolly including the 11:50 and 12:50 from Drogheda and the 19:10, 21:00 and 22:10 to Dundalk. This latter is now operated by a two-piece Arrow railcar set and although departing ten minutes later than previously is only two minutes later into Dundalk. The 07:43 ex Drogheda no longer runs on Saturdays thus releasing the set to form a new 07:02 Dundalk/Pearse which runs in the path of the Monday to Friday 07:28 Drogheda/Bray as between Drogheda and Howth Junction.

Changes on the Maynooth line include the additional services at 22:10 ex Connolly and 22:50 ex Maynooth, both of which run non-stop between Castleknock and Connolly. The existing 20:15 to Maynooth is deferred to 20:55 and now returns from Maynooth at 21:35 instead of 21:05. These two trains no longer serve Broombridge and Ashtown and appear to have been altered to create paths for Sligo liners at 19:40 and 20:15 ex North Wall. The 06:20 ex Longford now departs at 06:15 and runs five minutes earlier throughout thus allowing the 08:09 ex Maynooth to be advanced to 08:02. The latter train, which also runs on Saturdays, operates through to Rosslare Europort and in addition to serving all stations from Maynooth to Connolly also stops at Tara Street, Pearse, Sydney Parade, Blackrock, Bray, Greystones, Wicklow and all stations thence to Rosslare Europort. The 10:40 ex Connolly is extended to Enfield each weekday and returns at 11:45 serving all stations to Connolly. The former 11:20 ex Maynooth no longer operates although there is a new 12:03 departure formed by the Enfield service. The weekday 15:05 ex Maynooth and 16:10 ex Connolly now operate to and from Pearse, an alteration whose success has proven yet again the popularity of Tara Street and Pearse stations. Incidentally the 08:02 ex Maynooth is currently loading around 450 passengers (MF), of whom at least 300 continue beyond Connolly. As mentioned elsewhere accommodation on afternoon

and early evening Arrow services to/from Maynooth has been doubled on Mondays to Thursdays thus considerably easing overcrowding problems.

The 07:30 Balbriggan/Connolly service, which is formed by the Dublin based Sligo Mk2 set, was advanced to depart at 07:28 with effect from 21<sup>st</sup> October and now serves Donabate. This train acts as a relief to the 06:40 ex Dundalk and 07:28 ex Drogheda but attracts only modest patronage as most potential passengers wish to travel to Tara Street, Pearse, Lansdowne Road and Sydney Parade.

The Sunday morning “Boat Train” service between Connolly and Dun Laoghaire now consists of one, rather than two return trips. The remaining workings, 08:30 ex Connolly and 09:00 ex Dun Laoghaire are generally formed by the push/pull set which subsequently forms the 11:30 Heuston/Cork, 15:00 Cork/Cobh, 15:30 Cobh/Cork, 16:45 Cork/Limerick and 19:35 Limerick/Heuston While the outbound service is non-stop, the return 09:00 ex Dun Laoghaire serves all stations to Connolly.

Diesel operated commuter services during the morning peak currently absorb eighteen sets, three formed by Cravens (06:15 ex Longford, 07:35 ex Dundalk and 06:57 ex Arklow), three push/pulls (06:40 ex Dundalk, 07:28 and 07:43 ex Drogheda), one four-piece railcar set (08:07 ex Dundalk), five two-piece railcar sets (07:08 ex Maynooth, 07:58 ex Portlaoise, 06:05 ex Dundalk, 06:45 ex Carlow, 06:50 ex Kildare), one Mk3 set (07:05 ex Portlaoise), three Mk2 sets (07:28 ex Balbriggan, 08:02 ex Maynooth and 05:20 ex Cork) and two air braked Mk2 sets (05:30 ex Galway and 07:00 ex Limerick). A nineteenth set, consisting of three or four Cravens, is spare at Connolly during the morning peak although reports suggest that this stock is sometimes used on the 06:45 ex Carlow should the rostered railcar set be unavailable.

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## Private Railways and Museums

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### Railway Preservation Society of Ireland

A serious fire occurred at the Whitehead premises of the RPSI on 22<sup>nd</sup> May. The blaze appears to have been started maliciously, a suspicion given further credence by evidence of forced entry through the perimeter fencing. Two firemen were injured by an exploding steam heating cylinder in one of the burning coaches during the course of the blaze which started around 20:30 and was extinguished by 22:00. The fire brigade were summoned by NIR control who had been informed of the outbreak by the driver of a passing train on the nearby Larne line.

Vehicles destroyed or suffering severe body damage include:

1328 (GSR Bredin of 1935)

1333 (GSR Bredin of 1936)

231 (GNR side corridor brake first)

227 (GNR side corridor first)

255 (LMS/NCC open third)

504 (GNR bogie goods van)

306 (Rebuilt by the UTA in 1951 for Festival Express)

Less severely damaged vehicles include a 10 ton open wagon of NCC origin, which was last used for coal traffic to the Courtaulds factory at Carrickfergus in the 1960s, and a 25 ton brake van of GNR origin.

Work on the refurbishment of the former state coach, 351, commenced in May under the auspices of a youth employment scheme based at Cabra. This vehicle is of GS&WR origin and was a survivor of 1992 carriage shop fire at Inchicore.

The RPSI have recently acquired Craven standard 1549 from Irish Rail. It is proposed that this vehicle

will be converted for catering/sales use and included in train sets hired from Irish Rail for use on lines over which RPSI wooden bodied stock is prohibited.

The 1996 operating season was a busy one for the RPSI although it was not without problems and incidents. The highlight was probably the annual two day tour which, while less adventurous than previous years, featured double heading, splitting and a superb express run from Dublin to Portadown behind GNR(I) 4-4-0 compound No.85. The society's own stock was used on the Sligo line and again from Portadown forward. Locos 461 and 171 double-headed from Dublin to Enfield on the outbound trip from Sligo to Boyle at the beginning of the return journey on the Sunday morning. The main part of the tour took place this year on 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> May with the now traditional Belfast/Portrush finale on 13<sup>th</sup> May being hauled by No.85.

The annual Portrush Flyers, routed via the Lisburn/Antrim line, ran on Saturdays 6<sup>th</sup> July, 20<sup>th</sup> July, 3<sup>rd</sup> August and 17<sup>th</sup> August with No.85 hauling the society's own rolling stock. The widespread disturbances in Northern Ireland during this year's "marching season" resulted in somewhat disappointing patronage particularly on the first two trips. A local trip was scheduled from Portrush to Castlerock on each of the four operating dates listed above.

Other activities in Northern Ireland included a mid-summer evening trip to Ballymena on 21<sup>st</sup> June again featuring No.85. The "Carlingford Express" scheduled to run from Belfast to Dundalk on 9<sup>th</sup> June was cancelled due to poor advance bookings.

The final Northern Ireland outing of the summer season took place on 7<sup>th</sup> September and was to have run from Belfast (Central) to Londonderry. The train set out as scheduled but the trip had to be abandoned when No.85's tender became derailed a short distance from Coleraine, on the approach to the automatic half barrier crossing at Damhead North. Nobody was injured and damage to the track was relatively minor although the long-term implications are as yet unclear, particularly in regard to the use of No.85's fixed wheelbase tender.

Dublin based activities proved to be somewhat more prosperous with some 1,400 travelling on the "Royal Canal" trips from Dublin to Maynooth and Maynooth to Enfield on 26<sup>th</sup> May. A private charter on 6<sup>th</sup> June brought 461 from Connolly to Rathdrum and back, the return trip successfully negotiating the evening rush hour. A most unusual working took place on 30<sup>th</sup> June, in connection with the Budweiser Irish Derby, when Irish Rail hired 171 to work the 12:40 Heuston/Curragh and 19:00 Curragh/Heuston specials. The train consisted of an EGV + 6 Mk2s and was stabled at Kildare, the engine returning light to Inchicore between trips. The steam-hauled train formed the last special in each direction and with preceding departures from the Curragh at 17:33, 18:15, 18:34 and 18:49 there were few patrons prepared to wait in unseasonably cold conditions for the return trip. The popular mid-summer night excursion from Dublin to Mullingar ran on 22<sup>nd</sup> June, the train consisting of No.171 hauling eight RPSI coaches. Some 300 passengers travelled leaving Dublin at 17:45 and Mullingar at 22:02. The return train was blocked by signals outside Connolly from 23:25 to 23:38 due to congestion caused by a number of concert specials awaiting departure for Cork and Limerick.

"Strawberry Fair" fair specials operated from Connolly to Enniscorthy and Enniscorthy to Rosslare on 6<sup>th</sup> July hauled by No.171. The "Sea Breeze" excursion to Wexford had to be curtailed at Enniscorthy on 20<sup>th</sup> July due to injector problems on 461. For the same reason the advertised Wexford/Rosslare trip was cancelled although 461 was able to work its train back to Dublin. The now annual "Greystones Shuttles" which were due to operate on 22<sup>nd</sup> September had to be cancelled due to the non availability of suitably experienced Irish Rail footplate staff. It is understood that a subsequent filming train had to be cancelled for the same reason.



*(6101) 5 p/p + 207 arrives at Heuston on Connolly/Heuston transfer, 4<sup>th</sup> August 1996.*