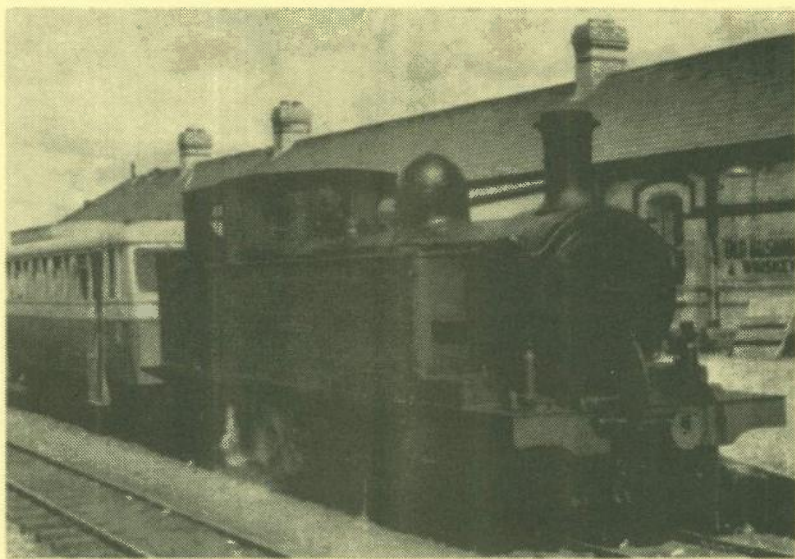


# THE NARROW GAUGE



**COUNTY DONEGAL RAILWAYS  
MEMORIAL NUMBER**

**THE NARROW GAUGE RAILWAY SOCIETY**

**No. 30 / 31 WINTER 1961/2**

## THE NARROW GAUGE

(Official Magazine of the Narrow Gauge Railway Society)

Editor : W.J.K.Davies, 126 Hughenden Road, St. Albans, Herts.

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### CONTENTS

Editorial

#### COUNTY DONEGAL RAILWAYS

History	2
Principal Dates	9
Track Lifting	10
Disposition of Stock pending Auction	10
Stations and Halts, with mileages	11
Bibliography	12
Map and Trackplans	D1 – D8
Steam Locomotives	14
Diesel Railcar Dimensions	14
Railcar Fleet details	15
Coaching Stock	16
Goods Rolling Stock	18
Envoi	22

*\* Compilers Note : due to the size of the original (31 pages), it was counted as equivalent to two 'normal' issues.*

We are very grateful to all those who have helped to produce this magazine, especially the C.D.R.J.C., and Messrs M.Bunch, S.A.Leleux, L.King, R.Ormiston-Chant and M.Hynd; and also to the owners or copyright holders of the blocks and photographs used, for permission to publish them.

Cover Photo : 2-6-4T "*Blanche*" and a railcar, forming the train for Letterkenny at Strabane on 2<sup>nd</sup> August 1958. The locomotive was going to Letterkenny to assist in working heavy bank holiday traffic in the reverse direction.  
(Photo : P.B. Whitehouse)

## Editorial

The County Donegal Railways Joint Committee - or, as nearly everyone called it - "the Donegal", was such an extensive and important system that no apologies need, we feel, be offered for devoting a whole double issue of the magazine to it. It was, after all, a fascinating railway - the largest narrow-gauge system in these islands - a pioneer in the use of petrol and diesel railcars which had a charm of their own on the journeys into the wild western parts of the country; and its magnificent red tank engines will be remembered with affection by all those who knew them.

We are only sorry it has taken so long [for this special edition to appear] for it is nearly two years since the railway closed, but the task of compiling and checking all the information made available by members was a long one. The main burden has been borne by Michael Bunch, who has a long acquaintance with the line, and to him particularly, your editor is grateful.

Even now, there are gaps in our knowledge. We have no reliable coaching stock list, and no track plans have come to light for the Glenties Branch. If anyone can supply such plans we will publish them in a later issue.....This is not intended as a final history in any case, but rather as a collection of what facts are readily available; we hope that you can be stimulated to further research, and hope that you will enjoy what we have managed to prepare.

## Illustrations

- 1) Mixed train at Donegal, headed by 2-6-4T "*Blanche*". (P.B.Whitehouse)
- 2) Train from Donegal entering Stranorlar, with 4-6-4T "*Erne*". (I.S.Pearsall)
- 3) Diesel locomotive No. 11 "*Phoenix*" at Stranorlar. (C.P.Boocock)
- 4) Donegal Station July 1956, showing Railcar 19 and Trailer 2 on 4.55 p.m. to Killybegs, and Railcar 14 forming 5.0 p.m. to Stranorlar. (D.Winkworth)
- 5) Railcar 16 at Letterkenny on a train for Strabane. (J.G.Dewing)
- 6) Railcar 20 at Killybegs, May 1956. On the right is Railcar 10 (ex Clogher Valley), now preserved. (J.G.Dewing)
- 7) Six-wheel coach No. 1 at Stranorlar; this is one of the original West Donegal Railway coaches. (F.Church)
- 8) Killybegs Station in May 1948. (J.G.Dewing)

(Blocks courtesy Railway Magazine)

## C.D.R.J.C. : History

The County Donegal Railway, which was to become one of the largest narrow-gauge railways in these islands, had very humble beginnings. It started life on 25<sup>th</sup> April 1882, when the West Donegal Railway was opened with 13¾ miles of three-foot gauge track, running southwards from Stranorlar, already the terminus of the 5'3"-gauge Finn Valley Railway, which connected with the Irish North Western Railway at Strabane.

The aim of the W.D.R. was to reach Donegal Town, but at Druminin (later Lough Eske) the funds gave out. The final four miles were completed with State assistance and opened on 16<sup>th</sup> September 1889. Three small locomotives and eleven coaches were supplied for the opening.

We shall now see how this insignificant stretch of railway was to become part of the largest narrow-gauge railway in the British Isles. It had the largest number of engines, and the largest station and works, at Stranorlar, which was to become the headquarters of the system. Of the Irish narrow-gauge lines, the Donegal had the longest life span and the largest number of coaches. It used the first superheated steam engines on the narrow gauge and was a pioneer in the use of diesel railcars.

The railway's expansion was quite rapid. Between 1893 and 1909 mileage went up from nearly 18 to 125. Although the W.D.R. amalgamated on 27<sup>th</sup> June 1892 with the Finn Valley to form the Donegal Railway, the first narrow-gauge extensions were westwards. One was to the seaport of Killybegs, a distance of 19 miles and opened on 18<sup>th</sup> May 1893; the other was from Stranorlar to Glenties, a 24½-mile line opened on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 1894. These two lines were built with State aid under the Light Railways (Ireland) Act of 1889. A further batch of six locomotives and seventeen coaches were supplied to work them. Meanwhile, the Finn Valley was closed and relaid to three-foot gauge, being reopened on 16<sup>th</sup> July 1894. The mileage was now 75, and there was a pause.

The next line to be built was in direct competition to the Great Northern Railway (successors to the I.N.W.R.) and ran from Strabane to Londonderry, whose port was the ultimate goal of much of the Donegal Railway's traffic. Until this 14½-mile line was opened on 6<sup>th</sup> August 1900, all traffic had to be transferred to the G.N.R. at Strabane in order to reach the port.

To cope with this extension, a further batch of coaches, including observation saloons, was acquired in 1901, and in 1902 these were followed by two tank engines with the unusual 4-4-4 wheel arrangement, designed as express engines. In 1904 the railway bought more coaches as well as four large goods wagons for the increased freight traffic. These last two classes were restricted to use between Stranorlar and Londonderry, where the rails weighed 65 lbs./yd., as against the 45lb. rails on the rest of the system.

At Londonderry there were already several miles of mixed-gauge sidings running along both banks of the River Foyle and connected by tracks on the

lower deck of a road bridge. These were used by the broad gauge and by the L. & L.S.R. on the three-foot gauge, but as the tracks on the bridge were linked by wagon turntables, only wagons could be transferred between the two systems.

The final line to be built by the Donegal was from Donegal Town to Ballyshannon, 15½ miles long and opened on 21<sup>st</sup> September 1905. This competed with the G.N.R. at Ballyshannon, but the stations were about a mile apart.

As a result of this rapid expansion, the Donegal became financially embarrassed, and on 1<sup>st</sup> May 1906 it was taken over by a joint committee of the Midland Railway of England and the G.N.R.(I), with the exception of the Londonderry Branch which passed entirely to the Midland Railway, although it continued to be worked by the County Donegal Railways Joint Committee, as the concern had now become.

By now the original three engines were nearing retirement, No. 1 only being used for shunting, so in 1907 five more locomotives were bought along with a final batch of coaches, making 56 in all. Also in 1907, the line from Stranorlar to Killybegs was relaid with heavier rail so that all engines could work throughout the system.

The last narrow-gauge passenger railway to be built in Ireland was the Strabane & Letterkenny, planned to connect the Donegal at Strabane with the L. & L.S.R. at Letterkenny. Unfortunately the Company ran out of money short of Letterkenny and another had to build the terminus and the connection to the L. & L.S.R., while the Donegal loaned the rolling-stock. Operations commenced on 1<sup>st</sup> January 1909, and although the S. & L. always remained independent, it was worked by the C.D.R. This line, 19½ miles long, brought the total mileage to 124½, the odd half-mile being accounted for by short branches at Killybegs and Letterkenny.

Three more 2-6-4T's of the type delivered in 1907 were ordered from Nasmyth Wilson, but they were to have a water capacity of 2000 gallons instead of 1000, in order to avoid re-filling en-route. The makers suggested superheating to effect economies in running, along with 1500-gallon tanks, and this proposal was adopted. When delivered in 1912, they were the first narrow-gauge engines to be superheated; they were numbered 21, 2A and 3A, the latter two being on a duplicate list.

The Company now had twenty-three engines, but No's 2 and 3 were scrapped soon after and from then on, events turned against the railway. The 1914-18 War put paid to plans to extend the Glenties Branch to Ardara, and when peace was restored in Europe, civil war broke out in Ireland. Train services throughout the west were disrupted, a situation which lasted until the partition of 1921. This split the railway, County Donegal being in the Irish Free State, while about 19 route miles between Strabane and Londonderry were in Northern Ireland. Customs Posts were set up at Strabane, at Lifford on the Letterkenny Branch, and at Clady and Castlefinn on the main line. Through

goods traffic to Londonderry dwindled, although some was transferred to the G.N.R.(I) at Strabane for conveyance to Dublin and the south, travelling in bond through Northern Ireland in sealed containers. Through passenger traffic likewise fell off, but local traffic remained.

In 1926 the last of the original engines was scrapped, and it was becoming increasingly uneconomic to use the new large engines on the now lightly loaded passenger trains. Mixed trains, which had of course always run, became the order of the day, and petrol railcars were introduced. Two four-wheel 22hp. cars were obtained from the 4'8½" gauge Derwent Valley Light Railway, being rebuilt at Stranorlar for use on the three-foot gauge. They were followed by a locally-manufactured bus-type vehicle in 1928, and in 1929 a four-wheel trailer was built to be hauled by the Company's old inspection car, originally built in 1906 and much altered since. The next car, built in 1930, was somewhat larger, being a six-wheeler; the front pair of wheels formed a pony truck, the drive being to one axle of a bogie, whose wheels could be coupled by chains for increased traction.

In 1931 the first diesel railcars in Britain were introduced. They were otherwise similar to No. 6 but with a larger bonnet. The Clogher Valley Railway had in 1928 bought a four-wheeled steam tractor which failed as such, being acquired cheaply by the C.D.R. and converted to diesel power; it was placed in service in 1932. The following year saw the conversion at Stranorlar of two petrol buses, presumably to replace the ex-Derwent Valley cars which were scrapped in 1934. That year also saw the appearance of the first of what was to become the C.D.R.'s standard railcar, an articulated diesel vehicle 41' long.

The Castleberg & Victoria Bridge Tramway closed in 1933 and from this Company was acquired a railcar chassis. A body and engine were fitted at Stranorlar and the vehicle, which resembled No. 6, went into traffic in 1934. In the same year the Dublin & Blessington Steam Tramway closed, and two of its railcars were acquired. These were of 5'3"-gauge so conversion to 3-foot was necessary; one of the vehicles also had its engine removed. The other was an unusual vehicle, having its engine under the floor between four wheels, and a pony truck at each end. This vehicle was also unique as far as the C.D.R. was concerned in being double-ended, all other cars having one driving cab only. More articulated cars were also purchased, one similar to the 1934 example in 1935, and four of a more modern design in 1936-39.

By now the steam engines were beginning to dwindle as their services were less needed. In 1937 the renumbering started in 1928 was completed (see full details later); about the same time a number of coaches became redundant - of the original 1882 stock, most were scrapped, though one or two lingered on to the Second World War. A few of the 1893 vehicles were converted to bogie vans by boarding up the windows and existing doors, and fitting double doors in the centre of each side; some were also given roof lights.

Because of the Second World War, no further new railcars were bought, but a second-hand one was acquired when the Clogher Valley closed at the end of 1941. This was a shorter version of the standard type, and had been built in 1932.

When the war ended, the traffic position was even worse, and more economies were called for. On 31<sup>st</sup> December 1947, the Glenties Branch closed to passengers, though goods traffic lingered on until 10<sup>th</sup> March 1952.

During the 1940's a number of the older and smaller railcars were withdrawn. The original inspection car was preserved, but most were scrapped, and by 1949 only four non-standard cars, remained, all converted to trailers. This was unfortunate, as shortly afterwards No. 18 was destroyed by fire; it is not known for certain whether this car was rebuilt or replaced by a similar vehicles with the same number.

Following this, car No. 17 was involved in a collision with locomotive No. 10, and both were scrapped. Railcar No. 19 of much more modern design replaced this, and at the end of 1951 yet another car was bought, making a total in service of eight diesel cars and four trailers. These were sufficient to operate all passenger services with the exception of the Londonderry Branch, where the turntable had been removed.

Over the years, the management of the C.D.R. changed hands several times. In 1923 the Midland Railway became part of the L.M.S. Railway; this made little difference, but the nationalisation of the mainland railways in 1948 was different. The Irish lines of the L.M.S. were handed over to the Northern Ireland Road Transport Board which was renamed the Ulster Transport Authority. This concern, being very definitely 'anti-train', lost no time in shutting down railway branches as fast as it could, including the Strabane - Londonderry Branch on 31<sup>st</sup> December 1954. The rest of the C.D.R. was fairly secure, however, since the U.T.A. only had a half-share with the G.N.R.(I).

One bright spot amongst the gloom was the transfer of three modern corridor coaches from the closed Ballycastle line of the U.T.A. They were not used much, however, as the only steam passenger trains were summer excursions, and also the doors tended to foul the platforms when opened, as the coaches were lower slung than the C.D.R. stock.

After the closure of the Glenties and Derry branches, the normal working timetable only called for two of the seven remaining steam engines, seven of the eight railcars and the four-wheel diesel loco, which was used solely for shunting at Strabane and Lifford. From 1955 onwards, the Company sought permission to close, but this was refused by the Irish Government as the road bridge between Strabane and Lifford over which all traffic for County Donegal from Strabane would have to pass, was restricted to light traffic. However the railway could not go on indefinitely, as the track was rapidly deteriorating, and it closed to all traffic from 31<sup>st</sup> December 1959, with the exception of the line from Stranorlar to Strabane which remained open for goods. The replacement buses started from Lifford for Stranorlar and Letterkenny, and passengers had

to walk over the bridge from Strabane to reach them. This inconvenience lasted for four weeks until the C.D.R. had laid a road on its own bridge for the buses and replacement road lorries to use to reach Strabane. The last goods train ran from Strabane to Stranorlar on 6<sup>th</sup> February 1960.

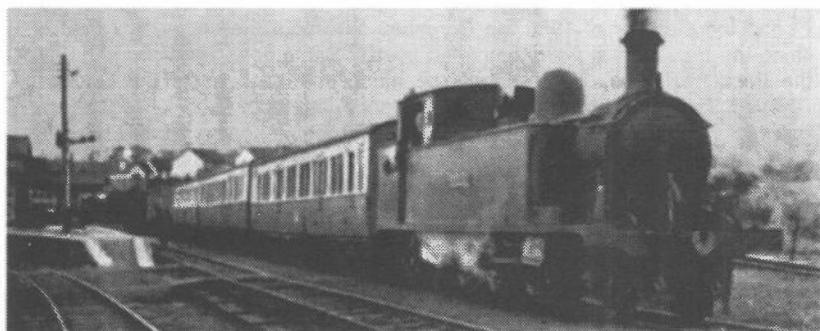
During the summer of 1960 the Company set about the unpleasant task of lifting the track, which was completed by 10<sup>th</sup> September. However although the track has gone, there will still be much to remind us of the Donegal Railway. The replacement buses, for instance, are in the same livery as the railcars. The stations and station buildings will remain; some are still used by the Company as road service depots, and others, as at Liscooly and Killygordon, have already become private dwellings. The buildings and part of the platform at Londonderry are now in use as a warehouse. Here the starter signal still stands and now indicates whether the warehouse is open or closed!

At Stranorlar, the sheds and Works are to become a cattle mart, while of course the offices on the platform remain as the Company Headquarters. And what of the rolling-stock?

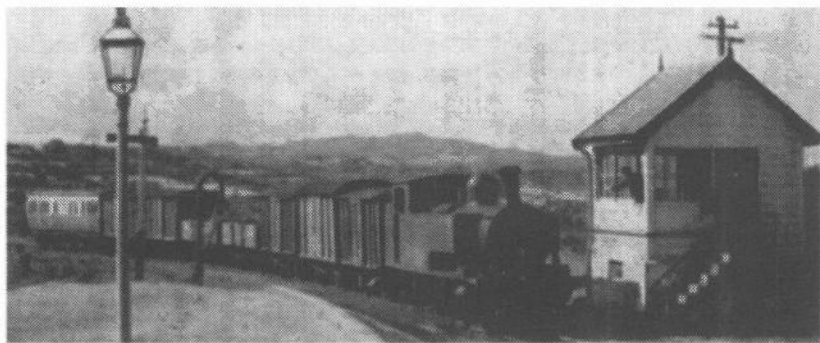
At the auction of the Company's effects on 1<sup>st</sup> March 1961, it turned out that surprisingly little was to be scrapped - only two engines, two railcars and a few coaches met this fate. An American millionaire named Dr. Cox bought four steam engines, three railcars, ten coaches and a large quantity of wagons, track and signalling materials. The Isle of Man Railway bought the two newest railcars, which are only eleven and twelve years old respectively, while prior to the auction one locomotive, a railcar and various other items were donated to the Belfast Transport Museum.

And so we come to the present day. What future there is for the Donegal lies on the roads - for the railway it is the end.





Mixed train at Donegal, headed by 2-6-4T "*Blanche*". (P.B.Whitehouse)



Train from Donegal entering Stranorlar, with 4-6-4T "*Erne*". (I.S.Pearsall)



Diesel locomotive No. 11 "*Phoenix*" at Stranorlar. (C.P.Boocock)



Donegal Station July 1956, showing Railcar 19 and Trailer 2 on 4.55 p.m. to Killybegs, and Railcar 14 forming 5.0 p.m. to Stranorlar. (D.Winkworth)

# **C.D.R.J.C. : Principal Dates**

1860	15 May	Finn Valley Railway incorporated
1863	7 Sept	Finn Valley Railway opened
1879	21 July	West Donegal Railway incorporated
1882	25 April	W.D.R. opened to Druminin
1889	16 Sept	W.D.R. extended to Donegal
1889	-	Light Railways (Ireland) Act
1892	27 June	F.V.R. and W.D.R. amalgamated as Donegal Railway
1893	18 May	Donegal - Killybegs section opened
1893	27 July	F.V.R. gauge alteration authorised
1894	23 June	Stranorlar - Glenties Branch opened
1894	16 July	Strabane - Stranorlar reopened on 3' gauge
1896	7 August	Londonderry - Strabane and Donegal - Ballyshannon lines authorised
1900	6 August	Londonderry Branch opened
1903	-	Strabane Raphoe & Convoy Rwy.incorporated
1904	-	Above renamed Strabane & Letterkenny Railway
1905	21 Sept	Ballyshannon Branch opened
1906	1 May	C.D.R.J.C. formed
1909	1 Jan	Strabane & Letterkenny Rwy. Opened
1947	31 Dec	Glenties Branch closed to passengers
1952	10 March	" " " " goods
1954	31 Dec	Londonderry Branch closed to all traffic
1955	Oct	" " abandoned
1959	31 Dec	Remainder of C.D.R.J.C. closed apart from Strabane - Stranorlar (goods)
1960	6 Feb	Strabane - Stranorlar closed
1960	16 Feb	All lines in Co. Donegal abandoned
1961	Feb	All [n-g] lines in N.Ireland abandoned

1961      1 March      Auction of effects

### **C.D.R.J.C. : Track Lifting**

By 10/54	Glenties	Ballybofey	
Summer '55	Ballybofey	Stranorlar	
11-12/55	Derry	Strabane	by contractor
'56-early '57	River Branch	Letterkenny	
1/60	Strabane	Lifford	
1-6/60	Ballyshannon	Donegal Town	railcar 12
6-9/60	Killybegs	Donegal Town	railcars 12,16
7-8/60	Donegal Town	Stranorlar	loco 4
"	Raphoe	Letterkenny	loco 11
8/60	Raphoe	Lifford	"Phoenix"
8-9/60	Stranorlar	Strabane	loco 4/railcar 10

Track still in situ at Strabane and Stranorlar stations until stock removed after auction. Short lengths remain at other places also.

### **Disposition of Stock Pending Auction 1 March 1961**

Strabane : Locos 2,4,5; railcar 10; diesel loco 11; trailer 3;  
Coaches 1,12,15-17,23,30,40,47,53,56  
Stranorlar : Locos 1,3,6; railcars 14,15,18-20  
Coaches 13,14,28,32,57-59 and majority of goods stock  
Donegal : Railcars 12,16; trailers 2,5 (may have been sold prior to  
auction)  
Letterkenny : Loco 11

Additional details of the goods stock surviving at the end are given later, courtesy S. Leleux.

## **C.D.R.J.C. : Stations and Halts, with mileages**

A station name in CAPITALS indicates a staff exchange point. The Derry Branch was worked as one section latterly.

### Main Line, Strabane to Killybegs

STRABANE (0), Clady (4½), CASTLEFINN (6¼), Liscooly (8¼), Killygordon (9¼), Cavan Halt (11¼), STRANORLAR (13¾), Derg Bridge (opened 1913) (21½), Barnesmore (25½), LOUGH ESKE (27½), Clar Bridge (29½), DONEGAL TOWN (31½), Mountcharles (35¾), Dooring Road (37½), INVER (39¾), Port (41½), Dunkineely (43¾), Bruckless (46), Ardara Road (48½), KILLYBEGS (50½).

### Strabane & Letterkenny

STRABANE (0), Lifford (0½), Ballindrait (2¾), Coolaghy (5), RAPHOE (6½), Convoy (9), Cornaghillah (opened 1911) (11¼), Glenmaquin (13¾), LETTERKENNY (19½).

### Glenties Branch

(miles from Stranorlar)

Ballybofey (0½), Glenmore (4), Cloghan (6¾), Elatagh (-), Ballyinamore (13¼), FINTOWN (16), Shallogans (21), GLENTIES (24½).

### Ballyshannon Branch

DONEGAL (0), Drumbar (opened 1906) (1½), Laghey (3¼), Bridgetwon (5), BALLINTRA (7), Dromore (8), Rossnowlagh (10¼), Priory Halt (opened c.1952) (10½), Coolmore (11½), Creevy (opened 1911) (-), BALLYSHANNON (15½).

### Londonderry Branch

LONDONDERRY (0), New Buildings (2¾), Desertone Halt (opened 1908) (5), Cullion (6 ½), DONEMANA (8 ¼), Ballyheather (opened 1902) (9¾), Ballymagory (11¼), STRABANE (14½).

## **Bibliography**

### **Works of reference :-**

"Narrow Gauge Railways of Ireland" by H.Fayle, Greenlake Publications 1946 (o.o.p)

pp.121 - 135 : history of the railway to 1945, with short route description and comprehensive details of locomotives and railcars, including photos of all types. Very few rolling-stock details.

pp.195-6 details of tickets. General route map.

"Light Railway Handbook No. 4 : Irish Light Railways" by R.W.Kidner, Oakwood Press.

Very brief details with route sketch and loco details.

"ABC of Narrow Gauge Railways" by W.J.K.Davies, Ian Allan 1961.

pp.67-8 route and historical details only, summarised.

### **Articles :-**

"Narrow Gauge Album", by P.B.Whitehouse, Ian Allan.

Donegal Excursion, reminiscent article with five photos.

"Railway Magazine" - Vol.6 p.240; 12/62; 24/360. General articles dealing with the railway in the early stages of its history.

"Locomotive" - Vol.25 p.66. Contents unknown.

"Railway World" - Vol.17 p.315. Account of an interesting and amusing journey over the whole of the system remaining in 1956, with photos and map.

Vol.21 p.166. "The End of the Donegal Railway", an account of a final journey with route map and nine photos. (see also Trains Illustrated Summer Annual 1960 for a similar article).

## C.D.R.J.C. : Steam Locomotives

1 <sup>st</sup> No.	2 <sup>nd</sup> No.	Name	Renamed	Wks/No.	s'h*	W/n	Disp.
1	-	Alice	-	3023/81	-	1926	Scr. '26
2	-	Blanche	-	3021/81	-	1905	Scr. '12
3	-	Lydia	-	3022/81	-	1905	Scr. '12
4	-	Meenglas	-	4573/93	-	1937	Scr. '37
5	-	Drumboe	-	4574/93	-	192-	Scr. '31
6	-	Inver	-	4575/93	-	192-	Scr. '31
7	-	Finn	-	4576/93	-	192-	Scr. '31
8	-	Foyle	-	4577/93	-	?	Scr. '37
9	-	Columbkille	-	4578/93	-	?	Scr. '33
10	-	Sir James	-	6103/02	-	1933	Scr. '33
11	-	Hercules	-	6104/02	-	1933	Scr. '33
12	9	Eske	-	697/04	1921	?	Scr. '54
13	10	Owenea	-	698/04	1922	1949	Scr. '49
14	11	Erne	-	699/04	1922	@	@
15	12	Mourne	-	700/04	1933	?	Scr. '52
16	4	Donegal	Meenglas	828/07	1926	@	@
17	5	Glenties	Drumboe	829/07	1929	@	@
18	6	Killybegs	Columbkille	830/07	1925	@	@
19	7	Letterkenny	Finn	831/07	1924	?	Scr. '40
20	8	Raphoe	Foyle	832/07	?	?	Scr. '48
21	1	Ballyshannon	Alice	958/12	new	1957	Scr. '61
2A	2	Strabane	Blanche	956/12	new	@	@
3A	3	Stranorlar	Lydia	957/12	new	1956	Scr. '61

Notes : @ - survived until closure. No's 4,5,6 and 11 sold to Dr. Cox at auction. No. 2 preserved.

: \* - date superheated

Original No's 1-3 were Class 1; 4-9 were Class 2; 10-11 were Class 3;  
12-15 were Class 4; 16-20 were Class 5; 21, 2A and 3A were Class 5A.

## Steam Locomotive Dimensions

Class	Type	Maker	Date	Cyls.	Pressure
1	2-4-0T	Sharp Stewart	1881	13 x 20	120lbs.
2	4-6-0T	Neilson & Co.	1893	14 x 20	150lbs.
3	4-4-4T	Neilson, Reid & Co	1902	14 x 20	160lbs.
4	4-6-4T	Nasmyth Wilson	1904	15 x 21	160lbs.
5	2-6-4T	" "	1907	14 x 21	175lbs.
5A	2-6-4T	" "	1912	15½ x 21	175lbs.

All engines had outside frames and cylinders. Outside-framed bogies on Classes 5 and 5A only. Coupling height was 2' 10½".

Class	Weight		T.E.		Wheelbase		Wheel Diameter	
	t.cwt.	lbs.			Coupled	Total	Coupled	Bogie
1	20.0	8,230			6'0"	11'6"	3'6"	2'6"
2	30. 12 ¾	11,900			9'0"	16'7 ½ "	3'6"	2'3"
3	38. 10 ¾	11,100			7'3"	26'1 ½ "	4'0"	2'3"
4	44. 10	14,250			9'0"	25'6"	3'9"	2'3"
5	43. 10	12,700			10'0"	26'3"	4'0"	2'9"/2'3"*
5A	50. 8 ½	14,300			10'0"	27'3"	4'0"	2'9"/2'3"*

\* : Front/Rear

Livery : Green until 1906, then as B&NC and LMS engines (lined black). 1937 onwards - Geranium red to match railcars.

## C.D.R.J.C. : Diesel Railcars - Main Dimensions

No's	Body Length	Bogie wheelbase		Total w/b	Height
		Front	Rear		
6,7	30' (approx.)	-	5'6"	19'6"	?
10	30'	6'9"	4'0"	20'0"	9'10"
11	15'	-	-	6'6"	9'6"
12-20	41'	7'3"	5'0"	30'10½ "	10'8"#

# - Over Luggage Rack.

All vehicles are uni-directional, with 4+1-speed gearboxes. Coupling height as steam locos.

No's	Wheel Diameter		Weight t/cwt.
	Front	Rear	
6,7	2' 2"	2' 2"	7. 0
10	2' 0"	2' 0"	11. 14
11	2' 6"	-	?
12-20	2'3"	2' 0 1/8"	12. 0

Livery : Red below waist, cream above; roof grey.



## Railcar Details

No.	Fuel	Engine	HP.	Chassis	Body	New	Acq
1	Petrol	A&O #	10			1906	1906
2	"	Ford	22		reb.Stranolar	1923	1926
3	"	"	22		"	1923	1926
4	"	"	36	4w.	Doherty	1928	1928
5	Trailer	n/a	n/a	4w.	"	1929	1929
6	Petrol	Reo	32	6w. GNR(I)	"	1930	1930
7	Diesel	Gardner	74	6w.	"	1931	1931
8	"	"	74	6w. "	"	1931	1931
9	Petrol	Ford	36	4w.	?	?	1932
10	"	"	36	4w.	?	?	1932
11	Diesel	Gardner	74	4w. Walker	Walker	1928	1932
12	"	"	74	8w. "	GNR(I)	1934	1934
2(II)	Petrol	Reo	36	6w.	C.D.R.	1925	1933
3(II)	"	Drewry	35	8w. Drewry	Drewry	?	1934
13	"	Ford	22	4w.	?	?	1934
14	Diesel	Gardner	74	8w. Walker	GNR(I)	1935	1935
15	"	"	74	8w. "	"	1936	1936
16	"	"	96	8w. "	"	1936	1936
17	"	"	96	8w. "	"	1938	1938
18	"	"	96	8w. "	"	1939	1939
10(II)	"	"	74	8w. "	C.V.R.	1932	1942
18(II)	"	"	?	8w. "	GNR(I)	1949	1949
19	"	"	102	8w. "	"	1949	1949
20	"	"	102	8w. "	"	1950	1951

Notes : No. 11 named "Phoenix".

Doherty is a coachbuilder at Strabane.

# : A & O = Allday and Onions.

No.	Seats	Remarks	Fate
1	6	Rebuilt 1920 with Ford 22hp engine and 10 seats	Preserved 1956
2	?	Ex Derwent Valley Light Railway	Scrapped 1934
3	?	" " " " "	" "
4	22		Scrapped 1947
5	29	Rebuilt 1938	Body sold 1960
6	32	Converted to trailer 1945	Scrapped 1958
7	32		Scrapped 1949
8	32		Scrapped 1949
9	20	Bought as road bus; converted at Stranorlar, in service 1933	Scrapped 1949
10	20	" " "	Burnt 1940
11	n/a	Steam tractor ex CVR, rebuilt by CDR with diesel engine	Preserved 1960
12	41	Sold to Dr. Cox	Preserved 1961
2(II)	32	Chassis only from C & VBT. To trailer 1944	?

3(II)	40	Ex D&BST, 2-4-2 wheel arrangement.	Preserved 1960
		To trailer 1943	
13	16	Ex D&BST. To trailer 1934	Scrapped
14	41	85hp. from 1952	Sold for scrap 1961
15	41		" " " "
16	41	Sold to Dr. Cox	Preserved 1961
17	43		Crashed 1949
18	43		Burnt 1949
10(II)	28	ex CVR. 29 seats after 1955	Preserved 1960
18(II)	41	Possibly rebuild of 18(I)	Sold 1961
19	41	Sold to Isle of Man Railway	Sold 1961
20	41	" " " " " "	Sold 1961

### C.D.R.J.C. Coaching Stock

The CDR owned a total of 59 coaches. The original eleven built for the West Donegal Railway were six-wheelers, but all the rest were on bogies and of very similar construction and appearance, since the CDR standardised its rolling-stock very early on. They were mainly compartment stock of traditional type but included some very handsome saloon vehicles.

In later years a few coaches were regularly used as railcar trailers, and a number of others were kept for the rare steam trains, but many were converted to bogie vans or flat wagons. No's 57-59 were different, having been bought as late as 1952 from the U.T.A. as the remains of the old Boat Train stock. They were very comfortable corridor coaches but were never popular on the Donegal as they were low-slung and the doors tended to foul platforms when opened. Also the couplers had to be raised, so the corridor connections were sealed off.

The table below gives all known facts.

No.	Built	Seats	Type	Remarks	#
1	1882	26	Managers saloon		Y
2-11	"	*	5-compt. (some poss.brake/compos)	5/7/9 conv. to 6w. wagons, remainder scrapped	N
12	"	50	5-compt.		Y
13	"	40	2-compt./brake		Y
14	"	50	5-compt.		Y
15-17	"	50	"		Y
18	"	50	"	scrapped 1955	N
19-22	"	50	"	converted to vans	Y
23	"	20	2-compt./brake		Y
24-27	"	?	?	converted to vans	Y
28	"	20	2-compt./brake		Y
29	"	?	?	converted to van	?
30	1901	54	Saloon		Y
31	"	?	?	converted to bogie flat	?
32	"	60	6-compt.		Y

33	"	?	"	converted to bogie flat	Y
34	"	?	?	"	Y
35-36	"	?	?	scrapped	N
37-38	1904	40	4-compt+2 lavs/compo, later 6- compt.	Scrapped	N
39	"	56	open-end saloon, later closed-end	converted to bogie flat	N
40	"	56	"		Y
41-43	"	20	2-compt./brake	42/43 converted to bogie flats	N
44	"	?	?	scrapped	?
45	"	?	?	converted to bogie flat	?
46	1907	60	6-compt.	"	?
47	"	60	6-compt., reb. to 3- compt/brake		Y
48-52	"	?	?	converted to bogie flats	?
53	"	30	3-compt./brake		Y
54	"	?	?	scrapped	N
55	"	?	?	converted to bogie flat	?
56	"	60	6-compt.		Y
57	1928	60	3-compt + seats in former brake,lavs		Y
58	"	56	7-compt. centre corr		Y
59	"	58	6-compt. + seats in former lavs.		Y

Notes :-

# : survived to 12/59 - Yes/No

[\* : *Original entry in TNG30/31 states 50-seater bogie coaches, apparently in error*]

Builders : 1-36 - Oldbury Carriage Co

37-44 - R.Y.Pickering

45 - unknown

46-56 - Metropolitan Carriage & Wagon

57-59 - LMS/NCC for B&L, transferred to Ballycastle 1932, bought  
by CDR 1952

No. 30 latterly fitted with electric light for use as railcar trailer

No's 37/38 originally 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> composites, 14 seats in each class

All brake coaches have the brake compartment in the centre

## C.D.R.J.C. : GOODS ROLLING-STOCK

The goods rolling-stock of the C.D.R. was large and varied, comprising at its maximum some 350 vehicles of all types, including 4-wheel open wagons and vans, cattle trucks, tank wagons for fuel oil and, latterly, a number of bogie flat wagons mostly converted from old passenger coaches. There were also a few 4-wheel vans painted red and fitted for use as parcels trailers for the railcars. Most stock was painted grey with white lettering and was fitted with the vacuum brake. Much research is still needed to give a true picture; the position at closure is as follows :

### Open Wagons

(all four-wheel, 'w' after number indicates dropside)

Castlefinn : 150, 158w, 221/26(low-side)

Strabane : 42, 110, 113, 115w, 136, 161, 167, 168w, 230, 299

Stranorlar : 44, 117w, 130, 140, 141w, 143, 145, 147, 148, 152, 160, 212,  
213w, 237, 295, 297, 298, 300, 311, 338 plus  
un-numbered, plus red mail wagon 3

Donegal : 119, 121, 133, 214w, 222, 227w, 236, 296

### Vans

(all four-wheel unless otherwise stated, 'c' after number indicates cattle van)

Castlefinn : 62, 73

Lifford : 17 (used as store but complete)

Strabane : 320 (bogie)

Ballindrait : 174

Letterkenny: 54 (store but complete), 59, 79, 182, 201, plus remains of No.10

Stranorlar : 3c, 7c, 11, 12, 19-21, 25, 49, 51, 52, 56, 57, 64, 65, 67, 71, 76,  
78, 88, 91, 171, 175, 178, 179, 181, 187, 190, 192, 193, 195,  
196, 202, 206, 207, 241, 242, 244, 245, 248c, 256, 258, 259,  
260-62, 266, 267, 269, 271, 277, 278, 288, 318 (bogie), 326,  
plus two un-numbered

Donegal : 1, 17, 21, 29, 46, 533, 95, 180, 191, 274, 284, 285

### Other Vehicles

Castlefinn : 334 (bogie open ex CVR)

Clady : PW trolley

Lifford : PW trolley

Strabane : 337, 340, 341 - four-wheel flat wagons, plus three bogie flats (ex coaches?), two in demolition train, one used as coal platform. Also fourteen four-wheel underframes.

Ballindrait : One bogie flat

Letterkenny : Ten four-wheel underframes

Stranorlar : Forty-one four-wheel underframes (one with WDR lettering, one with CVBT lettering)

Two bogie underframes

251,253 - underframes for open containers

Un-numbered four-wheel flat

314, 323?, - six-wheel open wagons

159 - bogie open

335, 343 - four-wheel tank wagons (343 lettered Shell)

339, 342 (3009) - tank wagon underframes

(bracketed no. is I.A.Co. no.)

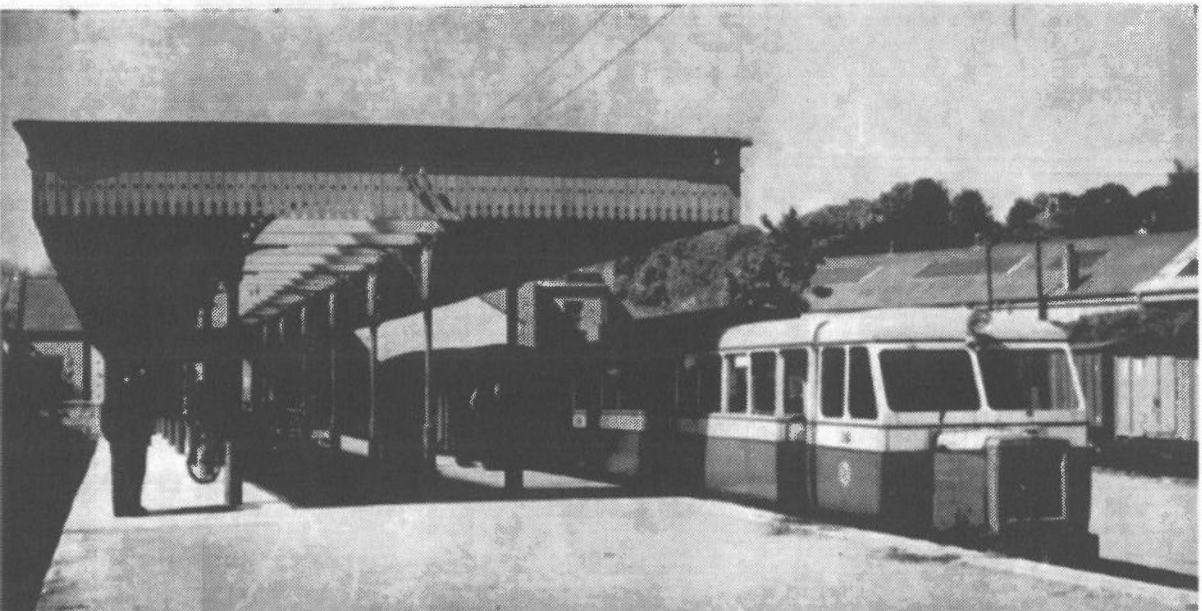
Donegal: 336 - bogie flat (ex B&NC couplers raised onto floor)

Three four-wheel underframes

One four-wheel flat ex CVR.

### **C.D.R.J.C. : LOCOMOTIVE SHEDS**

Location	Allocation
Londonderry	1
Strabane	2
Letterkenny	1
Stranorlar	6 (plus railcars)
Donegal	1
Killybegs	1 - this shed dismantled sometime before closure



Railcar 16 at Letterkenny on a train for Strabane. (J.G.Dewing)

## ENVOI

Appropriately enough for this article, the editor did not visit the C.D.R. until right at the end - it had always seemed too big and standard, to one brought up on a diet of little English and Welsh lines - and it took the news of final closure to persuade us to visit the line and to learn that here was the narrow gauge as it should be - performing all the tasks of a standard-gauge line in country where the latter would not have been economical, but still with a character all its own. It seems fair that those who will now know only our few tourist lines - so untypical of most secondary railways - should have a few impressions as well as the bare facts. Perhaps these fragmentary impressions of a journey undertaken in the last few days of the line will give some sort of a picture.

The County Donegal was an individual line and a friendly one. The first characteristic had been evident as soon as we arrived at Strabane to see the old Clogher Valley railcar No. 10, forming the 2.25 p.m. to Killybegs, and heard that laboured clanking of coupling rods so reminiscent of an old 4-4-0 as the car from Letterkenny appeared round the bend near Lifford. It was even more apparent when there was a roar and a rattle and "*Phoenix*" came belting down from the customs point with the mails and a couple of vans for the Killybegs train; and if we'd still had any doubts about the narrow gauge nature of the Donegal, they must have been set at rest when, on showing our pass for the evening goods to Letterkenny, the Stationmaster just nodded and said to one of his minions "You'd better put a lamp in the van, Paddy". There it was when we set off, a genuine flickering oil lamp with the bowl half full of the traditional dirty water and dead flies.

Not that we saw it for long, for we soon joined the guard (his lamp was just a bare wick dangling from the tube!) and talked all the way to Letterkenny as the dusk deepened into night and "*Meenglas*" snorted her way over the hilly road. We'd had to reach Stranorlar by bus after that but now, in the cheerless early dawn of a typical 'soft' Irish day, we plodded through the dripping streets of Stranorlar and waited on what seemed a very bleak platform for the Killybegs train to clatter in from Strabane, which it did, seven minutes late and composed [of] Railcar 15 and a van.

Daylight crept up on us as we growled away past sodden fields and laboured up past Barnesmore, the cab unit rolling from side to side quite independently of the passenger compartment and usually in the opposite direction! Things were not quite right up front, for a large piece of cardboard propped against the windscreen proclaimed that the battery was not charging, and we took on a fitter at Donegal Town, who rode with us up to Killybegs and back.

Still, the weather improved (it almost stopped raining) and as the car ran on through pleasant scenery our spirits rose too. We had collected a wagon at Donegal and dumped it again at Mountcharles, which entailed quite a bit of reversing, but that was nothing to the orgy of shunting which went on at

Killybegs, where we watched the railcar trying to move over a dozen four-wheel vans on a wet rail, before depositing them in various sidings.

A really tough steak for lunch, and we were off again, this time trailing a couple of vans. From time to time rain squalls obscured the landscape and the windows kept steaming up; now arrivals 'in the know' carefully wiped their sleeves over their selected window before they got in, we noticed. And the windows were not the only things to get steamed up either! Our resident fitter was definitely not happy and was holding long, shouted conferences with the driver over the clatter of worn rods and bearings, while from time to time the guard wandered up from the back, lifted up an inspection hatch, and (with a long face) listened to the horrible noises coming from the transmission.

Still we made Donegal all right, and there cannot have been much wrong for we carried straight on. It was some consolation to watch the anxious group of men gathered round the road in the valley bottom, where the swirling river threatened to undo their work, as we stormed up Barnesmore Bank, a huge plume of white vapour billowing from the boiling radiator.

Then on to Stranolar and a quick photographic sortie while the car shunted about and picked up a bogie coach to which we hastily transferred. If one ignored the diesel snarl and just listened to the car's coupling rods clanking round, it was quite easy to imagine oneself in a steam train and, surprisingly, we worked up a fair speed along the flattish stretch to Castlefinn. It was really exhilarating and when we arrived, there was "*Erne*" on a long Stranolar-bound goods and trailing two of the N.C.C. corridor coaches.

It made a pleasant finale to an enjoyable visit and we left the line in appropriate vintage style - the old G.N.R. railcar No. 101. Even this gave us a little Irish interest, as the crew apparently deserted the driving compartment to settle down to a game of cards at the back of the passenger saloon.....but then that's another story and does not belong here.

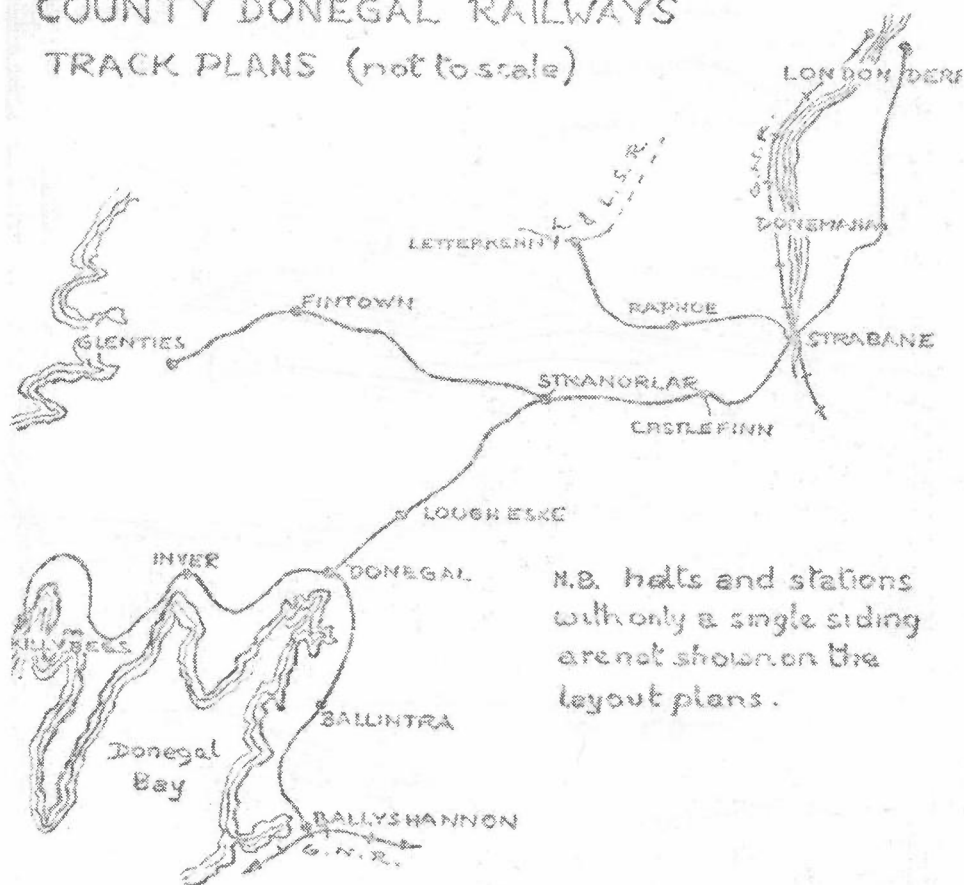
*Compilers Notes : [ ] indicates corrections to original text.*

*It has been necessary to rearrange some of the tables to suit the reprint, but all the original information has been retained.*



# COUNTY DONEGAL RAILWAYS

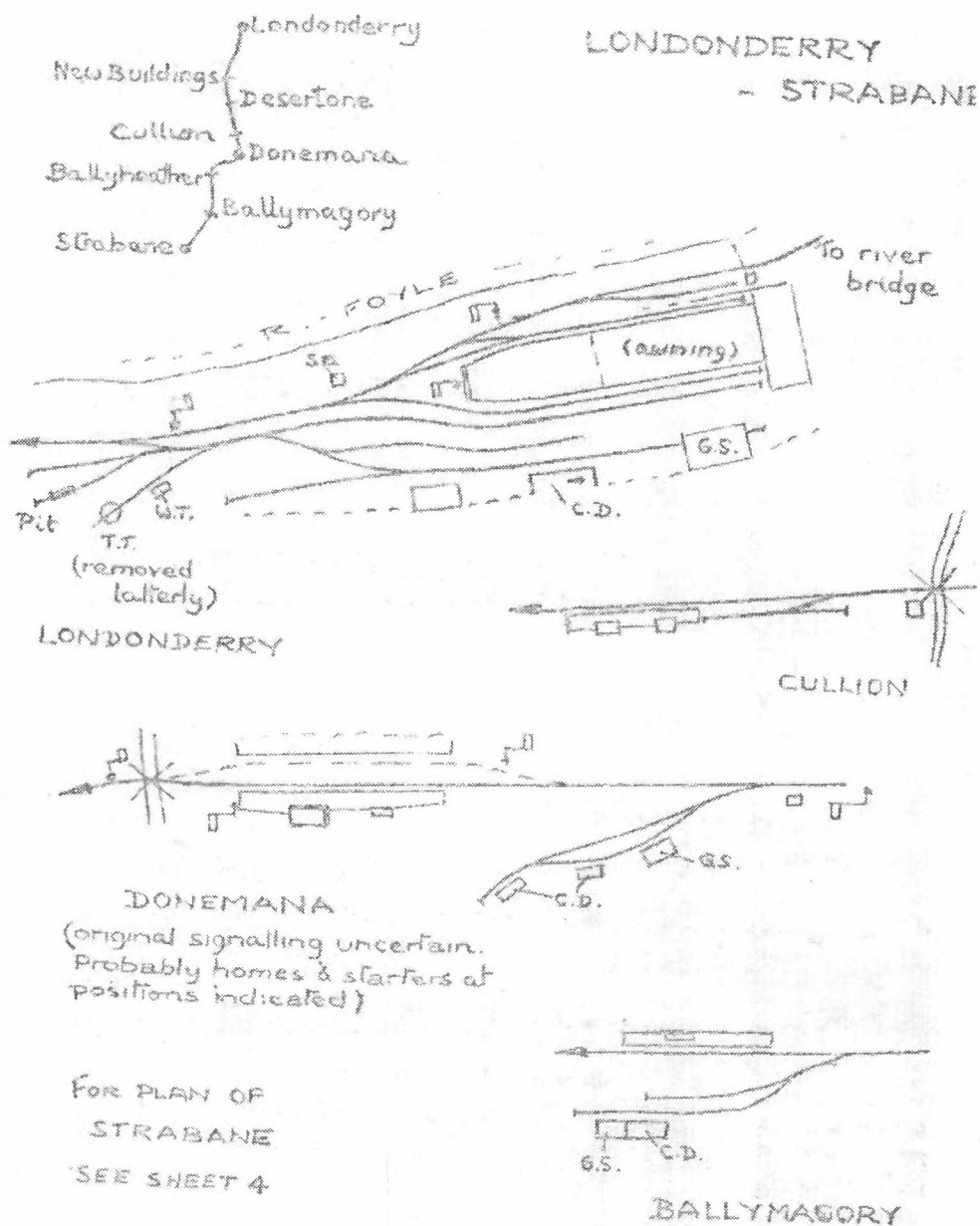
## TRACK PLANS (not to scale)



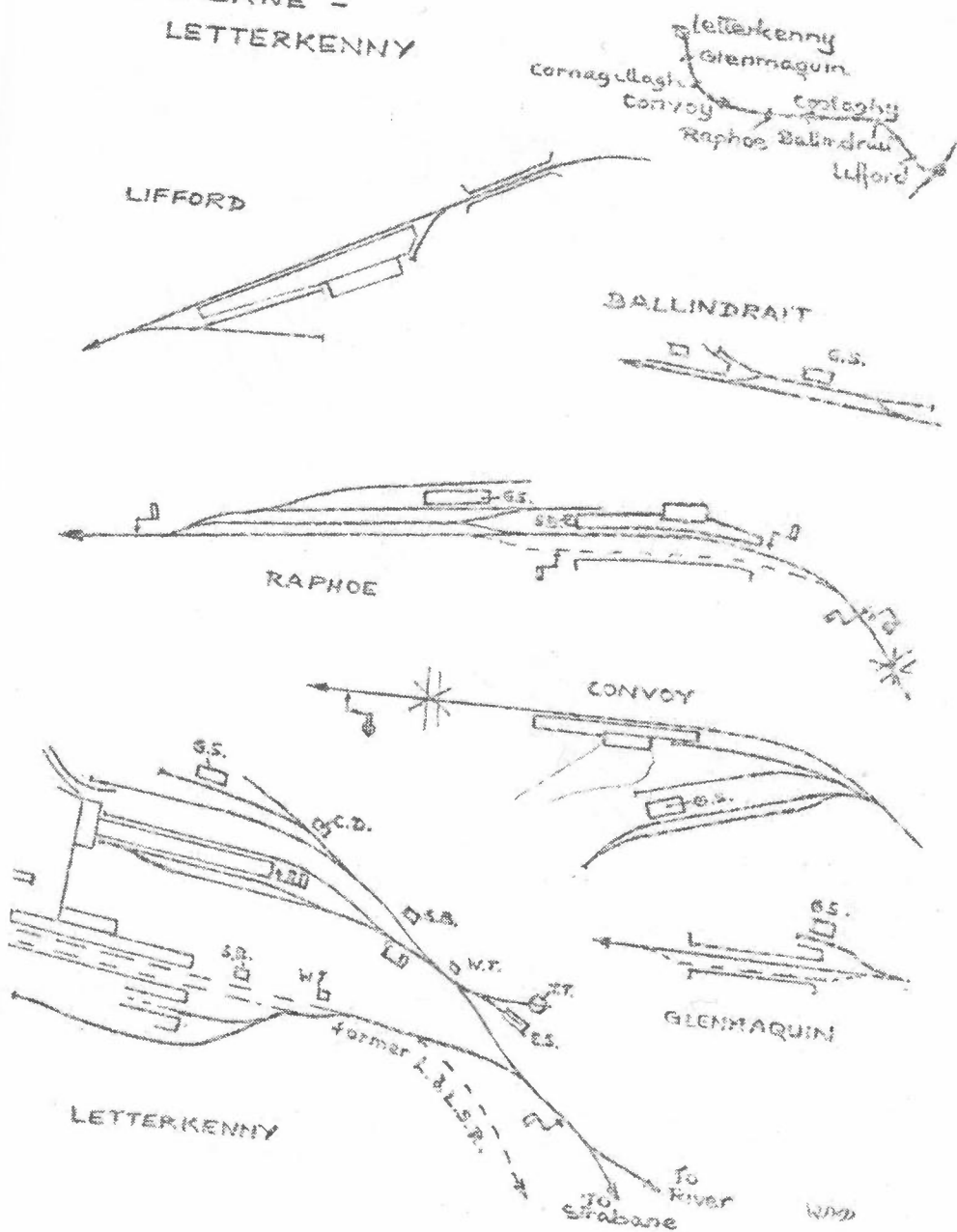
### KEY

C.D. CATTLE DOCK  
 E.S. ENGINE SHED  
 G.S. GOODS SHED  
 S.B. SIGNAL BOX  
 T.T. TURNTABLE  
 W.C. WATER COLUMN  
 W.T. WATER TANK

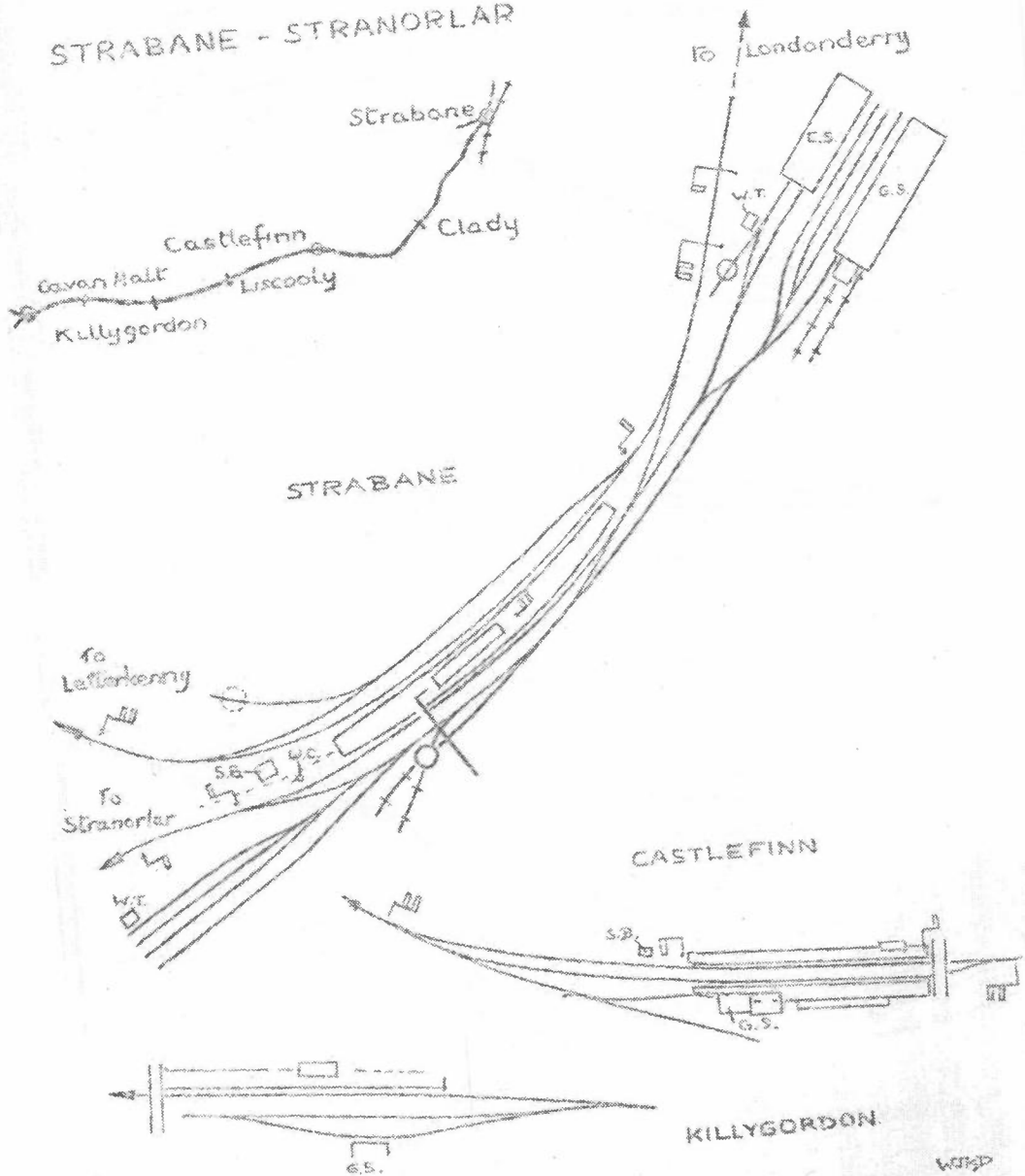
--- LIFTED  
 --- EXTANT TO CLOSURE } 3/11  
 + + 5' 3" GAUGE (G.N.R.)  
 [ L HOME OR STARTER SIGNAL  
 [ L GATE DISTANT SIGNAL  
 <--- TO NEXT STATION ON PLAN.



# STRABANE - LETTERKENNY

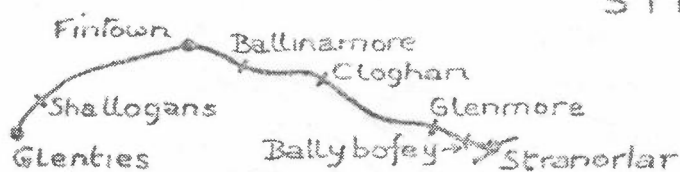


## STRABANE - STRANORLAR

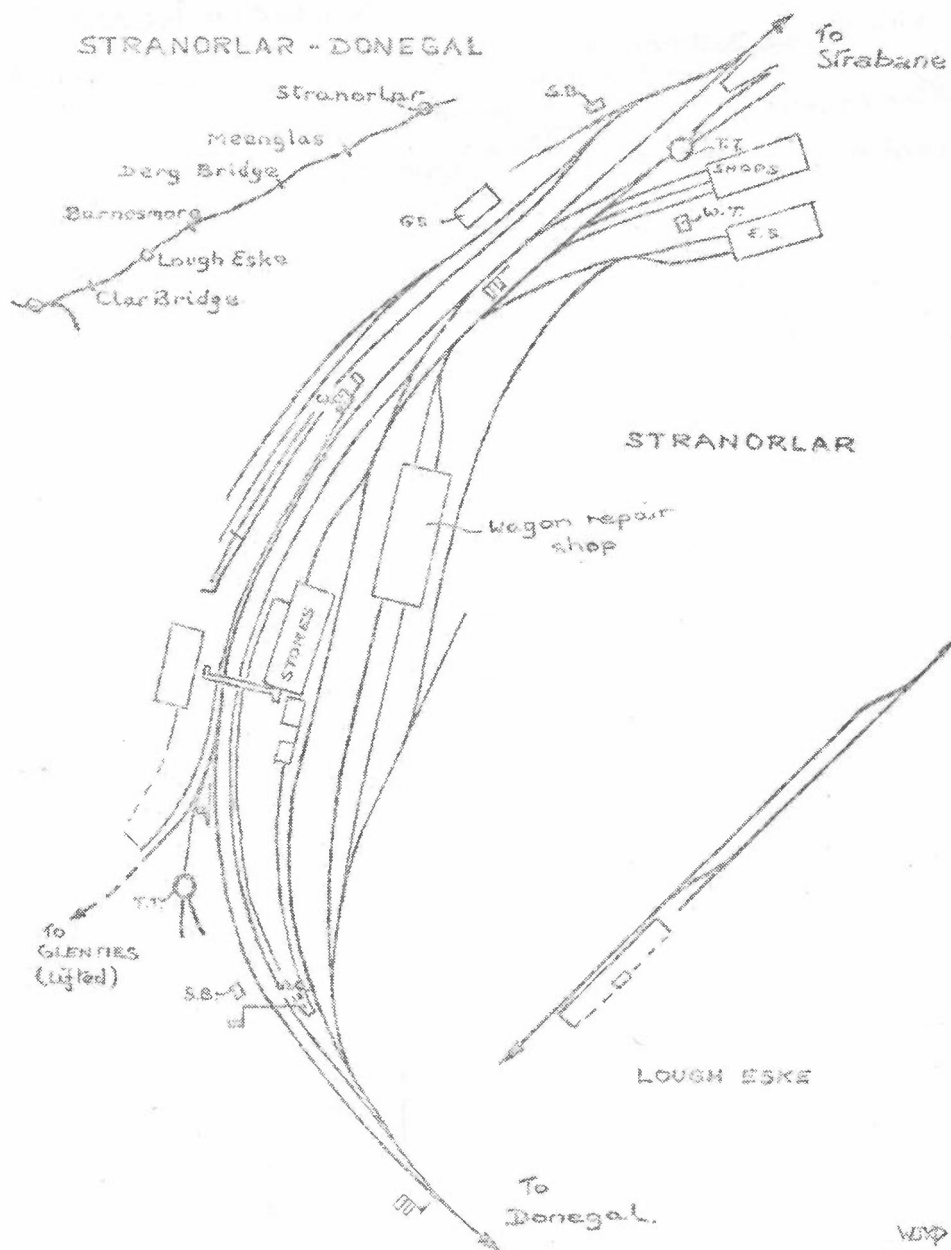


## STRANORLAR

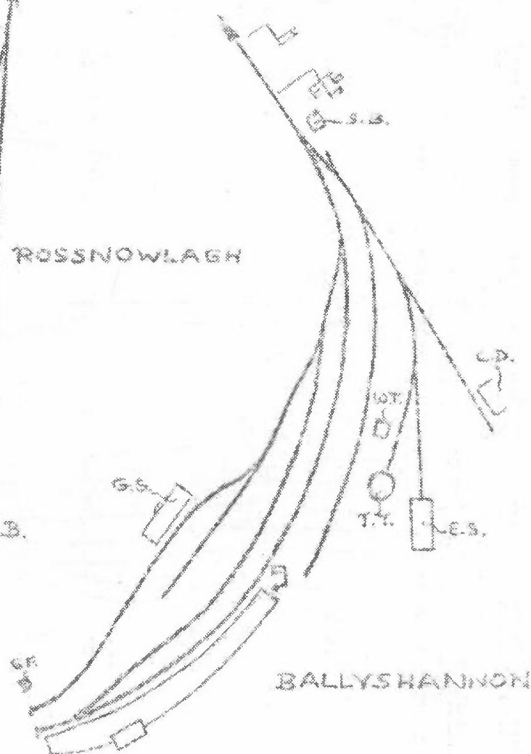
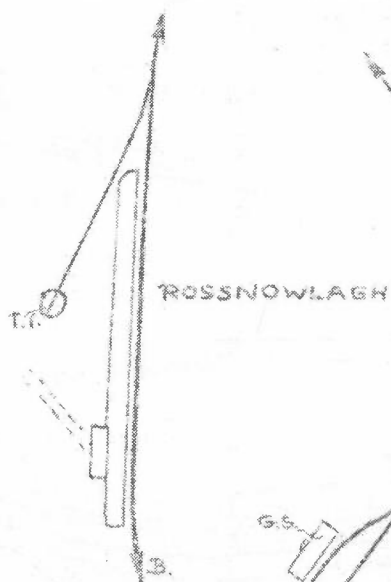
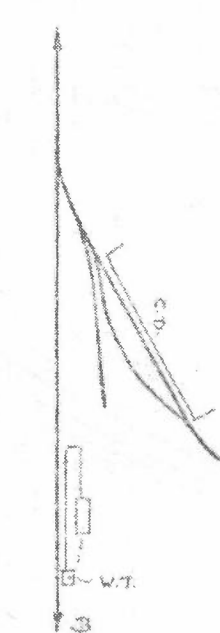
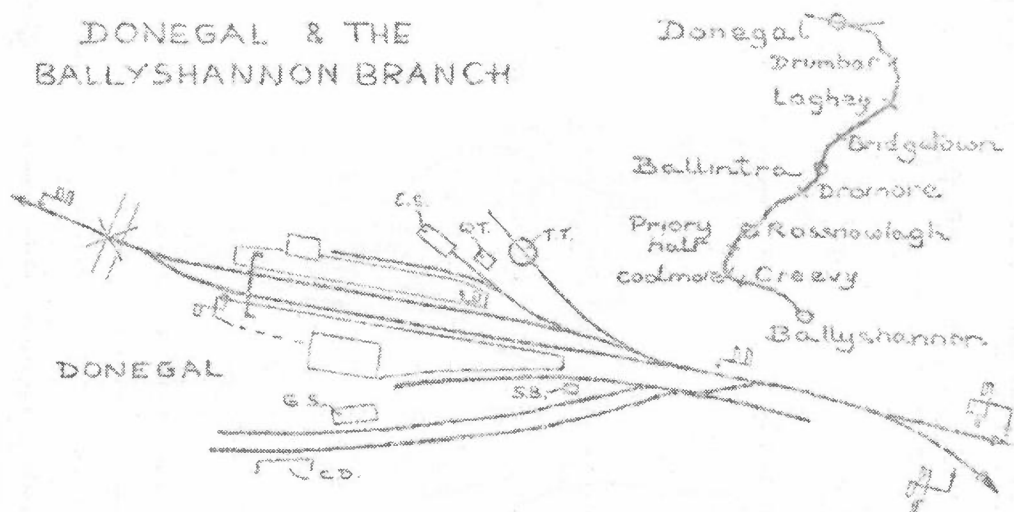
- GLENTIES



FOR PLAN OF  
STRANORLAR  
see sheet 6.



DONEGAL & THE  
BALLYSHANNON BRANCH



## DONEGAL - KILLYBEGS

