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# Rail chaos fury

HUNDREDS of furious and confused Limerick hurling fans were left waiting for two hours at Colbert Station yesterday morning when the earliest of the five specials was grounded by a brake problem. But the 500 passengers remained on board not knowing what was happening.

Questions now have been asked why the problem only came to light prior to the train's departure time.

Mr Paddy Murray of Dooradoyle bought his ticket for the first special, which was due to leave at 7.45am.

"When I bought my train ticket, I remember the woman in the ticket office saying to get to the station early as the train would leave as soon as it filled.

These words are still ringing in my ears. I spent almost two hours sitting in this train not knowing what was happening."

Brian Malone from Ballynanty said: "I was one of the first to get on the 7.45am train and that was at 7.20am. I left it two hours later to get on the last special which I managed to catch. But nobody told us anything."

Chris Ryan, from Ardacrusha said he had decided to get the first train in order to collect match tickets in Dublin.

"I couldn't find out what was happening and people should have been informed. We were left sitting in this train for two hours while the two later trains pulled out. We then managed to get out and get the last special which left at 9.30am. Nobody seemed to know what was happening. We asked somebody and he just shrugged his shoulders."

When the last special was reversing into the centre platform, only half the carriages were approachable from the platform.

People who were waiting on this platform were joined by many who decided to finally get out of the stricken 7.40 special which was still standing in its position.

One person present said: "It was like a scene from the railway station scene in the film Gandhi. There were people climbing aboard from off the platform, elderly people and children."

As hundreds scrambled on board, an Irish Rail employee arrived with a



Dominic Guigley avoids the markers to put Limerick on the attack in yesterday's All-Ireland hurling final at Croke Park. Picture: OWEN SOUTH

trolley full of beer to load up for the bar.

One passenger remarked: "He was about the only railway worker who knew what he was supposed to do throughout the mayhem."

Those on this train which pulled out at 9.30am had to endure another 40 minute stop at Newbridge. A belated announcement told passengers that there was a fault with the brakes.

The overcrowding on board was chronic. In one carriage which had 56 seats, there were upwards of seventy people standing. Children were stretched across the tables.

Speaking to the Limerick Leader, an Irish Rail off-duty employee said that the problem appeared to arise from an air-block in the braking system and, in his opinion, the problem could have been detected and rectified long before the scheduled departure time of 7.45.

Indeed, only for the commendable good humour of the local supporters, Irish Rail could have been faced with a potentially embarrassing situation as the patience of those stranded

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