

## LEADER LETTERS

# Trains again on our ghost railway line?

**□ IN OCTOBER 1975** the Ballingrane-Listowel Railway line closed and train services to Newcastle West ceased.

At the time CIE promised to leave the tracks in situ for ten years.

This period of grace is now coming to an end and thus the time is opportune to consider the future use of the station and the lines to Tralee and Limerick. In the absence of any outside interest it is probable that the rails and sleepers will be removed and the site re-developed. Probably, nothing will remain to indicate that Newcastle West was once served by rail.

However, depending upon the degree of interest shown, I believe that there are three less bleak options available, as follows:

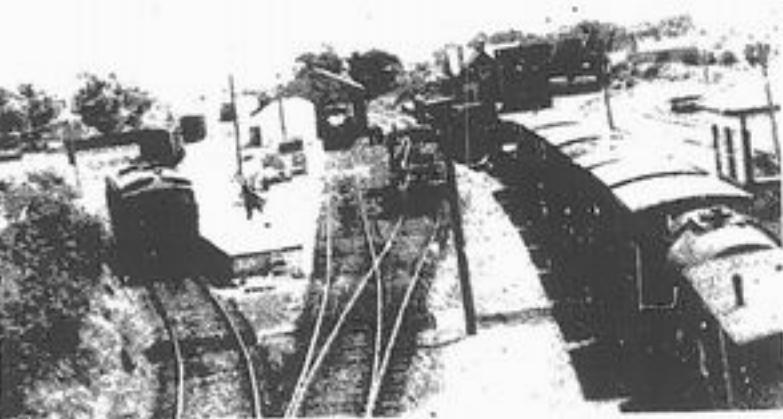
(1) Should there be no alternative to the disposal of the property consideration could be given to the retention of the present avenue with its rare, evergreen, oak trees. Also, the possibility of restoring the station house, with its distinctive architectural style, could be entertained.

(2) CIE could be asked to retain the 10 miles of track of Ballingrane Junction and to make the line available for occasional trains (GAA matches, Knock Shrine, etc.). As the track is still in reasonable condition and as this section does not contain any exceptional engineering features (which could prove expensive to maintain) this option need not prove costly. Furthermore, the scrap value of this section would not exceed £250,000, a small sum in terms of CIE's annual budget.

(3) This third and final option is the one which would be most dependent on local, voluntary support. It would seek the retention of some or all of the line by a railway preservation society. These societies are quite numerous in Britain and there are a few in existence in Ireland also. Preserved lines are a source of tourist revenue as well as illustrating to the future generations just how things used to be.

Many people would feel that West Limerick hasn't been allocated its "fair share" of public monies towards tourist development. Besides, there is also the possibility of EEC money being available for such projects. I must emphasize again that such aid is conditional upon a strong voluntary support group being in existence.

As an example of what has been achieved one need only visit Mallow Station where the Great Southern Railway Preservation Society have, with AnCo assistance, restored a number of carriages and are in the process of ensuring that a venerable old lady of steam will be heard on the rails of Munster in 1986. Is it



The line at Newcastle West in happier times: June 3rd, 1969.

on the particularly scenic line from Newcastle to Abbeyfeale which traverses the highest summit of the Irish rail system at Barnagh?

Whether or not any or all of the

above options ever become reality remains to be seen. However, I think that they should be thought about before any irrevocable decisions are taken as to the future of the

railway through Newcastle West.

LIAM O'MAHONY  
Bishop Street,  
Newcastle West.

with my pen friends and the foreign students that have been here.

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U.S.A.

## ENJOYING WRITING

A number of pen pals have now stopped by my Portland home and it has been interesting meeting them and their families. I have visited some of my pen pals in areas like the Bahamas and Canada.

We have had exchange students from France and Germany. In a year, my daughter would like to be an exchange student to England, Germany, Austria or Switzerland. In a couple of years, we would like to visit the family of our French student as we have become close to him and have enjoyed conversations and letters with the parents. The parents hope to come this way next year to visit. After we visit France, we plan to visit pen friends in England and Germany.

My daughter, Kiera, is 14 and a freshman in high school. She is holding a high grade point average and plans to be a pediatrician. She has just now gotten interested in writing to pen pals in other countries. She has enjoyed exchanging ideas

## Driver is fined

£200

A fine of £200 was imposed at Newcastle West Court on Martin Walsh, of Livaniska, Castlemahan, on a charge of driving with excess alcohol in the blood on April 21 last at Killarney. He was also disqualified from driving for 12 months.

Mr. Gary McMahon, solicitor, defending, told Justice M. C. Maguire, that defendant, who had recently got married and had a full-time job, had never been in trouble before.

Fined £50

Thomas O'Brien (19), of Sheehan's Road, Newcastle West, was fined £50 at the local court for common assault on Thomas Coffey at North Quay, Newcastle West, on April 7th last.

## TRACING

**□ I WOULD LI** my grandparent known descenda area. Anything : Following is Grandfathe Park, Nenagh, John, Mother, Grandmother, County Cork. N

3870 No. Freem Orchard Park, U.S.A.

## CROAGH PATRICK

**□ THE NATIONAL** Croagh Patrick ta year (1500 Anniversary of St. Patrick) on 28. Trains and bu former years, b from all over the o part in this histor exercise. Stances will be cele Oratory on the s mountain hourly l to 3.00 p.m. The a.m. will be in Ic (noon). Mass will Mass. A Mass fo the Charismatic R ment will be at 1.

The history of t exercise dates ba St. Patrick spent the season of Lough mountain, kno Crucifix Aisle called Croagh 1 day, most piligr Rock (as Croa called) on the 1 July, the day of Pilgrimage.

The pilgrimage sea lasts from June. Individuals and s people may be at the summit on a during this perio days for Rock are 13th Garland Friday (in July), which is 26th July.

Apart from days of age the Oratory is locked. This is to preserve the bus savages of storms extremely exp Organised pil accompanied by make arrangements Mass said in it contacting Rev. Jo, C.C., Lecan or Very Rev. Adm., Westport. It would be hel wishing to offe summer on 28 contact either F Costello, indicat mate time at wh celebrate.

PATRICK COS St. Patrick's Pres Leacanvey, Westport, Co. Ma

## SKS 1

Unit 2  
TOA, AKG  
handled b  
Trade :