

DEVELOPMENTS IN TRANSPORT IN EIGHTEENTH AND NINETEENTH CENTURY LIMERICK – THE COMING OF THE RAILWAY

(Unpublished article)

By

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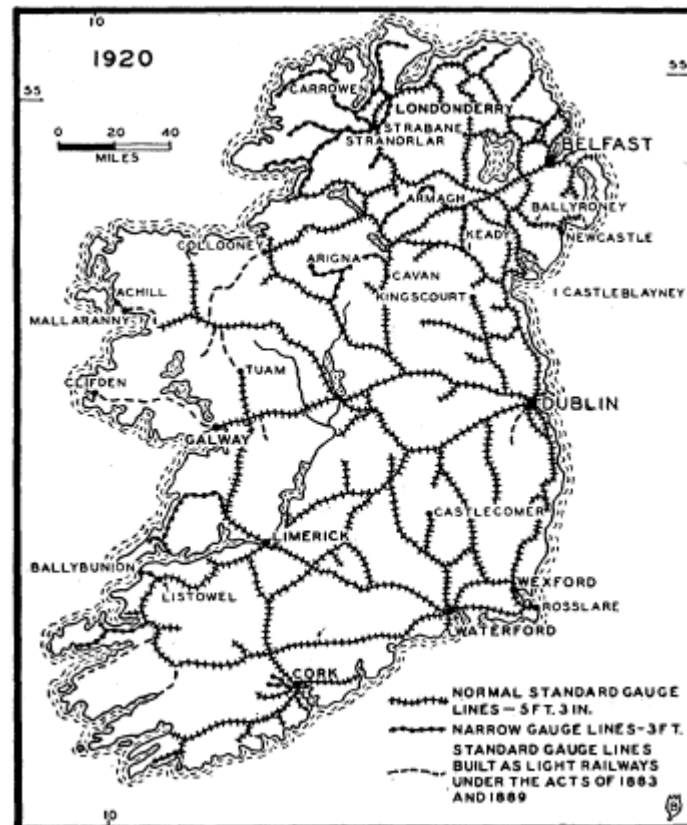
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Dublin and Kingstown Railway (1834) - the first railway in Ireland

The railway fever which took hold of England in the mid-nineteenth century spilled over to encompass Ireland; however the scale and intensity of investment was greatly reduced. This was mainly because Ireland's limited natural resources had created a different pattern of

economic growth and also because Ireland did not experience industrial revolution to any great extent. The distribution of the Irish population was not conducive to railway transport as the majority of its population was rural. In addition most cities and towns were already served by river and sea transport and neither fishing nor agriculture were developed enough to benefit a railway¹. Despite this by the early twentieth century there was over 3,350² miles of railway track in Ireland.



The Irish Railway System at its greatest extent (1920), taken from *Economic Geography*, Vol. 17, No. 3 (Jul., 1941), p. 272

The railways brought an impressive legacy with them. They established a uniform time across the country. They created a demand for specialist engineering skills and they allowed for the distribution of national papers across the country and for improved postal services. They also left a highly visible physical imprint upon the landscape in the form of permanent ways, bridges, embankments and cuttings. In addition the railways facilitated social mobility as well as, inadvertently, both migration and emigration

¹ Middlemass, p.6

² C.I.E website

Although the first railway to open in Ireland was the Dublin to Kingstown (now Dunleary) Railway in 1834, the first to actually receive royal assent was the Waterford and Limerick Railway on the 31 May 1826. This was also the only act passed for an Irish railway company in the reign of King George IV³. This line was first suggested by Alexander Nimmo, who proposed a railway line which would run from Limerick to Carrick-on-Suir, with a continuation line to Waterford and a branch into Tipperary to serve the coalmines at Killenaule⁴. The proposed main line was to start at the canal lock in Clare Street and would have passed through Singland, Killowen, Grainge, Oola, Solaheadmore, Bansa, Cahir Clonmel and Kilsheelin. However, despite the offer of a loan of £100,000 from the Board of Public Works, it proved impossible for the promoters to raise the necessary funds and the project was allowed to lapse.

In 1836 the project was briefly revived as the Suir and Shannon Junction Railway and was promoted by Brunel's Great Western Railway (GWR), which demonstrated the close links between English and Irish railway investment. The demand for passenger travel between these two cities was quite high as was demonstrated by the amount of stage coaches, both public and private, which travelled that way. A railway connection between Limerick on the western coast and Waterford on the south eastern coast was viewed as vital for connecting Limerick to London and also for promoting Limerick as a hub for transatlantic shipping. It was projected that upon completion of the railway it would be possible to travel between Limerick and London in about twenty-six hours; the Limerick to Waterford train would take two and a half hours, the Waterford and Bristol Steamer took around twenty hours and the Bristol to London train was four hours⁵. The railway could be built for an estimated cost of £900,000 with an additional £100,000 allowed for expenses. This worked out to £12,000 per mile of track which was lower than in England. This was mainly as the 'surface of the country is so level, the soil so firm, and the requisite materials so very abundant along the line, that they are sure the work can be constructed for £2000 per mile less'⁶. In spite of this the project was once again allowed to lapse.

³ Shephard, p.7

⁴ *ibid*

⁵ Smyth, p.19

⁶ Smyth, p.11

		Passengers.	Journies, per day.	Total travellers along the Line.
Coaches :				
The Limerick and Waterford } (1) carrying 8, performing 2				16
Mail				
Cork Mail, part of the Line (1), „ 8 „ 2				4*
Cars.—Between Waterford, Carrick, and Clonmel:—				
Bianconi's three horsed . . . (2) „ 16 „ 4				128
Briscoe's† ditto (1) „ 16 „ 2				32
Mail Car (1) „ 6 „ 2				12
Between Clonmel, Caher and } (2) „ 12 „ 2				48
Tipperary				
Between Tipperary and Limerick:—				
Bianconi's (1) „ 12 „ 2				24
Chaplin's (1) „ 8 „ 2				16
Between Limerick and Clonmel:—				
Mail Car (1) „ 6 „ 2				12*
Kilkenny and Cork Car, } (1) „ 16 „ 2				6*
through Clonmel, Caher, } and Tipperary				
Mail Car (1) „ 6 „ 2				2
	(13)		24	300*
Total Coaches and Cars, 13 ; Journies 26 ; daily accom-				
modation for travellers along the Line, 300.				

Availability of transport between Limerick and Waterford in 1836,
from *The Suir and Shannon Junction Railroad*, p. 15

Unregulated railway speculation in England in the late 1820's and early 1830's had resulted in several problems. One of these was that several types of gauge being used which often caused difficulties when passengers and goods were transferring between lines. Isambard Brunel's Great Western Railway had a gauge of seven foot whereas the railway lines built by George Stephenson used a gauge of four foot eight and a half inches which was to become the British Standard Gauge (BSG). It was believed that this width had developed naturally from the conversion of road wagons which had been adapted to work on primitive rails⁷. The Dublin and Kingstown Railway (D&KR) was built to a gauge a four foot eight and a half inches. In order to try and circumvent some of the problems facing the English railway system the government appointed a committee to enquire into the most advantageous railway system for Ireland. The committee convened in 1836 and published its final report in 1838 giving detailed survey of Ireland's economic status at that time as well as a detailed analysis of traffic flows on the existing roads and canals. Known as the Drummond Report after its chairman Thomas Drummond, as was the commission, it was largely ignored by government but is an

⁷ Casserley, p.21

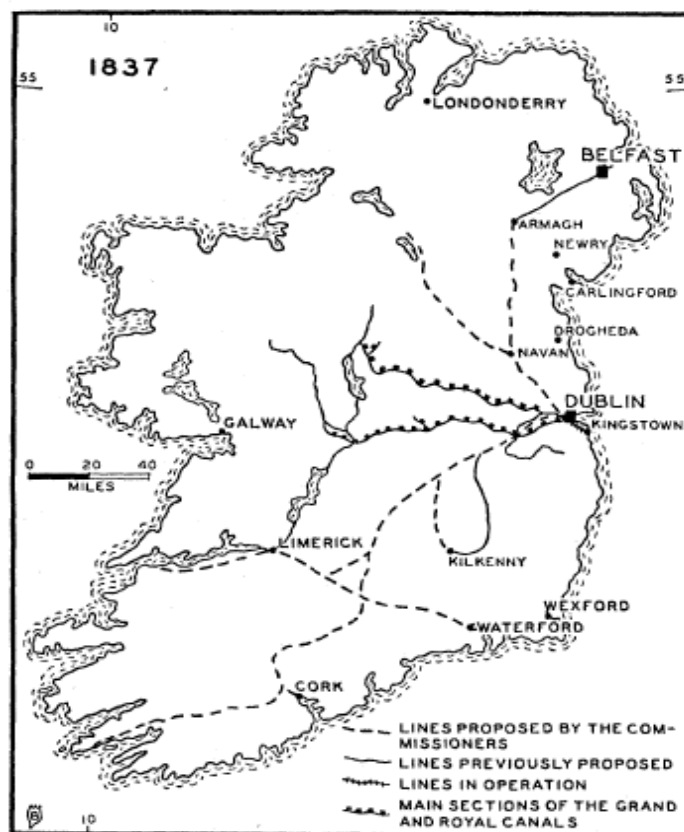
excellent source for historians. This commission shows the beginnings of governmental attempts to control the railway industry in order to reduce the unregulated capitalism which had proved problematic in England.

Towns between which Conveyances run.	Towns or Villages through which Conveyances pass.	Description of Conveyance.	Times per Week each passes in one direction.	Number of Passengers each can carry.	Average Number carried.	Fare per Mile.		Distance in Irish Miles be- tween Places in first Column
						Inside.	Outside.	

COUNTY OF LIMERICK.								
Limerick—Ballingarry	Patrick's Well, Adare	Car	6	6	4	d.	d.	14
" Charleville	Bruff, Kilmallock	Coach	6	15	12	2½	1	20½
" Clonmel	Tipperary, Cahir	Mail Car	7	4	2	-	2	40
" Cork	Bruff, Kilmallock, Charleville, Buttevant, } Mallow	Mail Coach	7	8	5	3¾	2½	51½
" Cork	Bruff, Kildorrery, Fermoy, Rathcormac	Car	6	11	8	-	2	48
" Croome	~~~~~	3 Cars	6	10	6	-	1	10
" Dublin	Nenagh, Moneygall, Roscrea, Burros-in- } Ossory, Mountrath, Maryborough, Bally- } brittas, Monasterevan, Kildare, New- } bridge, Naas, Rathcoole	Mail Coach	7	8	5	4	2½	93
" Dublin	Nenagh, Moneygall, Roscrea, Burros-in- } Ossory, Mountrath, Maryborough, Bally- } brittas, Monasterevan, Kildare, New- } bridge, Naas, Rathcoole	Coach	7	15	9	3¾	2½	93
" Ennis	Newmarket-on-Fergus, Clare	Coach	7	15	10	2½	1½	20½
" Ennis	Newmarket-on-Fergus, Clare	2 Coaches	6	15	10	2½	1½	20½
" Galway	Newmarket-on-Fergus, Ennis, Gort, Cranmore	Mail Coach	7	8	3	3	2	52
" Garrystillar	Hospital	Car	6	10	7	-	1½	19½
" Kilfoan	Hospital	Car	6	8	5	-	1½	22
" Killaloe	Castleconnell	Coach	6	15	9	-	1½	12½
" Killaloe	~~~~~	Car (*)	6	12	10	-	1½	12½
" Killarney	Adare, Rathkeale, Newcastle, Castle Island	Car	7	11	5	-	1½	53½
" Nenagh	~~~~~	Coach	6	15	10	2½	1½	20½
" Newcastle	Adare, Rathkeale	Car	6	16	13	-	1	20½
" Newport	Castleconnell	Car	6	10	6	-	1	8
" Pallas-Kenry	Hospital	Car	6	12	8	-	1	10
" Rathkeale	Adare	Car	6	12	9	-	1	14
" Rathkeale	Adare	Car	6	6	4	-	1	14
" Shanagolden	Askeaton, Kildimo	Caravan	6	16	9	1	-	22
" Tipperary	~~~~~	2 Cars	6	6	5	-	1	20½
" Tralee	Adare, Rathkeale, Newcastle, Abbeyfenle	Mail Coach	7	8	4	3¾	2	49½
" Tralee	Rathkeale, Askeaton, Glin, Tarbert, Listowel	Car	7	6	3	-	2	56½
" Waterford	Tipperary, Cahir, Clonmel, Carrick-on-Suir, } Piltown	Mail Coach	7	8	3	3¾	2	62½
" Waterford	Tipperary, Cahir, Clonmel, Carrick-on-Suir	Car	6	10	6	-	2	62½
Rathkeale—Cork	Newcastle, Drumcollaher, Charleville, But- } tevant, Mallow	Car	6	8	4	-	1¾	47½
Tarbert—Ballylongford	~~~~~	Car	6	16	8	-	1½	5½

From Appendix B No.5, *Return of Public Conveyances, Between the Several Towns in Ireland by the Railway Commissioners Ireland*

The commissioners viewed railways in Ireland as public enterprises which should be undertaken by government for the benefit of the public rather than by private investors for profit. Ireland had a very unevenly dispersed population and the commissioners projected that a few additions to those lines already in existence would be sufficient to cater for Ireland's railway needs. However the government did not agree with this analysis and they disregarded almost all of the committee's recommendations acting upon only one, namely the standardisation of the gauge.



Shows the lines which had received Parliamentary sanction by 1837 and those which had been recommended for construction by the Drummond Commission from *Economic Geography*, Vol. 17, No. 3 (Jul., 1941), pp. 263

The gauge is the distance between the load bearing rails of a railway or tramway⁸ and is by far the most important measurement on any line of railway. If the gauge was not rigorously maintained then derailments and accidents were almost certain to occur. The gauge also had a bearing on the construction costs of the railway in that it impacted on the quantity of land needed. It also influenced the speed at which the train could travel and the volume of traffic which the line could support. As mentioned the first railway to open in Ireland (D&KR) had a gauge of four foot eight and a half inches. The Ulster Railway (UR) which opened in 1839 and had a gauge of six foot two inches and the projected Dublin and Drogheda (D&DR) line was to have a gauge of five foot two inches⁹. Following complaints from the Ulster Railway the Board of Trade appointed Major-General Pasley of the Royal Engineers to investigate. He sought the advice of George Stephenson who recommended a gauge of between five foot and five foot six inches¹⁰. The average of these two distances was five foot three inches which

⁸ Oxford English Dictionary

⁹ Casserley, p.22

¹⁰ Casserley, p.22

was to become the Irish Standard Gauge (ISG). Towards the end of the nineteenth century in more lightly populated areas light railways were built to a gauge of three foot.

The Railway Commission, along with the worsening economic climate, acted as a constraint upon the outbreak of speculation in the late 1830's. Partly as investors hesitated to invest before the committee's findings were returned but also because of an economic downturn in England. The second wave of railway mania occurred during the mid-1840's. It was during this period that Limerick obtained its first railway which was a revival of the first railway to receive parliamentary permission. *The Railway Gazette* of 11 November 1844 reported on a meeting of the provisional committee of the Waterford and Limerick Railway (W&LR) Company at Waterford town hall¹¹. Charles Vignoles was appointed as the consulting engineer at a wage of £1,000 per annum for a minimum of eight weeks attendance per year¹². Subscribers to the project included William J. Geary, the mayor of Limerick and Charles Bianconi, the mayor of Clonmel and also a stage coach service provider. It was estimated that construction would cost around £750,000, which was less expensive than the Suir and Shannon Junction Railroad proposal a decade earlier. In Limerick the line was to commence at the east side of Nelson Street (now Parnell street) and cross the old road about a mile from Limerick¹³. Capital was to be raised through the sale of 15,000 shares at £50 per share. However it was stipulated that if construction of the W&LR was not completed by 1 May 1847 then the Great Southern & Western Railway (GS&WR) was free to take over and complete the railway works. If the W&LR failed to commence construction within three months of the act passing or if work stopped for three months then all rights would transfer to the GS&WR.

The first meeting of the shareholders was held in Waterford on Thursday the 27 August 1845, Thomas Meagher was appointed as president and William Septimus Saunders was appointed secretary. William Saunders was the brother of Charles Saunders who was the company secretary, general manager and superintendent of the Brunel's Great Western Railway¹⁴. Charles' appointment demonstrates the close links between the GWR and the W&LR. The engineer Vignoles was authorised to begin work on the Limerick to Tipperary section immediately. In September 1845 at a meeting at Cruise's Hotel in Limerick city, it was

¹¹ Shepherd, p.7

¹² Shepherd, p.8

¹³ Shepherd, p.8

¹⁴ Shepherd, p.9

reported that the entire line to Tipperary was mapped out and that a further ten miles was surveyed, with notices served on the landowners. In addition the secretary was requested to seek tenders for the construction of the line, of which William Dargan's was accepted. Thus on Wednesday 15 October 1845 the first sod was turned by William Dargan, Charles Vignoles and Richard Osborne. Osborne had been chief engineer on the Philadelphia and Reading Railroad in 1842

(66)

Waterford and Limerick Railway.

STATION.

Date.	Article.	Name.	Address.	Weight.				Rate.	Amount Received.		
				Tons.	cwt	qrs.	lbs.		£	s.	d.
1849											
March 2	Boxes	Prof Barker	Widmore St Dublin	1	3			13/-		16	9
				Clerk. <i>Wm Lacy</i>				Paid	£		
										16	9

Notice.—The Company are not responsible for any Parcel above the value of £10, unless declared as such at the time of booking and entered and paid for accordingly. (See other side.)

G. Morgan Goggin, Printer, 34, George-st., Limerick.

**Receipt - Waterford and Limerick Railway
(from Limerick City Museum Online Catalogue)**

The main line was to be built from Limerick via Carrick-on-Suir, Clonmel and Tipperary and it was to cross the GS&WR route near Tipperary at what was to become the infamous Limerick Junction.¹⁵ At a shareholders meeting in February 1846 it was announced that several cargoes of rails had been delivered to Limerick and that the line to Tipperary was well advanced with over 1,200 employed on its construction¹⁶. In March 1846 Osborne was authorised to take full control of construction as Vignoles was unable to give the line the attention it required. In July two first class carriages were ordered from Rogerson, Danson & Russell of Dublin at a price of £630 each. The price suggests that these carriages must have been considerably longer vehicles than the standard length carriages being built for other railways at that time¹⁷. In December 1846 Osborne advised the shareholders that large quantities of materials were needed including fifty tons of best American white oak, 500 tons of best red pine, 100 tons of best pine pitch and 100 tons of second quality memel (Baltic fir).

¹⁵ Ferris, p.23

¹⁶ Shepherd, p.9

¹⁷ Shepherd, p.111

The glass for four second class carriages and six third class carriages was also ordered at this time¹⁸.

The shareholders had also begun to question the amounts which the committee were expending on land acquisition and on parliamentary expenses. It was revealed that there had been several difficulties encountered with land purchases namely with landowners asking for exorbitant and unjustified amounts. One example was of a Mr. Dixon from whom the company was looking to acquire thirty-two acres. He demanded £16,000 in compensation for the land which the company refused. The dispute was sent to the grand jury for arbitration and the jury members demanded financial remuneration before they would return a verdict. Mr. Dixon finally received £3,225 and 15 shillings in compensation¹⁹. Another example was that of William Roche who claimed his land was worth £1,800, the company offered him £260. However the amount he finally accepted was only £85. Cases such as these helped to reduce the excessive claims which many landowners made and to reassure the investors. Not all landowners attempted to swindle the railway company, Dr Henry White, the landlord of a cottage required by the company, agreed to forgo compensation for himself and handed it over to his tenant who had previously lost an arm in an accident²⁰. The shareholders also appointed a sub-committee to locate a railway at Cahir. The Limerick committee was instructed to obtain enough land outside the Limerick Terminal for a Y-track for the turning of engines and carriages without a turntable. However a turntable was ordered seven months later at a cost of £150 In February 1847 the chairman announced that W&LR would build its own carriages in order to reduce costs. In March 1847 the first sod was turned for the Clonmel extension at Cahir, this line employed 120 labourers working for nine shillings per week.

The W&LR company was also suffering from random acts of violence some of which ended tragically. In July of 1847 there was a notice in the local press offering a reward of £50 for information concerning an atrocity committed on 20 June. On this date an obstruction had been placed on the rails at Boher causing the derailment of a ballast train which resulted in the death of a labourer and serious injuries to two others. Six months later there was a similar occurrence between Pallas and Oola, but without fatalities, and the reward was increased to £100. The company threatened to suspend all works in any district where outrage or injury

¹⁸ Shepherd, p.111

¹⁹ Shepherd, p.9

²⁰ Shepherd, p.10

was threatened on any of its contractors or labourers²¹. On Monday 27 March 1848 the company held the trial of the locomotive Bessborough; on the 29 March a train was laid on

The Waterford and Limerick Railway will be opened for traffic in four days time. Trial trips were made from Limerick to Tipperary on Monday, when the distance was accomplished in an hour.

From the *Freeman's Journal* Monday, April 3, 1848

to bring patrons to the Tipperary Steeple Chase²² and 400 passengers departed Limerick at ten o'clock. On the eighteenth and nineteenth of April 1848 the line was inspected by John Simmons on behalf of the Board of Trade. His report stated that the curves were favourable, that the earthworks were generally moderate and appeared firm but that the cuttings were excavated to such a narrow width that if there was even a slight slip the traffic might be impeded²³. In addition to the miles of track which had been constructed there was also twenty-four road bridges, ten of which were constructed of wood and the rest were a combination of wrought and cast iron. Their spans varied from seventeen feet to eighty-five feet. Twenty bridges built from stone and timber were constructed to carry the line over roads. These bridges had been introduced by Richard Osborne and were 'of a common application' in America²⁴. Finally there were the level crossings which were provided with gates and keepers, and the principal roads also received semaphore signal gates.

The Waterford and Limerick Railway was the first to reach Limerick Junction with goods services starting between Limerick and Tipperary, with the three intermediate stations of Killonan, Pallas and Oola, in April 1848. The line officially opened for passenger traffic to Tipperary on Tuesday 9 May 1848. On the 19 May the *Limerick Chronicle* observed that the trains were 'daily thronged with passengers and luggage traffic'²⁵. Two months after the W&LR opened the GS&WR completed its line to the point of junction and on the 1 July the first train from Dublin arrived at Limerick Junction. Trains departed Limerick three times a day at 6am, 11:30 and 15:30 on week days. It took the train an hour and a half to travel the twenty-five miles to the junction. The trains left Tipperary at 8am, 15:30 and 19:30 on week

²¹ Shepherd, p.10

²² Shepherd, p.10

²³ Shepherd, p.11

²⁴ Shepherd, p.11

²⁵ Limerick Chronicle, 19/05/1848

days and at 9:30 and 18:00 on Sundays. All trains were supplied with first, second and third class carriages whose respective fares were four shillings, three shillings and one shilling and eight pence irrespective of distance travelled. The GS&WR had trains leaving Limerick four times a day, at 8:05am, the morning mail train, 11:00, 14:05 and 21:50, the night mail. The mail trains ran seven days a week and the remaining two trains ran on week days only²⁶.

Limerick Junction was often used to show Ireland and its railways in an unfavourable light and was the subject of many ill-informed jokes²⁷. Described as:

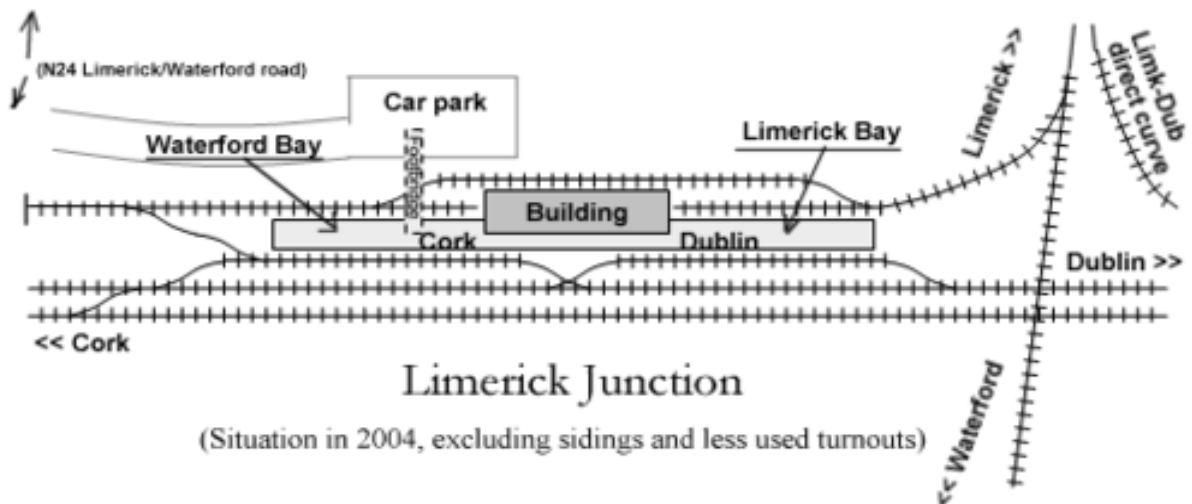
'one of the most extraordinary junction stations that ever existed, which may be described as typically Irish. Limerick junction is not really a place at all ... one would be inclined to think that the railway people would have at least planted it in county Limerick, but they did not, Irish like, they selected a pleasant spot in county Tipperary.'²⁸

This had mainly transpired due to the fact that from the opening of the junction in 1848 to 1967, when Coras Iompair Eireann (C.I.E) installed a new track layout, all passenger trains serving the station had to reverse to reach the stations one lengthy island platform. The up and down Cork to Dublin main line trains ran past the platform and then reversed through a scissors crossover to reach the GS&WR platform. Frequently the two trains crossed here and when both had arrived at their respective stretch of platform, the two locomotives were facing each other. W&LR trains bound for Limerick crossed the GS&WR main line and ran past Keane's Point Junction before reversing into a bay platform behind the Dublin end of the main line platform. Departures were straightforward. The most elaborate manoeuvres were carried out by trains heading for Waterford. They diverged from the mainline at Keane's Point Junction, came around a curve, passed behind the rear of the station and then reversed into a bay behind the Cork end of the main line platform. On departing, the train would pull forward out of the bay until clear of the points from where they had to reverse all the way back to the junction before going on their way towards Tipperary. These manoeuvres meant that even the mail and boat trains had to spend between fifteen and twenty minutes at the junction.

²⁶ Shepherd, p.90

²⁷ Ferris, p.23

²⁸ Shepherd, p.123



Limerick Junction in the twenty-first century (illustration taken from Wikipedia)

American-style Bogie Carriages (a bogie was a wheeled wagon or carriage) were introduced on the Waterford and Limerick Railway for its opening. Until 1964 it was erroneously believed that this style of carriage was first introduced on the narrow gauge Festinog railway in 1873. In the May 1964 issue of *The Railway Magazine* George Mahon wrote that they had been introduced due to Richard Osborne's experience with the Philadelphia and Reading Railroad. All twelve passenger carriages constructed for the opening of the line were American-style vehicles carried on two short-wheelbase, four-wheeled bogies²⁹ In his report for the board of trade John Simmons wrote that

'the carriages are peculiar, being also introduced from the United States, consisting of a body about forty foot length supported on two bogie frames, one at each end, which are free to turn round spindles, fitting into sockets in the underframing of the body...

These carriages are well appointed for going round curves ... but I think it yet remains to be proved whether they are adapted to very high speeds'³⁰

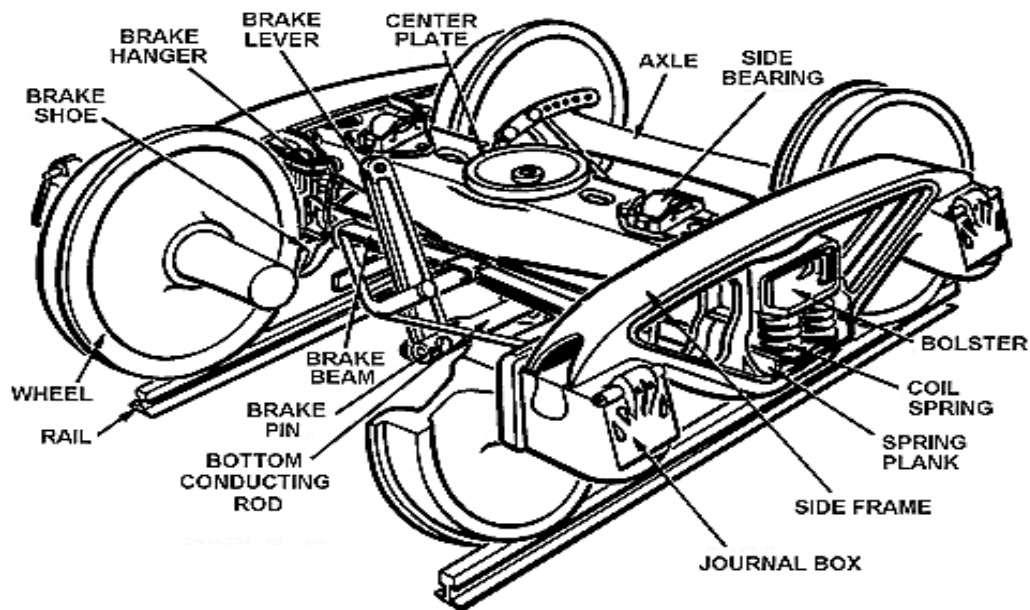
However, the traffic manager of the GS&WR, George Ilberry, drew attention to the fact that the stock used by W&LR was incompatible with that of the GS&WR and it required that the W&LR use the GS&WR own vehicles for a period³¹. The opening of the line had rendered Richard Osborne's position superfluous and he returned to the United States. His departure spelt the end of the bogie carriages and his successor recommended they be cut in two. Two first class, two second class and two third class carriages were created by cutting the bodies

²⁹ Shepherd, p.111

³⁰ Shepherd, p.111

³¹ Shepherd, p.112

of three bogie carriages in half. However each of the them had to be equipped with an additional drag box to accommodate the dragwear at the newly created end of the carriage³².



Drawing of a railroad truck or bogie from US Army Field Manual FM 55-20, Figure 8-8.

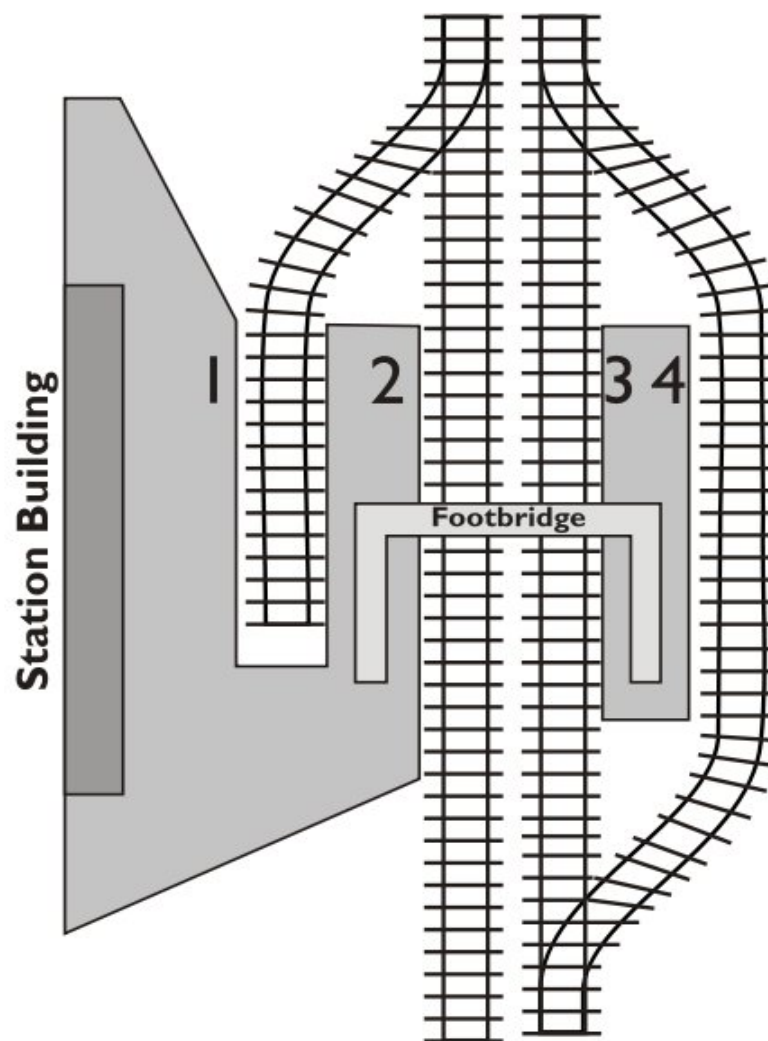
([Illustration](#) taken from Wikipedia)

Passengers travelling on a GS&WR train from Dublin or Cork had to change at Limerick Junction for a W&LR train to continue onto Waterford or Limerick. The GS&WR didn't like depending on other companies and it made several attempts to reach Limerick independently from Cork and Dublin³³. None of these alternative routes were utilised to any great extent. The line from Cork to Limerick was promoted by the Cork and Limerick Direct Railway (C&LDR) with the backing of the GS&WR. This line left the main line at Charleville Junction which was about a mile north of Charleville station and it ran for seventeen and a half miles to make a junction at Patrickswell with the Limerick and Foynes Railway (L&FR), over which the C&LDR had running powers. The C&LDR opened in 1862 and it was worked by the GS&WR until it was officially acquired by the company in 1871. Some trains did run directly from Cork to Limerick after the takeover but most journey's were terminated at Charleville where passengers would change to main line services. The GS&WR line to Limerick from the north was more complicated. This began as two separate branches built by two independent companies, the Roscrea and Parsontown (now Birr) Railway (R&PR) which

³² Shepherd, p.112

³³ Ferris, p.45

was authorised in 1854 and opened in 1858. This was supported by the GS&WR. At the same time the Limerick, Castleconnell and Killaloe Railway (LC&KR) was constructing a line which would terminate at Killaloe Pier on the River Shannon, which was served by steamers. This line reached Castleconnell in 1858, Birdhill in 1860 and Killaloe in 1862 and it was worked by the W&LR. This line met the Dublin to Cork route at Ballybrophy where the trains terminated in a bay platform so that through running to Dublin was not possible. This



Platform 1 is a "bay" platform, while platforms 2, 3 and 4 are "through" platforms. The physical platform accommodating 3 and 4 is an "island" platform

Types of platform (illustration taken from Wikipedia)

route was six miles shorter than the original route via Limerick Junction. The building of this through-route created branches at both ends, the original line to Birr became a branch leaving the line at Roscrea. At the other end of the line the GS&WR trains did not run through to Limerick but terminated at Birdhill. Here they connected with the W&LR services to and

from the Killaloe line which was now left as a four mile branch from Birdhill. However the GS&WR route to Limerick still depended on the W&LR for the final part of the journey.

As mentioned the Waterford and Limerick Railway reached Limerick Junction in 1848, the line was completed to Clonmel in 1852 and it reached the outskirts of Waterford, at Newrath, in 1854. However the W&LR trains didn't reach the site of the present Waterford station until 1864³⁴. The expansion of the W&LR focused on Limerick city which was to become a major railway centre. At its greatest extent at the end of the nineteenth century the W&LR was the fourth largest railway in Ireland despite the fact its main line was only seventy-seven miles long. The growth of the company was mainly due to its absorption of smaller concerns or from working their routes. The railway line spread south-west from Limerick and took almost thirty years to reach Tralee (1880). The first part of the line, from Limerick to Ballingrane, was opened in 1856 by the Limerick and Foynes Railway (L&FR). The line reached Foynes itself in 1858. In 1867 this line was extended by ten miles to Newcastlewest by the Rathkeal and Newcastle Junction Railway, this line was mainly worked by the W&LR. From Ballingrane to Foynes Junction was also worked by the W&LR. The line from Limerick to North Kerry was authorised in 1873, a forty-two and a half mile connection was built from Newcastle to Tralee. The W&LR agreed to supply £25,000 of the necessary £260,000 on the condition it could work the line which was to become known as the North Kerry line. The W&LR also began to expand north from its terminal in Limerick city. The Limerick to Ennis Railway (L&ER) was authorised in 1853, the company went bankrupt in 1856 and the original contractors were replaced by William Dargan. The Public Works Loan Commissioners gave a loan of £40,000 towards finalisation of the line and it was finally declared complete in 1859. This was the first railway line in county Clare and it was worked by the W&LR from the outset and they officially absorbed it in 1874. The Limerick to Ennis line was expanded as far as Athenry, a distance of thirty-six miles via the MG&WR line to Galway, in 1869³⁵. There were also many schemes which were promoted in order to link Limerick with Kilkee, Kilrush and Cappagh Pier due to their connections with costal shipping but which were never realised. Another scheme was the Kilrush, Dublin and Belfast Junction Railway which was intended to link the small port town of Kilrush, on the west coast, with the two largest cities in the country. Another proposal was the Limerick and Belfast Direct which was promoted in 1845 but never realised.

³⁴ Ferris, p.48

³⁵ Ferris, p.49, p.99

Waterford and Limerick District Railways.

Yr. Month.	Line opened.	Miles.	Yr. Month.	Line opened.	Miles.
1848 May 9	^a Limerick to Tipperary	24½	1860 July 23	^e Castleconnell to Birdhill	4½
1848 May 12	^b Kilkenny to Thomastown	11	1860 Sep. 27	^g Athenry to Tuam	15½
1850 May 29	^b Thomastown to Jerpoint	1½	1862 Apl. 12	^e Birdhill to Killaloe	2½
1852 May 1	^a Tipperary to Clonmel	24½	1865 Mar. 1	^k Kilkenny to Abbeyleix	19
1853 Aug. 23	^a Clonmel to Dunkitt	26½	1867 Jan. 1	ⁱ Ballingrane to Newcastle	10
1853 May 18	^b Jerpoint to Dunkitt	17	1867 May 15	^k Abbeyleix to Maryborough	9½
1853 Sep. 10	^c Waterford to Tramore	7½	1869 Sep. 15	^k Ennis to Athenry	35½
1854 Sep. 7	Dunkitt to Waterford	1½	1878 Aug. 12	^l Waterford to Lismore	43
1856 July 22	^d Limerick to Ballingrane Jun.	17½	1879 June 23	^m Clonmel to Fethard	8
1858 Apl. 27	^d Ballingrane to Foynes	9	1880 July 1	^m Fethard to Thurles	17
1858 Sep. 2	^e Killonan to Castleconnell	5½	1880 Dec. 20	ⁿ Newcastle to Tralee	42
1859 July 2	^f Limerick to Ennis	24½			

^a Waterford and Limerick.—Details of the Capital, Traffic, etc., are given at pp. 25, 29.

^b Waterford and Kilkenny.—In 1868 the name of this company was changed to Waterford and Central Ireland. It is worked as an independent line. No dividend has been paid on the Ordinary Stock. A dividend of 5 per cent. was paid on the 6 per cent. Preference Stock in 1882.

^c Waterford and Tramore.—An independent line. The dividends on the Ordinary Stock were 3 per cent. in 1880, 2½ per cent. in 1881, and 3 per cent. in 1882.

^d Limerick and Foynes.—Amalgamated with the Waterford and Limerick in 1873.

^e Limerick and Castleconnell.—Amalgamated with the Waterford and Limerick in 1872.

^f Limerick and Ennis.—Amalgamated with the Waterford and Limerick in 1874.

^g Athenry and Tuam.—Leased to the Waterford and Limerick. The dividends on the Ordinary Stock were 2 per cent. in 1880, 2 per cent. in 1881, and 1½ per cent. in 1882.

^k Kilkenny Junction.—Worked by the Waterford and Central Ireland. No dividend has been paid on the Ordinary Stock.

ⁱ Rathkeale and Newcastle.—Worked by the Waterford and Limerick. No dividend has been paid on the Ordinary Stock.

^k Athenry and Ennis Junction.—Leased to the Waterford and Limerick. No dividend has been paid on the Ordinary Stock.

^l Waterford, Dungarvan, and Lismore.—An independent line. The net receipts have so far been insufficient to pay the interest on Debenture Stock, but a dividend of 5 per cent. on the Ordinary Stock is payable out of the rates of the County and the County of the City of Waterford.

^m Southern of Ireland.—Worked by the Waterford and Limerick. No dividend has been paid on the Ordinary, or on the Preference Stock.

ⁿ Limerick and Kerry.—Worked by the Waterford and Limerick.

Dates of opening of the railway lines closely associated with the Waterford & Limerick Railway from the *Manual of financial, railway, agricultural and other statistics for politicians, economists and investors*, 1883, p. 67

In 1873 the Ennis and West Clare Railway was approved by an act of Parliament. It had first been proposed as a broad gauge line but it was re-presented as a narrow gauge, three feet wide, and as such was the first narrow gauge line to receive parliamentary approval. The route from Ennis to Miltown Malbay was very similar to the one which the West Clare Railway would later follow. However the company was unable to raise the necessary capital and so the project was abandoned. The 1883 Tramways (Ireland) Act, *An Act for promoting the extension of tramway communication in Ireland and for assisting emigration and for extending certain provisions of the Land Law(Ireland) Act 1881*, provided the incentive which was needed to encourage more development. The 1883 Act provided a stimulus to railway construction in disadvantaged areas in that it allowed for potential promoters to present their projected railways for grand jury approval. This also became known as Baronial approval and it guaranteed a five per-cent return, which would be paid by the ratepayers of the region the railway was built in. Under the terms of the baronial guarantees, if a railway

failed to meet its operating costs for four consecutive years then control would pass from the company to the grand jury³⁶. In 1889 the Light Railways (Ireland) Act allowed the government to provide direct public funding for line which the Lord-Lieutenant deemed to be in the public interest. In 1896 the Railways (Ireland) Act allowed the treasury to provide grants from the public purse to construct railways where the Government felt they were necessary. This level of financial support for railways was unknown elsewhere in the Kingdom.

In May 1884 the West Clare Railway (WCR) was authorised to build a three foot gauge line twenty-seven miles in length from Ennis to Miltown. The interest on the capital was assured under the terms of the Baronial guarantees. The same year the South Clare Railway (SCR) was authorised to extend the WCR line to the south of the county with branches to Kilrush and Kilkee. Although the SCR was officially a separate concern it was always worked by the WCR and the term West Clare Railway is usually applied to the entire line. The contractor for both lines was William Martin Murphy and the first sod was turned by Charles Stuart Parnell at Miltown on the 26 January 1885. The line from Ennis to Miltown Malbay was opened in July 1887, the line from Miltown to Moyasta Junction was opened in 1892. At Moyasta Junction the line split into two to serve the towns of Kilrush and Kilkee. Kilkee was a very popular holiday destination for many Limerick people. The line was extended past Kilrush to Cappagh pier and there was also a through line which enabled trains to run directly between Kilrush and Kilkee. This facilitated all the holidaymakers who travelled from Limerick by boat as they could take the train straight from Kilrush to Kilkee. The through line also created a triangular junction at Moyasta and was the only one on the Irish narrow gauge system. The WCR became immortalised in song when the Percy French penned the parody '*Are Ye Right There Michael*' in 1902 after an incident which lead him to sue the company for loss of earnings³⁷.

The introduction of the railway to Ireland brought sweeping changes, one of these was it created new forms of employment. Many of the early staff came from England particularly in the case of drivers and fitters as these skills were relatively unknown in Ireland. Railway companies had to induce men to come from England to fill these positions. Many returned home again when they realised that the wages and working conditions did not meet their

³⁶ Ferris, p.86

³⁷ County Clare Library

expectations. The first staff appointment of the Waterford and Limerick Railway was of John Griffin who was appointed clerk at the Limerick office in September 1845, his salary was fixed at £80 per annum³⁸. In October 1845 George Rodgers was made Superintendent of Police, he was later given the power of suspending and reporting on the thirty-six 'trustworthy men not exceeding the age of forty years' who were to be employed as policemen. They were to be paid according to the pay scale used by the GS&WR and were also to be supplied with suits of linen and good topcoats of Irish manufacture³⁹. In February 1848 the station masters were appointed, John Conran was at Limerick on a wage of £80 per year. James Moloney was at Killonan on a wage of £50 a year, however he was dismissed in June 1849 for neglect of duty. An M. Kelly was appointed at Pallas and a William Lee at Oola both for £50 per annum. Thomas Worsted was appointed as a shunter at Limerick for three shillings per day and Maurice Hall as a stoker for two shillings and sixpence per day. Shortly after the line opened drivers were paid seven shillings a day. Guards were initially paid fifteen shillings a week but this was soon increased to seventeen shillings and sixpence and by July 1852 they were earning nineteen shillings. Work on the railway was grouped into three classes; third class work was work on the branch lines, with the goods vehicles, on ballast, shunting, banking and piloting. Second class work was categorised as the working of mixed trams between Limerick, Waterford, Tuam and Tralee. All main line passenger work between Limerick, Waterford, Tuam and Tralee was considered first class work.

³⁸ Shepherd, p.152

³⁹ Shepherd, p.152

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Drawing of a railroad truck or bogie from US Army Field Manual FM 55-20, Figure 8-8, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Railroad_truck_FM55-20.Fig8-8.png

