

THE PROPOSED CORK TO PASSAGE RAILWAY 1837

Brendan Hall

The Parliamentary Committee to consider the Bill for the construction of a railway between Cork and Passage West met over three days in April 1837. The members of the Committee were Mr. **O'Connell**, Mr. **D. Callaghan**¹, Mr. **Jephson**, Mr. Serjeant **Jackson**, Mr. **Longfield**², Mr. **Roche**³, Mr. **Vesey**, Sir Andrew **Agnew**, Sir **R. Bateson**, Mr. **Barry**⁴, Mr. **Cole**, Colonel **Thomas**, Mr. **E. Buller** and Sir Richard **Musgrave**.

There were several petitions against the Bill. One was from a group of Cork (city and county) inhabitants, alleging that the proposed railway would be harmful to the navigation of the river Lee and to trade in Cork city. No evidence was put forward to support these allegations and the claim was rejected. A petition forwarded by a consortium interested in constructing a competing railway service between Cork and Cove was also rejected. The Committee looked sympathetically on a protest by **William Wise**, on whose land it was proposed to build a railway terminus on the side of the river Lee.

Traffic from Cork to Passage (1837)

Statement showing the present annual amount of traffic, and the expected annual traffic by the Cork and Passage Railway, in Passengers and Goods -

	Present avg. amount of passengers annually	Expected annual traffic by Railway	Average charge by Railway	Amount of receipts expected annually
To and from Cork to Passage:				
Passengers by public vehicles	267,000	524,000	9d	£18,650
Passengers by private vehicles	100,000	150,000	9d	£5.625
Goods from Cork to Passage				
Dead stock, in tons	6,000	20,000	1s 6d	£1,500
Live stock, pigs and sheep	-	50,000	3d	£625

In 1837 the average time taken to make the journey between Cork and Passage was one hour for those travelling by 'car' and around nine hours for the transportation of goods by carriers; vessels took anything between four hours and five days, depending on the state of the winds and tides. This was not considered satisfactory on both social and economic grounds and the advantages

¹ Daniel Callaghan, MP for Cork city, a Liberal and supporter of the Liberal/Repealer pact 1835-41

² Richard Longfield, elected Conservative MP for Cork County in 1835, unseated in August 1837

³ Edmund Burke Roche, Liberal/Repealer MP for Cork County

⁴ Garrett Standish Barry, Liberal MP for Cork County

of introducing a railway system between the two termini was compelling as well as potentially profitable.

The average charge for passengers at the time was 1s 6d (as against a proposed 9d); the charge per ton of goods transported by water was also 1s 6d. The average number of passengers travelling by vessel between Cork and Passage daily was around 200. The introduction of the railway, some 6½ miles in length, would obviously be of commercial benefit to all.

The names and residences of the Directors of the proposed Railway Company, with the amount of shares taken by each, was as follows:

Names	Residences	Designations	No. of Shares	Amount
James Beale , esq.	City of Cork	Merchant	100	£5000
Reuben Deaves , esq.	Ditto	Merchant	020	£1000
Daniel Leahy , esq.	Shanakill	Deputy Lieut., Co. of Cork	020	£1000
Daniel Meagher , esq.	City of Cork	Merchant	020	£1000
Samuel Lane , esq.	Ditto	Merchant	020	£1000
James Kencaid , esq.	Leinster Street, Dublin	Land Agent	020	£1000
Joseph Robinson , esq.	11 Eden Quay, Dublin	Merchant	050	£2500
James Pim , jun. esq.	College Green, Dublin	Stock Broker	050	£2500
Richard Williamson Topp , esq.	Rochell, Cork	Brewer	020	£1000
John Gould , esq.	City of Cork	Merchant	25	£1250
Paul Twigg , esq.	11 Eden Quay, Dublin	Merchant	35	£1750
11 Subscribers			380	£19,000

The projected capital of the Company set up for the construction of the railway, was £200,000, with the power to raise £66,000 by loan. There were some 151 shareholders (at £50 per share), who between them raised some £151,000. The Parliamentary Report lists only those with a share subscription of £2,000 and upwards:

Names	Residences	Designations	No. of Shares	Amount
Joseph R. Pim	11 Eden Quay, Dublin ⁵	Merchant	050	£2500
James Pim , jun. ⁶	College Green, Dublin ⁷	Stockbroker	050	£2500
James Beale	Patrick's Hill, Cork	Merchant	100	£5000
John Lecky	Queen Street, Cork	Merchant	050	£2500
Joseph McMullen	South Terrace	Merchant	050	£2500
Charles Sugrue	King Street	Merchant	050	£2500

⁵ Joseph Robinson Pim, General Steam Packet Office. His private address was 3 Fitzwilliam Square, Dublin

⁶ 41 Dame Street, Dublin

⁷ Boyle, Low, Pim, and Co. Bankers

Denis Hegarty	Devonshire Street	Merchant	050	£2500
R.F. Macleod	Harbour View Terrace	Merchant	050	£2500
Joshua McChaytor	Dublin	Merchant	050	£2500
Lord de Vesci	Abbeyleix	-	050	£2500
Richard Roberts	Ardmore	Lieut. R.N.	050	£2500
James Brunton	Hamburgh	Merchant	200	£10000
McGregor Laird	London	Agent	100	£5000
J.P. Robinson	London	Agent	050	£2500
Edward Roberts	Kennington	Gentleman	65	£3250
Samuel Hall	Basford near Nottingham	Engineer	110	£5500
16 Subscribers			1125	£56,250

This initial plan to build the railway failed, despite the figures above, because sufficient funds could not be raised. However, with an eye on the success of the Dublin to Kingstown Railway, another attempt was made to resurrect the project in 1845. This time there were three competing consortiums: the 'Cork, Passage and Kinsale Railway', the 'Cork and Passage Railway' (possibly a revival of the original plan⁸) and the 'Cork, Blackrock, Passage and Monkstown Railway'. The latter consortium succeeded in their application and received Parliamentary sanction to proceed with the project on 16 July 1846 as the 'Cork, Blackrock and Passage Railway' [CBPR].

Despite considerable financial difficulties, a contract to build the line was awarded to Messrs. Moore of Dublin, the engineer being Sir John Macneill, of 23 Rutland Square, Dublin⁹. The first sod was cut by Lady Deane, with great ceremony, on 15 June 1847. In May 1850 the first trial runs took place on the line, to test the stability of the track. Although this run took eighteen minutes, it was estimated that the journey could be done in safety in about ten to twelve minutes. Following a half-yearly meeting a week later, some of the shareholders took a trial run. The Cork (City Park terminus) to Passage line eventually opened to the public on 08 June 1850 and was an immediate success. On the following day, a Sunday, an estimated 6,000 passengers were carried. The last train out of Passage that day carried an estimated 800 passengers. The cost of a single fare was 6d for 1st Class, and 4d for 2nd Class.

The terminus in Cork was moved to Albert Street in 1873. The railway was converted to 3 ft. narrow gauge (it was originally standard gauge) between Cork and Passage in October 1900 and an extension line to Crosshaven was

⁸ Information of the later history of the line is taken from: Newham, A.T., *The Cork Blackrock & Passage Railway*, Surrey 1970, page 4

⁹ At the time he was on the council of the Institution of Civil Engineers of Ireland

constructed between 1902 and 1904.¹⁰ The CBPR became part of the Great Southern Railways in 1925.

Station Masters at Passage West were¹¹:

1867 - John **O'Sullivan**; 1886 - Patrick **Hennessy**; 1892 - George **McCabe**;
1898 - Daniel **Coakley**; 1903 - Patrick **Coughlan**; 1907 - Michael **Buttimer**;
1912 - T. **Howard**; 1918 - J. **Kelly**; 1932 - D. **Crone**.

The line closed in 1932.

Sources:

'Reports from the committee on Railway Bills 1837' in *Parliamentary Papers – Ireland 1837*

Walker, B.M., editor, *Parliamentary Election Results in Ireland, 1801 – 1922*, Dublin 1978

Newham, A.T., *The Cork Blackrock & Passage Railway*, Surrey 1970

The Treble Almanack 1829, CD-ROM, Archive CD Books 2001

Thom's Irish Almanac 1848, Dublin 1848

Irish Narrow Gauge Web Site at: www.trainweb.org/i3/

Cork, Blackrock and Passage Railway Web Site at:

www.geocities.com/CapeCanaveral/Lab/8690/pa205.htm

OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO

'The passengers on board the India vessels which lately touched at Galway, and many of whom travelled up to Dublin on their way to the British capital, have not much reason to praise the hospitality of Ireland.

The instant the vessels came to anchor and sent their boats on shore *extortion* was the order of the day. Butter was instantly raised by the huxters to 3s 3d per pound, eggs to six pence the couple, butchers meat and poultry in proportion, a post chaise to travel twelve miles, was charged five guineas; all the hacks that could be got in the country, were charged the same price; and a Physician was mean enough to *hire* his post chaise to two gentlemen, to convey them up to Dublin, and to extort **TWENTY GUINEAS** for the job.'

The Freeman's Journal, 13 Sept 1794

¹⁰ Cork, Blackrock and Passage Railway at:

<http://www.geocities.com/CapeCanaveral/Lab/8690/pa205.htm>

¹¹ 'Irish Narrow Gauge Railways – Cork, Blackrock and Passage Railway':

<http://www.trainweb.org/i3/places/w769689.htm#w769689>