

opening bridges in both of its sections, the Canal bridge at Longford and the Shannon bridge at Drumsna. Shannon Bridge (92.00) had an opening span and was the only telescopic bridge on the Midland, the opening span being drawn back instead of the more usual turning method. The principle involved was described in an illustrated article in *The Engineer* in May 1869. Drumsna (93.00) had the usual facilities and is followed by Carrick-on-Shannon (97.60) whose station is still open. Boyle (106.33) was an important station with two platforms and goods facilities, including those to enable grain to be loaded. It is still open for passenger traffic.

Kilfree Junction (112.40) was just beyond the summit of a climb almost all the way from Boyle with some stretches at 1 in 100. This was the junction for the Ballaghaderreen branch which trailed in on the down side. There were two platforms, that on the down side being an island. Today there is little evidence of there having been a station here. There was a refreshment room here prior to the First World War. The line now falls for nearly two miles at 1 in 100, easing to 1 in 125 and 250 before levelling off into Ballymote (120.36). It was a block post with two platforms with the main building on the up side and goods accommodation beyond the platforms. The line then runs in a cutting on a rising gradient, avoiding the Ox Mountains which lie ahead.

Collooney (127.56) ceased to be a block post in 1930, the abandoned up platform still being in existence. There were goods facilities at the Dublin end. Leaving the station, the line passes over the site of the connecting line from the GS&W station to that of the SL&NC and immediately beyond the former's track from Claremorris trailed in on the down side. Shortly afterwards comes the site of Carrignagat Junction (128.60) where the SL&NC joined on the up side. From here to Ballysodare (129.61) the SL&NC trains ran over the former MGW up road. Ballysodare had two platforms with the goods shed and station building on the down side. Just beyond the station, a half-mile long siding came in from the flour mills of Pollexfen & Company. The line again falls, at 1 in 80, towards Sligo (134.16), the last half-mile being double track.

The station is reached on a curve past the

Lough Atalia Bridge was perhaps unique in that, whilst it included an opening span as built, it is believed to only have been opened once in connection with the Board of Trade inspection before the line was opened. Prior to its construction, local interests had vigorously campaigned for an opening span. This undated photograph was probably taken in the closing years of the nineteenth century. Author's collection.

site of the engine shed and turntable, the latter retained to turn the single cab '121' class diesel locomotives which have worked Sligo line trains for a number of years. The present cabin is in the 'V' where the Quay branch diverges on the down side. The station has two platforms with two intermediate sidings. It was burned down during the Civil War and was rebuilt in much the same style although the overall roof was not replaced. When it was being rebuilt, the decision was taken to build a hotel which was not however completed until the GSR had taken over.

The Quay branch has always been worked as a goods only line and is on a steep falling gradient of 1 in 70. One track was extended on to the quay itself beyond the goods station, the extension being the property of the Sligo Harbour Commissioners. It included a loop and fanned out into three sidings at its extremity.

Athlone to Westport and Ballina.

The Mayo branch, as it was always known, was in reality a secondary main line, today single track throughout although double in Midland days as far as Roscommon. It diverges from the main line to the west of Athlone with the first station at Kiltoom (84.00) which was opened in 1879 as a block post. It had two platforms but no sidings. Nine Mile Bridge (87.00) was the site of platforms used annually on 24th June by a special train from Athlone in connection with the nearby St John's Well pilgrimage. Just beyond was Lecarrow (88.20) with its large ballast quarry on the up side, one of two supplying permanent way materials for CIE. There was a long siding with a loop passing under the stone crusher; entry was

by means of a ground frame and subsidiary ETS instrument.

Knockcroghery (90.00) is now the first block post on the branch; there are two platforms with the cabin on the up side at the Dublin end beside the crossing and there was a goods store at the Westport end on the down side. Ballymurry (92.71) also had two platforms but no goods accommodation. The line falls at 1 in 150 to Roscommon (96.20), an important station with the station buildings on the up side and a tall cabin on the down platform. There is a large goods store on the up side and a cattle loading bank. Leaving Roscommon, the line climbs for two miles and reaches Donamon (101.73), a former block post with a single platform with a cabin, both on the down side. There was a loop on the up side serving a cattle bank and a siding to the goods store.

Ballymoe (107.55) was a picturesque station situated some miles from the village, it being basically a block post although livestock traffic was dealt with there. There were two platforms, with a goods store, sidings and cabin, all on the down side; there was an old water tower beside the goods store. Frenchlawn crossing (109.01) was the scene of the 1903 accident which was alleged to have been caused by a goat. The next station, Castleroa (112.60) was the last of the handsome GN&W stations as finances were depleted at this point, leading to inferior buildings at such places as Westport and Ballina. It was an important station with goods facilities and it at one time boasted a locomotive shed and turntable. The 26-lever cabin is on the up side at the Westport end beside the crossing. A long siding extends from the up loop off which is the goods store and a cattle bank.

