

B954

CORAS IOMPAIR EIREANN

JOINT ENQUIRY

RULES & REGULATIONS  
OFFICER  
- 2 MAY 1982  
CORAS IOMPAIR EIREANN  
CONNOLLY STATION

Fatal Accident

at

Accommodation Crossing 124 miles 1220 yards,

Sligo/Dublin Line

on

31st October 1981

District Manager's Office,  
Sligo.

28th November 1981

Contents

1. Description of Accident
2. Evidence
3. Review of evidence
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1. Description of Accident:

1.1 At approximately 11.50 hours on Saturday, 31st October, 1981 the 08.30 hours Connolly to Sligo passenger train collided with a motor car at 124 miles 1220 yards Accommodation Crossing in the Ballymote/Sligo section.

1.2 The occupants of the motor car were a mother and two daughters:

Mrs. [REDACTED]  
Miss [REDACTED]  
Miss [REDACTED]

1.3 Mrs. [REDACTED] and her daughters were taken to Sligo General Hospital after the accident, where [REDACTED] aged 12 years, was found to be dead on arrival. Mrs. [REDACTED] and daughter [REDACTED] were detained for treatment.

1.4 The train consisted of:

Locomotive B.134 and B.135	
Standard Coach	1458
Standard Coach	1431
Standard Brake	1932
Buffet Car	2405
Standard Coach	1555
Standard Coach	1541
Heating Van	3171

1.5 Driver [REDACTED] and Guard [REDACTED] were in charge of the train. Ticket Collector [REDACTED] was on duty on the train. Driver [REDACTED] is attached to Mullingar Station. Guard and Ticket Collector are attached to Sligo Station.

1.6 The train was scheduled to leave Ballymote at 11.29 hours, but, due to late running did not arrive until 11.42 hours, and departed at 11.44 hours. It was running approximately fifteen minutes late when accident occurred.

1.7 As a result of the collision the car was carried for about twenty yards by the train

Contd./

1.7 (continued)

and was extensively damaged. Mrs. [REDACTED] the driver of the car, and her daughter [REDACTED] who occupied a front passenger seat in the car were both thrown from the vehicle following the first impact. [REDACTED] who was the only passenger in rear seat of car, was subsequently thrown from it before car came to rest. The train came to a stop with the locomotive approximately 1000 yards from the crossing and opposite Clarke's house. The actual stopping point of the loco was predetermined by Loco Driver [REDACTED] in the knowledge that he would attract assistance from Clarke's house by sounding the loco hooter.

1.8 The crossing is an accommodation crossing in the townland of Cloonacurra, parish of Collooney, County of Sligo. It is situated at 124 miles 1220 yards Ballymote/Sligo Section, Mullingar to Sligo line. The approach road is a narrow road used by the Crean family who reside approximately 150 yards inside the railway line. The [REDACTED] family were returning from visiting Mrs. [REDACTED] who is Mrs. [REDACTED]'s mother, when accident occurred.

Bilingual warning notices and C.I.E. Triangular Notices are in position at each gate. Whistle Boards are in position at either side of crossing.

2. Evidence:

2.1 Statements were taken from the following and are included as appendices:

Loco Driver [REDACTED]	<u>Appendix 1</u>
Train Guard [REDACTED]	<u>Appendix 2</u>
Ticket Collector [REDACTED]	<u>Appendix 3</u>
Loco Driver [REDACTED]	<u>Appendix 4</u>

Driver [REDACTED] who worked the 07.40 hours passenger train from Sligo to Mullingar on 31st October 1981 and was returning as passenger from Mullingar on the 08.30 hours passenger train ex Connolly, took over the train after the accident and drove it to Sligo.

Contd./

2.2 Drawing No. 610/1090A Appendix 5

This drawing shows:

- (a) Map of location which also shows position of Whistle Boards.
- (b) Map of scene showing final position of car and positions of warning notices.

2.3 Drawing No. 610/1090B Appendix 6

This drawing shows:

- (a) Cross section along roadway to house.
- (b) Enlarged section from gate on down side to gate on up side.
- (c) Longitudinal section along rail.

2.4 The standard views measured in yards by the standard method are as follows:-

Down Side		Up Side	
Down	Up	Down	Up
480	220	415	340

2.5 Report from Maintenance Manager, Inchicore on the result of examination of locomotives Nos. B 134 and B 135.....Appendix 7

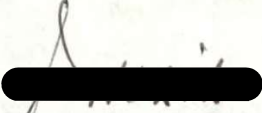
3. Review of Evidence:

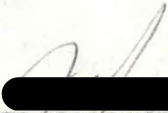
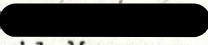
- 3.1 The statements from the members of the train crew confirm that the train was running late but that everything was normal otherwise.
- 3.2 The standard triangular warning notices together with the standard bilingual warning notices were in position at the crossing. Whistle boards were also in position at either side of crossing.

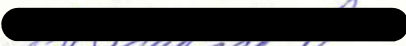

4. Conclusion:

We conclude that the accident was caused by the failure of the driver of the car to exercise normal precautions when using the crossing.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

  
District Manager,  
Sligo.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
  
Asst. Area Rail Manager (Running),  
Galway.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
  
Asst. Divisional Engineer,  
Athlone.

STATEMENT BY LOCO DRIVER [REDACTED]

I booked on duty in Mullingar at 09.25 hours on 31st October 1981 to work 09.47 hours passenger train to Sligo. Train left Mullingar at 10.05 hours and everything was normal until I arrived at Cloonacurra Crossing which is known locally as Crean's Crossing. As train approached the Crossing I saw a car move out gradually towards the line. I would say train was approximately 40/50 yards from Crossing when I first saw the car. I then applied both brakes and blew the hooter. The front loco struck the car and I saw the car turn round. I also saw the car breaking up and a body flying out of it. At this stage I was losing sight of the car as the train was bearing to the right. I decided to let the train run to where I knew Clarke's house was so that I could get assistance. I stopped the train beside the house and blew the hooter to attract attention. The lady came out and I told her I had a very serious accident at the Crossing beyond the bridge. She phoned for an ambulance, doctor, and priest. Loco Driver [REDACTED] who was travelling on the train came to me. The Guard and Ticket Checker also came to the loco and they decided to go back to the Crossing. The Checker went through the train to get whatever medical assistance was available. I then went to the house and phoned Sligo Station to report the accident. I had examined the locos and had ascertained that I could work the train in with the leading loco B 134. I then went back to the train and waited for Guard and Checker to come back. The Checker told me a girl had died and all had been brought to hospital. As I was a bit shocked Driver [REDACTED] worked the train to Sligo. Subsequently I travelled home to Mullingar on the 13.20 hours passenger train. I booked off duty in Mullingar.

Question: What speed was train travelling at time of accident?

Answer: I would think 65/70 m.p.h. but tachometer was stuck at 63 m.p.h. when train stopped.

Question: Are you satisfied that the front of the leading loco struck the car?

Answer: Yes there were paint marks on the front of the loco.

Question: Did you notice position of Gates at time of accident?

Answer: No.

Question: Were you alone in the cab of loco at the time and what position were you in?

Answer: I was alone and driving from the left hand side.

Question: Did you sound the hooter when train was passing the whistling board?

Answer: I cannot say I did or I did not but I have no reason to doubt that I did as this is routine.

Question: Did the brakes on the train work when you applied them?

Answer: Yes.

I have read this statement and it is correct.

SIGNED: \_\_\_\_\_

WITNESS: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_ 25.11.1981



STATEMENT BY TRAIN GUARD [REDACTED]

I booked on duty at 07.10 hours in Sligo and worked the 07.40 hours passenger train to Mullingar on 31st October 1981. At Mullingar I changed to the 08.30 hours passenger train ex Dublin and worked towards Sligo. We were 14 minutes late leaving Ballymote. The train stopped in the Ballymote/Sligo section on the line opposite Clarke's House. I checked the vacuum which was zero and then I looked towards the driver who was pointing towards the rear of the train. I checked the vacuum hose but it was in order. I then walked beside the train to the driver. I asked the driver what was wrong. He said there was a bad accident back at the "iron gates" crossing, we had hit a car and that he had asked the woman in the house to 'phone for aid. I suggested that he stay with the train and [REDACTED] and myself went back. I got my detonators and ambulance kit, locked the van crossdoor and proceeded to protect train which I did. The Ticket Collector and nurses were at the scene before me. On my arrival at the scene I saw the child lying on her back on the bank, a nurse was attending the child. I assisted the nurse. I spoke to the injured woman who was in a state of shock. She wanted to know who the driver of the train was. I did not say. As the ambulance arrived I proceeded to complete the protection of the train. When I returned to the Crossing the ambulance was gone but I learned that a second ambulance was coming for the other girl who I believe was in a shocked condition in the house. The gardai then arrived and shortly afterwards the second ambulance. I walked back to the train. As far as I know the nurses went back to Sligo in the ambulances as one of them asked me to take care of their luggage on the train. When I got to the train the Traffic Inspector was there and we boarded the train. I was advised that the Ticket Collector was back on the train so we proceeded to Sligo.

I booked off duty at 13.50 hours in Sligo.

Question: When you arrived back at the Crossing did you notice the position of the Gates?

Answer: They were open.

Appendix 2 (Continued)

Question: When you left Ballymote did you hear the hooter being sounded?

Answer: I did not hear it but I consider I would not hear it from my position in the rear van.

Question: Did the Gardai ask you to hold the train for any further investigation?

Answer: No.

Question: Did you hear any bang or noise before the train stopped?

Answer: No, only the noise of the brakes applying.

Question: When you got back to the scene of the accident who was there?

Answer: The injured child, her Mother who was also injured, her Grandmother, [REDACTED] the two nurses and another person.

I have read this statement and it is correct.

SIGNED: [REDACTED]

WITNESS: [REDACTED]

DATE: 25.11.1981

STATEMENT BY TRAVELLING TICKET COLLECTOR [REDACTED]

I booked on duty at 07.25 hours in Sligo on the morning of October 31st 1981 to work 07.40 hours passenger train to Mullingar where I joined 08.30 hours passenger train from Dublin to work back to Sligo. Everything was normal until train stopped on line opposite Clarke's house which is in Ballymote/Sligo section. I went to loco and met Driver [REDACTED] who informed me a serious accident had occurred at Cloonacurra Crossing and that he thought some occupants of a car were fatally injured. I enquired from Driver if he all right. I then went through train to find out if any Doctors or other medical people were on board. I secured the services of two nurses who went back to scene of accident with me. On arrival at scene of accident I discovered a woman holding a young girl in her arms sitting on the bank beside line. Beside her I saw an older woman in a hysterical condition. I noticed also a man standing near crossing. He had apparently come from public road. We immediately examined a car which was in a wrecked condition beside line to see if any other occupants were still in it. The nurses attended to injured people while I went to public road to await ambulances. The ambulance arrived almost immediately and took the injured woman and daughter, who at that stage was thought by the nurses to be dead, to hospital. The older woman was taken back to her house by one of the nurses and a priest who had come on the scene. I went to the house as well to see if I could give any further assistance. I then got a seat in a car from there back to train. Guard returned to train soon after and then train left for Sligo.

Question: Did you notice position of Gates when you came back to Crossing?

Answer: Both Gates were open.

Question: After you left Ballymote did you hear the hooter sounding?

Answer: I cannot recollect.

I have read this statement and it is correct.

SIGNED: [REDACTED]

WITNESS: [REDACTED]

DATE: 25.11.1981

STATEMENT BY LOCO DRIVER [REDACTED]

I was travelling home to Sligo on the 08.30 hours Passenger Train on October 31st 1981 having worked as Driver on 07.40 hours Passenger Train to Mullingar. I was sitting in front coach. When I heard a noise of breaking glass as the train was passing Cloonacurra Crossing I looked out and saw a young girl being thrown into the air. When train stopped I approached driver and he told me of the accident. He left me in charge of Loco and went to a telephone to convey information on the accident to Station Master, Sligo. As Driver [REDACTED] appeared shaken by the incident I offered to drive train to Sligo.

Question: In your experience what is the general position of these Gates?

Answer: On a couple of occasions I have seen them open.

I have read this statement and it is correct.

SIGNED: [REDACTED]

WITNESS: [REDACTED]

DATE: 25.11.1981

17/9  
Internal Memorandum

APP. 11

from Maintenance Manager, Inchicore

our reference  
M2340/182  
your reference

date  
23-12-81'

to Asst. Area Rail Manager (Running), Galway ✓  
Copy/Area Rail Manager, Galway  
Rules + Regulations Officer, Connolly  
Claims Manager, Heuston

Fatal Accident At Accommodation Crossing At  
124 $\frac{1}{2}$  miles Ballymote/Sligo Section  
Saturday 31-10-81' - 08.30 Pass. Connolly/Sligo - Loco B134/B135  
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I refer to yours of 18th inst.

The locos involved suffered the following damage in the accident.

Loco 134

Cow-Catcher badly bent  
Cab. Steps torn off.  
Speeds - Gearbox sheared off.

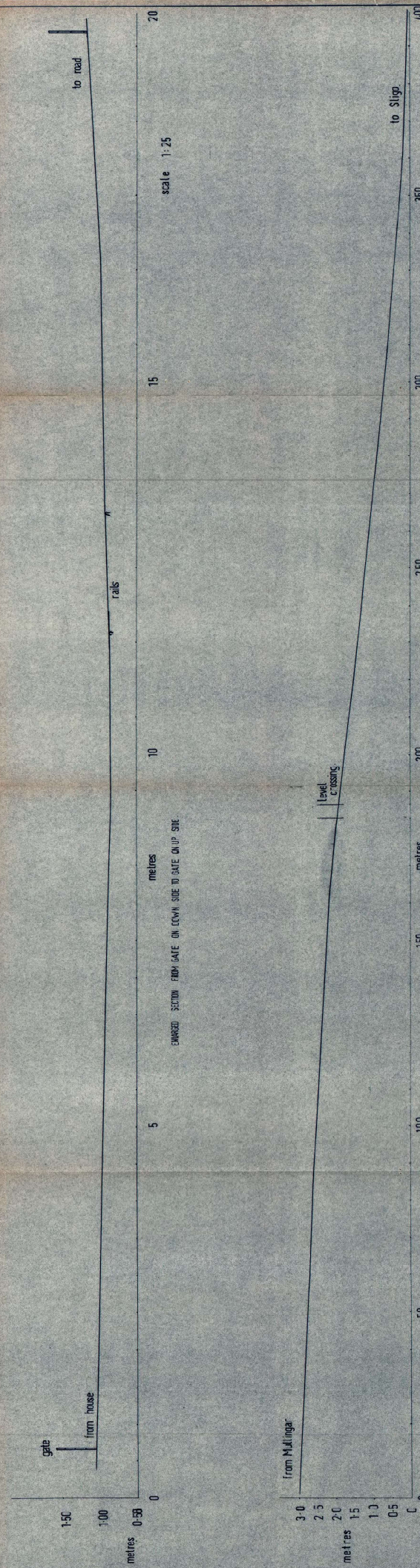
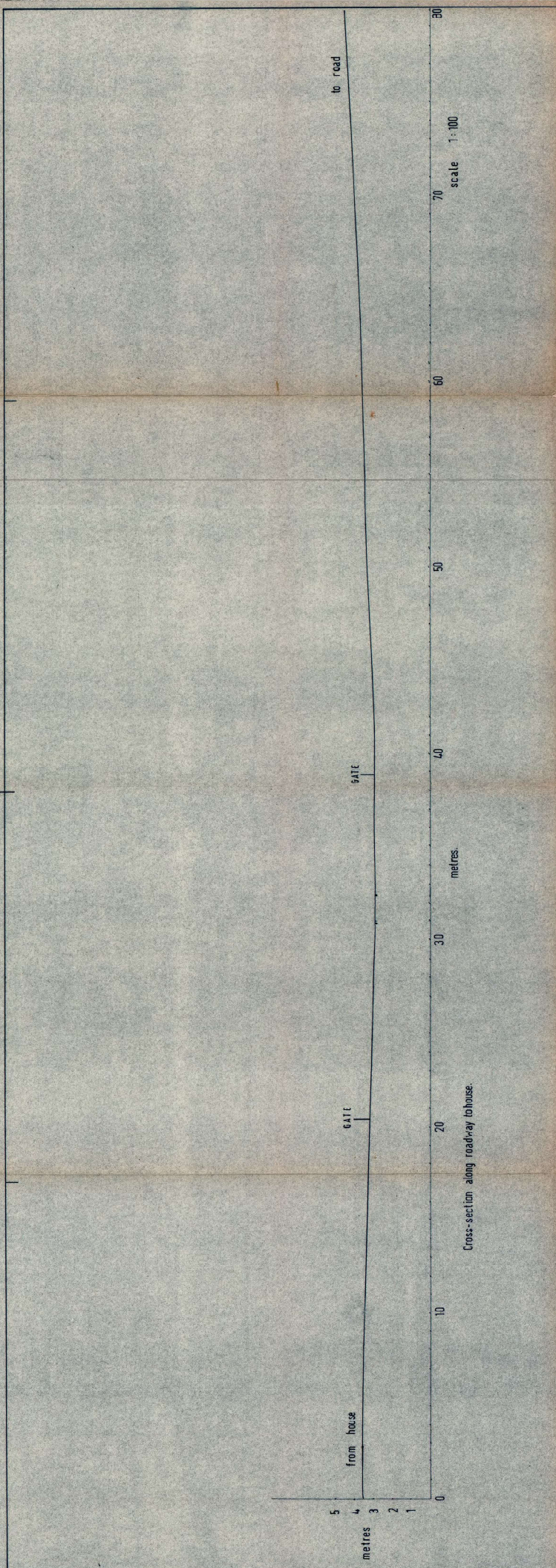
Loco 135

Cow-Catcher badly bent.  
Brake cylinder damaged and renewed  
Brake rod and pipe bent.  
two cat - walk side panels damaged  
Cab steps torn off.

Following completion of this work the locomotives brakes were tested  
and found to be satisfactory and the locomotives were returned to traffic  
on 10/11/81'.

██████████  
██████████  
Maintenance Manager





Coras Iompair Éireann Civil Engineering Department  
 Fatal accident at accommodation crossing  
 on Sligo line 124mbs 1220yds. 31-10-81.

OFFICE	Divisional Engineer's Office	Alblone
REVISIONS		
A/		
B/		
C/		
D/		
E/		
DRAWN	PK	CHECKED
		BLANKETED
		PK
		DATE
		11.11.81



**Cbras Iompair Eireann Civil Engineering Department**  
 Fatal accident at accommodation crossing  
 on Sligo Line 124 mls 1220 yds  
 31-10-81.  
 SCALE: 1" = 2500'  
 DRAWING NO. 610 / 1091 a

OFFICE		DIVISIONAL ENGINEERS' OFFICE, ABLOONE.	
REVISIONS		CHECKED	DRAWN
A			
B			
C			
D			
E			

DATE	BY	FOR
11-11-81		