

# Citytrack... a name that means speedy travel

**CITYTRACK** became a new word officially in Northern Ireland today, particularly for rail commuters in and around Belfast, for it marks the beginning of a system designed to attract thousands of people to railway travel through speedier service — speed, comfort, economy and convenience.

It became official when the City's Lord Mayor, Alderman Myles Humphreys, on a dual-role occasion, declared open the new Belfast Central Station, a delightful modern building which has been designed to provide the Albert Road side of the Albert Road. The ceremony also marked the re-commissioning of the historic Belfast Central Line. Alderman Humphreys was present as Belfast's official citizen — and as chairman of Northern

Ireland Railways, for whom today's ceremony opened a new era, and an exciting one for local commuters and inter-city travellers.

Citytrack, and completion of the new main terminal building, marks the completion of years of planning and hard work by railway staff, consultants and contractors.

Citytrack itself is a service aimed at speeding commuters on their way, linking Belfast Central and various stations and halts along the route with Bangor on the one side and Portadown on the other. There will also be direct links with Ballymena and Antrim, while the inter-city services to Dublin and Londonderry and various points between will also go directly to the new

Belfast Central Station.

The new Botanic Avenue Exit now operating close to Shaftesbury Square and Queen's University, is expected to be a boon to passengers. And thoughtful planning is bringing other facilities and changes, too. Not only can folk now travel directly from Dublin, Portadown, Lisburn, directly to Bangor, but a further new halt is to be built on the Bangor side of the Central Station, convenient to the shopping and the large industrial sector close by.

It is estimated that thousands of people will re-discover the speed and convenience of rail travel, compared with the delays of traffic-choked roads.

"The new centralisation means that so many travellers will merely

change trains under the one roof, or travel straight through Belfast Central Station as a passenger," a spokesman said.

"Citytrack in particular can revolutionise the daily travel habits of thousands of people. Indeed, we now have a railway revolution on our hands — and one the public will appreciate and enjoy for the first time. It can now get people right across Belfast in a matter of minutes."

Northern Ireland Railways are also extending car-parking facilities at various major stations, to assist the car/rail commuter.

"We see the entire scheme as providing opportunities for the commuters in Belfast especially to travel in speed and comfort from the peripheral areas," the spokesman said. "This includes city-centre destinations, too, with frequent Citybus services available."

"The only exception is the Larne line, which remains separate. Otherwise, Belfast now has an integrated railway system."

"This means that many economies can be achieved. It also presents us with new opportunities to further improve service levels and achieve higher standards of operational efficiency. The new Central Station, by the way, is not an unpleasant spot in which to linger between trains — the modern amenities include a buffet and a lounge bar is expected to open. As well the remaining shops are expected to have tenants shortly."

On a number of occasions, while plans and work were going ahead to bring about the new look railway system, the future of railways in general seemed to be in doubt. At the moment, therefore, the Central Station, and its "twins" of Citytrack and inter-city travel, are seen not only as examples of what modernisation can do, but as a vote of confidence in railways as an economic and efficient transport mode.



The hexagonal design delights the eye, but this isn't just a pretty shape — it is one of the tunnels, which ensures that passengers will walk, well sheltered, between the station and the platforms.

## Linking bus service

IN ORDER to facilitate passengers travelling on from Belfast Central Station to the central City area, arrangements have been made with Citybus for a linking bus service from Central to the City centre.

This service begins early in the morning and continues at ten-minute intervals until approximately 6 pm and provides a fast linking bus service from Central

Station to Cross Square, May Street, Howard Street, St. Victoria Street, Faber Place, Wellington Place, Royal Avenue, Donegal Street, Bridge Street, High Street, Queen's Square, Oxford Street, and on the Central Station again.

Botanic Station, which is situated at Botanic Avenue and adjacent to Shaftesbury Square, is already well served by various bus services.

## Tracking the trains

PART of the modern equipment in the station's central control room is an illuminated diagram, which shows the positions of all trains on the various tracks, even engines carrying out shunting duties.

There is one bank of main signals to be watched and another of subsidiary signals, while a remotely-controlled satellite interlock controls movements in and out of the Adelaide freight yard.

**The Structural Steelwork now standing on the Platforms at the New Central Station, Belfast, was fabricated and erected by**

## Smyth Mills Ltd.

The signalling system was supplied by M.L. Engineering, Plymouth, and installation was carried out by Adair and Milliken, Belfast.



Station manager Mr. John Johnston on one of the platforms during a tour of inspection.

Switches and Crossings Manufactured and Supplied by the