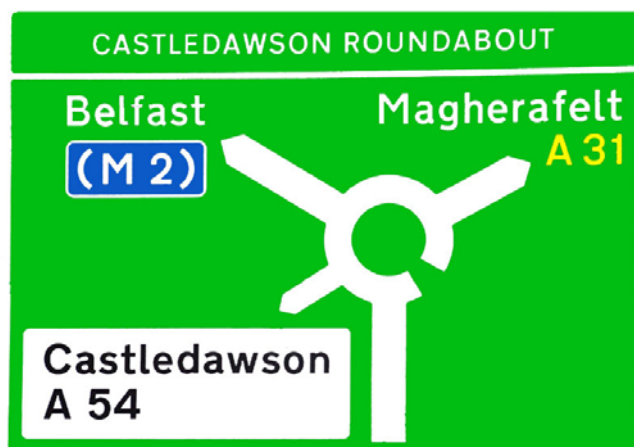


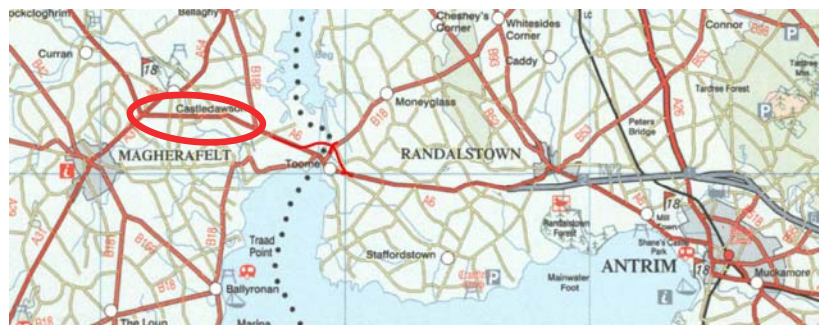
Motorway plans announced in the House of Commons in 1964 envisaged that a motorway would be constructed to Antrim and then fork and give motorways to Castledawson and to beyond Ballymena. Later, the motorway to Ballymena would be extended to Coleraine and on to Londonderry. The first 2.8 miles section of the M22 between Dunsilly and Ballygrooby (East of Randalstown) was opened to traffic on 16th August 1971: it was constructed by Farrans and cost £1.9M to build. The second 1.4 miles section of the M22 between Ballygrooby and Artresnahan (the Randalstown Bypass) was opened to traffic on 30th January 1973: it was constructed by Graham and cost £1.2M to build. The plan to continue the M22 to Castledawson was subsequently abandoned.

By the mid 1970s, the A6 west of the Castledawson Roundabout had been largely reconstructed to high



standard single carriageway. East of the Castledawson Roundabout, a new high standard single carriageway road was planned through to Donnelly's Bridge (west of Toome) where it would join to the planned high standard single carriageway road between Donnelly's Bridge and the western end of the M22 motorway at Randalstown. Roads Service reviewed this plan in the mid 1970s and proposed that a new 3.5 kilometre road should be constructed from the Castledawson Roundabout to connect to the existing A6 in the townland of Annahorish. This road plan was included in the

Magherafelt Area Plan 1976—1996. The Plan written statement acknowledged that *“Generally the road provision in the District is good. Outside the District the completion of the M2/M22 motorways to Belfast has greatly improved the links to both the City and docks, Similarly, improvements to the western section of the A6 have improved communications with Londonderry”*. The Plan described road improvements to



A6 Castledawson Bypass

© OSNI

be carried out during the plan period. *“Annahorish—Castledawson Roundabout A6: the scheme will enable through traffic to be diverted around Castledawson, will speed the flow of traffic through the District and will help shorten the journey times especially to and from Belfast and Londonderry. The implementation of this scheme is scheduled for 1982”*.

The 3.5 kilometre long single carriageway Castledawson Bypass was opened to traffic in Autumn 1992: it was constructed by RJ Maxwell and cost £2M to build. Innovative design solutions were employed to overcome the difficulties of building the bypass over the soft alluvial clays in the River Moyola floodplain. The bypass is carried over the River Moyola on a 3 span reinforced concrete bridge. Pedestrian ways are provided underneath the bridge to allow anglers to enjoy the excellent fishing available along the river.



Bridge carrying Castledawson Bypass over the River Moyola