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December 2023

Magazine

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■ **COVER:** 'Black Five' No. 44871 looks the part on the Keighley & Worth Valley Railway as it climbs 'GN Straight' on a snowy March 10, 2023. STEVE SIENKIEWICZ

The RAILWAY Magazine

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Farewell to a *Railway Magazine* stalwart

IT is with great sadness this month that we say farewell to our long-time contributor and friend Peter Nicholson. Peter passed away at the end of October, shortly after writing his final news stories for our November issue, after almost a quarter of a century in charge of the Classic Traction and Miniature News sections.

Peter was well known and respected within the railway community, being a regular visitor to standard gauge, narrow gauge, and miniature lines all across the country. Not only that, but he also owned or helped preserve a great number of locomotives and other rail vehicles, many of which might not have otherwise survived.

On a personal level, he was very knowledgeable about all things rail and would submit his news stories like clockwork. But behind all that, he had a great sense of humour and could often be relied on for a wry comment, sometimes delivered with a mischievous glint in his eye.

In more recent times, Peter was assisted in news gathering by his grandson Josh, and I am pleased to announce that Josh will be carrying on that work from this issue, writing Miniature and Classic Traction stories – in the latter case assisting our

other new correspondent, the award-winning photographer Jack Boskett. We welcome them both to the team, and know that Peter's reporting is the standard they will be striving to match.

From *The RM* team

Peter's passing has cast a rather sombre cloud over our editorial office, but as the year end approaches we would like to wish all our readers a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

We hope you enjoy our free 2024 calendar (UK copies only), maybe take advantage of some of the gift opportunities offered by our advertisers, or get to visit one of the increasing number of heritage lines that are open over the holidays (see the various diary sections in 'Track Record' for listings). And, during any quiet moments, why not look back over your photos from this year and enter the free RCTS competition. There are some great prizes up for grabs with nothing to lose, so turn to page 17 for more details and get uploading for a chance to win!



Paul Bickerdyke,
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Irish news



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World news

Rail Holidays of the World



See the Beauty of Britain by Train

The Snowdonian Steam Weekend ~ Departs 19 April 2024 - 3 days from £485pp

Spend a weekend in North Wales to include an 80-mile trip on the aptly named Snowdonian steam train. This is a special unescorted mini-break that also includes a tour of the Boston Lodge Workshops, the world's oldest narrow gauge workshop. Meet fellow passengers for a welcome dinner at Spooner's at Porthmadog Harbour Station. The Snowdonian journey, covering the length of both the Ffestiniog and Welsh Highland Railways, will include a buffet lunch at Waunfawr and tea and cakes on the train from Caernarfon plus a special souvenir to remember the event.

- ❖ A chance to ride the Snowdonian Train in Snowdonia!
- ❖ 80 mile round trip on the Ffestiniog and Welsh Highland Railways
- ❖ Guided tour of Boston Lodge
- ❖ Variety of motive power
- ❖ Optional extension of stay in beautiful Snowdonia



Orcadian Odyssey ~ Departs 9 May 2024 - 15 days from £3,255pp

This escorted tour begins in Glasgow and travels by rail to Aberdeen to explore Royal Deeside with its many famous castles before heading north to Inverness to ride the stunning Kyle of Lochalsh Railway or enjoy a Loch Ness Cruise and visit the Culloden Battlefield. Spend 4 days on Orkney with a knowledgeable local guide to learn about its ancient history, UNESCO sites, nature reserves and traditions. Return to the mainland for a stay in Wick before heading south by train, weaving through wild moorland to Inverness before continuing on to Edinburgh.

- ❖ 4 complete days on mainland Orkney with a knowledgeable local guide
- ❖ Visit the UNESCO Heart of Neolithic Orkney World Heritage Site
- ❖ Enjoy distillery tours at Orkney Brewery, Highland Park & Kirkjuvagr
- ❖ Royal Deeside castle sightseeing by private bus
- ❖ Visit the Castle of Mey - the late Queen Mother's home in Caithness
- ❖ Time at leisure in Aberdeen, Inverness & Edinburgh

Rails, Trails & Tracks of the Mid Pennines ~ Departs 16 June 2024 - 6 days from £1,125pp

A chance to enjoy a few transport-themed days in Brontë Country, including journeys on the Keighley & Worth Valley Railway (KWVR) and the Settle-Carlisle Railway. We go behind the scenes of the KWVR and travel by vintage bus to learn more about the industrial history of the area. See Worth, Sladen and Bridgehouse Beck valleys, visit canals, tunnels and waterworks and enjoy a tour of Hebden Bridge, including the Rochdale Canal. All escorted by a local tour leader, an acknowledged expert and author, who was also an extra on the 1970 film *The Railway Children*, whose various locations you will see on the KWVR.

- ❖ Behind the Scenes access to the KWVR
- ❖ Travel on the famous Settle & Carlisle Railway
- ❖ Enjoy the splendid scenery of the Brontë Moors
- ❖ Expert and knowledgeable tour leader



Scottish Islands & Highlands ~

Departs 6 September 2024 - 14 days from £3,195pp

This is a small group escorted tour that explores the Inner and Outer Hebrides, travelling from Glasgow onboard the West Highland Railway to Oban to spend time on the isles of Mull and Iona, including a visit to Tobermory. A return to the mainland includes an unforgettable journey on the Jacobite steam railway before immersing ourselves in more island life on Uist, Barra, Lewis and Harris. The return to Edinburgh includes more stunning rail journeys.

- ❖ Local guides enhance our experience on the isles
- ❖ Explore some of Scotland's most iconic and interesting historical sites
- ❖ Meet local islanders and learn more about traditional island life
- ❖ Stay in colourful Tobermory & visit beautiful Iona
- ❖ Enjoy some of the most scenic rail journeys in Scotland
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The RAILWAY Magazine

NOT A 'WHERE IS IT!' There are no prizes for guessing where this shot was taken, as the famous Blackpool Tower dominates the backdrop while 'Tractor' No. 37418 *An Comunn Gaidhealach* prepares to depart with the 1220/20.15 Blackpool North to Birmingham New Street on November 11, the return leg of Vintage Train's 'Blackpool Illuminations Explorer'. Class 47 No. 47773 was at the other end of the train. TOM MCATEE



Ticket office closure plans scrapped

Operators forced to backtrack in the face of overwhelming public demand.

By 'Industry Update'

TICKET office closure plans were scrapped at the end of October, after Transport Secretary Mark Harper said they failed to meet high passenger standards.

Train operating companies controlled either directly or under contract by the Department for Transport published proposals in July to close almost 1000 ticket offices across the country in a cost saving measure.

A very short period of consultation with passengers and others began on July 5 and was originally due to end just three weeks later on July 26, subsequently extended to September 1 as there was also a lack of information about alternative ticketing arrangements.

When the consultation closed, 750,000 comments had been received by Transport Focus and London Travel Watch, the majority arguing against the proposals.

Under procedures established at the time of Privatisation in the mid-1990s, the train operators had to comply with the Ticketing and Settlement Agreement. This specifies that any action must not dilute the service to passengers and must ensure impartial retailing on behalf of other operators.

Exhaustive analysis

The responsibility for approving any change is held by Transport Focus and London Travel Watch, the official Government-funded organisations that represent the interest of passengers. The rules are that a proposal for change must represent an improvement on the current arrangement in terms of quality of services and/or cost-effectiveness, with an emphasis that members of the public must continue to have widespread access to the purchase of rail products.

If Transport Focus objects to a change because the proposal fails to meet these duties, the train operator providing the ticket office must either modify or withdraw the proposal, with the added option of being able to make a referral to the Department of Transport for a decision.

To inform its own decision making, Transport Focus undertook an exhaustive analysis of the 750,000 responses. Where objections were made, the main categories of concern were: the ability to buy tickets in the future; the provision of information to plan journeys, particularly at times of disruption; and how passengers requiring assistance would receive help and support.

Amongst more knowledgeable objections there was a theme that ticket office closures should not be considered until the fare structure is simplified. Without ticket offices, it would not be possible to buy many products at stations, such as purchases by rail card holders, and there would not be facilities for passengers who prefer to use cash.

Lack of retail capacity

There were also concerns about the speed of buying tickets, and whether a ticket machine would be compliant with the benchmark that there should be no need to queue for more than five minutes at peak times. If passengers were required to carry out more complex transactions at a machine, it became evident that very substantial queuing could arise.

Many were also concerned that, given the difficulties of buying the right ticket from a machine, the penalty fares system should be abandoned as a 'fine' of £100 is currently

imposed in addition to the price of the ticket. It was also thought that prosecution for fare evasion was no longer appropriate if the process for buying a ticket was restricted.

Once all the objections had been analysed, individual train operators were asked to comment on the views expressed, and in particular to demonstrate that the test of improving the service was satisfied.

The result was that a number of operators reinstated the staffing time at stations and offered solutions to address the inability to issue all types of tickets, offer the ability for cash payments, and be able to make refunds.

Transport Focus accepted that customer service can be improved where passengers have switched to using digital technology to purchase their tickets. This switch has resulted in a decline in the use of face-to-face ticket buying, and statistics have been published that show

"The rules are that a proposal for change must represent an improvement on the current arrangement... and members of the public must continue to have widespread access to rail products"

only 12% of tickets are now purchased from a ticket window.

This figure may be the overall average, but the consultation process revealed significant divergence at varying locations. London Underground closed its network of ticket offices in 2015 and instead provide staff to assist with ticket machine purchases because it had a simple zonal fares structure and was dealing with a population largely familiar with digital technology.

But it is a very different matter



The consultation highlighted concerns about replacing ticket offices with machines, particularly for those who need extra help or for buying special tickets such as rovers. There was also a fear about penalty fares when ticket machines were not working. This was a broken ticket machine at Rugby on October 26. CHRIS MILNER

in other parts of the country, such as holiday resorts where occasional travellers use a ticket

office as the primary source of information about tickets that cannot be bought from a vending machine, such as rovers. Staff using mobile ticketing machines operating 'outside the glass' are similarly unable to issue such tickets.

The Rail Delivery Group, which acts as an umbrella organisation for train operators, also seemed to undermine the suggestion that moving staff out of ticket offices would be the best solution when it revealed there could be a reduction of up to 1200 employees providing retail services at stations.

Formal objection

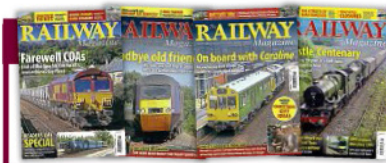
The conclusion reached by Transport Focus was that what was proposed did not meet the terms of the Ticket and Settlement Agreement, and it therefore lodged a formal

objection. It considered that the 'welcome point' concept proposed by a number of train operators had not been developed to the point where there was any clarity about what would actually be provided, and that this had not been explained in the consultation process so that passengers could comment or highlight concerns.

Attention was also drawn to concerns that if ticket offices closed, staffing numbers at stations could be reduced as there was no regulatory oversight of this as there is for the provision of ticket office opening hours.

The response of the Transport Secretary to formal objection made by Transport Focus was a prompt about turn. He said the Government had made it clear that the proposals must meet a high threshold of serving passengers and that, following consultation, it was evident the proposals did not meet this. As a result, the train operators were asked to withdraw the plans.

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LNER 10-train deal with CAF

A new fleet of 10-car tri-mode units is expected to spell the end for the remaining Class 91 and Mk.4 sets on the East Coast Main Line.

By Graeme Pickering

SPANISH train builder Construcciones y Auxiliar de Ferrocarriles (CAF) has won a contract worth in excess of 500 million Euros (approximately £437 million) to build and maintain a 10-strong fleet of 10-car tri-mode multiple units for London North Eastern Railway.

To be assembled at the company's Newport plant in South Wales, the trains will be capable of taking traction power from 25kV AC overhead wires, as well as from on-board batteries and diesel engines.

They will be part of CAF's 'Civity' family, which includes the TransPennine Express-operated Class 397 'Nova 2' EMUs, to which they are

expected to bear a strong resemblance.

Although details are still to be confirmed, LNER's description of them as 'long distance' and tri-mode (which includes the ability to arrive and depart stations on battery power, thereby lowering noise and emissions compared to diesel) suggests their duties could include its most far-reaching Anglo-Scottish diagrams to and from Aberdeen and Inverness, which each include 130-140 miles of unelectrified route. Since the withdrawal of the operator's HSTs in 2019, these have been worked by Hitachi-built Class 800 bi-mode 'Azumas'.

Financed and leased to LNER by Porterbrook, information has not yet been given about when

production of the new trains will begin (the Newport factory is currently completing an order of Class 197 DMUs for Transport for Wales) or their anticipated entry into service. But their introduction will lead to the retirement of the remaining 'Intercity 225' sets formed of Mk.4s and a Class 91.

Based in Leeds

The CAF-built units will be based at Neville Hill. *The RM* understands that representatives from the manufacturer visited the depot in late August and are planning to install lifting jacks running the full length of the maintenance shed, and overhead walkways as part of preparations for the new fleet.



An impression of how LNER's CAF-built trains could look. CAF

LNER announced its intention to procure at least 10 new intercity units to augment its fleet of 65 Hitachi-built 'Azumas' (23 Class 800 bi-mode and 42 Class 801 electric units) in October 2020, just weeks after the last of those trains entered service.

Given that Hitachi was beginning to experiment replacing one engine with a battery pack on a TransPennine Express Class 802 (almost identical to the 'Azumas', but with more powerful diesel units) as well as similar plans for

a Great Western Railway Class 802, it seemed the potential might exist to purchase trains from them which would meet the specifications, while also being largely familiar to crews and engineering teams and compatible with existing maintenance systems and facilities.

Hitachi has, however, refused to confirm any involvement with the procurement project, while neither CAF nor LNER would elaborate on the decision, other than to say it was the result of a "thorough" process.

Redundancy threat at Alstom's Derby plant as gap in orders looms

By Chris Milner

DERBY'S Litchurch Lane works, now part of the Alstom empire following completion of a merger in 2021 with Bombardier, could see around 1300 workers trimmed from its workforce in spring.

With no further new train orders beyond the current Class 701 build for South

Western Railway, which should be completed by April, the company has entered consultations with its workforce over redundancies. The indications are that up to 550 permanent and 780 temporary jobs are at risk.

The number of job losses is expected to be ultimately higher because of the wider impact on Alstom's supply

chain partners. Just four years ago, Bombardier took on 400 additional staff to work on new trains for Greater Anglia, SWR and West Midlands Trains.

With the news coming just before Christmas, it is a bitter blow to the workforce, and also highlights the boom and bust cycle of rolling stock production.

Even though Alstom has won the order to build trains

for HS2 with Hitachi in a joint venture, construction is not due to begin until 2026, with the first train expected to roll off the production line around 2027.

No new orders

There are no orders to fill that two-year gap and there are growing fears train manufacturing at the site – the last traditional works in Britain

that still builds trains – could cease, having been used for that purpose since 1876.

The original plan for HS2 stock announced in December 2021 was for a fleet of 54 trains capable of 225mph.

The vehicle body assembly and initial fit-out would be at Hitachi Rail's factory in Newton Aycliffe, County Durham, with Alstom handling the second stage fit out and testing at Litchurch Lane, and the bogies in Crewe.

The recent announcement of scaling back HS2 north of Birmingham means that fewer trains will be needed, and so exacerbated Litchurch Lane's problems, particularly as there are no indications on how many trains will now be needed.

In respect of the redundancies, Alstom said in a statement that it had been working with the Government for the past six months in a bid to secure a 'sustainable future' for the factory, adding: "We will fully support our dedicated colleagues during this exceptionally difficult time.

"We look forward to fulfilling our commitments on HS2 and successfully competing for rolling stock opportunities across the UK in the future.

"We remain open-minded as to the future of non-production functions located at Litchurch Lane and to potential future alternative uses for the Derby site."



An aerial view of Alstom's Litchurch Lane factory in Derby on June 7, 2022, with GBR's No. 47739 preparing to depart with a new Class 701 unit for SWR. STEVE DONALD



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Funding set for next five years

Regulator issues final determination for Network Rail spending to 2029.

By 'Industry Update'

THE Office of Rail and Road has announced that railway funding for Control Period 7, which runs from April 2024 to March 2029, will total £43.1 billion. This comprises £38.5 billion for England and Wales and £4.6 billion for Scotland.

The total is not significantly different from the previous five-year period (CP6, April 2019 to March 2024), but there is a change of emphasis for renewals and contingencies as a result of climate change.

Income from fixed and variable track access charges is calculated at £10.6 billion and, taking into account the net effect of the performance regime and recovery of the cost of providing electric traction current from the train operators, the Government grant will be £29.8 billion, which again is a very similar figure to that paid in Control Period 6.

Greater emphasis is given to freight traffic, with gauge clearance and infrastructure improvements to allow full-length intermodal services to use more routes, which should allow growth of 7.5% in England and Wales and 8.7% in Scotland. Track access charges for freight operators will continue to be capped, and there will be favourable tariffs for charter operators.

Renewals main share

The largest element of Network Rail spending is for the renewal of structures, track and signalling, for which a budget of

£19.7 billion is provided – a 7% cut from CP6. The brunt of this reduction seems to be in the Southern Region, despite the need to replace ageing third-rail traction supplies.

There is also a cutback in the national programme to install in-cab digital signalling, where the budget has fallen from £742 to £557 million. The intention to convert the northern part of the West Coast Main Line has been pushed back to save £123 million, while the introduction of new signalling on the Midland Main Line from St Pancras has also been postponed.

However, the planned expenditure on the installation of in-cab equipment in locos and units has been kept at the current level, with an anticipated outlay of £699 million to cover passenger and freight traction, plus provision for heritage, charter, and on-track plant vehicles.

There has been a debate about the continuing relevance of compensation payments to operators for lost revenue as a result of planned engineering work ('Schedule 4') or unexpected infrastructure failures ('Schedule 8'). The argument is that for operators directly controlled by the Government or operating under contracts where no responsibility is held for



Almost half of CP7 spending will be on track, signalling and structures renewals. This is upgrade work at the south end of Maiden Newton station, Dorset, in October. NETWORK RAIL

revenue, the compensation is unnecessary.

However, without such payments there will be no funds available to pay for rail replacement services, particularly when short notice events disrupt the train service. Despite criticism from rail users

about recent events, such as providing long-distance taxis to get people home, these are funded by Schedule 8 payments and without them it is not

clear how train operators will cover the cost of emergency arrangements.

The regulator has decided that abolition of such payments is not the right thing to do until a single tier management structure under Great British Railways is a reality. A reduced budget of £1.6 billion has

been retained for passenger compensation – but it is likely that the cutback in track renewals will result in a greater number of equipment failures, and thus service disruptions.

Increases in energy costs, as a result of the disruption caused by the ongoing war in Ukraine, has had a significant effect on payments for electric traction current, which are forecast to rise by 61% from £3.1 to £5 billion during CP7. This increase has also changed the business case for electrification which, although necessary for plans to achieve net zero emissions, has resulted in subdued enthusiasm for the expansion of electric haulage. In fact, some freight operators have recently reverted to diesel haulage 'under the wires' as it is more economic.

Excluded items

Proposals for enhancing capacity and electrification remain outside the financial settlement however, and individual projects will be approved if a business case can be made and funds are available.

The funding implicit in the 'Restoring Your Railway' initiative is also absent in the ORR's figures. But additional resources could be channelled to worthwhile reopening projects, from the money released by cancellation of HS2's northern extensions.

The enhancement programme was previously driven by an assumption there would be a steady growth in passenger numbers, for which an annual figure of 2.5% was used in the development of business cases.

The current unsaid expectation is that future growth will be less, given the impact of digital technology

allowing home working, and thus a reduced demand for travel. This is a questionable conclusion, however, given that statistics released by the ORR for journeys made from April 1 to June 30 show passenger demand has recovered to 89% of pre-Covid levels. Year-on-year figures for these three months show an increase of 19% to 390 million journeys, despite including five railway strike days. For the year to June 30, 1447 million trips were made (see also story on page 14).

It is worth remembering that in 1995, the final year of British Rail operations, the total number of passenger trips was 735 million, while the all-time high in 1920 of 2186 million journeys was when the rail network was significantly larger than today.

Although passenger numbers are moving back towards pre-pandemic levels, revenue continues to be suppressed. Farebox income for the three months to June 30 increased by 10% to £2.6 billion, compared to £2.3 billion for the same period in 2022. But with a 19% increase in passengers in the same period, it is no surprise that the average fare per journey reduced from £7.07 to £6.55 – despite a fare increase of 5.6% in March.

Analysis of the decline in the price being paid identifies a number of causes, including the reduced use of season tickets in favour of less regular travel and cheaper one-off journey fares. Season tickets were used for just 13% of journeys, earning £193 million or 7.5% of the total. The greater use of split-ticketing for an estimated 5% of longer distance journeys is also a factor in the reduced level of the average fare.

“Without such payments there will be no funds available to pay for rail replacement services”

CABBING IT ROYALLY!

During a visit to Nuclear Transport Solutions' base in Barrow-in-Furness on November 15, the Princess Royal visited the cab of DRS diesel locomotive No. 68006 *Pride Of The North*. Part of the UK's Nuclear Decommissioning Authority, NTS is a specialist transportation company comprising shipping firm Pacific Nuclear Transport Limited (PNTL) and Direct Rail Services. Princess Anne also visited the *Pacific Heron*, said to be one of only three specialist nuclear transport ships in the world. NTS



Storm devastates heritage line

Northern Ireland's Downpatrick and County Down Railway left with extensive and expensive damage.

By **Hassard Stacpoole**

THE Downpatrick and County Down Railway in Northern Ireland has had to suspend all operations until further notice because of flood damage caused by Storm Ciaran at the end of October, with water levels rising on the last day of the DCDR's 'Phantom Flyer Halloween' trains on October 29.

The flooding devastated large parts of the town, with the DCDR's station area, carriage gallery and workshops under 5ft of flood water at one point, damaging locomotives and rolling stock.

DCDR chairman Robert Gardner told *The RM*: "This is a devastating blow to the railway. We were all gearing up for a busy Christmas season with our popular 'Lapland Express' and our Winter Diesel Gala. However, we are now in a position where we don't know when can start running trains again.

"We see the marshes flooding every year, but when the waters kept rising, we were hoping it would stop and it just never did. The only building we had left out of the water was the main

station building as it's up higher.

"All diesel locomotives and railcars were submerged in water for some time and, together with the Irish Traction Group (ITG), we are inspecting and assessing all for damage. Water was high enough to have entered axleboxes, traction motors, and other aspects of the locomotives and we are braced for very bad news because it is possible that some may be beyond our ability to repair. We will not know the extent of the damage until our team have carried out full assessments in the coming weeks."

Extensive damage

Locomotives Nos. 146, G617, A39R, and C231, 80 Class power car No. 90 and the Wickham railcar have all been in deep water. Power car No. 69 in the workshop, which is under restoration, was also submerged.

450 Class railcar No. 458 escaped water rising above the axle boxes everywhere except the driving trailer cab end, but it still needs to be inspected and dried out fully to prevent possible major



As 5ft of flood water subsided, the DCDR could begin to assess the substantial damage that had been caused.

damage. The DCDR's small fleet of steam locomotives was partly submerged, but these are not as complex to return to service, and were partially dismantled either for overhaul or for their annual boiler inspection.

"We have reached out to Irish Rail and Northern Ireland Railways for help and advice to get our motive power back into action," said Mr Gardner. "We have also had good support and advice from heritage railways in Britain. However, in addition to the damage to rolling stock, we have also lost a lot of equipment, tools, and spares needed to

maintain and run the railway.

"We are lucky that we are covered by insurance and are seeking to find a suitable insurance assessor with railway experience, as the damage is likely to run into hundreds of thousands of pounds. Like many other businesses in Downpatrick, we are frustrated that, a week after the flooding, we have not yet received any support from the Government because there is no Northern Ireland Executive, and the Northern Ireland Office has failed to engage.

"The first step is to assess the

rolling stock and see what can be returned to operational order easily and quickly, we don't even have a working locomotive to shunt rolling stock around the site yet.

"We are, however, grateful to the enthusiast community, many of whom have generously waived their gala refunds to help us get back on track. The outpouring of support across social media has genuinely brought tears to our eyes."

To find out more about how you can support the DCDR, please visit the website at www.downrail.co.uk/flood.

Widespread storm damage

1. A period of high winds and heavy rain at the end of October and early November either side of Storm Ciaran saw lines across the country run at reduced speed or even close altogether. This was the scene at Claypole, Lincolnshire, on October 23 as 'Azuma' No. 801229 works the 1E03/05.34 Stirling to Kings Cross past flooded fields.

PAUL CLARK

2. GWR IET No. 802010 was brought to a halt north-east of Par, Cornwall, early on November 2, when a damaged tree was found to be fouling the line. This is the view looking

in the up direction towards

Lostwithiel. NETWORK RAIL

3. The older (eastern) part of the sea wall at Dawlish was damaged by early November storms, this view about a week later on the 11th shows how some of the coping stones had been displaced by waves.

DAVID HUNT

4. Ryde Pier on the Isle of Wight is particularly susceptible to bad weather, and so it proved as this view shows on November 3, with some of the walkways lifted from below on the recently renovated structure.

PHIL MARSH



1



2



3



4



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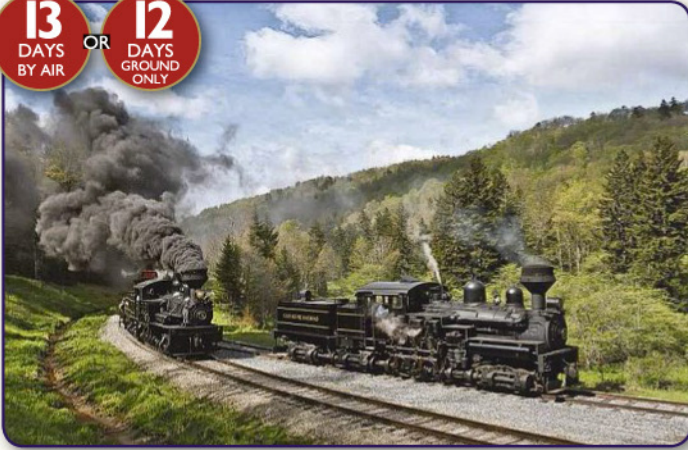
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SIDELINES

Seasonal concert

A RAIL Staff Christmas Carol Service is to be held in central London on Thursday, December 14. It takes place at St Mary's Church on Eversholt Street, which runs along the eastern side of Euston station.

The event will feature London's Transport Choir and begins at 12.30, followed by light refreshments. The organisers say that all are welcome to attend.

Tube Street View

TRANSPORT for London and Google are collaborating to provide 'Street View' images within a number of stations. The project will use 360-degree cameras to capture images inside around 30 Tube stations, including Green Park, King's Cross St Pancras and Waterloo. The images should be available to see in 2024.

Plessey viaduct repaired

EXTENSIVE repairs to Plessey Viaduct on the East Coast Main Line north of Cramlington, Northumberland, were completed on November 3. Part of the masonry parapet wall was discovered to be loose during planned track renewals in early October, resulting in single-line running over the viaduct during the works.

Brent Cross opening

THE new £40 million Brent Cross West station is due to open on December 10. The four-platform station will be served by Thameslink services between Luton, Sutton and Rainham, with eight trains per hour in each direction at peak times, six in the off-peak. Services will also connect with the Elizabeth Line at Farringdon.

York scheme rejected

PROPOSALS by LNER to repair and restore the porte cochère at York station in time for its 150th anniversary in June 2027 have been rejected by York City Council's planning committee.

The Grade II-listed building is currently used for taxis, but the plan would have seen it become fully glazed with new retail space. Councillors said there were concerns that what LNER planned 'just wasn't right' for the space, which includes the distinct station taxi office inside the portico, which is also a listed structure.

LNER MD David Horne said the plans would have solved a number of problems, including that of pigeons and anti-social behaviour.

Ridership is creeping up

Passenger journeys have risen to 89% of pre-pandemic levels.

THE number of passenger journeys made on Britain's rail network rose by almost a fifth year-on-year in the second quarter of 2023, April 1 to June 30, according to the latest figures produced by industry regulator the Office of Road and Rail.

A total of 390 million journeys were made over the three months, representing a 19% increase on the 328 million journeys in the same period in 2022. However, the numbers are still only 89% of pre-pandemic levels.

All franchised operators had a greater number of passenger journeys than the previous year, ranging from 1% for TransPennine Express to 33% for ScotRail. However, the latter

was operating on a reduced timetable from May 23 to July 15, 2022, therefore the increase in the latest quarter partly reflects the return to usual services.

The London and South East sector recorded 276 million journeys in the quarter, making it the largest sector by number of journeys. This was a 24% increase on the 223 million journeys in the same period last year. The Long Distance sector recorded 33 million journeys (an 8% increase), while the Regional sector recorded 79 million journeys (a 10% rise).

There were 2.4 million passenger journeys recorded for all open access operators combined, which is a slight increase (up 2%) compared

with the same quarter in the previous year. Hull Trains recorded a 31% increase and Grand Central 12%.

Revenue figures

Total passenger revenue was £2.6 billion in the latest quarter, which is a 10% year-on-year increase when adjusted for inflation using the Consumer Prices Index, but 78% of pre-pandemic levels.

Anytime or Peak tickets saw the largest growth at £790 million in the latest quarter, a 17% increase on the £677 million in 2022. Season tickets also generated more revenue in the latest quarter, up 7% from £180 million to £193 million, but they only accounted for 13% of journeys.

In terms of the distance covered by rolling stock, 750 million passenger vehicle kilometres were operated in the

latest quarter – a 0.7% increase on the same quarter last year, but 90% of pre-pandemic levels.

Analysis by Great British Railways Transition Team showed that revenue from leisure travel grew by a fifth (19%) quarter-on-quarter, commuting rose 6%, and business travel grew 8%. "There are a few areas where we're focused on making collective progress," said Suzanne Donnelly, GBRTT's director of passenger revenue. "These include service reliability, optimising how capacity is used across the network in light of new travel trends, making ticketing simpler and better value for money, and improving communications and information to passengers. These are areas we know will have the biggest impact in encouraging more people to choose the train, more often."

Fuel cell project stalled

COLAS Rail Freight has "no immediate plans" to continue its involvement in a solid oxide fuel cell (SOFC) trial unless further funding becomes available, writes Graeme Pickering.

This follows a static demonstration at its Rugby depot in September, using Class 37 No. 37254, which was attached to a SOFC running on Bio Liquefied Petroleum Gas (BioLPG) to power its exterior and interior lights.

The trial, in partnership with fuel systems developer G-Volution and using equipment supplied by Adelan Ltd, aimed to prove the concept of using on board fuel cells to power locomotive auxiliary equipment. Route simulations carried out by the University of Birmingham showed that, on

a working using two Class 37 locomotives, 35kW SOFCs had the potential to give an average carbon dioxide equivalent saving of 12% (50 tonnes) per annum and an average yearly reduction in fuel costs of 8%.

Auxiliaries, which, in addition to lighting, include equipment such as air compressors, cooling fan, control systems and traction motor blowers are termed as 'parasitic loads' because they are usually powered via the locomotive's diesel engine and reduce power available for traction.

The first part of the project received over £378,000 in last year's round of funding from the Department for Transport's 'First of a Kind' programme. The next stage would be to install the SOFC equipment



Colas Type 3 No. 37254 connected to a solid fuel oxide cell system during the demonstration at the company's Rugby depot on September 21. HOPE DREW/ADELAN LTD

on board the locomotive using space available near the electrical control cabinet and batteries, but Colas says the key

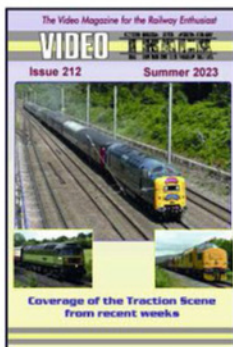
challenges are cost per kilowatt and packaging a system which would deliver the required output.



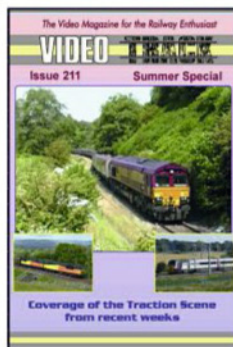
CORNISH CDAs CUT:

Cutting has begun of the former CDA china clay wagons at St Blazey Yard in Cornwall. The last of the four-wheeled fleet was withdrawn in August after 35 years of service, being replaced by newer bogie JIAs. This view on October 21 shows some of the frames with their hoppers removed.

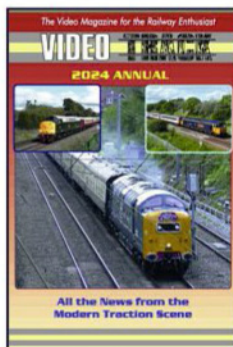
CRAIG MUNDAY



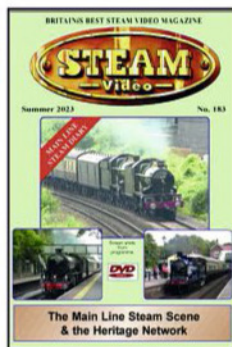
The Summer edition of Video Track with a mix of news & features including Deltics on the East Coast Main Line, Double headed freight, Class 37s on the weedkiller, 20 901 & 20905, Cross Country HSTs, Special Trains and Freight traffic around the network.



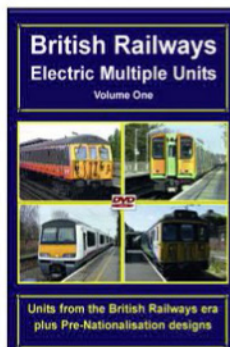
A special Summer edition of Video Track with a mix of news and features including coal from Cwmbargored, HSTs in the West Country, Cambrian 37s, the West Coast Main Line around Tamworth and Class 50/37 specials to Yarmouth, Lowestoft and Skegness.



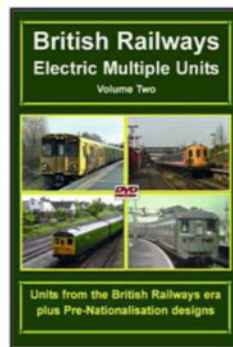
The Latest Video Track Annual out on the 20th of Jan. All the major events and happenings from the Modern Traction scene of 2023, from 'Deltics' to Class 40s, 37s, 47s, HSTs, 73s, Special Trains, unusual workings, stock moves and freight action.



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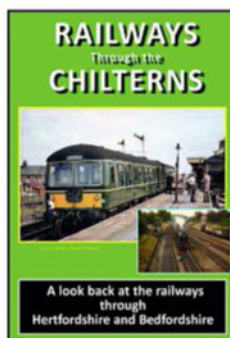
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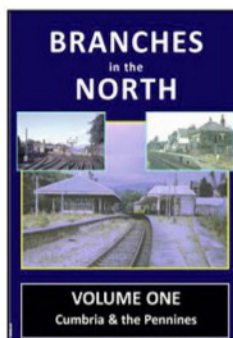
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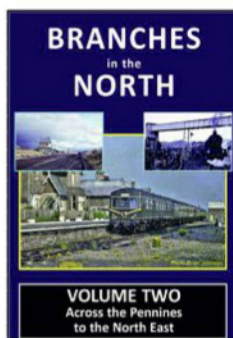
All new footage of the railway from Welwyn Garden City to Luton, Dunstable and Leighton Buzzard plus the Midland Main Line through Harpenden and Luton in the 1950s, 60s and 70s. Features steam and early diesel traction

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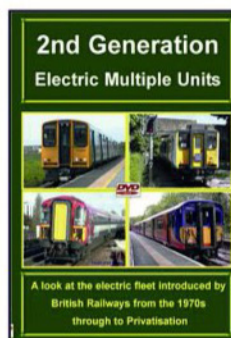
A tour of the branches in the North West of England including the Keswick branch, the Alston branch, Penrith to Kirkby Stephen and the Southern Lakes & Lancaster with steam and early diesel traction.

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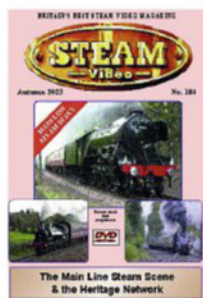
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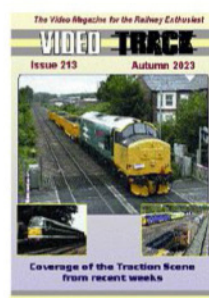


The 'Nickey Line' from Harpenden to Hemel and the Buntingford Branch. Comprises archive film from the BR era and a history of both branches

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You could take the train to nearby York, a historic walled city famous for its magnificent 12th-century Minster. Another way you could spend your day is by catching a train to the picturesque town of Knaresborough. Or if you'd rather stay in Harrogate for the day,

there are endless ways to discover more of the town.

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Travel by coach to Ingrow for a journey on the Keighley & Worth Valley Railway up the Worth Valley to Oxenhope. Continue to the picturesque village of Haworth, surrounded by the remote Pennine Hills and the site of the Brontë Parsonage, once home to the famous literary sisters.

Day 5. Harrogate & home

After breakfast this morning, it's time to say goodbye to Harrogate and head home. Before you do, you might like to visit one of the town's beautiful parks, such as the Valley Gardens, or step into Betty's Tea Room for some tea and a Fat Rascal.

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SIDELINES

Cornish smartcard

GREAT Western Railway and Cornwall Council launched a pay-as-you-go smartcard in West Cornwall on November 15, valid on GWR and CrossCountry services between Penzance, Par St Ives and Falmouth. Plans are in place to extend the scheme to the rest of Cornwall.

Train tickets, season tickets and railcards can be stored on the pay-as-you-go smartcard. See GWR.com/CornwallPAYG for details.

Book your slot at Kents Bank station library

WORK is underway at the library devoted to railways and transport at Kents Bank station, on the Furness Line, to establish a not-for-profit community interest company to develop the collection, which numbers in excess of 3000 titles.

Run by Paul Salvason, visits to the library are currently by appointment, but it is planned to hold monthly open days on the first Saturday of each month, starting in 2024. A preview 'open day' was held on October 21, and attracted 60 visitors.

The library is primarily for reference, but there is a small lending section. Visit www.stationlibrary.org.uk for more details.

Fighting fare evasion

TRAIN operator Northern has issued a warning to persistent fare-dodgers after recouping millions in lost revenue for the financial year 2022/23. The operator said that 108,681 reports of attempted fare evasion had resulted in 301 court sittings, which secured 14,072 convictions and led to repaid revenue of £2,851,883.

The operator added that with 70% of tickets now bought via online methods, its Digital Fraud Investigations Team can scrutinise the circumstances of alleged fare evasion incidents in much more detail, including any instances of historic fare evasion or delay repay claims.



ABOVE: The wagon within the train carrying apparatus including satellite and generator equipment.

BOTH PHOTOS: TONY WINWARD

LEFT: Class 31 No. 31466 pictured with the Project SODOR hybrid communications technology test train at Levisham, NYMR, on October 24.

Project SODOR tests on NYMR

Heritage railway hosts a three-week trial of hybrid communications technology ahead of roll-out to main line testing.

By Graeme Pickering

RUNNING for three weeks from late October, the North Yorkshire Moors Railway was the location for a trial of new technology aimed at improving mobile communications on board trains.

The project called SODOR is led by IT and business consulting firm CGI, which was

chosen by the Government in November 2021 to develop and demonstrate a hybrid satellite and terrestrial communications system for use on trains. The acronym stands for Satellites for Digitisation of Railways, although it also appropriately spells out the name of the fictional island from Reverend W Awdry's *The Railway Series* books.

Testing on the NYMR between Pickering and Grosmont was a precursor to future main line trials and involved moving a train including a wagon carrying a generator and satellite equipment.

Working in partnership with technology firms Icomera, Isotropic Systems and 5G3i, along with Network Rail, ScotRail, Northern and LNER,

the project aims to demonstrate how hybrid networks based on 5G mobile technology can improve reception and offer better value for money. The system uses connections with satellites to fill the gap in existing terrestrial mobile coverage, giving additional capacity for purposes such as train monitoring and crew and passenger communications.

Flying Scotsman goes home

AS PART of its centenary year celebrations, the NRM's 'A3' No. 60103 *Flying Scotsman* returned to its home city over the long weekend of November 10-12.

The world famous locomotive was displayed at Freightliner Railport in Doncaster, as its actual birthplace at Doncaster Works ('The Plant') was knocked down in 2008 and the land reused for housing.

The first day of the three was a private event led by Freightliner UK & Europe chief executive officer Tim Shoveller,

and Doncaster Mayor Ros Jones, which also saw No. 66508 named *City of Doncaster*. This was followed by a ticketed event over the next two days allowing the public to get up close to the 'A3' in light steam.

Flying Scotsman is to end its centenary year with a visit to Locomotion in Shildon from December 16 to January 7, where it will be in light steam and open for cab visits. While the event is free of charge, tickets must be booked in advance. The specially-created



No. 60103 on display at Freightliner Railport in Doncaster on November 10. BEN HARRISON PHOTOGRAPHY

film 'Flying Scotsman: 100 Years, 100 Voices' will also be screened, showing stories from people whose lives have been touched

by the locomotive. The museum is closed on December 24-26, but see www.locomotion.org.uk for more details.

Send in your best photos of 2023 to win prizes!

WITH the Christmas holidays fast approaching, the break could be a great time to look back over your photographs of recent months for the RCTS's free and easy-to-enter prize competition.

Backed by Mortons Media – publisher of *The Railway Magazine*, *Heritage Railway*, *Rail Express*, *Railways Illustrated* and *Steam Days*

– the 'Steam or Modern; People and the Environment' competition offers existing and fledgling photographers of any age the chance to showcase their work and win one of a great range of special prizes. These include a simulator session, cab rides, depot tours, books and magazine offers supplied by GB Railfreight, Nene Valley

Railway, Severn Valley Railway, DB Cargo and Talyllyn Railway.

There are four possible categories to enter: Heritage railways and mainline steam; Modern Traction; People and the Railways; and The Environment and the Railway. The competition is open to all and there is no fee to enter. Photographs can be submitted anytime before

the end of March 2024, with images taken at any time after January 1, 2022.

For the latest information, full terms and conditions, and a link to upload your photos, please visit the dedicated webpage at rcts.org.uk/rcts-mortons-media-photo-competition-2023.

Good luck! We look forward to receiving your entries!

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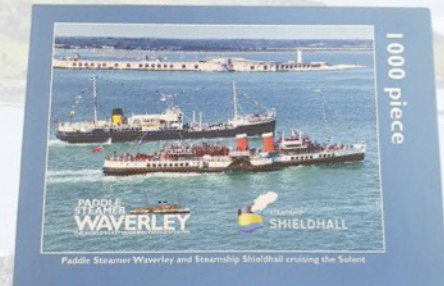
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Two of the 72 beams in position, showing the height of the Thame Valley viaduct over the river's floodplain. ALL PHOTOS TAKEN ON OCTOBER 30 BY PHIL MARSH

Vale of Aylesbury viaduct unveiled

HS2 contractor EKFB has been busy on the northern outskirts of Aylesbury preparing the groundworks for the Thame Valley viaduct, which will carry the high-speed line at low level across the river's floodplain.

By Phil Marsh

MAIN construction has begun on the 880 metre-long Thame Valley Viaduct to the north of Aylesbury.

The viaduct will have 36 spans, each formed of two 90 tonne precast box girders (beams) placed longitudinally on a series of 70 precast piers, which in turn each rest on three 45m-deep piles. The piers are only 3.3m above ground level, so this will be no Welwyn or Harringworth viaduct in appearance, despite the estimated total of nearly 6km (3¾ mile) of piling required.

32 spans are 25ms long and four are 20m, which when complete will have created the longest viaduct in what is known as the C23 Programme

of HS2. This runs for 80km (50 miles) from just south of Beaconsfield to Greatworth (south of Warwick), and will eventually boast 15 viaducts.

Off-site manufacture

The post-tensioned, precast box girders are manufactured by Pacadar on the Isle of Grain in Kent using the same mould to ensure consistency.

They are transported individually from there to site overnight by road.

Each end of the beam is labelled north or south. As there is no area on site large enough to turn one of the delivery lorries, the beams must be loaded the right way round in Kent for lifting off the trailer and onto the viaduct piers.

Once a beam has been lifted clear of the trailer by two crawler cranes, the lorry drives

away and engineers check the beam's dimensions the old-fashioned way by using a spirit level and tape measure. The beam is then lifted, swung and lowered onto the pre-prepared pier baseplates, each with four vertical bolts to secure them onto their designated pier, while 10 rods create a strong connection between the beams. A complete lift is carried out in about 15 minutes.

The viaduct's deck, formed of reinforced concrete slab partly precast and partly created on-site, will be placed on the beams later for the rails to be installed upon.

The original plan was to have four precast beams, but a redesign halved this. As a result of this change benefits include environmental, cost and flexibility in the construction sequence, plus a reduction



A 90 tonne beam arrives by road from the factory on the Isle of Grain.

in temporary works during construction.

Just like Lego

Construction of the piers began several months ago.

All the major elements of the bridge – the concrete piers, beams, reinforced concrete deck planks and parapet – are manufactured off-site on the Isle of Grain and assembled on site, as HS2 puts it: "Like a giant Lego set!"

HS2 claims this is the first prefabricated viaduct to be built in the UK.

Contractor EKFB is a joint venture between Effiage, Kier, Bam Nuttall and Ferrovia construction, a Spanish company.

A spokesperson said: "This structural design is based on similar viaducts built as part of the Spanish high-speed rail network, and reduces construction time, workforce numbers, and embedded carbon."



Engineers check the beam's dimensions and levels.



One of the viaduct's pier foundations under construction.

SIDELINES

Colne Valley Viaduct passes halfway point

ALMOST two years after work on the Colne Valley Viaduct near Denham in Buckinghamshire began, construction engineers have passed the halfway point.

The 2.1-mile structure will carry HS2 over a series of lakes and the Grand Union Canal between the London and Chiltern tunnels. More than 500 of the 1000 segments (forming over a mile of viaduct deck) were in place by early November.

Digging that £25 million saving

IT is estimated that digital monitoring technology installed on diggers working on the HS2 construction project has helped to reduce costs by around £25 million.

Used by contractor EFKB joint venture, DIGGER (DIGital Earthworks Reporting programme) uses data from 700 earthmovers on the 50-mile central section of the London-West Midlands route.

Locating pinch points on sites and better utilising machines has enabled the savings, a significant proportion of which came from reduced fuel consumption.

TBMs *Emily* and *Anne* prepare for launch

Another key section of tunnelling is about to begin in West London.

TOWARDS the end of October, tunnel boring machines (TBMs) *Emily* and *Anne* were lowered in sections into a 25-metre deep (82 feet) ancillary shaft at Victoria Road in Ealing, West London.

It will be their starting point at the beginning of 2024 for the excavation of the 3.4-mile tunnel under Ealing to Greenpark Way in Greenford, which will take around a year to complete.

Emily is named after midwife (and later Ealing mayor) Emily Sophia Taylor, who provided help for women who could not afford maternity care. *Anne* is named after educational reformer, philanthropist and anti-slavery campaigner Lady Anne Byron.

Manufactured by Herrenknecht in Germany, the assembled TBMs will each



weigh 1700 tonnes and have eight back gantries each, carrying all the systems required for the tunnelling operation.

Above: The 336-tonne middle shield of tunnel boring machine *Emily* is lowered into the ancillary shaft at Victoria Road, Ealing. It and TBM *Anne* will bore the 3.4-mile tunnel from here to Greenpark Way in Greenford. HS2

Railways in Parliament Compiled by Jon Longman

LNER trial success

LORD Bradshaw wanted to know whether the Government planned a pilot scheme to abolish peak time fares similar to that introduced by ScotRail with funding from the Scottish Government.

Transport Minister Baroness Vere of Norbiton replied: "There are no current plans to introduce a pilot scheme to abolish peak time fares in England.

"Peak and off-peak fares are an important tool to manage demand and alleviate crowding on peak time services by encouraging those who can travel off peak to do so. In recent years, we have introduced several initiatives to support passengers and improve affordability of rail. We have successfully launched flexible season tickets to support commuters' return to the rail following the pandemic.

"We have also saved a generation of passengers a third off their fares through the 16-17 and 26-30 Railcards

and went even further in November 2020 by extending these savings to former servicemen and women through a Veterans Railcard.

"We are now rolling out single leg pricing to most of London North Eastern Railway's network following a successful trial. We will carefully consider the impacts of expanding single leg pricing to most of LNER's network before taking decisions on any wider extension."

Passenger assistance

LIFE peer Baroness Thomas of Winchester asked whether the Government's plans to make using the Passenger Assistance service easier for disabled people are compatible with plans for closing booking offices (plans that were subsequently cancelled, see Headline News).

Baroness Vere said: "Together with industry, we want to improve and modernise the passenger experience by moving staff

out from ticket offices to provide more help and advice in customer focused roles.

"Safety and accessibility remain a top priority. The Passenger Assist service will continue to help disabled passengers to use the network with confidence and in safety.

"Since April 2022, passengers have been able to prebook their assistance up to two hours in advance of their journey, at any time of the day."

Accruing WMT benefits

PORTSMOUTH South MP Stephen Morgan asked what steps the DfT is taking to improve services via Crewe.

Transport Minister Hugh Merriman said: "The DfT continues to work closely with TOCs to review options to improve performance and increase services to and from Crewe.

"Together we are working to develop a resilient timetable that is appropriate to passenger demand and

delivers good value for the taxpayer. West Midlands Trains is improving its Birmingham-Crewe-Liverpool services to half hourly at peak times and most of Saturdays.

"WMT is also trialling 12-car operation on selected Sunday services on its Crewe to Euston route due to rising demand."

Govia service review

LEWISHAM & Deptford MP Vicky Foxcroft asked whether the DfT has had discussions with Govia Thameslink Railway on the reduction of its Southern London Bridge to East Croydon services.

Transport Minister Richard Holden said: "The DfT has regular discussions with TOCs to assess the level of service provision and ensure that the timetable meets passenger demand. The timetable will remain under regular review.

"However, there are no significant changes currently planned to services between East Croydon and London Bridge."

Network Rail careers

EASINGTON MP Grahame Morris requested the intake dates for new Network Rail apprentices.

Mr Merriman said the latest intake of Railway Engineering Technician Apprentices in October saw 189 recruits start. He added: "The next intake will be October 2024. Network Rail will have one large intake a year for this scheme moving forward."

Speeding up projects.

FOLLOWING up his earlier question, Mr Morgan asked what steps the DfT is taking to speed up and reduce the costs of delivering infrastructure projects.

Mr Merriman replied: "We work closely with Network Rail to improve the speed and cost of delivering infrastructure projects.

"Network Rail has set up Rail SPEED (Swift, Pragmatic and Efficient Enhancement Delivery)... to identify ways to increase the efficiency of infrastructure delivery."



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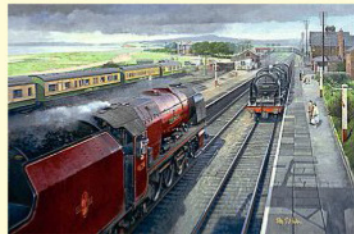
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2024 'Footplate' Calendar



'Winter Scotsman'



'Arriving At Snow Hill'

Another year and another fabulous collection from the original paintings by Philip D. Hawkins FGRA. Titles included are:- 'Pacific At New Street', 'Passing Through Beaconsfield', 'Summer Lightning', 'On The Banks Of The Torridge', 'Arriving At Snow Hill' & 'Winter Scotsman'.

Overall size 19.5in x 13.5in. Image size 15in x 10.5in. Price £25 inc p&p

Peter Nicholson 1948-2023

Railway author, photographer and *RM* correspondent.

IT IS with great sadness that we report the death of railway author, journalist, photographer and preservationist Peter Nicholson, who passed away on October 30 aged 75.

Peter had been an occasional contributor of photographs and articles to *The Railway Magazine* for many years before becoming our Classic Traction correspondent in 1999, drawing on his in-depth knowledge of preserved diesel and electric locomotives. Six years later, Peter introduced a new section to the magazine covering miniature railways.

The RM editor at the time, Nick Pigott, recalled how he had initially needed some persuasion to include these smaller gauge railways in the magazine, but subsequently had to admit that Peter had been right to do so.

Peter wrote for *The RM* until the November 2023 issue, in recent years assisted by his grandson Josh Brinsford, who is following in his grandfather's writing footsteps from this month. Josh said: "Peter will be sorely missed by everyone who knew him, and our family thank everyone who has shown their support. We are very grateful and will all remember the good times with grandad."

For many years, Peter worked for Haynes Publishing in Sparkford, Somerset, and was the book editor of a number of

publications, but also authored his own works.

As a frequent visitor to many heritage railways across the country, Peter was known by many. He did not just write the news, however, as he was also very active 'on the other side of the fence' as the owner of many standard, narrow, and miniature gauge railway vehicles.

In 1979 he was part of the group that formed the Barry Steam Locomotive Action Group (BSLAG) to save as

many locos from the famous scrapyard as possible, at the time when the yard had run out of wagons to process and so was turning to the long lines of locomotives that had been stored there since the 1960s.

One of his favourite Barry locos was GWR Churchward 2-8-0 No. 2807, which he campaigned to save as the oldest survivor of the '2800' Class. Poignantly, the loco returned to steam after overhaul just a day before Peter



Peter Nicholson, 1948-2023. JOSH BRINSFORD

passed away. He also saved many narrow gauge steam and diesel locos, including

repatriating locos from France and other countries.

Paul Bickerdyke



Peter and grandson Josh linesiding at the West Somerset Railway on September 23. ROBIN WHITE

Peter Townend 1925-2023

The man who gave Gresley Pacifics a new lease of life.

TO TAKE control of the East Coast Main Line's premier motive power depot at the age of 30 requires an exceptional level of ability. To play a vital role in the development of Gresley Pacifics too confirms Peter Townend as one of the most influential steam figures in postwar Britain.

Born on August 13, 1925 and raised in Doncaster, Peter had been taken as a 10-year-old to witness the inaugural run of 'A4' No. 2509 *Silver Link* on the 'Silver Jubilee' in September 1935 and quickly became an enthusiast, devouring the pages of *The Railway Magazine* in his local library every month.

"It was the only way we could find out what was happening on the LNER and other railways in those days," he said.

After learning his trade as a premium apprentice in the white heat of Doncaster Works during the Second World War, he progressed to relief and managerial roles at various sheds, including Melton Constable, Yarmouth Beach, Bury St Edmunds, March, King's Lynn, Plaistow, Hatfield, Boston and Hitchin. In those posts, he found himself having to give orders to men old enough to be his grandfather, but it proved the perfect preparation for the plum job he was to land in 1956 as shedmaster at King's Cross.

In the half-decade he spent at 'Top Shed', he had around 50 Pacifics under his wing, 19 of which were 'A4s'. But Peter did not merely run the depot, he entered the history books as

the man whose comparison trials did much to lead to the mass-fitting of 'A4s' and 'A3s' with double chimneys, thereby giving them a new lease of life in the face of the diesel onslaught. He was also responsible for the fitting of German smoke deflectors to the majority of 'A3s', having travelled to Cologne at his own expense to observe the devices in use there.

Unlike many other ECML shedmasters, he did not dispense with his team of cleaners as a cost-saving measure either, ensuring that King's Cross's immaculately-groomed steeds were almost invariably the smartest on the line.

Peter left the 'Cross in 1961 and retired from the rail



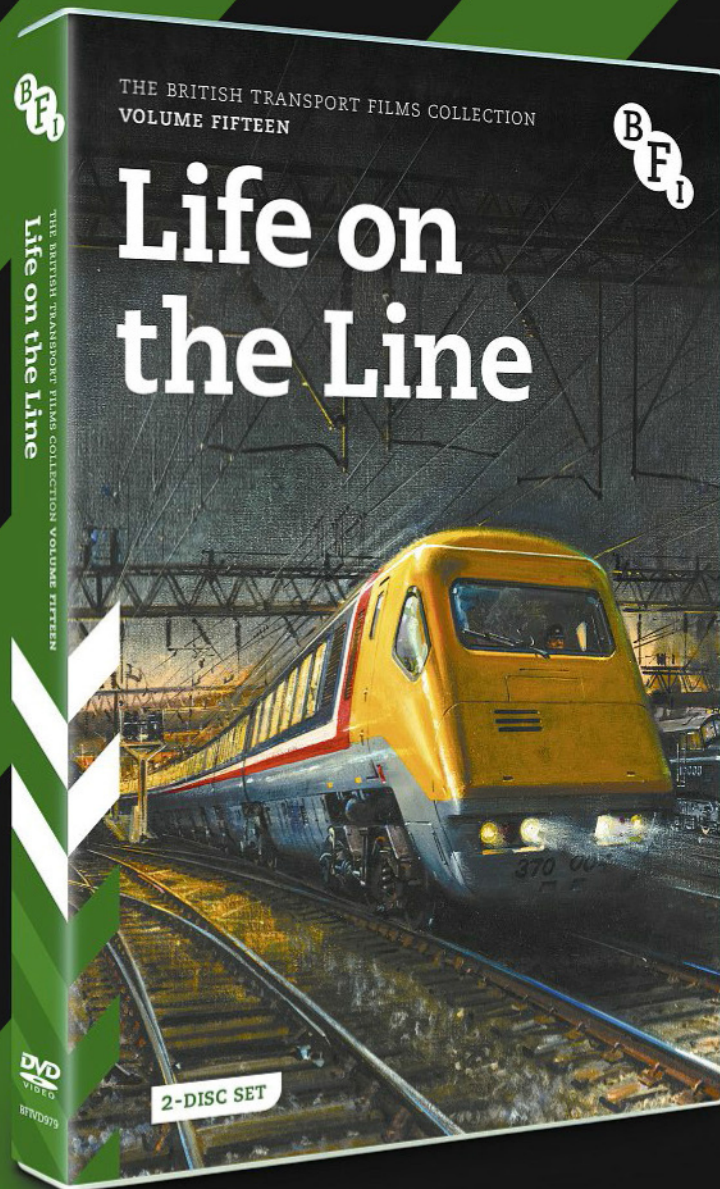
Peter Townend pictured for the interview in our December 2007 issue. NICK PIGOTT

industry 23 years later, but he remained in close touch with the steam heritage movement, becoming vice-president of the A1 Steam Locomotive Trust, the Gresley Society and the Engine Shed Society. He advised the trust on the construction of *Tornado* and the National Railway Museum on the restoration of *Flying Scotsman*, and continued to give of his

expertise freely to engineers and operators well into his 90s.

Having moved to the Devon resort of Torquay in his retirement, he passed away on October 18, less than two years from his 100th birthday, but his remarkable legacy lives on in his books, the best-known of which are 'Top Shed' and 'East Coast Pacifics at Work'.

Nick Pigott



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Britain's newest steam loco

Double-Fairlie No. 8 *James Spooner* had its official launch at the Ffestiniog Railway on October 20, as Cliff Thomas reports.

FOLLOWING the unveiling of the Ffestiniog Railway's newly built Double-Fairlie *James Spooner* during its October 6-8 Bygones Weekend (see Headline News last issue), the locomotive was ceremonially launched on October 20.

James Spooner was fully painted in lined 'Victorian Plum' livery for its Bygones Weekend cameo appearance, but did not carry nameplates – although the name did appear on the distinctive bells atop the boiler.

As invited guests and press arrived at a rainswept Harbour station on the morning of October 20, *James Spooner* stood at the head of a train with its nameplates fitted but obscured. On the adjacent road was England 0-4-0STT *Welsh Pony*, which carries the same ornate livery as the new Double-Fairlie. *Welsh Pony* is currently out of service awaiting work on a crank pin, but had been carefully drawn across the Cob for the occasion.

With guests and media aboard, *James Spooner* set off hauling its first loaded

passenger train, driven by Rob Coulson and fired by FR's youngest fireman. The special train's arrival at Tan y Bwlch was greeted by Double-Fairlie *David Lloyd George* at the head of a train of heritage stock posed in the loop, and at Blaenau Ffestiniog Double-Fairlie *Merddin Emrys* was similarly posed with a heritage train on the other platform road.

Speeches

A choir of local primary schoolchildren entertained the guests before Dr David Gwyn stepped up to the microphone to provide an introduction in Welsh and English as the rain continued to beat down on the canopy – North Wales's share of Storm Babet rather than the "traditional Blaenau welcome", as David Gwyn joked!

He was followed by Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Railway (Ff&WHR) chairman Dr John Prideaux, who spoke of the genius of *James Spooner's* engineering of the FR with its gradient calculated to enable gravity working down to the harbour and horse

haulage of empty wagons back to Blaenau. He also mentioned that it was good to see a descendant of *James Spooner*, Mr Nigel Spooner, present for the occasion but unfortunate that Ff&WHR general manager, Paul Lewin, had tested positive for Covid and was obliged to stay in isolation at his Minffordd home.

John Prideaux thanked all involved in the project to build the new locomotive, emphasised the size of the FR's contribution to the local economy, and closed by referring to the allocation of the fleet number 8 to the new *James Spooner* as also forever reminding him that bringing the project to fruition had taken no less than eight years!

Next to speak was Ff&WHR chief mechanical engineer John Whalley who outlined the gestation of the project. Starting with the idea of designing and producing a new Double-Fairlie boiler, realisation of just how worn out 1979-built *Earl of Merioneth* had become evolved into the decision to build an entirely new locomotive,

"Bringing the project to fruition had taken no less than eight years"



A smiling Rob Coulson drives *James Spooner* away from the water tower at Harbour station after returning with the October 20 special train. CLIFF THOMAS



During a lunchtime layover between services on October 27, the Ffestiniog Railway's new Double-Fairlie *James Spooner* took part in an impromptu line-up at Harbour station with 1879-built *Merddin Emrys* (left) and 1992-built *David Lloyd George* (centre). CHRIS PARRY/FF&WHR

but construction had been severely set back by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Not a replica

John emphasised the new loco was not a replica of the original 1872-built *James Spooner* (withdrawn in 1928), but did take important design cues from this locomotive – including such noticeable features as the open centre of the cab (there is a roof section which can be put in place, but this was not in use for the launch day) and the bells and their mountings on the boiler. The design was also influenced by *Merddin Emrys*, built in 1879 by Boston Lodge and still in service.

Attention then switched to *James Spooner* itself, where a curtain covering the nameplate was pulled back to reveal the name by Liz Saville Roberts, the Plaid Cymru MP for Dwyfor Meirionnydd, and a pupil selected by Ysgol Y Maenofferen.

James Spooner is the seventh FR Double-Fairlie, the fifth built at Boston Lodge and the third in current service. The others are *Little Wonder* (George England 1869, scrapped), *James Spooner* (Avonside 1872, scrapped), Boston Lodge-built *Merddin Emrys* (1879, in service), *Livingston Thompson* (1886, static display NRM), *Earl of Merioneth* (1979, in store) and *David Lloyd George* (1992, in service). ■



Left: The FR's oldest operational Double-Fairlie *Merddin Emrys* (built in 1879) and the newest *James Spooner* alongside each other at a very wet Blaenau Ffestiniog on October 20. CHRIS PARRY/FF&WHR

THE MAN BEHIND THE NAME

JAMES Spooner was a surveyor and engineer largely responsible for building the Ffestiniog Railway and its development over the first 20 years. He was born in Powick, Worcestershire, in 1790 but his work took him and his family to North Wales in the late 1810s, eventually settling

in Porthmadog in the early 1820s. An initial survey of a railway route to Porthmadog in 1825 largely followed that of the later Croesor Tramway, but a later survey in 1830/31 established the route of the Ffestiniog Railway as built in 1832-36.

Spooner oversaw construction

of the line and then became its manager, beginning the process of upgrading the permanent way in the 1850s so that steam locomotives could be used instead of horses. He died in August 1856 and is buried just outside Porthmadog at St Cynhaearn's church.



Left: Liz Saville Roberts MP and a pupil from Ysgol Y Maenofferen pull the curtain cord to unveil the *James Spooner* nameplate at Blaenau Ffestiniog on October 20. CHRIS PARRY/FF&WHR



Right: A close-up on the new loco's named bell and whistle. CLIFF THOMAS



THE SNOWDONIAN



THE SNOWDONIAN

Friday 19th and Saturday 20th April 2024

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Light breakfast in Spooner's. Buffet lunch at the Snowdonia Parc Brewpub at Waunfawr
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An optional evening meal may be booked in Spooner's, to follow Friday's tour of Boston Lodge.
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A view of the East Hill Lift on reopening day, October 23.
ALL PHOTOS BY KEVIN BOORMAN



Back in business

The East Sussex seaside town of Hastings has two operational funiculars again after the reopening of the East Hill Lift.

BRITAIN'S steepest funicular reopened on October 23 following a year-long refurbishment of the track and cars.

The 5ft gauge East Hill Lift (EHL) in Hastings closed for extensive refurbishment work in October 2022. It is one of two cliff railways in the town, this one opening in 1902, 11 years after the West Hill Lift (WHL).

The refurbishment took longer than planned because more work was found to be needed than first thought. The two cars

were removed to complete the track repairs and were refurbished at Wheel Sets UK in Rotherham, South Yorkshire.

Funicular railways operate by cable with counterbalanced ascending and descending cars. The EHL originally used the water balance principle, with the tanks hidden in the towers at the Upper Station, but it was switched to electric power in the mid-1970s.

The line runs from the seafront to Hastings Country Park, overlooking the Old Town. It is 267ft (81 metres) long with a gradient of



Looking from one car to the other on board the first passenger service for 363 days on October 23.

38% slope (1-in-2.6), and each car can carry 16 passengers. The 6ft gauge WHL is nearly twice as long as 500ft, but not quite as steep at 33% slope (1-in-3).

Hastings councillor Andy Batsford said: "We are delighted that this much-loved asset has been restored to its former glory, enabling passengers to enjoy the spectacular views from the top of the East Hill for years to come."

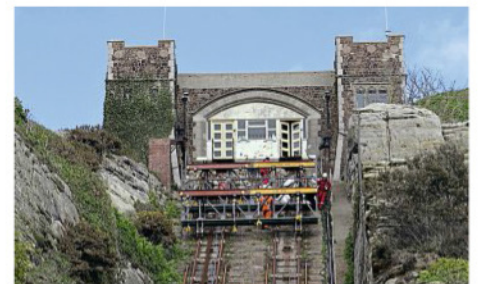
The EHL is due to run at weekends during the winter period. ■



One of the cars being refurbished at Wheel Sets UK in Rotherham on June 23.



The two cars were returned to the railway on September 5.



Trackwork in progress at the Upper Station on March 27. Note the two towers built to conceal the water tanks that originally powered the funicular.

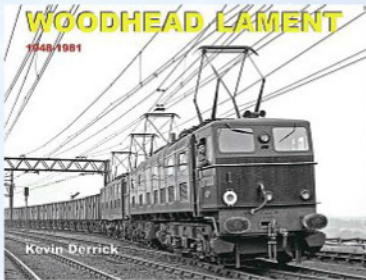
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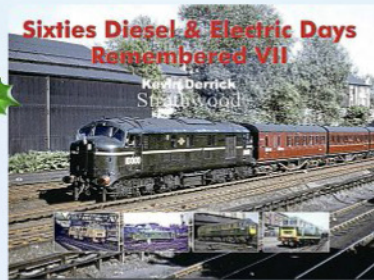
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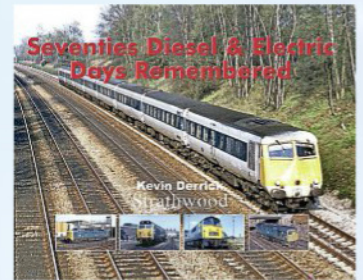
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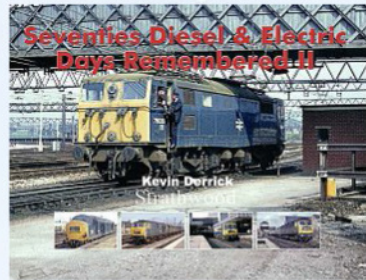
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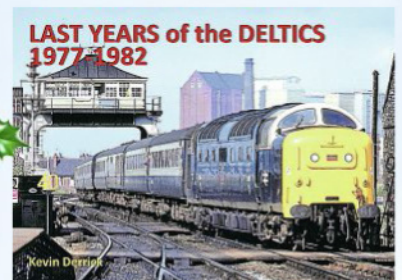
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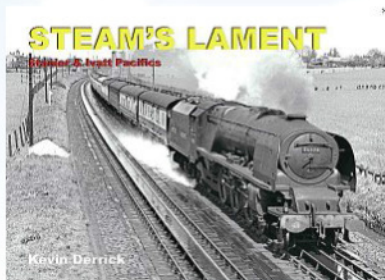
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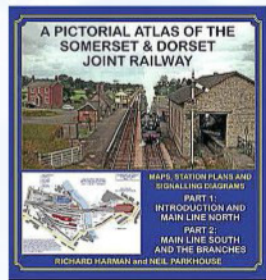
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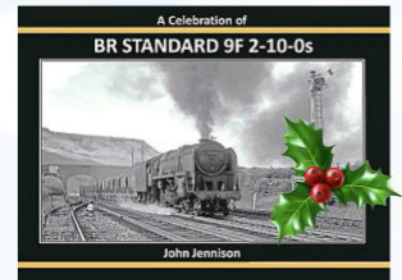
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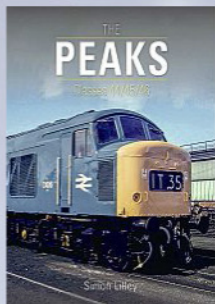
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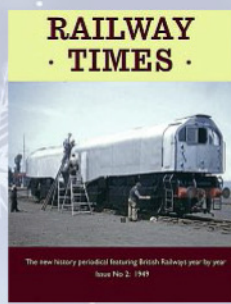
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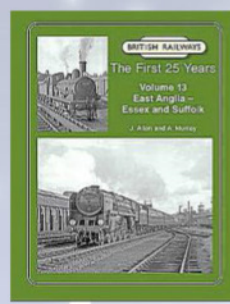
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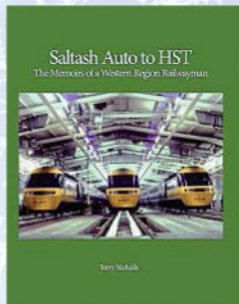
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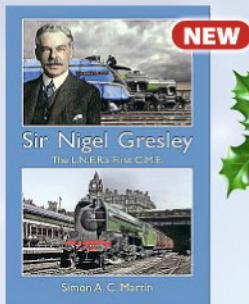
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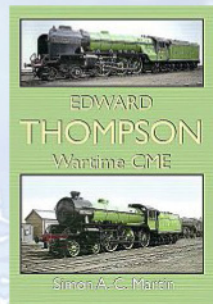
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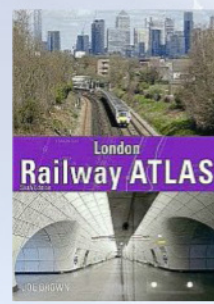
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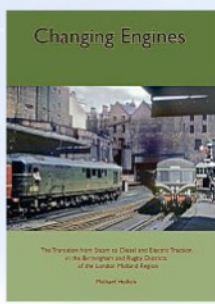
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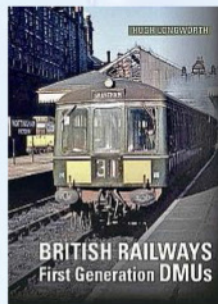
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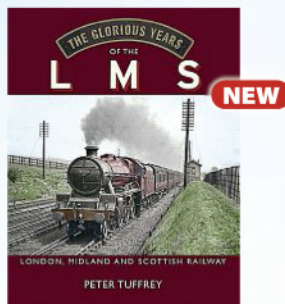
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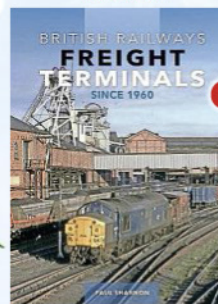
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Lost in France

John Heaton FCILT travels by train from London to the French Riviera via the eastern city of Strasbourg.

EUROSTAR Train 9024 was speeding across the plains of Northern France with Class 374 'Velaro' tri-voltage half-sets Nos. 4033/34 forming 16 coaches weighing some 916 tonnes tare and packing 21,000hp. Cruising speed was close to the 300kph infrastructure's maximum, varying with the gradients and neutral sections, averaging around 290kph (180mph) over long distances.

We had left London St Pancras International on time to the second at 11.31 and made the mouth of the Channel Tunnel in just 32min 26sec, covering the 111.41km (69.2 miles) at an average 207kph (129mph). To those train timers weaned on Southern CEP EMU and baggage car formations of 13 coaches usually taking over 80min to reach Folkestone Harbour before the tedious embarkation, unpredictable crossing times and unseemly scrummages alongside a Calais Maritime boat train, there could be no more striking example that times have changed.

On the other hand, you could turn up at London Victoria a minute before departure back in those times and choose your own seat.

Nowadays it is nearer 40min before departure and

tolerate whatever the computer chooses to allocate, in this case 'backwards aisle'... as usual.

Passage through the tunnel took 20min 25sec, more than a little down on the Railway Performance Society fastest time of 18min 56sec, recorded in 1994, but with no sign of any 'perturbation' that could threaten my Strasbourg connection of an hour from Paris Nord to Paris Est. It took until approaching Lille Europe before such optimism reverted to realism. We stuttered along from 'repère' board to 'repère' board before we ground to a halt for 26 minutes, during which time 'signalling problems' became 'wires down'.

A missed connection

Another half hour's crawl ensued, during which time I intercepted the Eurostar crew member responsible for sorting out connectational implications of the delay as she passed through my coach at a faster speed than our train was travelling. "Was the 15.51 [incidentally 15.53 retimed by 2min by text message after having booked] the last train to Strasbourg?" she asked, clearly with no idea of where Strasbourg was or its importance. "Do you really think you would not have enough time?" "Er... yes." My ticket was

Below: Ready for the off at St Pancras International on October 9 with 'Velaro' Class 374 half-set No. 4033 heading train 9024, the 11.31 to Paris Nord.

ALL PHOTOS BY JOHN HEATON





stamped 'rupture de correspondance' and I was told the train manager of the next train would accommodate me when shown the document. I suppressed my scepticism.

In that strange way that fate finds to mock us, arrival in Paris Nord coincided precisely with the booked departure of my connection from the Gare de l'Est. The walk between the two stations is further than St Pancras to King's Cross, but probably shorter than to Euston. However, it seems longer than I remembered it when I once arrived from Boulogne at 16.54 and, travelling faster than a bolt from William Tell's crossbow, made the Arbalète for Zurich at 17.05, a train with conventional restaurant car and a 3,550hp Class 72000 diesel. Another reminder that times have changed.

East to the border

I elected to go to the booking office with my 'endorsement'. The queue was being managed by a triage system, so I was immediately plucked out for attention to my affliction. A ticket for the last seat on the next departure at 17.22 was forthcoming and I think I was expected to show more gratitude. The double-set TGV was confusingly shown as two trains, one for Freiburg (Germany) via Strasbourg and one for Strasbourg only, both from Platform 27, but passengers for the latter set could sit anywhere.

After ensuring my booked coach no longer contained my seat, the train manager pointed to the front set and said 'quatre-vingt-un ou quatre-vingt-deux'. Someone was in 81 so it was backwards again. At least my first traversal of the Ligne a Grand Vitesse (LGV) Est would be in daylight and not in darkness, as feared when delayed at Lille. Instead of two Duplex sets we had a Duplex and a Réseau (Network) set, still four power cars and 16 coaches totalling 24,245 hp for 782 tare tonnes at 31hp/tonne.

Using the admirable RPS French mileage charts, compiled by British expatriate and Nice resident Alan Varley, I aimed to keep track of the journey. The document shows significant locations, their distance, the maximum speed and altitudes, but LGV Est is another step up even from LGV Nord, with the higher maximum permissible

1: Duplex TGV 2N2 No. 4706 at Paris Est on October 9.

2: The interior of a typical First Class 'Corail' open coach in use on Strasbourg to Bâle (Basel) TER trains on October 10.

TABLE 1: PARIS EST TO STRASBOURG

Unit 4723
 Vehicles/tare/gross tonnes 2+8/399/415
 Train 14.55 Paris Est-Colmar
 Date January 31, 2017
 Recorder/Position A Varley 4th of 10

Km	Miles	Timing Point	Sch	M S	KM/H	MPH
0.00	0.00	PARIS EST d	0	0 00	Pfm 27 ½L	
8.91	5.54	Noisy-le-Sec		6 32	119	74
10.48	6.51	Bondy		7 15	129.9*	80.7*
18.31	11.38	Chelles		10 48	132.3*	82.2*
22.54	14.01	Vaires		12 21	163.7*	101.7*
22.70	14.11	LGV start				
34.70	21.56	SEI 75		16 46	260	162
41.20	25.60	Chauconin SEI		18 09	301/319	187/198
61.86	38.44	Ocquerre SEI		22 08	312/317	194/197
67.71	42.07	Coulombs SEI		23 17	299/314	186/195
78.48	48.77	CAI		25 21	313/319	194/198
84.46	52.48	CAI		26 31	305/317	190/197
94.31	58.60	Beuvarde SEI		28 25	302/317/284	188/197/176
112.87	70.13	Villers SEI		32 06	287/277	178/172
136.47	84.80	Champagne-Ardenne		36 56	316	196
163.32	101.48	Livry SEI		42 04	311/317	193/197
183.36	113.93	A4 Bridge W		45 52	311/317	193/197
194.24	120.70	OB		47 58	312/320/301	194/199/187
211.06	131.15	Villers SEI		51 12	312/318	194/198
226.95	141.02	CAI		54 14	314/297	195/185
236.27	146.81	Meuse		56 03	311	193
258.36	160.54	Lamorville SEI		60 19	309/285/317	192/177/197
276.72	171.95	CAI		64 00	313	194
286.14	177.80	Prency SEI		65 56	248/234	154/145
304.02	188.91	Lorraine TGV		69 35	310/317	193/197
330.26	205.21	Lesse SEI		74 45	292	181
353.82	219.85	Domnon SEI		79 20	319/320	198/199
381.70	237.18	Vieux-Luxheim SEI		84 44	298	185
402.22	249.93	Steinburg SEI		88 56	282/303	175/188
414.73	257.70	CAI		91 33	265	165
429.86	267.10	Vendenheim		96 26	sigs45/28	sigs28/17
434.68	270.10	Hausbergen		99 54	150/160	93/99
439.50	273.09	STRASBOURG a	106	105 05	Ave 251	Ave 156

Speeds marked * are averages.

Log considerably condensed from the original. Timed to a tenth of a second, rounded for publication but used for checking by average speed.

CAI= Cabine d'Appareillage Intermédiaire (LGV relay room); SEI=Système d'Enclenchement Informatisé (signalling cabin).

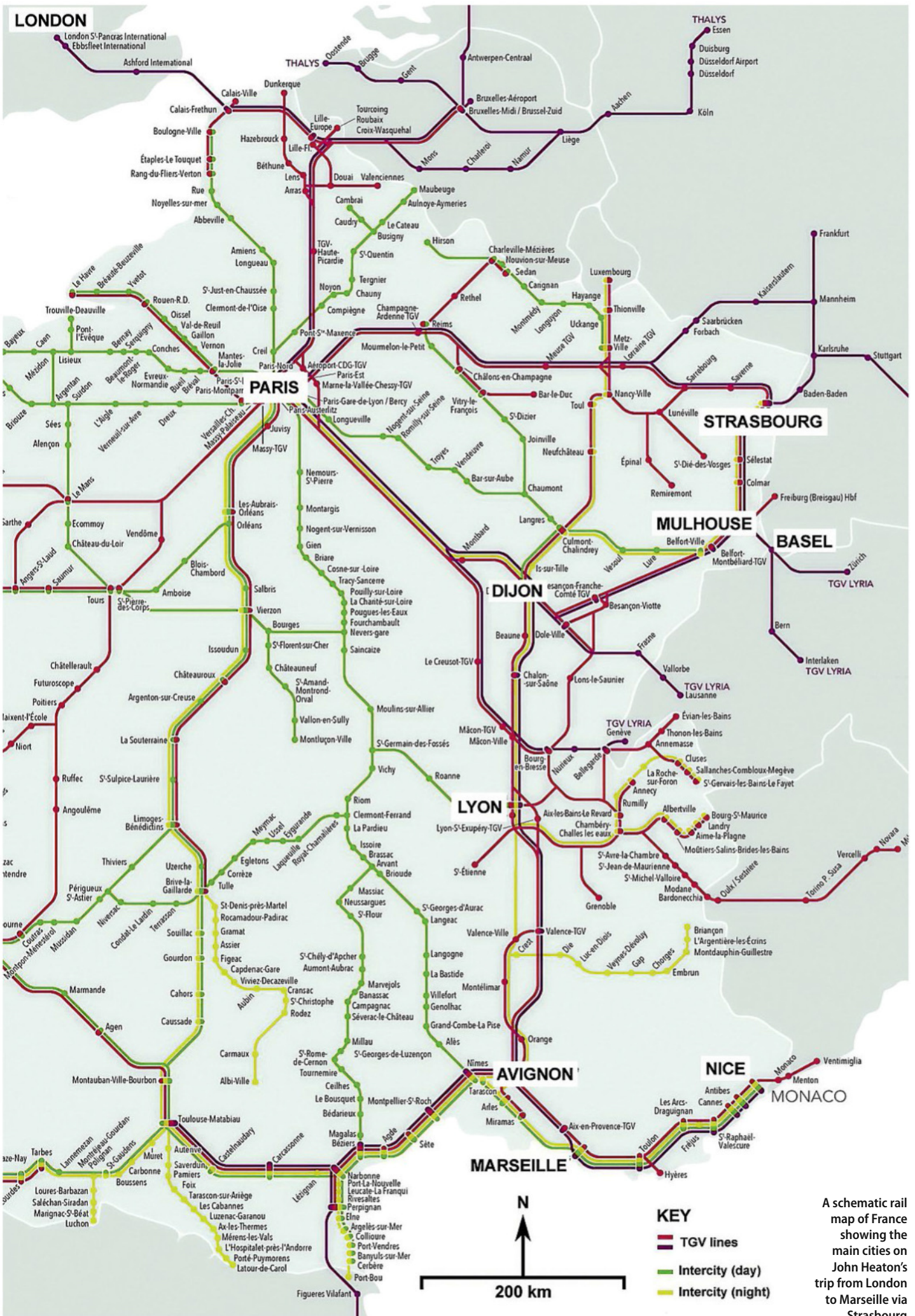
speed of 320kph (199mph), meaning a kilometre whisks by in just 1.25 sec.

I was now in the Duplex set, so forget GPS reception – which is not too large an imposition on flatter lines, where long distances are conducted without large speed variations, but the LGV Est has successive steep rises and falls that the averages disguise.

Timing at full speed is best done from viaducts and tunnels, but there are not many of either on this route, so over bridges come second on the recommendation list. Sorting one from another is more difficult, unless it is the ever-present A4 motorway that crosses the railway occasionally. Despite my best efforts, in the end, I was like Bonnie Tyler in 1976: 'Lost in France'.

Most trains run nonstop for the 439.5km (273.1 miles) from Paris to Strasbourg, of which 385.5km (239.5 miles) – which is about 88% of the distance – are on the LGV. Large towns, such as Nancy, Metz and Reims, are catered for using short branches or the occasional LGV new station located in wilderness and requiring road transfer ▶

“To train timers weaned on Southern EMUs taking over 80 minutes to reach Folkestone Harbour, there could no more striking example that times have changed”



A schematic rail map of France showing the main cities on John Heaton's trip from London to Marseille via Strasbourg.

to the city to which they profess allegiance.

The highest point on this 'montagnes russes' profile (avoiding the English 'saw-tooth' cliché) is reached at 335 metres (1099ft) just east of Prény. Arrival at Strasbourg was 3½ minutes late in 12min 59sec. Back in the days of the crack 'Stanislas' Trans-Europe Express, with one stop averaging an end-to-end speed of 131kph (81mph) over the longer conventional route's 502.03km (312 miles), the journey time was 230min with a Class BB 15xxx electric loco.

To give an accurate picture of the current running to be experienced on the LGV Est, I am grateful to Alan Varley for permission to use an excellent run of 105min 05sec from 2017 (Table 1). Following a couple of disappointing runs, his notebook comment reads: "This is how it should be done." Average start-to-stop speed was 251kph (155mph), with the 200km from Chauconin completed at an average speed of 306.5kph (190.5mph). Net of the signal delay approaching Strasbourg, the running time would have been 103min 15sec.

A loco-hauled dash

In *The RM* January 2023 Practice & Performance, I examined the state of the nation's railways in Switzerland. Only a limited and one person sample I would agree, but the verdict was that the network was not as good as it used to be, although arguably still an 8/10. What would France merit?

My last published trip (*RM* February 2015) had been aimed at assessing residual loco-hauled performance, whereas the chief purpose of this trip was to sample the LGVs I had been ignoring. But first I wanted to do a couple of trips to Mulhouse before then going south on the Rhin-Rhône LGV.

Responsibility for specification and funding of local rail services has been delegated to the French regions, resulting (predictably) in different responses. In the Grand Est region (formed from the merger of Alsace, Lorraine and Champagne-Ardenne), there has been extensive re-equipment in multiple unit local stock, including Alstom single-power cars for branch lines that sometimes have sparse service levels. Filling the gap between these and the TGV Grandes Lignes service sit the TER half-hourly clockface Strasbourg-Bâle (Basel) trains powered by 'Sybic' 7510hp locomotives running at up to 200kph (124mph).

The topography could not be more suitable, as was readily evident from the comfortable former Corail coaches of the 1980s still in use. Hand-me-downs they might be, but what a pleasure it was to experience soft seats, back-, arm- and headrests. The route follows the broad Rhine flood plain, with the Vosges mountains rising to the west, for 108.32km (67.3 miles) to my Mulhouse destination, 101km (62.8 miles) of which are authorised for the 200kph loco-hauled top speeds. Intermediate calls are made at Sélestat (43.22km / 26.9 miles) and Colmar (a further 22.6km / 14 miles).

Reflecting ownership of Alsace during the railway building era, German right-hand running is undertaken. TER train 96207 – leaving Strasbourg at 07.21 with a DBSO (the B for brake is debatable) leading seven coaches propelled by 'Sybic' No. 26158 – failed to live up to expectations, reaching no more than 182kph (113mph) before switching to restricted left-hand running and losing 4min to our first stop. Time lost at the unusual up platform for a down train amounted to a few seconds and the crossing back to the right-hand preference forfeited another 1½min. With time to be made up, there was then a taste of what was needed with a 199kph (124mph) top speed and a 19min 03sec run for the final 42.5km (26.4 miles), average speed 134kph (83.2mph), including a run through the final pointwork that would shock modern UK managers, but regain two lost minutes.

The return was with 'Sybic' No. 26159 leading an 'eight plus DBSO' set running 1min late. At least there was no reason to spin out time, so we had a dose of 200kph (124mph) running to Colmar in 18min 38sec. Accelerating towards Sélestat, the ensemble took 4.19km (2.6 miles) and 187sec to reach 160kph (99mph), but seemed checked on reaching 178kph (111mph), losing 2 min. On towards Strasbourg, a signal check to 29kph (18 mph) cost another 2½ min, making the up arrival 4min late, the same as the down run.

TABLE 2: STRASBOURG TO MULHOUSE									
Loco		Sybic 26158 (propelling)				Sybic 26162 (propelling)			
Load*		8/338/360/450				8/338/355/445			
Train		07.21 Strasbourg-Bâle				09.51 Strasbourg-Bâle			
Date		October 10, 2023				October 10, 2023			
Recorder/Position		J Heaton 8th of 9				J. Heaton 8th of 9			
Km	Miles	Timing Point	Sch	M S	Km/h	MPH	M S	Km/h	MPH
0.00	0.00	STRASBOURG d	0	0 00	½L		0 00	½L	
6.98	4.34	Graffenstaden		5 40	163	101	5 50	165	103
11.83	7.35	Fegersheim		7 22	179/182	111/113	7 26	187/193	116/120
19.77	12.28	Erstein		10 20	153	95	10 10	161	100
26.69	16.58	Benfeld		13 07	116/XL	72/XL	12 39	196/191	122/119
31.95	19.85	Kogenheim		15 24	160	99	14 17	193	120
36.39	22.61	Ebersheim		17 04	159	99	15 38	123/124	
43.22	26.85	SÉLESTAT a	18	21 51			18 37		
0.00	0.00	d	20	24 13	-/XL	-/XL	20 09		
5.24	3.26	St. Hyppolyte		3 45	157/172	98/107	3 20	-/182	-/113
9.57	5.95	Ribeauvillé		5 20	158	98	4 55	157	98
12.87	8.00	Ostheim-Bebenheim		6 35	160	99	6 10	162	101
16.09	10.00	Bennwihr		7 46	164/172	102/107	7 16	190/195/XL	118/121/XL
22.60	14.04	COLMAR a	10	11 18			11 00		
0.00	0.00	d	12	13 31	-/199	-/124	13 29	-/XL/203	-/XL/126
12.98	8.07	Rouffach		5 24	194/197	121/122	5 54	196/199	122/124
21.50	13.36	Raedersheim		8 04	193/180	120/112	8 31	189/198	117/123
25.11	15.60	Bollwiller		9 15	184/198	114/123	9 41	194	121
32.98	20.49	Richwiller		11 52	155	96	12 14	160	99
36.65	22.77	Lutterbach		13 20	138	86	13 40	140	87
42.50	26.41	MULHOUSE a	21	19 03		21 09	Pfm1		

XL= Change line * =Vehicles/tare/gross tonnes/incl. loco



Above: 'Sybic' No. 26159 draws into Mulhouse with the 08.21 Bâle to Strasbourg on October 10.

Another dash

There was plenty of time available for another return trip and, as I was using an Interrail Senior France 'three days in a month' pass, there was complete flexibility in that respect.

The load was the same as the first down run, No. 26162 reaching 199kph (124mph) before Sélestat, taking 18min 37sec but on an 18min advertised time. A smart 11min run to Colmar exceeded the maximum speed reached by the first trip by 23kph (14mph), creating a 30sec improvement before braking in a leisurely fashion. The final leg to Mulhouse was slightly checked, but the GPS clocked a momentary 203kph (126mph) before a much slower approach and a time of 21min 09sec, 2 minutes late.

PRACTICE AND PERFORMANCE

It was surprising to find the next northbound run had No. 26150 with just five coaches plus its DBSO. A faster start was as expected and a shorter time in the upper speed range did not prevent a smart 17min 54sec time to Colmar and 10min 36sec to Selestat. Leaving the latter stop, 160kph (99mph) was reached in 3.23km (2.01 miles) and 143sec, but some of this was more energetic driving not just the lesser load. A 19min 53sec run to Strasbourg arrived 1 second early on the advertised timing.

In his bible to French train running *The Kilometre Millionaire* (sometimes still in stock but now currently out of print), Alan Varley describes how these originally hourly trains had five coaches running to timings just one minute shorter. Perhaps another slight deceleration is now necessary. Just one more, if minor, criticism – the locomotives are in a drab livery, in complete contrast to the gaudy appearance of most other French passenger rolling stock.

Heading south

After a French bistro lunch, it was to be TGV 2239, the 13.37 Strasbourg-Nice with 'Paris-Ostfrankreich-Süddeutschland' (POS) set No. 4419 coupled to a 12.26 Nantes portion with Réseau relative No. 508. The 13.06 to Montpellier departed 30min late virtually in our path, which was bad news as we would follow it to Avignon some 5½ hours away. So it was in some ways fortunate that our Nantes set had yet to arrive, causing a 5 minute late departure.

TGVs are now allowed to run at 220kph (137mph) on most of the loco-hauled 200kph sections. The speed upgrade had resulted in the removal of level crossing hazards, of which there were relatively few, as the prevailing route direction by rail and road is north/south. There is still a section restricted to 160kph (99 mph) resulting from sub-soil instability in this former potash extraction area, but passenger train running benefits from having loops averaging around 10km (6.2 miles) apart, facilities that would make Network Rail signallers jealous and are probably a legacy from slower and more frequent freights.



Above: Two Ouigo-branded, cut-price operation TGVs Nos. 789+793 at Strasbourg on October 10.

Passing Matzenheim southbound (22.85km/14.2 miles), both our 'Sybics' had been slightly ahead of the TGV, around 10sec allowing for the different positions in the train. The TGVs are 400 metres (441 yards) long, so could not accelerate as early as the short loco-hauled trains, but Nos. 4419/508 were soon well into their stride accelerating to 219kph (136mph) and eliminating their deficit. Not for long though. The brakes of the 4+16 formation came on after passing Benfeld at full speed and before crawling for 18½min and losing 15min to Colmar. Accelerating from the station stop, we took 7.94km/4.93 miles and 3min 53sec to reach 220kph (137mph).

It was fortunate that I had consulted Alan Varley's guide before this leg of the journey, otherwise I might have thought Mulhouse had mysteriously disappeared. After passing Lutterbach, less than 6km (3.72 miles) from Mulhouse, it was 12 min before the city's station appeared from the opposite direction than expected, as we had completed a full circle via Mulhouse Nord yard, mainly at 80kph. Doubt about the wisdom of avoiding a reversal was even more relevant after a 9min dwell time that lost an extra 5 min.

Alan Varley explains that TGVs typically require 15min for reversal, possibly longer if using the same driver, and a typical Strasbourg depot Rhin-Rhône turn would be relieved at Dijon.

Un éléphant blanc?

Leaving Mulhouse, now heading for Belfort in the reverse direction from my 'Arbalète' run, and still on traditional infrastructure, was potentially confusing, but the Rhin-Rhône full LGV remains piecemeal, marooned on engineers' drawing boards and accountants' calculators.

The purpose of the route was to link Northern Germany with Southern France, the first LGV not to be radial from Paris, but its sense of purpose and direction feels lost by constructing only 140km (87 miles) of LGV, only a third of the rail distance between the two river arteries, effectively Mulhouse to Macon. 'Un éléphant blanc' (white elephant) perhaps?

After leaving Mulhouse there was a short stretch through Ballersdorf and then Chèvremont at 150kph (93mph), but most of the 25min run to the next stop was just below 130kph (81mph) and another 2½min had been lost to the next stop at Belfort, but not in the city. The station nameboards said it was Belfort-Montbéliard TGV, 11km (7 miles) to the former and 7km (4.3 miles) to the latter.

Whenever TGVs arrive at a station, no matter how bucolic the location, they seem to demand attention appropriate to their status, reflected in long dwell times. On the Duplex sets in particular, the aisles are narrow with a spiral staircase to negotiate then a couple of steps up before descending through narrow doors onto the platform, so it is scarcely surprising that three minutes are judged as the bare minimum dwell time and it is 4min even here at Belfort-Montbéliard TGV. I doubt UK regulatory bodies would have been minded to permit the design.

At last we can sample some true Rhin-Rhône LGV infrastructure between Belfort and Besançon Franche-Comté TGV, which is not in Besançon (which once had the good fortune to be twinned with Huddersfield), but is at least in Franche-Comté. This is an impressive run reaching 275kph

TABLE 3: MULHOUSE TO STRASBOURG

Loco		Sybic 26159					Sybic 26150				
Load*		9/380/395/485					6/257/270/360				
Train		08.21 Bâle-Strasbourg					10.51 Bâle-Strasbourg				
Date		October 10, 2023					October 10, 2023				
Recorder/Position		J Heaton 3rd of 10					J Heaton 3rd of 7				
Km	Miles	Timing Point	Sch	M S	Km/h	M P H	Sch	M S	Km/h	M P H	
0.00	0.00	MULHOUSE d	0	0 00	1L		0	0 00	1L		
3.19	1.98	Mulhouse-Dornach		3 21	100	62		3 00	106	66	
5.85	3.64	Lutterbach		4 50	158	98		4 25	157	98	
9.52	5.92	Richwiller		6 08	181	112		5 44	185/192	115/119	
12.89	8.01	Wittelsheim		7 13	195/200	121/124		6 48	191/189	119/117	
17.39	10.81	Bollwiller		8 34	198/200	123/124		8 11	196/197	122	
21.00	13.05	Raedersheim		9 40	196	122		9 19	187	116	
24.25	15.07	Merxheim		10 40	193/148	120/92		10 25	167/157	104/98	
29.52	18.34	Rouffach		12 44	165/192	103/119		12 20	165/188	103/117	
35.86	22.28	Herrlisheim-près-Colmar		14 55	143	89		14 38	153	95	
42.50	26.41	COLMAR a	19	18 38			19	17 54			
0.00	0.00	d	21	19 53	-/180/150	-/112/93	21	19 41	-/172	-/172	
9.73	6.05	Ostheim-Bebenheim		5 06	153/160	95/99		4 59	155	96	
13.03	8.10	Ribeauvillé		6 22	148/160/sigs	92/99		6 14	171/184	106/114	
22.60	14.04	SÉLESTAT a	11	13 09			10	10 36			
0.00	0.00	d	13	14 20			12	11 17			
6.83	4.24	Ebersheim		4 39	150/171	93/106		3 37	179/181	111/112	
11.27	7.00	Kogenheim		6 16	156	97		5 11	155	96	
16.53	10.27	Benfeld		8 14	178/190	111/118		7 09	185/188	115/117	
20.37	12.66	Matzenheim		9 36	134/sigs 29	83/sigs 18		8 25	161/159	100/99	
31.39	19.50	Fegersheim		14 53	172	107		12 25	195/198	121/123	
34.65	21.53	Geispolsheim		16 00	197	122		13 25	196	122	
43.22	26.85	STRASBOURG a	20	22 40			20	19 53			

XL= Change line * = Vehicles/tare/gross tonnes/incl. loco



Above: Class BB 22200 No. 522311R ready to propel the 14.57 Marseille-Nice TER service on October 11, but for only 17km (10½ miles) as far as Aubagne, where it failed.

(171mph) in 4min and then flying along with a maximum of 322kph (200mph) twice shown on the GPS.

Our TGVs take their entitled 3min at Besançon and remarkably gain 5min on the dwell time, which Alan says caters for being overtaken by the 13.34 Zurich-Paris although this did not appear. Generally speaking though, there sometimes seems to be a mismatch between schedules and energy consumption, running at high speed then sitting for long dwell times, or spinning out spare time by not exploiting the features of both infrastructure and rolling stock.

From Besançon to Dijon, the first 37.42km (23.25 miles) are on LGV, reverting to 160kph running for the last 15min into Dijon, where the welcome reversal allowed a forward-facing journey for the first time in my TGV odyssey.

Cutting the mustard

Dijon served to reinforce my opinion about Besançon's station stop, as we sat there for 12min and still saved 4min, departing now a mere 10min late.

The original plan for LGV Rhin-Rhône was to have a triangular junction south-east of Dijon, where the line from Mulhouse would fork with one prong running through Dijon to join the LGV-SE to/from Paris, while another would head south to Lyon – but both these remain unfunded. As Rhin-Rhône was not of direct benefit to Paris, the political will to succeed was probably absent and some of the benefits unappreciated. The journey planner often suggests quicker Strasbourg to Marseille transits via Paris.

So we set off from Dijon on more 160kph track with just one stop before Lyon Part Dieu, at Beaune rather than the larger and more usual Chalon-sur Saône, and this is where we met our next problem.

After passing Chagny at 137kph (85mph), there was an emergency stop conducted in 35sec. I feared the worst, and a half-overheard announcement on a low volume system with substantial background chatter disclosed the words 'personne' and 'voie', but it was fortunately just a trespasser. As in the UK, the response to what seems a growing problem verges on over-reaction. After standing for 17min, we ran at caution with a resultant loss of 23min to the junction with the LGV-SE, just south of Mâcon TGV station.

Surely Lyon Part Dieu could make a substantial saving on its 10min dwell time? No doubt there were congratulations all round when the train was dispatched in just 7½min, only to be faced with a crawl back to the LGV section at St Quentin Sud, taking all of 25min for the 25.95km (16.12 miles).

Our two coupled TGVs finally raced south, like dogs racing to the beach, at 300kph (186 mph), dropping only 49kph (30 mph) up the 1-in-43.7 gradient to Primarette summit. But the 71min 55sec to reach Avignon TGV had lost another 10min, making the Nice express 40min late.

It was too late in the year to have had any expectation of seeing the new LGV Méditerranée before darkness fell, so I will have to return for this daylight delight. The last time I travelled from Avignon to Marseille by the conventional



The nameplate of loco No. 522311R at Marseille on October 11.

TABLE 4: BELFORT-MONTBÉLIARD TGV TO DIJON

Units 4419 + 508

Load 4+16/772/855

Train 13.37 Strasbourg-Nice-Ville

Date October 10, 2023

Recorder/Position J Heaton 2nd of 20

Km	Miles	Timing Point	Sch	M S	Km/h	MPH
0.00	0.00	BELFORT-MONTBÉLIARD TGV d	0	0 00	23L	
9.91	6.16	Lizaine V West		4 04	275/282	171/175
18.72	11.63	Chevanne T West		6 00	270	168
35.29	21.93	SEI Les Magny		9 16	319/320	198/199
47.29	29.38	CAI		11 34	300/321	186/199
58.86	36.57	CAI		13 48	310/320	193/199
70.56	43.84	SEI Sorans		16 02	316	196
81.89	50.88	Besançon Franche-Comté TGV a	23	19 40		
0.00	0.00	d	31	22 47		
3.45	2.14	SEI 87		2 28	134	83
12.37	7.69	CAI		4 48	260/320	162/199
25.21	15.66	SEI Thorvay		7 26	314	195
37.42	23.25	CAI/feed		9 46	313	194
46.49	28.89	CAI		11 45	162	101
54.29	33.73	Collonges		14 39	158	98
58.40	36.29	Genlis		16 13	156	97
67.96	42.23	Neuilley		19 54	155	96
72.97	45.34	UB Longvic		21 53	116/sigs	72
76.99	47.84	DIJON a	27	27 04		

CAI= Cabine d'Appareillage Intermédiaire (LGV relay room)

SEI= Système d'Endenchement Informatisé (signalling cabin)

route it took almost twice as long as today's 33½ min, that included a 2½min stand at Aix-en-Provence, for the 93.11km (57.9 miles). There was no improvement on our late arrival at Marseille and no mention of delay repay on arrival, whereas on my last visit we had been handed forms by the station staff.

Not so nice to Nice

It had been my intention to centre this edition of Practice & Performance on the changes to the Marseille-Nice route over the decades and the decelerations that had taken place in recent years, despite modernisation, but I will save that for another time.

It must suffice to say that the intention on my third Interrail day was a round trip to Nice by TGV with a further comparative loco and coaches trip. The TGVs ran punctually on slack schedules with long dwell times, taking 159min eastbound and 153min westbound for the 224km (139 miles).

The trains are also infrequent, with only 11 direct expresses, six of which require compulsory reservations, between Marseille and Nice (the second and fifth largest French cities), with only one direct train eastbound after the three-hour, 15-stop 17.33 – a 'Standard Class-only' EMU at 19.25.

Two round trips in the daylight hours of October are difficult to achieve, but impossible when your TER loco No. 522311R, the scarcely disguised 1980s stalwart No. 22311 *Pierrefitte*, fails 10 minutes out of Marseille causing a two-hour delay. Pierre le fitter required.

My overall verdict? Counting the 'wires down Lille' as an SNCF issue, poor punctuality, and three out of four €20 seat reservations not being provided – no better than 6/10 and plenty of ammunition to use next time someone tells me about the high standards unflinchingly achieved by the railways of France. ■

“It was fortunate I had consulted Alan Varley’s guide before this leg of the journey, otherwise I might have thought Mulhouse had mysteriously disappeared”

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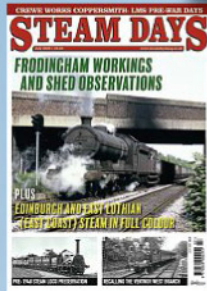
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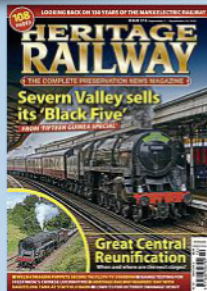
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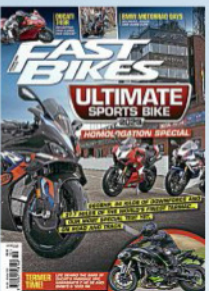
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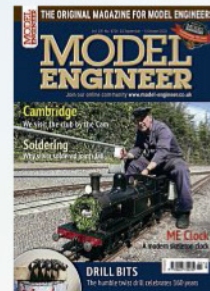
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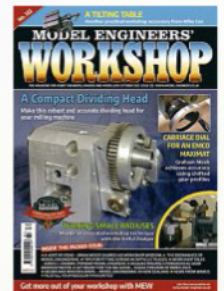
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Flight across London

Award-winning photographer Jack Boskett joined Network Rail's Air Operations team on patrol over the capital, resulting in these stunning images.





Network Rail Air Operations helicopter registration G-NTWK ready for take-off at Elstree Airfield. It is a French-built Eurocopter AS355 Twin Squirrel leased from PDG Helicopters. Note the imaging equipment attached to the underside of the fuselage.



Co-pilot Chris Ashworth (left) monitors images of the tracks below as Dave Vasey pilots the helicopter.



LATE summer saw me working as an official photographer at a railway industry event in central London, and I found myself seated next to Network Rail chairman Lord Peter Henty.

The event began with a video showcasing NR's Air Operations team, during which Lord Henty asked if I had ever been up in one of its helicopters. When I answered: "No, but would love to," he then promised to make it happen.

I did not have to wait too long. A date was set for October 3 to fly with Network Rail pilots Dave Vasey and Chris Ashworth as they conducted their analysis over the heart of London. I had prepared a wish list of areas I wanted to capture, with the main railway stations topping the list – such as London Bridge, Waterloo, Clapham Junction,

Paddington, Marylebone, Euston, St Pancras and King's Cross.

When the day came it could not have been more perfect. The weather graced us with clear skies and a gentle breeze. As we ascended to 1300 feet (400 metres), I could barely contain my excitement. I was able to open a small window from the back of the helicopter, which meant I did not have to shoot through glass.

One of the most awe-inspiring moments came as we flew at the same height as the top of The Shard building. Peering out of the window and seeing the iconic skyscraper right beside us as we circled London Bridge was a breathtaking sight. Dave was flying the helicopter while co-pilot Chris was tasked with recording a section of track from above, using their latest infrared cameras and thermal imaging technology.

The views from that altitude were nothing short of spectacular. Everything ▶



Above: A closer view of Cannon Street station as the helicopter flies west from London Bridge. The rooftop garden is a private venue that is occasionally open to the public.

Left: Looking north-west over London Bridge station, showing the terminal platforms (left) and through platforms (right). The 1000ft (300m) Shard building is alongside the station, while Cannon Street station can be seen at the end of the second bridge over the Thames from the right, with its roof garden and twin towers. Blackfriars station straddles the Thames two more bridges further west and, not far from Blackfriars on the south bank side, are two buildings that were previously home to *The Railway Magazine* – the South Bank Tower, formerly King's Reach Tower, (1991-2007) and the Blue Fin building (2007-2010).

ALL PHOTOS TAKEN BY JACK BOSKETT ON OCTOBER 3.



Moving west from Cannon Street over the south bank of the Thames takes us to the four-platform Waterloo East (just visible in the bottom right corner of this shot), linked by a walkway to the main Waterloo station, while the South Eastern Main Line continues across the Thames to the terminus at Charing Cross. Note the many non-railway landmarks in this shot, including the London Eye, the Houses of Parliament and Buckingham Palace. Also visible, and almost in a line, are the open spaces of St James's Park, Green Park and Hyde Park. Above the Houses of Parliament, the eagle-eyed might just be able to make out the tall brick bell tower of Westminster Cathedral, which is close to Victoria station.



South of Waterloo, but on the line from Blackfriars, is Loughborough Junction. This view, looking south, shows the two curves that connect east and west to the South London Line through Denmark Hill, but only the Blackfriars line has a station here.



Flying west from Loughborough Junction we reach the major station at Clapham Junction. In this view looking south, the main part of the station is in the centre of the photograph with platforms for services from Victoria to the South and from Waterloo to the South West, while a long footbridge connects to the Windsor Lines platforms. In between are the station's extensive carriage sidings.



North of Clapham Junction, across the Thames and Hyde Park, is Paddington – this view looking east over the Great Western terminus with the Paddington Basin branch of the Regent's Canal running along the eastern side. The cross-London Elizabeth Line is underground at this point.

appeared so much closer together than I had ever realised. It felt as though I had entered a different world, gazing down at the bustling streets and renowned landmarks of London. The city resembled

an intricate model railway from above.

My thanks go to Lord Henty for turning this dream into a reality, and also to my remarkable pilots Dave and Chris. Not only are they skilled professionals, but also incredibly friendly

and accommodating, and their in-depth knowledge of the city made the experience even more enjoyable as they pointed out landmarks and shared intriguing facts along the way. ■



A short distance east of Paddington is Marylebone, once the terminus of the Great Central Railway and now that of Chiltern Railways. It is much revived after the closure threat of the early 1980s, and this view looking north-east shows the Henry William Braddock-designed red brick station building. Perhaps counter-intuitively, the land to the left of the platforms in this view (which includes the BNP Paribas Bank building with the circular structure on the roof) has never been in railway use – Marylebone's former goods, loco and carriage sidings were north of the road bridge that crosses over the platforms.



North-east of Marylebone, across Regent's Park, is the former station at Primrose Hill (closed 1992) – the overgrown island platform on the connection between the West Coast Main Line and North London Line can be seen in the centre of this shot between the two intermodal trains. Adjacent to the closed station is the Camden Roundhouse, a locomotive shed from 1837 to 1966 but now a music and arts centre, while on the left are a number of EMUs stabled in Camden Carriage Sidings.



South-east of Camden/Primrose Hill is the terminus of the West Coast Main Line at Euston, this view looking south shows the land on the western side earmarked for construction of the HS2 terminus – although following the Government's decision in October to scrap the northern legs of the high-speed line, its Euston terminus will now be smaller than originally planned. Just visible in the top left is the trainshed of St Pancras station.



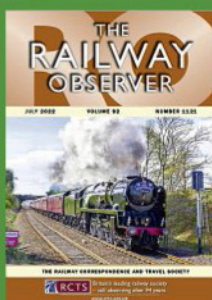
Just east of Euston are the Midland Main Line and East Coast Main Line termini at St Pancras and King's Cross respectively. St Pancras is on the left of this northwards view, showing the ornate George Gilbert Scott-designed brick building, its original arched trainshed and the flat-roof extension added when the station became the home of Eurostar international services in 2007. To the right is the more compact, Lewis Cubitt-designed King's Cross, and between the two stations are the recently built buildings as part of the regeneration of the area.

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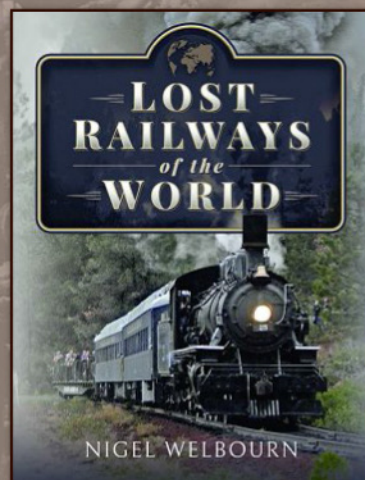
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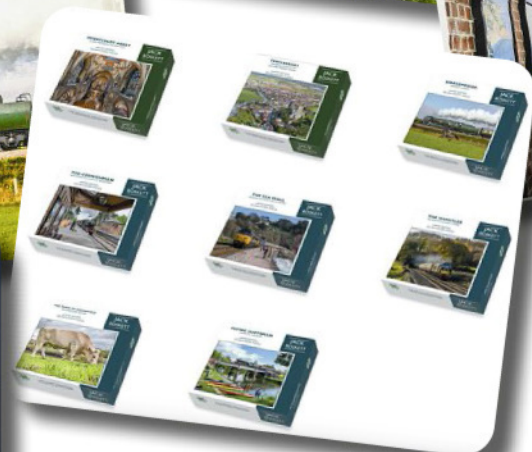
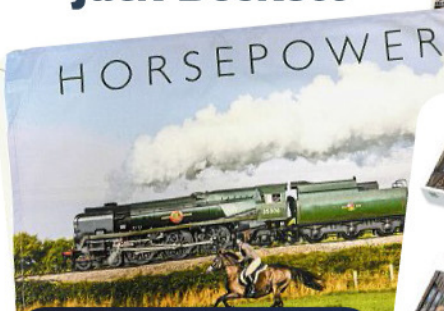
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A bridge to the PAST

For our annual Christmas ghost story, Geoff Cloke tells the tale of a fatal accident that closed a local railway line.

ILIVE in a little village in the Chilterns. It is rather isolated from the main roads and, while attractive to those who are well off and drive large cars, it is less appealing to younger folk. The remaining elders of the village have to make do with one village shop, a twice-weekly bus to town, and me as the local painter, carpenter and handyman with a small van.

Years ago, the village had a railway and station. You can still see the trackbed and the remains of a bridge over the road at the end of the village. The railway was closed in late 1962 – not from the Beeching cuts, but following an accident that took place at the bridge. The line had been used for occasional main line diversions and, on one night just before Christmas that year, a heavy train collapsed the bridge and tumbled down the embankment to the road. Fifty people died in the accident, and five bodies that were never identified are buried in our local churchyard – no individual stones, just a monument.

Tragically, the bridge had been scheduled for an inspection and minor repairs the following day, which would have no doubt found the fatal faults. With the culture of the railway closures at the time, and just like several other similar lines, it was felt that rebuilding the bridge was not worth

the money, especially for the number of passengers carried on the line, so the whole 10-mile route was shut, with the inevitable bus replacement service until that too dried up. It was one of the village's stories, everyone knew it.

Late night encounter

Just over 10 years ago, in December 2012 in fact, I was out late finishing a job in a neighbouring village, which meant it was dark by the time I was driving home. As I rounded the curve with the old railway embankment in front of me, I had to brake hard because there in front of me was the railway bridge – the one that had been demolished 50 years before. For a minute I wondered if I had missed some new scheme to reuse the railway, but then I remembered I had passed that way earlier in the day, when there was no bridge and the trackbed was overgrown as I always remembered it.

I got out of the van and saw a large, hand-painted notice on a stand at the side of the bridge: 'Bridge repairs tomorrow. Go another way'. This could not be right. I rubbed my eyes, had a sip of water and looked again – but the bridge and notice were still there.

In my confusion I reasoned that, if this was the real bridge, then the last time a notice

was there was just before the accident – and, I told myself, if there was a train soon then you had better get away from where it will land at the bottom of the embankment. So I got into the van, backed it up, and gave it some more thought.

Still in disbelief, it dawned on me that if I was really there, then I should try to stop the train and save the lives of those 50 people. I was still unconvinced any of this was real – but, if not, then all I would have done is wasted my own time.

I drove back about half a mile and found a small lane that once led to a farm crossing. This was about a mile from the bridge and, on reaching the crossing, I found that the tracks were still there. What to do now? If you want to stop a train, it takes some distance. It was also dark, so if I stood in the track like they did in *The Railway Children* then the driver would not see me. Any train, existent or non-existent, would need the whole distance to the bridge to stop in time. And then, even if a train appeared and I stopped it, what on earth would I say?

While this all went through my head, I heard a distant train whistle. It was then I had a 'lightbulb moment'. I got back in the van, drove forwards on to the crossing, and turned left so that my red brake lights were pointing towards the train. I put the van in neutral, placed a toolbox on the brake pedal and got out of the van, walking away into a neighbouring field. I did not know what was going to happen, but I did not want to be standing next to the van when it did. Someone might also start asking questions – questions I could not answer – so I could always run away.

Then I heard the train coming, the engine working hard. Looking down the line I saw lights from the carriages and a glow from the engine. I had never seen steam trains except on preserved railways, gleaming in the daylight and moving quite slowly, so what was coming towards me felt like a monster out of the dark. It was not stopping, was not stopping, was not stopping... until about 10 feet from the van, when I heard the brakes start to squeal. There was a monumental bang as it hit the van almost at full speed, then something hit me on the head and that was the last thing I remember.



The bridge at the end of the village was demolished after the accident. VIEVE FORWARD (CC BY-SA 2.0)

“Any train, existent or non-existent, would need the whole distance to the bridge to stop in time”



The morning after

When I came round, it was morning. I was sitting against a tree in the field, facing what was still a railway track. I heard a clatter and a modern looking diesel train with two coaches went past me on its way to the bridge... which was still there. There was no sign of my van, but the crossing was still a crossing, except that it now had a gate.

I got shakily to my feet, walked down the lane to the road and then along the road to the bridge. The bridge looked similar to the previous night, except in better condition and with the usual modern notices about what to do if a vehicle hits it.

I went home and over the next few days researched some information about what I had seen. I did not dare ask anyone, so went to the local library and looked on the internet. The sources all said the same thing: in December 1962, a diverted main line train had hit something on the line by the crossing and been brought to a halt just before the bridge. For a while, the train stayed there while they looked for the obstruction, but nothing was found. The train driver swore he had seen two red lights making him hit the brakes hard; but everyone on board was safe, just a few passengers with bruises from being thrown forward.

The story hit the headlines when the workmen arriving for the bridge repairs discovered just how bad a condition it was in. It had only been used by light branchline trains in the previous year or so, and if that bridge had taken the weight of a diverted express, it would have collapsed. This made it the ‘Christmas Miracle’, according to the press.



Above: The line had been closed since 1962, yet here was a train heading towards the fatal bridge.

(ADAPTED FROM AN IMAGE BY KEVIN WHITEHURST)

Left: The lane led to a remote farm crossing. DAVID MARTIN (CC BY-SA 2.0)

I walked to the churchyard and found no monument, no row of five graves, nothing. The whole life of the village had been changed, there were trains every day, and it had been revitalised.

I said nothing to anyone about my story.

A return visit

Eventually I moved away, but curiosity drew me back in December 2022. It had all begun to feel like a dream – something that I had, perhaps, actually dreamt. On the same date at the same time, I walked under the bridge and up the lane to the farm crossing. There was quite a bit of mist around but, although I knew where I was going, it looked somehow different.

About 100 yards from the crossing the mist cleared and there, parked on the railway track, was a small van and ‘me’ walking away towards the field. I stayed quietly where I was, partly through disbelief, partly because of those warnings in time travel stories about the dangers of meeting yourself. Then the

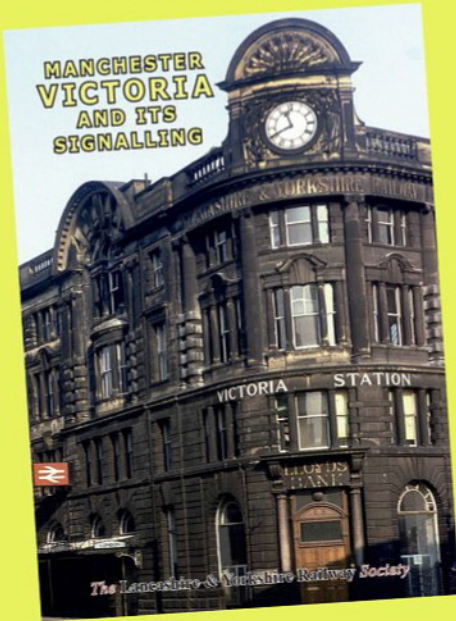
train came, brakes squealed, an almighty bang followed, and I saw myself collapse as something hit me. The van also flew off the tracks and disappeared into a nearby pond, where it submerged completely.

The train stopped at the edge of the bridge and people got out to look around, heads shaking, searching for the obstruction that was not there. I skirted round them and went to look for my other ‘me’ – yes, I know how that sounds – and found I was face down in the mud, not breathing very well. I lifted myself up and propped my unconscious body against a tree, when I noticed my breathing started to improve. I picked up the object that had hit me on the head, which happened to be the rear number plate from the van, and went home.

I still have that number plate under the carpet at home. And I still believe I saved that train (the first time) then myself (the second time).

So here is the key question: was I a ghost, and if so, when? ■

The Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway Society



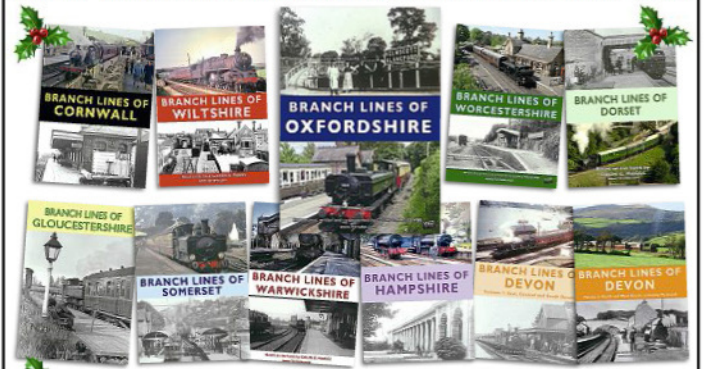
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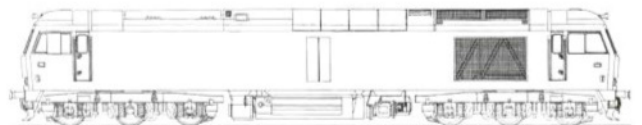
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4-VEP to return in 2024

An appeal fund has been launched to get third-rail EMU No. 3417 back into passenger traffic, as Hassard Stacpoole reports.

THE Southern Electric Traction Group (SETG) has set a target to return 4-VEP EMU No. 3417 *Gordon Pettitt* back into traffic for use on heritage lines in 2024, and is launching an appeal to raise £50,000 to help achieve this goal.

The SETG, which was set up by a small number of staff at Wimbledon Park depot, has been carrying out a steady and thorough restoration of the 1963-series, York-built Class 423. No. 3417 has been in the custody of the group since 2015, when it was delivered to Strawberry Hill depot from Bombardier's Ilford Carriage Works following a successful and high-quality repaint.

However, despite arriving in externally pristine condition, the quality of the internal fixtures and fittings was extremely poor after two years of open storage in a non-electrified siding at Clapham Yard, which led to a large amount of internal water and mould damage.

The team is led by former South Western Railway engineer Chris Buckland, who has established a functioning maintenance base at Strawberry Hill, where the SETG has exclusive use of a small part of the depot. The base covers everything from heavy maintenance and spares storage, to the manufacture of new and refurbished trim pieces – in short, everything required to bring a 1960s EMU back into serviceable condition.

Current work

Work in recent months has concentrated on two vehicles: non-driving trailer No. 70797 is undergoing a heating system re-wire, while driving trailer composite No. 76263 is having its driving cab and passenger accommodation



2

restored from a derelict state.

Despite the obstructions presented by the Covid-19 pandemic, as well as limited funds and a small volunteer team (Strawberry Hill is a working depot, which means only serving or former railway staff can access the site), the SETG believes it is on target to return the unit to traffic in 2024, and has started the programme of exams required for passenger use.

SETG director Steve Upton told *The RM* that it is fortunate to have a dedicated core of volunteers supported by a small, but committed, group of regular monthly donors. He said: "While financial donations from our supporters are very important, we are also lucky to have ongoing support from both inside and outside the railway industry, including well-known names such as Bombardier, Siemens, Stagecoach, FirstGroup, Unipart Rail, TBM Rail and Diamond Rail Services, as well as Armstrong Powerhouse, RealTime Trains, and the Bluebell Railway – the ultimate owners of the unit."

The restoration has been split into two distinct stages: firstly to return it to use on heritage railways (No. 3417 has previously visited the Swanage, Mid-Hants and Bluebell railways); and secondly, the group's long-term aim, to return the unit to passenger-carrying duties on the main line. This will require significant support from both inside and outside the industry, but – as Hastings Diesel Limited has proved with its 'Thumper' unit – it is more than attainable.

To help deliver the first stage, the SETG has launched a GoFundMe appeal to raise £50,000. See the website at <https://gofund.me/5c8a2423> for more details. ■

1: The *Gordon Pettitt* nameplate and the plaque that commemorates the unit as one of the last VEPs to be withdrawn by South West Trains. ALL PHOTOS TAKEN ON OCTOBER 10 BY HASSARD STACPOOLE

2: 4-VEP No. 3417 at its base at Strawberry Hill depot.

3: The unit's exterior is now pristine, but the inside needs a lot of work after previously being stored outside and suffering water damage.

4: Inside the restored cab of coach No. 76262.



3



4



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On high-speed matters

HS2 has been so emasculated that it can no longer be regarded as a separate high-speed railway. The only sensible way forward is to redesign it to become what it should always have been: a by-pass of the southern part of the West Coast Main Line.

This would allow Class 390 'Pendolino' trains to operate via the new line (at their maximum speed of 140mph, 225kph) before rejoining the existing WCML at Handsacre, near Lichfield.

The HS2 new-build trains would then be used only on the London to Birmingham section. This would overcome the anomaly highlighted by 'Industry Update' (*RM* November issue) where HS2 non-tilting trains would be limited to 110mph north of Handsacre.

To properly integrate HS2 into the WCML operation would then need: a Stafford by-pass line from south of Colwich to north of Norton Bridge to alleviate the Shugborough

bottleneck; a link between HS2 and the WCML in the Washwood Heath area to allow HS2 trains to go into Birmingham New Street and beyond; a more sensible maximum HS2 linespeed of 186mph (300kph); a reduced fleet of HS2 trains; and HS2 to the surface at Queen's Park to run over the WCML fast lines from there to Euston.

Tim Stevens, Peterborough

THE most relevant point among the indignation about HS2 in the November 2023 issue was how the costs of this project have become totally out of hand.

When that happens, something drastic has to be done and the inability of the taxpayer to give those running this project a blank cheque leads to the inevitable decision.

Those who lament the lack of potential opportunities for expanding the economies of the North, but who have no evidence to back this up,

would do well to consider the outrageous claims made for the benefits which would be brought to the South East of England by HS1.

What has happened there has been an explosion of house building, but very little economic benefit, as Eurostar has not stopped there (or at Ebbsfleet International) for the last couple of years and sees no reason so to do in the immediate future.

Surely the vast majority of train users in the North would be better served by hugely improving the train services in that region, than have the cost of doing that thrown at a line that would offer a quicker connection to London, benefiting many fewer travellers?

I am glad that, at last, someone has had the sense to pull the plug.

David Hackett, Maidstone

BARRY Deller's letter (November issue) is spot-on, especially

when he speaks of 'a small, congested island'. France, which began the construction of TGV lines 50 years ago, is more than double the size of Britain, with a slightly higher population: our density of population is more than twice that of France.

However, the issue is even more than that: it is reported that the 140-mile HS2 may cost us £54bn, yet the 540-mile Rail Baltica project linking the Baltic republics to Poland will cost £5bn – less than 10% of our costs!

Why? Look no further than our predilection for so-called 'experts' and 'consultants' charging exorbitant sums before even a clod of earth has been turned. A national newspaper reported that HS2 has spent £351 million on management consultants since 2012. Needless to say, when the newspaper approached these firms for comment they declined – now, I wonder why!

Fr Julian G Shurgold, South Croydon

South African Railways

I FOUND the article 'A Rail Safari' by Richard Gennis in the October 2023 edition extremely interesting, particularly the line from Saldanha to Sishen with the enormous 40,000 tonne iron ore trains using eight distributed locomotives. I note that the route is electrified, but I wonder why electric locomotives are not used. Is this because suitable electric locomotives are not available?

I also have very fond memories of the 3ft 6in gauge line from the High Veldt to Port Richard transporting very large coal trains, again with six distributed diesel locomotives, but the line (from memory) was not electrified. This was observed in 2005 during a holiday visit to South Africa.

Please keep up the good work in producing your excellent magazine, which I have read for numerous years, and my two-year subscription for future issues is already placed.

David Young, by email

■ With regards to the traction used on the Sishen to Saldanha line, when I have been there it has been pretty much a 50/50 split of diesels and electrics operating together in the consist, these being Class 43 diesels and Class 15 electrics hired in from Transnet. Most of the time the leading locomotives are always a Class 15 and 43 coupled together, which does seem strange, especially how they talk to each other.

When I was there in March 2023, the maintenance team at the Salcor depot were struggling with spares to keep the Class 15 electrics on the move, so I did see trains with a bigger percentage of diesels in the consist – Richard Gennis

Bear necessities

FROM November 1-6, I had the pleasure of being accompanied at my work as a driver for TransPennine Express by 'Wing Commander AB Bear of Bear Force', raising awareness for the mental health and suicide prevention charity set up by Richard Bland after the death of his son by suicide in 2013.

Aimed mainly at children and young adults, the charity was established to create safe spaces and environments where they can talk and be heard. It is accompanied by a storybook written by Richard, which follows AB Bear with a subtext helping to verbalise

children's emotions.

As his name suggests, he can usually be found flying in fighter jets and other military aircraft, but as he had never been on a train, we decided to put that right. With the help of the TPE social media team we were able to provide exposure over three days, with Class 68s featuring on most trains on the route from Scarborough to Manchester.

More information can be found at www.bearforce.org.uk, Bearforce on Facebook, bearforcecharity on Instagram and @Bear_Force01 on Twitter/X.

Driver Scott Rathbone, TPE



Mk.5s are better than DMUs

I WAS dismayed to read in the October issue that TransPennine Express is to withdraw the Class 68 hauled Mk.5 'Nova 3' sets from the Scarborough to Manchester route and revert back to Class 185 DMUs, which have operated since 2006.

The problem with the '185s' is lack of capacity unless two units are coupled together.

This service is so busy that a five-carriage train is essential. I recently travelled to Huddersfield with a reserved seat, but because a '185' was

rostered instead of a 'Nova 3', my booked seat was in a non-existent coach.

Also, when I travelled with my late wife in her wheelchair, we found the disabled compartment of the '185' very poor compared to a Class 170, which Northern uses on the Scarborough to Hull service.

I feel this is a very retrograde step, especially since TPE established servicing facilities for these sets here in Scarborough.

Gerard R Tall, Scarborough



GOING TOO FAR? Has GWR's retro livery gone a bit too far in this shot of No. 802114 at Newton Abbot on October 19, which has a tiny BR double arrows logo on the cab side? **DAVID HUNT, DAWLISH**

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Publication of a letter does not imply that the editor or staff of *The Railway Magazine* necessarily agree with its contents.



Caroline's origins

FURTHER to the article on inspection saloon No. RDB 975025 *Caroline* in the November issue, attached is a photo of the vehicle nearing completion in Stewarts Lane depot (South London) on April 10, 1970. I suspect that the '55' in the (now removed) Southern Region-style headcode panel was a

reference to its old number No. S60755. The occasion was part of a tour of Southern Region depots and workshops by a group of final year schoolboys as part of the selection process by British Rail of suitable candidates for sponsored engineering degrees.

**Basil Hancock,
Faulconbridge (Australia)**

'Pendennis' down under

THE August issue of *The RM* contained a very informative article about the GWR 'Castle' Class, and it reminded me of the photos I took on July 4, 1977 when *Pendennis Castle* arrived in Darling Harbour, Sydney.

It had journeyed on the freighter *Mishrefas* hold cargo, the locomotive and its tender being placed alongside each other, with plenty of timber bracing and many chains.

The floating crane *Titan* was used for the unloading procedure. I managed to have a few hours off work early in the morning and returned the same day at 4.15pm to take some photographs. The locomotive was then towed to the NSW government railways



workshop at Redfern for an inspection.

Some years later, on a special birthday of mine, I was at the same wharf at Darling Harbour to see *Flying Scotsman* unloaded by *Titan* onto the same rails! *Titan* was sold some years later to an Asian client, but was lost at sea while being towed.

Len King, Sydney, Australia

A joint nationalised industry success

IT was an excellent article on the Selby diversion (October issue), illustrating when the nationalised industries all worked together for the common aim of energy security. Contrast that with today, where major strategic projects have to navigate a myriad of private or independent agencies, but expect the same tax payer to fund the endeavour.

I was introduced to one strange sub-project of the Selby coalfield that never saw the drawing board in the 1990s. At the time, I was a trades union organiser representing many

members in administrative and clerical roles in the coal industry. The industry was in rapid decline and, during one consultation meeting on how that decline would be managed, parties mused on the failure of the Selby coalfields to absorb displaced North East miners. I observed that would have been unlikely at scale because of housing related issues.

A very senior manager replied, "We would not have moved them to Selby, we would have transported them on a modified high speed train with clean area, showers, basic catering and

dirty areas – with at least 200 kitted up ready to go straight down the Selby mine after picking up a lamp and token, and on the way back washed and brushed up ready to get off at Tursdale, where a central boarding point would have been created with access to the ECML."

Being a seasoned rail enthusiast, I dismissed the concept as fantasy. But thanks for a brief walk down memory lane, and reminding us that the nationalised rail industry got it right more often than wrong.

Dennis Morgan, Durham



Where is it? Our pictorial quiz, for fun only

LAST month's quiz photo by Bob Bunyar (below) showed the end of the former up platform at Bideford, North Devon, in August – looking towards Barnstaple with a replica signal somewhat hopefully in the 'off' position. Regular passenger traffic ended in 1965 and the line closed completely in 1982.

The site is now home to a railway heritage centre with a short stretch of track, and there is a growing campaign for rail services to Barnstaple to be reinstated.

For this month's teaser (above), where are these narrow gauge tipper wagons near a former bridge over a standard gauge line?



SHUNTER SHUFFLING: Further to Mel Thorley's article on Class 08s and their derivatives (November issue), the photo of the Class 13 shows it with the 'master' unit's radiator end coupled to the 'slave' unit's cab end. However, they were not always coupled this way, as the accompanying photograph shows, with No. D4502 (later No. 13002) captured at Tinsley in July 1965 coupled 'cab-to-cab'.
TOM ECCLES, SHEFFIELD



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WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 6

Pennine Railway Society. Town Fields Sports Club, Bennethorpe, Doncaster DN2 6AA. 19.30. Pennine Shield Railway Quiz. Further details on www.penninerailwaysociety.com.
Sutton Coldfield Railway Society. St James' Church Centre, 59 Mere Green Road, Sutton Coldfield B75 5BW. 19.30. Test track night.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 7

Great Central Railway Society (Sheffield branch). The Farm Road Sports & Social Club, Farm Road, Sheffield S2 2TP. 19.30. Quiz and annual review.
Lutterworth Railway Society. Lutterworth Bowls Club, off Coventry Road, Lutterworth LE15 4RB. 19.30. 'The Trent Valley Railway': Robin Mathams and Dave Barrett.
Monmouthshire Railway Society. Lysaght Institute, Orb Drive, Newport NP19 0RA. 19.00. 'Colour-Rail': Paul Chancellor.
Norfolk Railway Society. United Reformed Church Hall, Ipswich Road, Norwich NR4 6QR. 19.30. 'A Photographer's Railway Picture Gallery (Tebay/eBay part 3)': Dave Pearce.
Nuneaton Railway Circle. Chilvers Coton Conservative Club, Bridge Street, Coton, Nuneaton CV11 5UD. 19.45.

Railway Club of the New Forest.

Gordleton Mill. 18.30. Annual club meal.
Railway Correspondence & Travel Society (RCTS) (Milton Keynes branch). The Quadrant (Network Rail building), Elder Gate, Milton Keynes MK9 1EN. 19.30. Branch annual meeting.
South East Essex Railway Society. Friends' Meeting House, 18 Dundonald Drive, Leigh-on-Sea SS9 1NB. 18.00. Christmas social at Three Elms, London Road, Leigh-on-Sea.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 8

Stephenson Locomotive Society (SLS). Conference Room, 1st floor (access via Black Swan Courtyard), Newcastle Arts Centre, 67 Westgate Road, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 1SG. 19.00. Members' evening.
SWRS. The Manor, Slough station. 19.30. Members' photographic competition.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 9

RCTS. RCTS Library Leatherhead, Station Approach, Leatherhead. 11.00-16.00. Archive and Library open day.
SLS. Kidderminster Railway Museum (adjoining Severn Valley Railway station), Kidderminster DY10 1QX. 14.00. Members' presentations and buffet.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 11

Oxfordshire Railway Society. Kidlington Baptist Church, High Street, Kidlington OX5 2DS. 19.00.

'Bumper Annual Film Show': Michael Clemens.
Lincoln Railway Society. St Hugh's Church, Harewood Crescent, North Hykeham, Lincoln LN6 8JG. 19.30. TBA.
Southern Electric Group (Sussex Branch). Deall Room, Southwick Community Centre, Southwick BN42 4TE. 19.30. Members' evening.
SLS (Ayrshire branch). Lauriston Hotel, 15 South Crescent Road, Ardrossan KA22 8EA. 19.30. TBA: David Coddington.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 12

Gravesend Railway Enthusiasts' Society. Christmas dinner at Three Daws, Gravesend.
Great Western Society (Bristol group). Room 4, BAWA, 589 Southmead Road, Filton, Bristol BS34 7RF. 19.30. 'Swiss Mountain Railways Part 2 - The Rhätische Bahn and the Route of the Glacier Express': Robert Heron.
LCGB (North London branch). Parish Room, St Michael's Church, Bounds Green Road, Wood Green, London N22 8HE. 14.00. Branch supporters' afternoon.
LCGB (North West branch). Red Lion Hotel, 9 Ash Brow, Newburgh, Wigan WN8 7NF. 19.30.
Leicester Railway Society. Braunstone Civic Centre, 209 Kingsway, Leicester LE3 2PP. 14.00. 'The North East from the 1960s to present day': John Brigstock.
Meon Valley Locomotive Society. St Peter's Church Hall, Free Street, Bishop's Waltham SO32 1EE. 19.30. TBC.
Pewsey Vale Railway Society. Woodborough Social Club SN9 5PL. 14.45.
'Swindon Railway Works - The Golden Years': Revd Canon Brian Arman.
RCTS (Cambridge branch). The Swifts, Haggis Gap, Fulbourn, Cambridge CB21 5HD. 19.30. Branch annual meeting and members' contributions.
RCTS (Croydon & South London branch). East Croydon United Reformed Church, Addiscombe Grove, Croydon CR0 5LP. 19.30. Members' evening.
RCTS (Humberside branch). Highway Public House, Willerby Road, Hull HU5 5LH. 19.30.
RCTS (East Midlands branch). The New Mechanics, 3 North Sherwood Street, Nottingham NG1 4EZ. 19.00. Branch annual meeting and members' contributions.

The 8E Railway Association (Northwich branch).

The Gladstone Club, Station Road, Northwich CW9 5RB. 19.45. www.8erailwayassociation.org.uk
Wells Railway Fraternity. Town Hall, Wells, Somerset. 19.30. Annual meeting followed by quiz set by Andrew Tucker, last year's winner.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 13

Bradford Railway Circle. Bradford

Mechanics' Institute Library, 76 Kirkgate, Bradford BD1 1SZ. 14.00. Annual meeting and members' night.

Giggleswick Railway Circle.

Settle Victoria Hall, Kirkgate, Settle BD24 9DZ. 19.30. Ted Parker's video presentations.

LCGB (Dorking branch). Friends Meeting House, Butter Hill, South Street, Dorking RH4 2LE. 19.30. Annual meeting and members' presentations.

North Yorkshire Moors Railway (York area group). St Lawrence's Church Hall, Lawrence Street, York YO10 3WP. 12.00. 'Transport of the Isle of Man': Ian MacInnes. The meeting will be preceded by a buffet.

RCTS (Chichester branch). Bassil Shipham Centre, Tozer Way, St Pancras, Chichester, West Sussex PO19 7LG. 19.15. 'Railways of Col Holman Stephens': Chris Jackson.

RCTS (South Wales/De Cymru branch). Old Church Rooms / Hen Ysgoldy'r Eglwys, Park Road, Radyr, Cardiff CF15 8DF. 19.00. 'Rail Freight in Great Britain Today': Rail Freight Group Director Maggie Simpson.

Sutton Coldfield Railway Society.

St James' Church Centre, 59 Mere Green Road, Sutton Coldfield B75 5BW. 19.30. Members' Digital Evening.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 14

Aln Valley Railway. Barter Books, The Old Station, Alnwick NE66 2NP. 19.30. 'The Members Entertain'.
Locomotive Club of Great Britain (St Albans branch). St Bartholomew's Church, 47 Vesta Avenue, St Albans AL1 2PE. 19.30. 'Vintage Railway Film Show': Frank Banfield.

RCTS. RCTS Library Leatherhead, Station Approach, Leatherhead. 11.00-16.00. Archive and Library open day.

RCTS (Hitchin & Welwyn Garden City branch). Tilehouse Street Baptist Church, Upper Tilehouse Street, Hitchin SG5 2EE. 19.30.

'A Decade of Home and Away': David Jackman.

RCTS (West Riding branch). Saltaire Methodist Chapel, Saltaire Road, Shipley BD18 3HJ. 19.30. Christmas quiz and 'Bygone Memories': John Holroyd.

Shropshire Railway Society. Gateway Education and Arts Centre, Chester Street, Shrewsbury SY1 1NB. 19.00. 'The CM&DP and Clew Hill railways': Martin Connop Price followed by buffet.

South East Essex Railway Society. Friends' Meeting House, 18 Dundonald Drive, Leigh-on-Sea SS9 1NB. 19.30. Track night and mince pies.

Stevenage Locomotive Society. Community Arts Centre, Roaring Meg Retail Park, Stevenage. 19.30. '40 years of Deltic preservation': Murray Brown.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 15

Great Western Society (Taunton group). Village Hall, Stoke St Mary, Taunton, Somerset TA3 5BY. 19.30. 'Transport Video Highlights': David Brabner.

LCGB (Central London branch).

Keen House, 4 Calshot Street, London N1 9DA. 18.30. 'North from Euston in the Modernisation Era': David Jackman delves into the RCTS photographic archive.

RCTS (Bristol branch). St Teresa's Church Hall, 71 Gloucester Road North Filton BS34 7PL. 19.30. Christmas buffet and members' evening.

SWRS. The Manor, Slough station. 19.30. 'Year 2000 Travel Log': Adrian Palmer.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 18

LCGB (Brighton branch). Brighton Model Railway Club Room, London Road Station, Shaftesbury Place, Brighton BN1 4QS. 19.30. 'Keith gets 'Kracking' at Christmas again': Keith Carter.

RCTS (Northampton branch). Weston Favell Parish Hall, Booth Lane South Northampton NN3 3EP. 14.00. Branch annual meeting and members' contributions.

RCTS (South Essex branch). Shenfield Parish Hall, 60 Hutton Road, Shenfield CM15 8LB. 19.30. Zoom meeting: 'World travels, from Cambodia to Argentina via Alaska and Morocco': Ian Scotchman.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 19

LCGB (Bedford branch). St John's Church Hall, St John's Street, Bedford MK42 0DL. 19.30. 'Christmas meeting: A Frank Banfield Film Night'.

RCTS (Hitchin & Welwyn Garden City branch). Digs Well Village Church Hall, Warren Way, Digs Well, Welwyn AL6 0DH. 14.00. 'Industrial Action': Geoff Plumb.

RCTS (Thames Valley branch). Didcot Civic Hall, Britwell Road, Didcot OX11 7JN. 19.00. Branch annual meeting and 'Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Railways': Stuart Hicks.

SLS. Langdon Square Community Centre, Coulby Newham TS8 0TF. 14.00. 'Steam in Germany today': David Birtle.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 20

Grimsbly & Cleethorpes Railway Group. The No.1, Station Approach, Cleethorpes DN35 8AX. 19.30. 'Woodhead - the Lost Railway': Stephen Gay.

Pennine Railway Society. Doncaster Town Fields Sports Club, Bennethorpe, Doncaster DN2 6AA. 19.30. 'Pennine Members' Slides at Christmas'. Further details on www.penninerailwaysociety.com.

RCTS (Solent branch). Eastleigh Railway Institute, 2 Romsey Road, Eastleigh SO50 9FE. 19.30. '15 in 15': Members' evening and festive buffet.

Sutton Coldfield Railway Society. St James' Church Centre, 59 Mere Green Road, Sutton Coldfield B75 5BW. 19.30. 'Railway Allsorts': Jason Cross.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 21

Lutterworth Railway Society. Lutterworth Bowls Club, off Coventry Road, Lutterworth LE15 4RB. 19.30. 'The Leek & Manifold Railway': Paul Bluton.

Marlow & District Railway Society. Bourne End Community Centre, Wakeman Road, Bourne End SL8 5SX or on Zoom. 19.30. 'Baltic Coast Expresses': Peter Robins. Visit www.mdrs.org.uk

Norfolk Railway Society. United Reformed Church Hall, Ipswich Road, Norwich NR4 6QR. 19.30. 'Collecting from the Totem Era - Part 2': Barry Gayton.

Nuneaton Railway Circle. Chilvers Coton Conservative Club, Bridge Street, Coton, Nuneaton CV11 5UD. 19.45.

RCTS (Cheltenham branch). Victory Club, Burlington House, Lypiatt Road, Cheltenham GL50 2SY. 19.00. 'Great Western, the Hawksworth Years 1941-1947': Revd Canon Brian Arman.

RCTS (North-East branch). Darlington Cricket Club, South Terrace, Darlington DL1 5JD. 18.30. 'BR Steam 1947 to date': David Allinson.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 22

SWRS. The Manor, Slough station. 19.30. Members' presentations.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 29

SWRS. The Manor, Slough station. 19.30. Members' presentations.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 2

RCTS (Watford branch). Beeching Grove Baptist Church, Clarendon Road, Watford WD17 1JJ. 19.00. 'Northampton Gateway: Strategic Railfreight Interchange': George Collinson.

Southern Electric Group (South Hants branch) & Light Rail Transit Association (Southern area). Eastleigh Railway Institute, Romsey Road, Eastleigh. 19.30. 'Tour of United States light rail and tram systems': Mike Russell.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 3

Pennine Railway Society. Doncaster Town Fields Sports Club, Bennethorpe, Doncaster DN2 6AA. 19.30. Annual meeting followed by short presentation by Tony Caddick. Further details on www.penninerailwaysociety.com.
Sutton Coldfield Railway Society. St James' Church Centre, 59 Mere Green Road, Sutton Coldfield B75 5BW. 19.30. Test track evening.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 5

Kettering & District Locomotive Society. Corn Market Hall, London Road, Kettering NN15 7QA. 19.45. 'The Kettering to Cambridge Line': Robin Cullup.

100 YEARS AGO
DECEMBER 1923

Big LMSR investment

THE London Midland and Scottish Railway Company intend to spend £10,000,000 on locomotives, carriages, wagons, steel rails, construction work and tools. The fact was announced recently by the prime minister by reason of its bearing upon the unemployment question.

Among the works contemplated are the doubling of the line between Crewe and Weaver Junction for a distance of about 13 miles, additional loops between Manchester and Carlisle, extended siding accommodation at Camden and Willesden, the strengthening and partial reconstruction of about 30 bridges – plus station improvements at Tilbury Docks, Warrington, Bangor and Manchester Exchange.

The early electrification of the Manchester and Oldham line is another of the works proposed and is part of the policy for electrifying the lines in the northern suburbs of Manchester to deal more adequately with the increasing population.

50 YEARS AGO
DECEMBER 1973

The energy crisis

ALTHOUGH some months ago it may have seemed that the energy crisis was either a master plot by the oil companies to raise prices, or an inspired idea by the conservationists to curb motorway development, it has only taken the briefest of wars in the Middle East to precipitate a situation that was already developing.



FIRST GREEN 90:

The end of 2003 saw Freightliner start repainting its Class 90 fleet into green and yellow livery. The first to be completed at LNWR Crewe on October 13 that year was No. 90041.

CHRIS MILNER

However, if the railways can see their opportunity, they should be able to turn this situation to advantage by strongly urging more inter-city electrification to reduce national dependence on imported fuel, and at the same time make every effort to capture more of the national freight ton-mileage.

However, when petrol is rationed (and it seems to be more a case of “when” than “if”), the tourist railways will face a very lean summer, and may well have enjoyed their last peak season; indeed, the result of petrol rationing could prove fatal for several of them, by preventing access to them of the car-borne tourists who form their main source of passenger revenue.

West Coast changes

AMONG several major changes to Anglo-Scottish timings over the West Coast Main Line to be introduced next May, when the London-Glasgow electrification is complete, are two new daytime services. A through train will leave Euston at 09.35, Mondays to Saturdays, for Inverness (19.45), via Birmingham and Coatbridge, and with

13 intermediate stops; the up run will start from Inverness at 10.30 and take 10 hrs 34 min to London.

20 YEARS AGO
DECEMBER 2003

UK would seize up without rail

BRITAIN'S economy would collapse without a proper rail system. That's the blunt message from the Strategic Rail Authority in a hard-hitting policy document stating the network's requirements over the next 10 years.

In 'Everyone's Railway – the Wider Case for Rail', SRA chief Richard Bowker points out that Overground and Underground trains carry a staggering 78% of London commuters – 20% more than in 1993. Take that away and London would seize up is the gist of his argument to the pro-road lobby and to Whitehall planners.

Added Mr Bowker, as an example, 55% of people travelling between Manchester and Newcastle go by train, not by road, and there are more rail travellers nationally now than there were 50 years

ago. UK road-building would have to be increased by an unacceptable 50% to compensate.

However, the SRA chief admitted that rail costs have to be brought back under control.

Fears for Flying Scotsman

THE future of the world's most famous locomotive is in doubt following a revelation by Flying Scotsman plc that it has lost almost half a million pounds in a year.

In the company's annual accounts, the directors admit that they have “grave concerns” regarding a starting date for the ‘Flying Scotsman Village’ in Edinburgh, and that merchandising operations have been “disappointing”.

The problems are exacerbated by the fact that the company's largest shareholder, former owner Tony Marchington, has been declared bankrupt. As we closed for press, there were fears that the locomotive could end up as a static exhibit – or even be exported to America – when its main line boiler certificate expires in 2006.

The RCTS: then and now

KENT'S mainline in miniature – the Romney, Hythe & Dymchurch Railway (RHDR) – continues to go from strength to strength, as discovered on a recent visit.

The railway, a 15in (381mm) gauge light railway operating steam and internal combustion locomotives was first opened on July 16, 1927, by the Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports William Lygon, 7th Earl Beauchamp. The railway was originally the dream of millionaire racing drivers Captain John Edwards Presgrave (Jack) Howey and Count Louis Zborowski. However, Count Zborowski was killed in a motor racing accident at the Monza Grand Prix on October 19, 1924, before the Romney Marsh site was chosen, and Howey continued the project alone.

In his old age, Captain Howey had a summer house between the signalbox and engine shed at New Romney, where he could sit and watch his trains go by. His ashes lie in the rockery opposite.

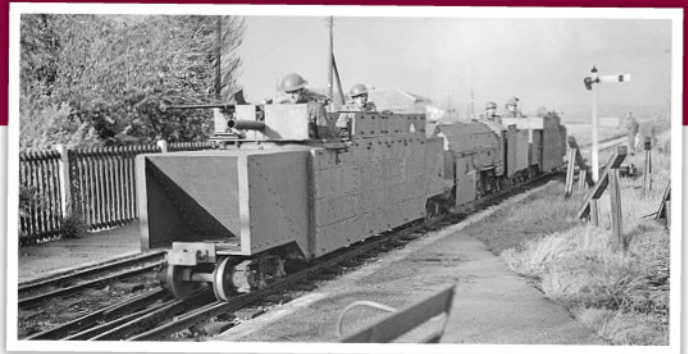
The locomotives were designed

by Henry Greenly who was commissioned by Howey to work on the construction of the entire railway and became its first chief engineer until his abrupt resignation in March 1929.

The railway was taken over by the military during the Second World War, with a miniature armoured train used on the line. It was also used by the Department of Petroleum Warfare in the construction of PLUTO (Pipe Line Under The Ocean), intended to supply fuel to the Allied forces after the D-Day Normandy landings.

During the latter stages of the construction of PLUTO, considerable damage was caused to the track on the extension to Dungeness when, to speed up the pipe construction work, lengths of pipe were dragged along the track bed by bulldozers, resulting in its reduction to a single track railway after the war.

The line reopened between Hythe and New Romney in 1946, the New Romney to Dungeness section



Troops from the Somerset Light Infantry man an armoured train on the Romney, Hythe and Dymchurch Railway on October 14, 1940.

following with a formal opening by Laurel and Hardy on March 21, 1947. Regular services started on March 29, 1947.

The RH&DR Association was formed in 1967 as a supporter's association and today has become a significant contributor to the railway's maintenance and refurbishment, with its members providing a significant input of voluntary labour. It became a registered charity on January 23, 2009. Stations in full or limited use are Hythe, Burmarsh Road, Dymchurch, St Mary's Bay, Warren Halt, New Romney, Romney Sands and finally Dungeness.

Major changes to the line over the years include the reconstruction of

New Romney station with a new track layout plus an overall train shed that spans platform 2 to 4 and the carriage sidings, allowing the majority of coaching stock to be berthed under cover.

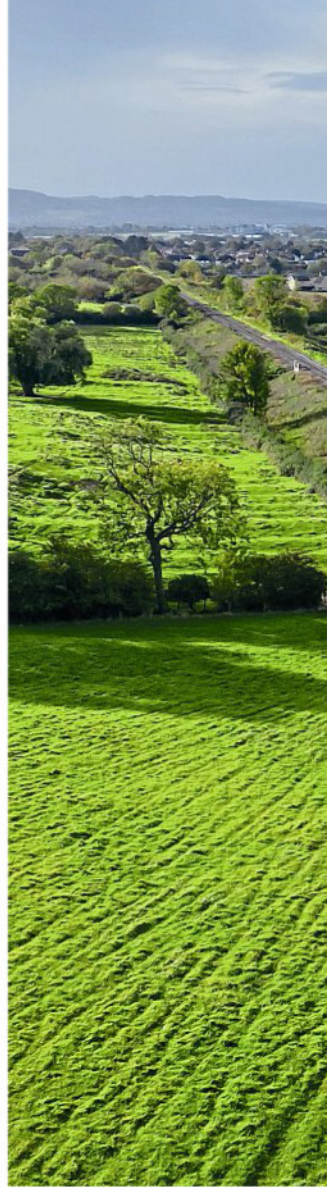
In the last decade, a new workshop complex has been built at New Romney that enables both day to day light repairs to be carried out along with major locomotive and coach overhauls. Towards the Hythe end is a new permanent way depot for the stabling of works vehicles and heavy equipment needed for track maintenance.

For information on the Society visit www.rcts.org.uk



PANORAMA

A showcase for the best in railway photography





1	3
2	4

1
AUTUMN GLORY: Ex-Caledonian Railway 439 Class (LMS 2P) No. 55189, disguised as scrapped LMS-built No. 55260, passes Tod's Mill (just south of Birkhill station) on the Bo'ness and Kinneil Railway on November 4. ROBERT FALCONER

2
FLOODED FIELDS: Storm Ciarán in early November led to Midland Main Line services being diverted via Corby due to problems with an embankment at Braybrooke,

south of Market Harborough. 'Meridian' No. 222104 is reflected in the flooded fields as it crosses the 82-arch Harringworth Viaduct with the diverted 1B29/14.24 Nottingham to St Pancras on November 5. MIKE SPENCER

3
A CLEAR ROAD AHEAD: On its inaugural solo passenger working since its 10-year major overhaul was completed, GWR 2800 Class No. 2807 departs Gotherington Halt with a train bound for Cheltenham Racecourse on October 29. JACK BOSKETT

4
TO THE COAST: With the 'Pacer' classes long gone, Leeds to Morecambe services are now solely in the hands of Class 158 DMUs. On October 22, No. 158754 departs Lancaster on October 22, 2023 with the 12.18 Leeds to Morecambe. PHIL WALLIS



PANORAMA

A showcase for the best in railway photography



AERIAL ABERYSTWYTH: A superb view over the unofficial capital of Mid-Wales on October 22, as Vale of Rheidol loco No. 7 *Owain Glyndwr* departs the VoR station with the 14.00 to Devil's Bridge past the narrow gauge loco and carriage sheds. In the background on the left is the main line terminus, while just visible on the hillside in the distance is the Aberystwyth Cliff Railway. GEOFF GRIFFITHS



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OO Gauge (1:76 Scale) Dapol - Diesel locos



4D-005-002 Class 59/2 59206 "John F Yeoman" in DB Schenker red (RRP £173.20)..... **BARGAIN**, £129.95



4D-012-010 Class 22 D6330 in BR green no yellow ends and headcode discs **NEW**..... £146.88



4D-012-011 Class 22 D6328 in BR green small yellow panels and headcode discs **NEW**..... £146.88
4D-012-011D Class 22 D6328 in BR green small yellow panels and headcode discs - Digital fitted **NEW**..... £174.42



4D-012-012 Class 22 D6356 in BR green small yellow panels and headcode boxes **NEW**..... £146.88



4D-012-013 Class 22 D6352 in BR blue headcode boxes **NEW**..... £146.88



1080 NBL diesel prototype 10800 in BR black silver bogies - post 1954 condition..... £216.71



1083 NBL diesel prototype 10800 in BR green late crest £216.71



2543 Class 25 D5243 in BR two tone green small yellow panels **NEW**..... £194.65



2545 Class 25 ETHEL train heating unit ADB97251 in BR blue and grey **NEW**..... £194.65



2546 Class 25/9 25904 in BR blue **NEW**..... £194.65



2547 Class 25 25301 in BR blue domino headcodes **NEW**, £194.65



2549 Class 25 25323 in BR blue (pre-1976 style) **NEW** £194.65



2570 Class 25 7513 in BR blue **NEW**..... £194.65



19430 GWR AEC diesel parcels railcar 34 in GWR chocolate and cream "Express Parcels"..... £198.90



19431 GWR AEC diesel parcels railcar W34W in BR crimson grey roof "Express Parcels"..... £198.90



19432 GWR AEC diesel parcels railcar W34W in BR crimson grey roof "Express Parcels" - weathered £207.40



9622 TCV Car Transporter Vans in BR 'Eastern Region' lined maroon - pack of 3 - weathered..... £220.15



9624 NVX Car Transporter Vans in BR blue & grey Motorail branding & grey roof - pack of 3 £194.65



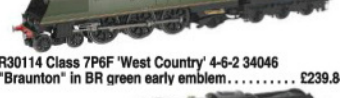
9625 NVV Car Transporter Vans in BR blue & grey Motorail branding & grey roof - weathered - pack of 3..... £220.15



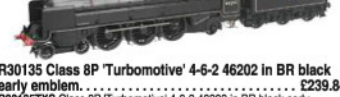
9626 TCV Car Transporter Van in BR Eastern Region lined maroon - E96286E **NEW**..... £67.96



9627 TCV Car Transporter Van in BR Eastern Region lined maroon - E96286E **NEW**..... £67.96



R30114 Class 7P6F "West Country" 4-6-2 34046 "Braunton" in BR green early emblem..... £239.84



R30135 Class 8P "Turbotomitive" 4-6-2 46202 in BR black early emblem..... £239.84
R30135TX5 Class 8P "Turbotomitive" 4-6-2 46202 in BR black early emblem - Digital sound fitted..... £282



R30233 Liverpool & Manchester Railway 0-4-2 No.58 "Tiger" Train Pack three granite wagons..... £206.99



R3983 Class P2 2-8-2 2007 "Prince of Wales" in LNER green as-built body..... £229.04



R3984 Class P2 2-8-2 2002 "Earl Marischal" in LNER green as-built body..... £229.04



R3997 Class 8P "Princess Coronation" 4-6-2 46245 "City of London" in BR maroon..... £217.79



R3893 Class 91 91117 "Cancer Research UK" in GNER (RRP £217.99)..... **BARGAIN**..... £158



R30218 Pair of Class 43 HST Power Cars 43400 and 43484 in RailAdventure..... £326.69



R30219 Pair of Class 43 HST Power Cars 43049 "Neville Hill" and 43060 in East Midlands Trains..... £326.69



R40006 ex-Mk1 SK Ballast cleaner train staff coach DB 975805 in BR departmental olive green (RRP £42.49) **BARGAIN**..... £19



R60165 Liverpool and Manchester Railway 4 wheel sheep wagons - pack of 3..... £71.99



R60166 Liverpool and Manchester Railway 4 wheel horse wagons - pack of 3..... £71.99



76DB002 Duple Britannia Barton **NEW**..... £21

Military ground vehicles



76K2002 Austin K2 Ambulance in 51st Highland Division 1944 brown..... £14.50

N Gauge Dapol - Steam locos



2S-007-033 Class 57xx Pannier 0-6-0PT 3711 in BR black early emblem **NEW**..... £91.80



2S-007-034 Class 57xx Pannier 0-6-0PT 9672 in BR black late crest **NEW**..... £91.80



2D-019-014 Class 43 HST 4-car book set in Intercity Swallow - 43120, 43039 2 Mk 3 coaches..... £211.14

O Gauge (1:43 Scale) Heljan - Diesel locos



7300 Class 73/1 E6008 in BR blue small yellow panels and grey solebar **NEW**..... £662.15



7301 Class 73/1 E6020 in BR blue small yellow panels and light grey roof **NEW**..... £662.15



7303 Class 73/1 unnumbered in BR large logo blue **NEW**..... £662.15



7304 Class 73/1 unnumbered in Intercity Executive **NEW**..... £662.15



7306 Class 73/1 73126 "Kent & East Sussex Railway" in revised Network SouthEast **NEW**..... £662.15



7310 Class 73/1 73107 "Tracy" in GB Railfreight **NEW** £662.15

TRACKRECORD

The Railway Magazine news digest



'ED' CLEARS THE WAY:

Class 73 electro-diesel No. 73212 *Stephen Eaves* arcs on the third-rail as it heads south out of Clapham Junction on October 20 while working the 3W90 railhead treatment train circuit from Tonbridge. Classmate No. 73109 *Battle of Britain 80th Anniversary* was at the other end of the formation. HASSARD STACPOOLE

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SIDELINES

New Year's Day steam

BLUEBELL Railway is kicking off 2024 in style with a New Year's Day Steam event on January 1. Subject to availability, four locos are due to be in action – WR 'Modified Hall' No. 6989 *Wightwick Hall*, SECR 'O1' 0-6-0 No. 65, BR 4MT 2-6-4T No. 80151 and 'Terrier' 0-6-0T No. 72 *Fenchurch*. The intensive timetable is due to feature passenger and freight trains throughout the day – plus the opportunity to travel in the LNWR Observation car hauled by *Fenchurch*. Normal fares will apply, but children will be able to travel for £1 with any fare-paying adult.

SVR special offer

FOR a limited time, the Severn Valley Railway is offering tickets for several special events in 2024 at 2023 fares. In a statement, the railway said: "Rising costs means there will be an increase to the ticket prices for our events in 2024, but we're able to make this special offer available for a limited time only. Tickets for one of these events would make a wonderful Christmas present." The offer, which ends on January 7, covers the April 18–21 Spring Steam Gala, May 16–19 Spring Diesel Festival, June 29–30 Step Back to the 40s, July 6–7 Step Back to the 40s, September 19–22 Autumn Steam Gala and October 3–6 Autumn Diesel Bash. Visit <https://svr.co.uk/2024-events-offer/> for details.

Furness progress

VOLUNTEERS from the Furness Railway Trust continue to dismantle GWR 0-6-2T No. 5643 in connection with its 10-year boiler overhaul at the group's Ribble Steam Railway base in Preston. By mid-November, all tubes had been removed and arrangements were being made for a non-destructive test of the boiler which will assist with assessing the extent of work required during the overhaul. Cleaning and stripping down of No. 5643's frames is ongoing. Meanwhile, missing cab fittings have now been acquired for GWR 'Hall' class 4-6-0 No. 4979 *Wootton Hall*. These include a new driver's brake valve and two new steam heat valves, which have been machined up.

Railway turned around

Kent & East Sussex Railway moves from a loss to break-even financial position as it gears up to celebrate half a century of preservation in the coming year.

THE Kent & East Sussex Railway (KESR) has got itself on to a more secure financial footing in the 2023 season – despite the strong headwinds.

With the heritage railway sector facing a host of challenges, Dr Robin Coombes, the line's general manager, said the KESR has "not only survived but thrived." The news formed part of his report delivered to the KESR's Annual General Meeting.

"In a time when many visitor and heritage venues experienced reduced numbers, we proudly achieved a 13% increase in passenger numbers," he said. "Moreover, the critical indicator of financial health, revenue per passenger, also saw an upswing. Our passengers not only increased in number but also in their contribution to our financial stability."

He said one of the most remarkable achievements this year has been the railway's financial transformation. "We managed to turn around a daunting £380,000 loss in 2021/22, coming close to

achieving a financial break-even point. By focusing on strategic financial reviews and tight financial control, we have shaped our trajectory towards fiscal health. We have cash in the bank."

Developments

The line has also seen what Dr Coombes describes as a "significant surge" in volunteer numbers. "With more than 150 new volunteers joining our team, we have strengthened our capacity to maintain and develop our railway," he added. "Their commitment, passion and unwavering support continue to be a driving force behind our achievements."

In 2024, the KESR will kick off celebrations to commemorate its half-century as a heritage line with a special ceremony on February 3, the original opening date. A grand festival is due to be held on June 1/2, commemorating the official opening in 1974 and a formal dinner is set to be held in September.

Dr Coombes says the railway

is committed to increasing the resilience of its loco fleet. Next year's roster is due to include 'Austerities', a hired-in loco, a Class 14 and the line's Class 108 DMU – plus Class 20 No. 20087, which arrived from the Battlefield Line on November 12.

GWR 2-8-0 No. 4253 is set to steam in the coming year, while USA 0-6-0T No. 65 (*Maunsell*) is due to return to service – and 'Terrier' No. 70 *Poplar* is expected to be repaired. On the latter, Dr Coombes said: "This has taken much longer than anticipated, the world of insurance moves at a very slow pace." Ford Diesel No.1 and GWR Railcar No. 20 are also planned to be in action in 2024. Subject to funding, the earliest GWR 0-6-0PT No. 1638 is likely to enter service in 2027.

Looking to the future, Dr Coombes said: "Change is an ever-present companion in our lives, and we must learn to embrace it. Change is not our adversary – it's our dance partner on this journey. The climate crisis, evolving technology and shifting landscapes are the

new companions of our time. Embracing change is not a choice; it's a necessity."

He added: "As we approach our 50th year, we must set a trajectory towards developing a sustainable business and operational model, first to 2030 and beyond.

Future

"In simple terms, we must not merely survive but also hand over a well-maintained railway to the next generation, so they can continue this legacy. We must celebrate our 50th anniversary to the fullest, with joy and enjoyment as our guiding principles. It's a time to look back with pride and nostalgia and, simultaneously, to look forward to the future with energy, confidence and the expectation of success.

"Our future is marked by challenges such as new societal circumstances and a changing volunteer landscape. However, we are embracing these challenges, driving innovation and adapting to secure the next 50 years."



MAROON 'MICKEY MOUSE' ON TEST: The Beet family's BR Ivatt '2MT' No. 46441 reached a milestone on November 6 following the completion of its overhaul when the loco hauled a loaded test train. The 2-6-0, which retains its BR maroon livery, is seen departing Haverthwaite on the Lakeside & Haverthwaite Railway with its second loaded test run. WILL SMITH

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Main line trio at Tunbridge Wells West

THE Spa Valley Railway now has three former BR steam locomotives on its roster again. They comprise SR Bulleid Pacific No. 34072 *257 Squadron*, BR Standard '4MT' 2-6-4T No. 80078 and Caledonian Railway '812' Class 0-6-0 No. 828.

No. 80078 arrived from the Mid-Norfolk Railway on the evening of Friday, October 20 and entered public service two days later.

Following completion of mechanical repairs, No. 828 returned to traffic in time to work at the October 20-22 Beer Festival, followed by the October half term services.

Barclay 0-4-0ST *Lady Ingrid*

made an appearance on the event's final day following the completion of its overhaul.

After a period on hire to the East Lancs Railway, Southern Locomotives Limited-owned No. 34072 *257 Squadron* has returned to Tunbridge Wells West in readiness for working The Polar Express. The 'Battle of Britain' will also operate on scheduled dates in January and February including two driver experience days, plus at the February 9-11 Winter Steam Gala alongside Nos. 828, 80078 and *Lady Ingrid*.

Apart from possible visits to galas, *257 Squadron* is expected to remain at Spa Valley in 2024.



CR 0-6-0 No. 828 is seen in action at the Spa Valley Railway's Beer Festival weekend on October 22. OWEN HAYWARD



No. 7827 *Lydham Manor* is seen at Churston on October 24. STEVE MASTERS/DSR

Lydham Manor back in action!

WR 'Manor' 4-6-0 No. 7827 *Lydham Manor* has returned to action at the Dartmouth Steam Railway following the completion of its overhaul.

A milestone was reached on October 24 when it gained a fresh boiler ticket from the insurance boiler inspector who was on site doing annual exams on GWR 'Small Prairie' No. 4555 and BR '4MT' No. 75014. That afternoon, the loco completed some gentle test running

around Churston, checking that all was well.

There are no plans to use No. 7827 on the railway's Train of Lights operation, which runs from November to December 30, so the 4-6-0 is set to return to public service at the start of the 2024 running season.

Lydham Manor is now in BR late crest lined green – a livery it's not carried since its last days in BR service. Prior to overhaul, it was in BR lined black.

Environmental survey work under way at Rother Valley

THE Rother Valley Railway's reinstatement as a heritage line of the missing rail link between Bodiam and Robertsbridge Junction continues to progress.

The extensive environmental survey of the yet to be built two-mile-long 'missing link' central section of the line – namely from Northbridge Street to Udiam, formerly the site of Junction Road Halt – is now under way. As previously reported, the environmental investigation, along with the arising mitigations, must be in place before physical construction work can get under way.

"The habitat survey involves looking at the length of the line, classifying the habitats and recording in detail all the plant species we can identify," explained Giles Coe, RVR's environmental expert.

"This enables us to place an independent value on the nature conservation of

what is here – and from there to assess the impact of the scheme. We can then design a mitigation, compensation and enhancement package.

"We will also be creating and implementing landscape ecological management plans. Monitoring is a crucial element of what we will do – both monitoring for habitats and checking how the various species are doing so we can see what effect the work has had on them."

At Robertsbridge station, the ground on the North Bank has been raised and levelled using recycled infill to specification and signed off by the RVR. In due course, this will be the site of the engine shed and sidings. The ground will be allowed to settle over the next couple of years. The ground will then be stabilised and on top of that will be the crushed concrete base, followed by ballast upon which the track will be laid.



CLASS 5 POWER:

Keighley & Worth Valley Railway-owned LMS 'Black Five' No. 45212 is on hire to the Nene Valley Railway for the festive season. The last of the day's light just about catches the smokebox of the 4-6-0 as it works around Yacht Club Crossing on the approach to Overton station on November 5. JAMES KINDRED

Washford sale

AGREEMENT has been reached for the West Somerset Railway Heritage Trust to buy the S&D shed and track at Washford from the Somerset & Dorset Railway Trust.

By mid-November, all rolling stock had moved from the site, apart from coach No. 4 which was waiting for loan agreements to be finalised. The two diesel shunters have been sold. The signal frame and levers from the demonstration box at Washford have been put on loan to the Tarka Line at Torrington which is rebuilding a signalbox on its site.

DIARY

Until Dec 30 West Somerset Railway: Winterlights (on selected dates)

Until Jan 1 North Norfolk Railway: Norfolk Lights Express (on selected dates)

Until Jan 7 Epping Ongar Railway: Lights Express (on selected dates)

Until Dec 30 Bluebell Railway: Starlights (on selected dates)

Until Jan 6 Watercress Line: Steam Illuminations (on selected dates)

Dec 9-10, 16-17 East Anglian Railway Museum: Days Out with Thomas

Dec 14-15 Keighley & Worth Valley Railway: Festive Flyer

Dec 16 Keighley & Worth Valley Railway: Carol Service Train

Dec 17-18 West Somerset Railway: Christmas Carol Trains

Dec 22 Severn Valley Railway: Christmas Carol Trains

■ **Santa Specials** (on selected dates in December) – Many heritage lines will get a visit from Father Christmas. Please consult your local heritage line and book early to avoid disappointment.

Dec 26 East Lancashire Railway: Mince Pie Specials

Dec 26-27 Isle of Wight Steam Railway: Mince Pie Specials

Dec 26-Jan 1 Keighley & Worth Valley Railway: Mince Pie Specials

Dec 26-28 & South Devon Railway: Spring Rails & Ales

Dec 28-Jan 1 Bluebell Railway: Kids for a Quid

Dec 29-Jan 1 Kent & East Sussex Railway: Steam into the New Year

Dec 29-31 South Devon Railway: Winter Steam Gala

Dec 30-31 Bo'ness & Kinneil Railway: Black Bun Specials

Dec 31 Bluebell Railway: New Year's Eve Steamlights

Dec 31-Jan 1 Ecclesbourne Valley Railway: Winter Steam in the Valleys

2024

Jan 1 East Anglian Railway Museum: New Year's Steam

Jan 1 East Lancashire Railway: Whisky Chaser Specials

Jan 1 Isle of Wight Steam Railway: New Year's Day Specials

Jan 1 Lincolnshire Wolds Railway: Steam Running Day

Jan 1 Mid-Suffolk Railway: Steam and Light Festival

Jan 2-3 Bo'ness & Kinneil Railway: Black Bun Specials

Jan 6 Helston Railway: Winter Steam Up

Jan 6-7 Swanage Railway: Winter Warm Up

Jan 26-28 Great Central Railway: Winter Steam Gala

SIDELINES

'Grange' set for New Year

THE launch of the GWR 'Grange' loco has been delayed.

It was hoped No. 6880 *Betton Grange* would be steamed in November, but this has been pushed back until early January. The group behind the project said completion of the 4-6-0 has been held up "for several reasons, most of which have been beyond our and Tyseley Locomotive Works' control".

While it had originally been planned to operate No. 6880 initially with a tender hired from 2-8-0 No. 3814, it is now planned to use the tender from No. 7822 *Foxcote Manor*, which is under overhaul at Tyseley.

Trackbed purchase

MIDSOMER Norton-based Somerset & Dorset Railway Heritage Trust has bought a 750 yard section of trackbed from just south of the Chilcompton tunnels to the Redan bridge. Before the trust can connect the track bed to its existing running line, there remains the substantial task of removing the infilled cutting leading up to the tunnels, plus the issue of both tunnels being occupied by tenants of National Highways. The trust continues to liaise with stakeholders over both issues.

Accessible donation

MAIN line train operating company Greater Anglia (GA) has donated several accessibility ramps to the North Norfolk Railway (NNR).

The heavy ramps previously used by the NNR often required two people to deploy them. The donated ramps, which had been used with Class 321 EMUs, are lighter and can be operated by one person.

Milestones celebrated

EAST Lancashire Railway Preservation Society (ELRPS) held its annual Long Service Awards on October 8 at Bury Transport Museum, with members celebrated for 10, 20 and 30 years' service.

A plaque was also unveiled celebrating the 55th anniversary of the formation of the society on May 21, 1968 at Helmshore station, the first base of the ELRPS. It also celebrated the 50th anniversary since the move to Bury, and the official opening of the museum at Bury on August 26, 1972.

The plaque was unveiled by ELRPS chairman Ian Aspey and museum chairman Keith Whitmore and is dedicated to past and present working members of the ELRPS.

Further movement at Duffield cutting landslip

Inaugural winter steam gala and Santa trains remain unaffected.

THE Ecclesbourne Valley Railway (EVR) has been hit by fresh movement on a landslip, although it is hoped repairs will be undertaken promptly.

As previously reported (*RM* July 2023), on April 2 it was found that a landslip had occurred in the cutting north of Duffield close to the footbridge.

Interlocking concrete 'Lego' blocks weighing about one tonne each were installed to hold back the slope. EVR trains began running through to Duffield on June 10 – services having been curtailed since April.

Heavy rain on October 20 caused the landslip to slump further and this has caused the 'Lego blocks' to move by a few inches, while both ends of the slip have extended beyond earlier boundaries. As a result, trains will run only to Shottle until further notice.

It is understood that a large part of the cost is likely to be covered by the insurance of a third party, and work to rectify may get underway as soon as this month. While insurance is likely to cover the majority of costs, by mid-November it remained unknown how much funding the railway will have to provide.

Operation of the line's Santa

services is unaffected, which as in previous years, run from Wirksworth to Shottle.

On the motive power front, BR '2MT' 2-6-0 No. 78018 arrived on hire from the Great Central Railway on October 11. The 'Standard' is scheduled to operate Christmas and New Year services, before returning to Loughborough.

Roster

The EVR plans to hold its inaugural Winter Steam in the Valley event on Sunday, December 31 and Monday, January 1. The gala is due to feature No. 78018, BR '4MT' 2-6-4T No. 80080, Andrew Barclay 0-4-0ST *Brian Harrison* and Bagnall 'Austerity' 0-6-0ST No. 68012 *The Duke* – the latter fresh from overhaul. All locomotives are subject to availability on the day.

Meanwhile, construction of a new ash pit is underway in Wirksworth yard. This forms part of a broader plan to extend the present maintenance facility to accommodate steam, diesel and restoration work in such a manner as to allow efficient operation.

In the New Year, work is due to commence on the completion of the new



The Ecclesbourne Valley Railway currently has two former main line steam locos on its metals. Joining BR '4MT' No. 80080, BR Standard Class 2 No. 78018 is currently on hire from the Great Central Railway. The 2-6-0 heads back to Wirksworth from Idridgehay on the November 5. ALAN WEAVER

Wirksworth station project. The new building will include modern catering facilities with a cafe providing seating capacity for up to 80 customers, together with a new booking office and direct interface with the EVR Association's museum and extensive shop. Following completion of the new building, work will commence on the new extension of the rolling stock maintenance facility.

Further projects at Wirksworth station have

included new point work to facilitate train departures and arrivals from platform one.

Experiences

The railway has been in discussion with the Derbyshire Stone Centre and plans to run scheduled services to the popular tourist attraction on the Ravenstor line next year, as well as introducing a number of new driving experiences on this branch, which features a 1:27 incline.

PENULTIMATE DAY IN ACTION:

End of the rainbow for SDJR '7F' 2-8-0 No. 53808 which was withdrawn from service for its 10-year overhaul on November 4. The preceding day, the Somerset & Dorset Railway Trust-owned loco was in action on a photographic charter on the Mid-Hants Railway and is seen heading away from Ropley under stormy skies. STUART CHAPMAN





LMS 'Jubilee' No. 45690 *Leander* is among the performers due to take part in the East Lancs Railway's March 15-17 steam gala. The 4-6-0 is pictured hauling the 1155hrs ex-Bury in Little Burrs cutting on Saturday, November 4. KEVIN WHITEHURST

Wildlife, flora and fauna celebrated by heritage lines

THE importance of providing habitat for wildlife has been recognised by three English heritage lines.

Cambrian Railway Orchard Project (CROP) which is part of Cambrian Heritage Railways has won the Gold Award for the Best Community Project 2023.

The award was part of the Oswestry In Bloom Festival which, in turn, saw the town named the best British large town in the national In Bloom competition.

Habitat

The one-acre site is located on land between the railway line and Gobowen Road, near Oswestry's Iron Age Hill Fort. Started in November 2011, CROP aims to establish a traditional orchard, planting half standard fruiting trees including local varieties of apple, pear, plum and cherry. Local craftsmen have also been encouraged to maintain fencing and hedge laying at the site.

Visit <https://cambrianrailways.com/chr/crop-the-railways-orchard> for more information.

Partnerships

Meanwhile, Quorn and Woodhouse station has won Gold in the annual East Midlands in Bloom competition. The station narrowly missed the top spot to the village of Uppingham.

Great Central Railway volunteers worked in partnership with Quorn village. Judges visited the station in July and saw the various displays including the station tubs, hanging baskets, Dig for Victory Garden before heading into the village.

The Kent & East Sussex Railway (KESR) held a Wild About Wildlife Weekend at Tenterden Town station on September 30 and October 1. The event featured displays, wildlife-focused talks, storytelling and engaging activities with the aid of local organisations.

"Our railway is a haven for wildlife. We have been investigating this biodiversity through an ecology survey with support from the Kent Wildlife Trust Consultancy, Bumblebee Conservation Trust and Tenterden Wildlife," said Robin Coombes, KESR general manager.

Powerful line-up set for Spring Steam Gala

A STAR-STUDDERED roster is set for the East Lancashire Railway's (ELR) March 15-17 Spring Steam Gala.

Billed as the Legends of Steam, the event will welcome LNER 'A4' No. 60007 *Sir Nigel Gresley* and BR '7MT' No. 70000 *Britannia*, along with LMS 'Jubilee' No. 45690 *Leander*.

Further details, including the

range of tickets, can be found at www.eastlancsrailway.org.uk

More immediately, regular public services are due to operate on December 26/27 and 30/31.

Meanwhile, on the motive power front, the ELR has authorised £50,000 of expenditure on the overhaul of LMS 'Jinty' 0-6-0T No. 47324.

Following its recent return to traffic, plans are being finalised to repaint SR Bulleid Pacific No. 34092 *City of Wells* in 2024.

Southern Locomotives Ltd-owned SR Bulleid Pacific No. 34072 *257 Squadron*, which has been hire to the ELR, returned south to Tunbridge Wells on November 2. After two-and-a-half years on hire to the

Spa Valley Railway, Andy Booth's 0-6-0 No. 2890 has returned to Bury. Following the completion of winter maintenance, the loco is expected to see use on the ELR in 2024.

Volunteers from Bury Standard 4 Group continue to work on correcting the issues with the flue tubes with BR '4MT' 2-6-4T No. 80097.

Swanage Railway launches £450k emergency appeal

THE Swanage Railway Trust has launched a £450,000 Save Your Railway appeal to boost the financial reserves of the railway through the early months of 2024 before the main trading season resumes in the spring.

The Swanage Railway Company, which runs the heritage steam trains on behalf of the trust, aims to reduce operating costs by £350,000 while also working on an initiative to attract more visitors to the Isle of Purbeck during 2024.

Swanage Railway Trust chairman Frank Roberts said: "While our passenger numbers are recovering they have not returned to 2019 levels – more than 141,000 people so far this

year compared with more than 202,000 people for the whole of 2019. Inflation continues to increase our operating costs with the Swanage Railway having to pay more for coal, oil, water and other services.

Costs

"We have also had to carry out the upgrade and overhaul of a Victorian metal girder bridge, carrying the railway over a road, near Furzebrook."

He said that in order to increase income, the railway will be repositioned into a "broader and more commercial visitor experience" while also maintaining its heritage train business.

"It's a challenge as well as an opportunity to shape

the Swanage Railway for the future," he added. "We are working to make the Swanage Railway more efficient and effective as well as being capable of attracting increasing numbers of passengers.

Positive

"The longer term survival of the Swanage Railway depends on a positive and quick response to our call to arms.

"We have gaps in our management structure that need to be filled by willing volunteers with relevant skills and experience."

Meanwhile, the railway has announced that a Winter Warm Up gala is to be held on January 6/7. The mixed-

traction event will see also see the return of demonstration freight trains to the line.

Anyone interested in volunteering should contact the railway's volunteer recruitment and retention officer Lisa Gravett by emailing iwanttovolunteer@swanagerailway.co.uk or by calling 01929 475212. Details about volunteering can also be found at swanagerailwaytrust.org/volunteering.

Donations to the SRT's appeal can be made online at swanagerailwaytrust.enthuse.com/saveyourrailway while cheques can be sent to the Swanage Railway Trust, Station House, Swanage, Dorset, BH19 1HB marked 'Save Your Railway Appeal'.

'Battle of Britain' loco set to commemorate Polish pilots

WHEN SR Bulleid Pacific No. 34053 *Sir Keith Park* returns after its overhaul next summer it will bear the name 303 *Squadron*, the Battle of Britain squadron formed mostly of Polish pilots.

The loco's owning group, Southern Locomotives Ltd (SLL), says the move is in tribute to the valour and dedication of the squadron that was generally

regarded as the most successful in combat during the battle.

A naming event is planned to be held at Eridge on the Spa Valley Railway, and the 4-6-2 will carry the name for approximately one year. SLL is in touch with Polish groups of interest in this, and to the family of Sqn Ldr Ronald Kellett, who commanded the squadron at the time.

Having been stripped at Herston Works, No. 34053 moved to Tyseley on October 9. Its boiler will be swapped for that which previously ran with No. 34010 *Sidmouth* in the 1960s. That has been overhauled at the North Norfolk Railway and will move to Tyseley shortly.

The boiler from No. 34053 will then be overhauled to run

with Light Pacific *Sidmouth*.

Meanwhile, the boiler was lifted from No. 34058 *Sir Frederick Pile* at Sellindge on November 7. With the Mid-Hants Railway unable to overhaul the boiler in the timeframe required, an alternative contractor is being sought. The cab is to be dispatched to Herston for repair or renewal.

Share issue to help unique 'Collett Goods' steam again

South Devon Railway plans a host of improvements to set itself up for the future.

THE sole surviving GWR 'Collett Goods' locomotive could steam again at the South Devon Railway (SDR), after agreement was reached between the 0-6-0's owners and the heritage line.

Under the terms of the agreement with the 2251 Locomotive Fund, the South Devon Railway Ltd, a Charitable Community Benefit Society will become the custodians of No. 3205 for the next 50 years.

Following acquisition by the 2251 Locomotive Fund from BR in 1965, No. 3205 became the second locomotive to arrive at Buckfastleigh for preservation later that year. Two years later, the '2251' became the first loco on the fledgling Severn Valley Railway (SVR). No. 3205 left the SVR in March 1987, initially to the West Somerset Railway before returning to Buckfastleigh to what by then had become the SDR in 1998.

During 2016 No. 3205 developed a crack in the boiler barrel, which was repaired that year, but it was withdrawn from traffic in 2017 when it found the loco needed a major boiler



Back on February 18, 2017, No. 3205 is seen on the South Devon Railway at Stretchford Straight with the 13.35 Totnes Littlehempston to Buckfastleigh, described as a combined milk and passenger working. DAVID HUNT

rebuild and a new cylinder block. Since then, it has been stored at Buckfastleigh. The renewal of key components as part of the loco's overhaul will see it fit for many years.

Tender

One part of No. 3205 is currently operational, however – the tender is on hire to No. 2807 at the Gloucestershire Warwickshire Steam Railway. As reported last issue, the GWR 2-8-0 has recently returned to

traffic following the completion of its overhaul. The tender frames for No. 2807 are in flat-pack form awaiting the team to put them back together.

While the SDR has a pot of money from the sale of Nos. 3803 and No. 4920 *Dumbleton Hall* which is reserved for capital projects, to help fund the comprehensive restoration of No. 3205, the SDR has announced a new share issue.

"The share issue will raise funds and we plan to use it as

match funding to apply for grants," SDR general manager Ernest Elsworth-Wilson told *The RM*. "We want people to invest in the long-term future of the railway."

Infrastructure

With that in mind, other projects to fund include a new building for carriage repairs; construction of phase 2 of the running and maintenance shed; new visitor facilities at Buckfastleigh; improvements to all stations;

and an upgraded museum at Buckfastleigh.

Elsworth-Wilson added: "We also want to fund schemes to reduce our railway's environmental impact. These include solar panels and electric car charging points, and rainwater harvesting for flushing WCs. We also want to build on the work we have already carried out with local wildlife groups in terms of managing habitats."

Visit www.southdevonrailway.co.uk/shares for details.

New owner for Pannier

A GWR loco which once stood outside a Cardiff city centre hotel has been bought by an engineering contractor and is now set to be returned to steam.

GWR 0-6-0PT No. 9629 was displayed outside what was then the Holiday Inn in the Welsh capital for nine years, until it moved to the Pontypool & Blaenavon Railway (PBR) in 1995. The loco has now been purchased by Leaky Finders.

In a statement, the Devon-based contractor said: "We are fortunate that the previous owners have amassed a considerable amount of the parts required, along with spares and many wooden patterns to cast new components from."

"The next few weeks will see all the parts (large and

small) head back over the border to our workshop here in Exeter. Once restored, the loco will be put out on the hire market, being a reasonably strong and economical loco for nearly any heritage railway in the country. The team here are super excited to get stuck into the project next year."

When displayed in Cardiff, No. 9629 was cosmetically restored and lacked a boiler. Its original boiler was acquired in 2012. The loco was privately owned by shareholders, with a minority stake held by the PBR. It was offered for sale in August 2023. With many of the shareholders getting older and with progress being slow, it was recognised that the project was unlikely to be completed within their lifetime.



Peckett R3 class 0-4-0ST *Kilmersdon* (1788/1929) is seen leaving Midsomer Norton station on October 29. JOSH BRINSFORD

Kilmersdon operates again in Somerset

PECKETT 0-4-0ST *Kilmersdon* returned to its native West Country in October, when it went on hire to the Somerset & Dorset Joint Railway at Midsomer Norton (MN).

Owned by the Somerset & Dorset Railway Trust, the loco is based at the

Watercross Line in Hampshire.

During its first public use at MN – Halloween at the Station on Sunday, October 29 – visitors turned up in significant numbers to fill the Down platform throughout most of the day, enjoying a ride to the summit of the railway and back.

After being rostered for Santa specials, *Kilmersdon* is due to work a full-day driver experience course on December 30, before operating public services on January 1, billed as 'New Year Steam & Mince Pie Special'. The loco is then due to return to the Mid-Hants Railway.

On track with infrastructure enhancements

Permanent Way work underway at heritage lines this autumn.

WITH no trains operating at many heritage lines between late October and into November, it provides a short window to undertake track maintenance before festive season services get underway.

Volunteers at the East Somerset Railway have been carrying out track improvements in Cranmore station. The work includes resleepering on the Down platform and attention to the drainage.

After Christmas, further work is planned to be carried out in the same area, replacing more worn-out components and taking the opportunity to modify the layout. The diamond crossing is to be removed and replaced by a point, resulting in the Tanker Sidings being accessed direct from the main – plus the loop being shortened.

Existing signals are being refurbished and a scheme for full signalling is being worked on with design, verification and approval ongoing. It is hoped this will allow enhanced operation in due course.

In mid-October, members

of the Severn Valley Railway (SVR) Permanent Way team recovered track from the former oil depot near Brownhills, on the disused South Staffordshire line between Lichfield and Walsall.

The week-long operation yielded three sets of points. The pointwork was donated as part of the partnership between the SVR and Network Rail. The track recovery work was assisted by contractor Quattro Plant Ltd, which has a lease on the old terminal oil yard.

One of these sets of points is to be installed on Roads 1 and 2 in Bridgnorth yard this Winter. The SVR is appealing for volunteers to help with the project in Bridgnorth yard – including lifting, relaying, alterations to the pit on Road 2 and concreting works.

Work is due to take place from January 10 until mid-March. To lend a hand, contact the SVR Volunteer Liaison Office on vlo@svrlive.com or call 01299 401776.

In November, volunteers at the Llangollen & Corwen Railway were removing the last remnants of Deeside loop. The East point at Deeside (Berwyn



Track work in progress at the East Somerset Railway's Cranmore station on November 20. ESR

end) was being replaced with plain rail.

Meanwhile, the A1 Steam Locomotive Trust welcomed the 507 Specialist Team Royal Engineers (Railways) to undertake the first major

tracklaying exercise at its new Darlington site on October 21.

The training exercise supported the readiness of the soldiers, while also helping the Trust reach the important milestone of a main line

connection in the coming year.

Track material has been acquired from both Nexus and Network Rail – some of the latter including rails cascaded from the Northumberland Line Project renewal programme.

Thirty's the long and short of it!

The East Lancashire Railway operated its longest demonstration goods train to date during its Autumn Steam Gala.

HISTORY was made at the East Lancashire Railway (ELR) on Saturday, October 13 when the line operated its longest freight train in the preservation era.

Thirty restored goods vehicles were in action using three locomotives at the line's recent Autumn Steam Gala.

It followed a mammoth effort by a team of volunteers and staff to organise and prepare resources for the event.

Stanier 8F 2-8-0 No. 48305, visiting from the Great Central Railway (GCR) hauled Class 24 diesel No. D5054 (24054) *Phil Southern* to appear like a rescue train – but in the end the steam loco failed and the '24' hauled the train to Ramsbottom. LMS 'Jinty' 0-6-0T No. 47298 was attached to the rear as a banker.

The presence of three locos on a freight train proved to be another first for the 12-mile long

Bury-based heritage railway.

"To get 30 wagons in operation is a huge achievement for our railway," enthused volunteer Keith Savory. "We have never run a freight train that long before. While the GCR recently operated a 50 wagon train, we do not have as many restored wagons as the GCR, so we decided to operate the longest we could – bearing in mind the train has to fit in both Ramsbottom and Rawtenstall stations."

Recent progress has included the completion of two oil tankers – one in ICI blue (No. B32) and one in Regent Petrol silver (No. 69). These wagons were restored last year (RM October 2022) but have now been lettered.

Conflat No. W36280 has been repainted and it now carries A Class container No. A65356,



Class 24 No. D5054 (24054) *Phil Southern* is seen at the head of the freight train on October 11 at Baron Street Yard. BOTH: KEITH SAVORY/ELR

which has been restored from a derelict grounded stores shed.

Three-plank open wagons Nos. M457543, M474048 and M478278 have been rebuilt with all rotten wood replaced.

Other wagons recently restored include two Medfits – Nos. B460675 and B460530 – and another three-plank open wagon No. B471345, plus Borail D wagon No. B945871.

Projects to be undertaken now comprise two oil tankers, as well as a 12 ton box van which is waiting to go inside the shed for a new roof, sides and doors.



Restored wagons in the demonstration goods rake include a Conflat, two tank wagons, a box van and a Toad brake van.

The railway has recently bought back a Seacow and Walrus after the vehicles were sold to a third party. The wagons are needed for permanent way

duties on the ELR.

The demonstration goods train is next expected to appear at the spring steam gala (see separate story on p63).

'Austerity' appeal milestone

Overhaul of Embsay stalwart loco *Wheldale* reaches landmark figure – but more funds are needed.

THE Yorkshire Dales Railway Museum Trust, owner and operator of the Embsay & Bolton Abbey Steam Railway, is celebrating having raised over a quarter of a million pounds towards the overhaul of 'Austerity' 0-6-0ST *Wheldale*.

The volunteer team, led by Mike Walsh, has raised the money in a variety of ways, including informing passengers about the appeal and seeking donations from passengers on Embsay's regular trains, a display in the former Cabman's Shelter at Embsay station, an annual draw and sales through the station's popular 'Bric-a-Brac' shop.

The appeal fund initially started back in 2015, the beginning of a huge fund-raising effort to raise at least £300,000 to fund the overhaul of the locomotive, and has grown significantly over recent years.

Built in 1944 as works number 3168 by the Hunslet Engine Company in Leeds for the Ministry of Defence (MoD), the locomotive entered service as No. WD75118. After several years working at a variety of

MoD locations it was sold to the North Yorkshire Area of the National Coal Board in 1965. Having received NCB workshop attention, it was sent to work at Primrose Hill Colliery, Swillington.

Following closure of that pit, the 'Austerity' subsequently moved to Allerton Bywater in 1971, followed by a brief interlude at Newmarket Colliery in 1978, before moving on to Wheldale Colliery near Castleford in 1981, where it became No. S134.

The loco achieved fame by having its mechanical stoker and gas producer system repaired in 1981 and being tested at Wheldale Colliery on behalf of the Hunslet Engine Company, which was looking at a potential sale of this equipment. In particular, the loco ended up being used on several occasions in the harsh winter of that year because the diesels froze up.

It was finally withdrawn from service in 1982 and moved to the (then) Yorkshire Dales Railway at Embsay.

After attention in the Trust's workshop, and by now named *Wheldale* after the last colliery



Hunslet 'Austerity' No. 3168 of 1944 is seen working at Wheldale colliery on March 10, 1982. The loco was subsequently named in honour of its final working home in industry. IAN SMITH

at which the loco worked, it became a stalwart of the railway's steam fleet for many years until withdrawn for overhaul in the mid-1990s.

Following a period in storage and on display, sufficient monies were raised in order to start the overhaul. The chassis is currently receiving a comprehensive overhaul at Statfold Barn Engineering in Staffordshire, while the boiler –

after initial work carried out in-house at Embsay – is to be sent away for a full repair at Israel Newton & Sons workshop near Matlock.

"Following the huge dedication and commitment of our volunteer fund-raising team over many years, and to have already raised £250,000 is testament to all their hard work," said Trust press officer, Richard Jones. "The overhaul

of *Wheldale* is progressing very well, and we hope it will not be too long before this popular locomotive returns to service – the 'Austerity' class being ideally suited to our railway.

"However, to achieve this, further donations are required and would be very much appreciated."

Visit the website at www.ebar.org.uk/wheldale for details of how you can help.

Tanfield gala success

TANFIELD Railway held a successful 'Run it' weekend on October 14/15 when everything that was runnable was steamed and operated during the event.

Head Wrightson 0-4-0VBT No. 1, built in 1871 was a popular visitor from Beamish, working alongside the home fleet.

Hawthorn Leslie 0-4-0ST No. 2 (2859/1911) operated alongside its younger cousin, 0-4-0ST *Sir Cecil A Cochrane*, Robert Stephenson &

Hawthorn works number 7409, built in 1949.

Also in use were the two Andrew Barclay locomotives, 0-4-0ST *Stanley* (1659/1920) and 0-6-0ST *Horden* (1015/1904). All four locomotives operated in various combinations during the weekend providing variety for the photographers present.

On test in the yard following overhaul was Hudswell Clarke 0-6-0ST *Renishaw Ironworks No 6*, (1366/1919).



Visiting 'Coffeepot' No. 1 is pictured outside the shed at Marley Hill, Tanfield Railway on October 14. OLIVER JOHNSON

BACK TO BLACK:

On the East Lancashire Railway, Manchester Ship Canal No. 32 has been repainted into the black livery for the first time in many years, it previously carrying 'Thomas the Tank Engine' blue livery. The Hudswell Clarke 0-6-0T (No. 680 of 1903) is seen at Buckley Wells depot, Bury, on October 15. The



locomotive carries its name *Gothenburg* inside the cab as a result of protests in the First World War

when locals attacked locomotive crews because the name sounded German. CALLUM PORTER



WORK IN PROGRESS:

Peckett R2 class 0-4-0ST *Lady Angela* (1690/1926) has commenced an overhaul at Buckfastleigh on the South Devon Railway. The locomotive is seen on September 29 with cab and tank removed. DAVID HUNT

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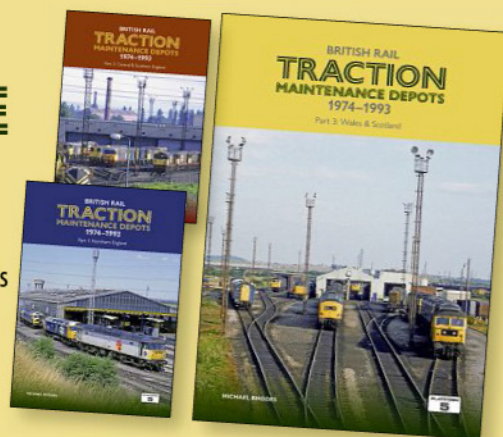
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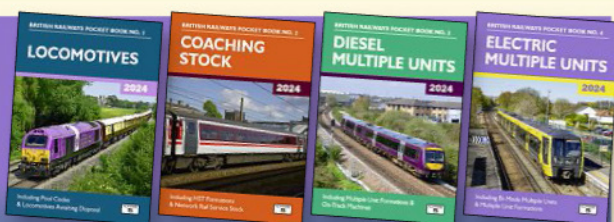


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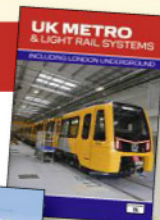


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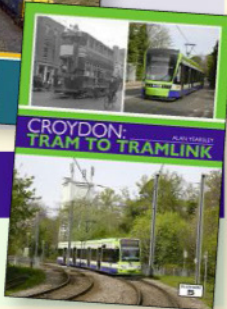
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SINGLE LINES

■ **TIMETABLED** Douglas Bay Horse Tramway operations for the 2023 season were stopped on October 18, earlier than planned, due to concerns over the condition of Tramway Terrace, although pre-booked tour group operations were fulfilled up to October 29. The terrace, in front of the stables, incorporates an arch through which staff and horses normally gain access to the stables. The building is now surrounded by scaffolding and awaiting demolition.

■ **REPAINTING** of Vale of Rheidol Railway's 2-6-2T No. 8 into BR black livery (*RM*, November) has been completed with 'lion over wheel' emblems and reinstatement of *Llywelyn* nameplates, believed not to have been carried on the loco since the early 1990s. No. 8 had been GWR green since 1996.

■ **THE** 15in gauge Clevedon Miniature Railway in North Somerset, a 900 yard circuit worked by a steam-outline 4-6-0 tender battery-electric loco, is currently closed.

Amid an apparently sensitive situation the future of the railway is currently unclear.

■ **HAVING** completed reconstruction of its two first class carriages, Vale of Rheidol Railway has commenced a programme of rebuilding five open carriages. The first to enter the works is No. 4, the body of which has been lifted off the chassis and the frames sandblasted. Nos. 1, 2, 3 and 6 will be similarly treated in due course.

These rebuilds will be the most comprehensive the vehicles have received since construction in 1938.

■ **EX-Matheran** Light Railway 0-6-0T No. 740 (OK2343/1907) purchased by Maddie Dolby in July (*RM*, September) has been largely stripped down in a private storage unit. The boiler has been removed and sent away for inspection while the cab, tanks and various other parts are now stacked around the unit waiting to be stored on shelving. Where restoration to operation will be undertaken has not been confirmed.

DIARY

December

16 Talylyn carol train

28-30 Welshpool & Llanfair Mince Pie Specials

26-Jan 1 Ravensglass Winter Warmer Trains

27-Jan 3 Bure Valley Mince Pie Specials

What comes around, goes around with Welsh merger

Vale of Rheidol and Brecon Mountain railways set to reunite under one management.

THE Vale of Rheidol Railway (VoR) has confirmed that it has been negotiating the acquisition of the Brecon Mountain Railway (BMR).

This merger will not only be a milestone for both railways which would safeguard the future of the BMR, but represents something of history turning a full circle.

The nominal 2ft gauge (actually 1ft 11¾ins) BMR was developed by the late Tony Hills, initially with Arthur Bailey and subsequently joined by the late Peter Rampton, on part of the trackbed of the standard gauge Brecon & Merthyr Tydfil

Junction Railway which had finally closed in 1964. The new railway opened to the public in June 1980.

Background

When British Rail (BR) put the VoR up for sale in 1988, it was purchased by the BMR partnership of Tony Hills and Peter Rampton with the two (nominal) 2ft lines continuing under unified management until 1996 when the business was separated, Tony Hills continuing to run the BMR while Peter Rampton took charge of the VoR.

Development of both

lines continued under their separate managements with the American-influenced BMR being extended to Torpantau, while the VoR enhanced its GWR branch line heritage while undertaking major redevelopment of its Aberystwyth terminus.

Both railways have well-equipped works facilities and undertake major locomotive overhauls, with VoR having developed its contract engineering business at Aberystwyth. Observers have also noted that Patrick Keef (managing director of Alan Keef Ltd) was appointed as a director

of Vale of Rheidol Railway Limited (VoR's operating company) on July 28, 2023.

Impact

The VoR views the merger of the two lines back under one ownership as securing the legacy of both Peter Rampton and Tony Hills (who died in 2019 and 2015 respectively) while offering economic benefits with shared resources, increased operational efficiency and cost savings. The VoR is set to take over BMR operations in spring 2024, with both lines due to run as separate entities, each retaining its unique character.



NEW LOOK FOR NO. 1: A sneak preview of the Great Eastern Railway blue livery, with red lining, applied to Talylyn Railway's Fletcher, Jennings 0-4-2ST No. 1 *Talylyn* when it was pictured in the shed at Pendre on October 19. The new livery was expected to be controversial but appears to have attracted a lot of favourable comment from Talylyn supporters. JAMES WAITE

Ticket runs out for Ashanti

MOSELEY Railway Trust's Hudswell Clarke 'Ganges' class 0-6-0WT 1238/1916 made its final appearances in steam at Apedale Valley Light Railway on October 14-15 before withdrawal on expiry of its boiler certificate.

In recent months as the boiler clock ran down the loco, which has become known as *Ashanti* although it does not carry nameplates, has made farewell visits to several lines.

The loco was steam tested in June 2014 after restoration by the 'Workshop X' team and launched into service at Statfold Barn Railway in August 2014.

The 10-year ticket began the date the boiler was hydraulically tested in October 2013. The period between then and entry into traffic was taken up by completion of finishing tasks not possible until the boiler had been delivered and fitted into the frames.

New stock for Lappa Valley

THE final two of the new passenger vehicles constructed by Alan Keef Ltd for the 15in gauge Lappa Valley Railway were delivered on October 15.

The complete new passenger train – comprising five carriages and a buggy wagon (*RM*, September) – were operated

as a set for the first time behind a steam locomotive on October 20.

The carriages were followed by delivery of the new bogie diesel built by Keef's. The entire new train represents an investment of over £500,000 by the Cornish railway attraction.

Major repairs for CCLR No. 24

THE comprehensive overhaul of Cleethorpes Coast Light Railway's Fairbourne-built 2-6-2 No. 24 continues at John Fowler Engineering in Bouth, Cumbria.

Work has included strengthening the rear part of the frames, installing new wheels, axles and crankpins and fitting new tubes and washout plugs to the boiler. The tender is now receiving attention which

will include new side plates, alterations to the seat and extensive work on the running gear including new wheelsets.

The loco went to John Fowler Engineering in January 2022 (*RM*, March 2022) with the original intention of returning to Cleethorpes for the line's 75th anniversary in spring 2023. The aim now is to return No. 24 to service in 2024.



The new diesel locomotive built by Alan Keef Ltd pictured following delivery to the 15in Lappa Valley line. The loco was built to work with the new passenger train constructed by Keef's. TOM GOODMAN

Narrow gauge lines under water

THE rain brought by Storm Babet which, as separately reported, lashed down on the Ffestiniog Railway's launch of its new Double-Fairlie *James Spooner*, also produced rising river levels and flooding around the Welshpool and Llanfair Caereinion area, obliging the Welshpool and Llanfair Light Railway to suspend services on October 21.

Trains resumed the following day after a line inspection.

The storm also affected several English narrow gauge lines.

The Amerton Railway was obliged to cancel operations on October 21-22 with flood water from the nearby brook leaving the track in the main station under water.

Bressingham halted operations of all rides on October 20 as water levels rose, particularly affecting the 15in gauge Waveney Railway where

parts of the track were under water.

Strong winds hit the Ravensglass & Eskdale Railway where a power cut at Dalegarth meant operations on October 20 had to be suspended.

The Heatherslaw Light Railway, often affected by rising levels in the River Till, had to close initially on October 24. Repairs to affected track enabled reopening on October 25 but water was back over the

line forcing closure again on October 28 for the remainder of the month.

Heavy rain over the last weekend of October flooded the Romney, Hythe & Dymchurch's tunnel at New Romney, preventing trains between New Romney and Dungeness. Halloween operations concentrated on the New Romney to Hythe section which continued to operate with both stations open.

SINGLE LINES

■ THE two double-ended ex-Tideway Tunnel Project 14-ton four-wheel battery-electric locos purchased by the Ffestiniog Railway (*RM*, October) have now been identified as Works numbers B4539/3 and B4539/5, both built in 2012. They each weigh 14 tons (including the 4.7 ton battery) and are rated at 150hp.

■ IN the course of renovating Lincolnshire Coast Light Railway's ex-Ashover coach No. 1, examination of one of the bogies destined for the project established that little if any of it would be salvageable. A new bogie frame has been constructed to which any saveable parts will be added.



HONOURS RECEIVED: Talyllyn stalwart John Bate was made an MBE in the King's Birthday Honours list (*RM*, *Headline News*, July 2023) and was presented with his honour by the Lord Lieutenant of Gwynedd, Edmund Seymour Bailey, during a ceremony at the Talyllyn Railway's Wharf station on October 26. John, a volunteer since 1951 and the railway's chief engineer between 1963-1994, was recipient of *The Railway Magazine* HRA Annual Award for Services to Railway Preservation in 2019. BARBARA FULLER



ANNIVERSARY TRIP: Launceston Steam Railway's Hunslet 0-4-0ST *Lilian* hauls a special train past Hunts Crossing in the late afternoon autumn light of October 22. The occasion was a celebration of the 60th anniversary of the formation of the Launceston Railway Circle. The railway itself will be operating trains on Boxing Day 2023 to celebrate the 40th anniversary of its opening. BERNARD MILLS

Amberley pair in the works

PREPARATIONS are being made at Amberley Museum to lift the boiler of the Peter Smith family-owned Decauville 0-4-0WT 1126/1947 *Barbouilleur* for inspection and repair.

Barbouilleur went out of ticket in July 2007. The running gear is worn but thought to be serviceable if a new boiler certificate can be secured.

Meanwhile, the overhaul of Amberley's Bagnall 2-4-0T *Polar Bear* is progressing inside

a party tent erected in the running shed which provides a more comfortable (i.e. it can be heated) and dust-free environment. *Polar Bear* last ran in October 2022, and while the boiler is being refurbished at Bennett Boilers in Highbridge, Somerset, the loco has been stripped and the frames and chassis components needlegunned and painted in a grey primer. The boiler is expected back at Amberley in late 2023.



Decauville 0-4-0WT 1126/1947 *Barbouilleur* pictured on October 15 in the exhibition hall at Amberley after commencement of preparations to lift the boiler. PHIL BARNES

Manx 2024 dates announced

ISLE of Man Transport has confirmed the dates for the 2024 Manx Heritage Transport Festival will be July 30 to August 4. Next year sees the 130th anniversary of the Manx Electric Railway opening to Laxey and 125 years since the electric line opened through to Ramsey.

Operating seasons for the Manx lines in 2024 will be: The Isle of Man Steam Railway March 15-November 3; Manx Electric Railway March 12-November 3; Snaefell Mountain Railway March 19-November 3; and Douglas Bay Horse Tramway March 26-November 3.



BREDGAR AFTER DARK: Last month we featured a daytime picture of recently restored privately-owned Fowler 0-4-2T (15513/1920) *Sena Sugar Estates No. VII*. That was during its visit to the Bredgar & Wormshill Light Railway to be reunited with resident ex-Sena Estates (Mozambique) Fowler 0-4-2T *Zambezi*, and the pair were then joined by Bredgar's Fowler 0-6-0WT *Limpopo* for a September 30 night photography session in the woods at Stony Shaw station. DAVE BOWLES

SINGLE LINES

■ WEST Lancashire Light Railway's (WLLR) September 24 Working engines event (which focuses on diesel, petrol and electric locomotives) featured 13 of the WLLR's collection of over 20 locos in this category in action hauling freight trains up and down the main line between normal passenger services, which were worked by Hunslet 0-4-OST *Irish Mail*.

■ THE Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway's ex-Bowaters paper railway bogie dropside ballast wagon No. 610 returned to Llanfair on October 19 following refurbishment by Alan Keef Ltd, which had previously refurbished the similar ex-Bowaters wagon No. 631. No. 631 is vacuum fitted while No. 610 is through piped.

■ THE private Richmond Light Railway in Kent is developing a signalling and control system upgrade at its Richmond station. This includes installation of electric point motors in the station and engine shed area, new approach signals, a replacement signal setup for the branch line and construction of a signalbox to house a refurbished lever frame and the electric control system.

■ THIS winter's Ffestiniog Railway work programme includes replacement of the 40-year-old water tank at Harbour station, with a like-for-like tank to be made by Caernarfon-based contractor Brunswick Ironworks.

■ Sittingbourne & Kemsley Light Railway commenced reconstruction of the sleeper-built platform at Sittingbourne Viaduct station in late October. The rebuilding will both raise and lengthen the platform.

■ Glyn Valley Tramway Trust's ex-RNAD box van, converted to the appearance of a Glyn Valley Tramway (GVT) van some time ago, returned to Chirk on November 1 following regauging from 2ft 6in to 2ft 3ins; the gauge now adopted for the revival of a section of the GVT at Chirk station.

■ The Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway had to restrict services to the section between Llanfair Caereinion and Sylfaen on November 2 following a motor vehicle accident prior to the start of the day's services. A car left the A458 road on the Welshpool side of Sylfaen summit, crashed across the field, railway and down the hill into woodland. The track and lineside fencing required repairs before services could resume.

Mannin ready for 2026?

Hopes remain for a return to service in three years' time of Manx loco No. 16, while reassembly of No. 12 *Hutchinson* is well underway as overhaul progresses.

RESTORATION to steam of Isle of Man Steam Railway's Beyer Peacock 2-4-0T (6296/1926) No. 16 *Mannin* is currently targeted for 2026, with the proviso that this timescale "remains subject to budgetary prioritisation".

Mannin was the final steam loco supplied to the original Isle of Man Railway and was bigger and more powerful than the previous Manx Beyer Peacock 2-4-0Ts. It was last steamed in 1964 and for many years was exhibited in Port Erin Museum.

Being non-standard with the rest of the IoM steam fleet,

Mannin had not been viewed as a restoration candidate.

However, in 2019 Isle of Man Transport confirmed it was seriously considering returning No. 16 to operation (*RM*, July 2019) with a view to it forming a centrepiece attraction for the steam line's forthcoming 150th anniversary celebrations.

Amid a rearrangement of exhibits in the museum in March 2020 prior to opening for the new season, *Mannin* was moved out and taken to Douglas (*RM*, April 2020).

Mannin did not appear

during the Isle of Man's Year of the Railways 2023 festival marking the 150th anniversary of the steam line and 130th of the Manx Electric Railway. In response to a Freedom of Information request earlier this year, Isle of Man's Department of Infrastructure confirmed over £129,000 had so far been spent on restoration of *Mannin* of which £23,922 was for boiler repairs, £23,971 for wheelsets and the remaining spend largely for chassis work which was ongoing. In late October, *The RM* was told work on *Mannin* was

currently halted due to more pressing projects.

The winter programme at Douglas includes reassembly of Beyer Peacock 2-4-0T No. 12 *Hutchinson* with a view to returning it to traffic next season. The frames, together with the new boiler constructed by Severn Valley Railway (SVR) in 2018 which were sent to SVR in mid-August 2022 for modification (*RM*, October 2022), returned to Douglas on October 26. Other components received included a new bunker. No. 12 last ran in August 2019.

Back to Bygones

WHILE the public debut of Ffestiniog Railway's (FR) new Double-Fairlie *James Spooner* was the star attraction of the FR's October 6-8 Bygones Weekend (picture *RM* Headline News, November and see separate launch story in this issue) there was much else going on as the FR showcased historic locomotives and stock.

James Spooner, in steam and periodically moving down to the water tower, and Kerr Stuart 6wDM 4415/1928 (currently without its engine) were displayed at Harbour station.

Action on the running lines included Hunslet 2-4-0STT *Blanche*, Double-Fairlie *Merddin Emrys* and Hunslet 0-4-0STs *Britomart* and *Lilla* (working double-headed) handling passenger services



A unique feature of Ffestiniog heritage events is the operation of a gravity slate train, pictured here at Rhiw Goch as it descends from Power Station Summit towards Minfordd on the morning of October 8 prior to the commencement of passenger services. NICK WARREN

of heritage carriages, primarily between Harbour and Tan y Bwlch. Baldwin 2-4-0DM (49604/1918) *Moelwyn* worked periodic shuttle trains of restored and recreated Ffestiniog goods wagons in and out of Harbour station,

while Double-Fairlie *David Lloyd George* hauled 'Mountain Spirit' all-line services to Blaenau Ffestiniog.

During the event Bachmann Europe presented a cheque for £1,500 to the FR representing a portion of sales of 4mm

scale models of FR buildings including Harbour station and launched new 009 scale models of FR's Hunslet 2-4-0STs *Linda* and *Blanche*, which join other models released in recent times which include FR Double-Fairlies.



Hunslet 0-4-0STs *Britomart* and *Lilla* pass Rhiw Goch with the 10.45 departure from Porthmadog to Tan-y-Bwlch on October 8. NICK WARREN



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'Forgotten' line to be revived

Efforts are underway to reopen the railway in the public grounds of a Liverpool stately home.

A RAILWAY in a Liverpool park that has remained untouched for around 15 years is now being reopened.

A team of volunteers is in the process of reviving the 7¼in gauge railway in the grounds of Croxteth Park, a stately home owned by Liverpool City Council.

The local authority said the railway has remained dormant for many years and was last operated by Jack Woods through a company called Forest Model Engineering.

In the intervening period, nature took hold, with the track becoming overgrown and buried beneath leaf mulch and earth.

Now, however, the once popular railway is being brought back to life by a small team of volunteers led by local resident Kevin Brown.

"It started when we arrived on site and found that the track was still in situ in certain places," explained Mr Brown.

"We then contacted the local council to see if we could

restore the railway. Since we have been on site, we have had a lot of people come along and tell us their memories of when they brought their family to the railway. It is all too clear that the railway has got a huge amount of history in the park and it will once again be a good attraction."

Approximately 90% of the original track remains intact, with only two segments missing.

The original station platform remains alongside the foundation of the engine shed and all the pointwork.

Restoration

It is hoped the revived railway can be enjoyed by the public during the coming year. The volunteers are committed to funding this restoration themselves, covering the cost of the missing track, along with enhancements to the station area, including fencing and levelling. These improvements would also become permanent fixtures of the site.

The railway's local authority

landowner is backing the revival of the line.

Lila Bennet, cabinet member for Employment, Educational Attainment and Skills at

Liverpool City Council, said: "I worked at Croxteth Country Park for several years and recall how popular the miniature railway was with visitors and

children. As an employee and a local resident, I have my own fond memories of my own grandchildren having lots of fun on the miniature railway."



END OF THE SEASON: Ayton Castle Railway held its final running day of this year on October 14. The railway has now been in operation for two years, having opened on September 24, 2021 (RM January 2022). The 10¼in line runs for 500 metres between Eyemouth Road station and Castle View Halt in the grounds of the baronial mansion, east of Ayton in the Scottish Borders. Trains are hauled by Lloyd, an 0-6-0 diesel hydraulic built by Alan Keef (AK109). STUART CHAPMAN

Bosnia



Photos: Bernd Sailer

There are only three revenue-earning steam operations left: North Korea, Indonesia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. The easiest to reach and most interesting can be found in Bosnia. There are still former standard gauge Deutsche Reichsbahn 2-10-0s 'Kriegsloks' and the Balkan 0-8-2 classics in use on the narrow gauge – but only in shunting duties.

Eritrea: Mallets to Asmara & camel market in Keren	Jan 6 th – Jan 14 th
Eritrea: Camel market, Timket Festival & Art Deco	Jan 14 th – Jan 21 st
Bosnia-Herz.: 'Kriegsloks' in Mine & Line Service	Feb 10 th – Feb 17 th
Romania: Narrow Gauge Steam on six lines	Apr 13 th – Apr 21 st
South Africa: Big Steam and Sandstone's Garratts	Jul 17 th – Jul 28 th
South Africa: The Big Five: Kruger National Park	Jul 27 th – Aug 2 nd
Pakistan: Broad Gauge Steam over the Indus	December 2024

In winter 2024 we will bring these locomotives with authentic freight trains back on the main line. Of course, we're hoping for snow and sunshine – but even if that's not the case, what suits a coal mining locomotive better than suitably miserable weather? As we have a number of night shots planned, we will definitely bring home some atmospheric shots.

The locomotives have been in service for over 80 years, and neither their post-war use nor their life in the mines is particularly beneficial to their substance. It is uncertain how long this residual steam operation will last. So if you want to experience real steam locomotives that have not been cleaned to death, you should come along on this journey.



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1
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1
AUTUMN TINTS: LMS 'Black Five' 4-6-0 No. 45212 leads the afternoon West Coast Railways 'Jacobite' service (2Y68/12.50 Fort William to Mallaig) through Craigag on Thursday, September 28. IAN DIXON

2
BURY AFTER DARK: SR Bulleid Pacific No. 34092 *City of Wells* awaits departure during a 3P20 Parcels Group night shoot on the East Lancashire Railway's Bolton Street station on October 22. RICHARD NEWTON

STEAM PORTFOLIO





1	3
2	4

1 BOSTON RECREATED: A photo charter billed as 'The Boston Bucket Bash' organised by the Nene Valley Railway Wagon Group on October 30 saw Wansford station and its environs become Boston back in the days of steam. Visiting Austerity 0-6-0ST No. 3193 appeared as BR No. 68018, while NVR out of ticket resident No. 75006 was renumbered 68070 – the long-scrapped 'J94s' being once based at the Lincolnshire port town. Scenes created involved goods wagons and the 1968 Morris 8cwt Commercial van owned by NVR volunteer Matt Baker. OWEN HAYWARD

2 FROSTY MORNING: SR Bulleid Pacific No. 34070 *Manston* eases away from Sheffield Park during a Jon Bowers charter at the Bluebell Railway on October 16. JAMES CORBEN

3 ROUNDING THE CURVE: The autumn colours are seen to good effect as BR Standard '2MT' 2-6-0 No. 78022 crosses Myholmes Viaduct with the 14.25 Keighley to Oxenhope on Sunday, October 29. STEVE SIENKIEWICZ

4 A CRACKING START TO THE DAY: '7F' 2-8-0 No. 53809 blows off the cobwebs on a Sunday morning with the first train of the day out of Sheringham at the North Norfolk Railway on October 8. ROB BATTY



Planning permission granted for Blackpool Tramtown project

Transformation of the tram shed into a major heritage attraction is approved as preparations are made for wider changes to the Rigby Road site.

PLANNING approval has been granted for an ambitious scheme to turn the home of Blackpool's heritage tram fleet into a nationally-significant and family-orientated heritage attraction.

Built in 1935, the tram shed at Blackpool Transport's Rigby Road site, marketed as Blackpool Tramtown, has proved consistently popular since opening its doors to visitors for guided tours in September 2021, but the longer term aim, scheduled to take five to seven years to complete, is its redevelopment into what is described by Blackpool Transport's head of heritage Bryan Lindop as an "adventure driven" visitor destination.

It aims to showcase the 138-year history of tramcars and tram operations in the area. As well as remaining the base for the tram collection, it will include an exhibition area,

viewing galleries, a cafe, retail areas, historical archives and conference and educational facilities.

The workshops, which are to be moved from their current location nearby as part of changes to the wider site to accommodate new bus fleet engineering facilities for the company, will form one of the centrepieces of the transformed building. Visitors will be able to see the work involved in restoring and maintaining the trams, many of which were first shedded there when new.

Vision

"Our vision has always been to develop a nationally significant visitor complex to support Blackpool's heritage tram operation, enable public access to the town's extensive history and preserve the historic trams, the tram shed and the archive collections," explained Blackpool



An interior visualisation of the redeveloped Blackpool Tramtown. STUDIO JOHN BRIDGE LTD

Transport managing director Jane Cole.

"There will be job and volunteering opportunities created at many levels," she added. "We will be looking to provide training opportunities in areas such as engineering, catering, archiving and customer relations. People and our community matter to us very much and I am immensely proud of the highly talented team that have put this sustainable and dynamic plan together for the benefit of Blackpool."

The project, which involves Preston-based architect John Bridge and his team, will be split into phases, initially concentrating on the relocation of the workshops and repairs, reroofing and conservation of the existing building, before the rest of the new facilities are completed.

In preparation for reconfiguring parts of the Rigby Road site for bus maintenance, however, Blackpool Tramtown has been temporarily closed to visitors

and some of the heritage trams have been relocated to the depot at Starr Gate (home of the modern Flexity fleet) to operate tours. Structural assessments are being carried out in order to ascertain whether buildings will be demolished or retained.

Tramtown itself is expected to reopen in the new year, although the timescale for this and its transformation are understood to be dependent on the progress of work on the wider site.

Chester tram progress

THE layout of seats for the upper deck of Chester Tram No. 4, under restoration at the former Hooton Park airfield in Cheshire, has been finalised, allowing floor slats to be fitted.

No. 4's trolley mast base has also been permanently attached. On the lower deck, work has continued apace. Interior lights are operational and windows have been trial-fitted, as has the braking mechanism. Outside, progress has been made with the platforms and staircases.

All aboard revamped Seaton No. 9

CAR No. 9 at the Seaton Tramway in Devon has been modified to provide an enclosed accessible bay, suitable for use in all weather conditions.

Previously, like sister cars Nos. 10 and 11, the middle section of the tram had open-sided accessible bays, but these left passengers more exposed to the elements.

No. 9 was the first of the three cars to be built by Bolton Trams Ltd (trucks and other fittings being added by Seaton Tramway at its own workshops) incorporating design elements from Plymouth and Blackburn vehicles, originally entering service in 2004.

The recent conversion work was carried out entirely in-house at its Riverside depot, led by the tramway's engineering manager Lee Taylor, who also designed the modifications.

"It was a privilege to lead this initiative, and I'm thrilled to see tram number nine creating a new passenger experience on our lovely tramway," said



With its central section now fully enclosed with doors, Seaton Tramway No. 9 is seen at Riverside depot. SEATON TRAMWAY

Mr Taylor. "Seeing the project completed ahead of schedule, before the winter season, has been a great accomplishment."

The tramway's month-long programme of Polar Express tram rides runs until Christmas Eve. It reopens from December 27-January 1, with a 20-minute service interval

between 10.00 and 16.00.

It is hoped that the neighbouring former Seaton Jurassic Centre, which closed in 2021 after its original operator Devon Wildlife Trust withdrew from the site, will reopen under Seaton Tramway ownership for the 2024 season. To be known as Jurassic Discovery, it will use

animatronics and the latest technology to explain the story of the dinosaurs and highlight local Jurassic coastal areas of present day interest.

East Devon District Council's Cabinet agreed to the sale in October and the process is expected to be completed in the next few months.

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Mike Pavie



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- Silver soldered copper boiler
- Etched brass body with rivet detail
- Available in choice of names
- Painted and ready-to run
- Stainless steel motion
- 2 Outside Cylinders
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- Piston valves
- Mechanical drain cocks
- Mechanical lubricator
- Reverser in cab
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- Height 14"
- Weight approx 120kgs

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SIDELINES

'Teddy Bear' debuts at Ecclesbourne

AFTER more than a year of overhaul work, Class 14 'Teddy Bear' No. D9525 worked its first train along the Ecclesbourne Valley Railway on the evening of October 29. The loco worked with classmate No. D9537 and five Mk.1s in tow, the run from Wirksworth to Shottle and back being a test run ahead of officially entering service on the EVR.

Last call for Clacton '309'

THE Clacton Express Preservation Group is offering its three-car EMU set No. 309624 free to any good home in a final attempt to prevent the unit from being scrapped.

The group's 18-month storage contract at the Lavender Line has ended and a new agreement has not been achieved. Any offers will be considered, and for more information email the group's chairman at chairman.cepg@gmail.com

Class 10 departs Kent

BR Class 10 No. D3489 *Colonel Tomline* left the Spa Valley Railway on October 31. Following a number of years based in Kent, the loco has been sold to a group of individuals at the Helston Railway in Cornwall, although it has temporarily moved to the Bodmin Railway due to problems with road access near Helston.

Henry on the move

FORMER Royal Train Class 47 No. 47799 *Prince Henry* was shunted into a new position at the Eden Valley Railway to make way for winter maintenance at Warcop. This is the first rail movement for the loco for some time. Work is still being carried out to restore the '47', with attention required on the brake valves to bring it back into operational condition.

'Crompton' celebrating 30 years in preservation

OCTOBER 23 marked three decades since Class 33 'Crompton' No. 33102 *Sophie* entered preservation. After withdrawal by British Rail in 1993, the loco was saved and moved to the Churnet Valley Railway, where it is still based.

DIARY

DECEMBER

8/15 Nene Valley Railway
Santa 125 Specials
29 Severn Valley Railway
Winter Diesel Day
29 Bo'ness and Kinneil
Railway Winter Diesel Gala

EMU bought for £1

First-built Class 313 unit acquired for preservation at Eastleigh Works.

THE 400 Series Preservation Group has acquired first-built Class 313 EMU No. 313201 (the former No. 313001) from Beacon Rail for a symbolic sum of £1, with the aim of restoring and maintaining the unit's operational status.

The plan includes conducting a B-exam at Eastleigh Works in early 2024 using the skills of the on-site engineers.

The unit was originally chosen by the Railway Heritage Designation Advisory Board for preservation after retirement, but the board changed its decision in early 2023 in favour of ex-Network Rail unit

No. 313121, which retains original seating and dual-voltage traction equipment.

No. 313201 spent the majority of its working life in North London, operating Euston to Watford DC and North London Line services. Over the years, it served under British Rail, then Silverlink and London Overground after Privatisation.

In 2010, the unit found its way to Southern after being displaced from London Overground by new Class 378 units, and it was based at Brighton depot where it would spend its final years.

The 400 Series Preservation

Group, led by driver Peter Spokes and engineer David Shell, has taken on the mission of preserving this third-rail unit. They have a combined 38 years' rail knowledge and experience spanning various locomotives and EMUs.

David said the safety equipment and paperwork will be kept up to date, while there is a substantial inventory of spare parts available from scrapped classmate vehicles.

There are plans for a test run to Brighton in the near future, offering an exciting glimpse into the unit's preservation journey. The team hopes to

make the unit available for loan to preserved railways, and to participate in special events and depot open days. They are also exploring training opportunities for both rail and non-rail organisations. All that comes at a cost however, and the group would welcome any donations.

"Even though we purchased the '313' for £1, it comes with its added costs," said Peter. "We need to ensure that we cover the £2790 plus VAT every month to keep it in secure warm storage at the works."

For more information or to donate to the cause, see the website at www.400series.co.uk.

No. 313201 basks in the sunshine at Eastleigh Works having been acquired for just £1. JACK BOSKETT



NEW HOME FOR EX-NCB 'TEDDY BEAR':

In striking NCB blue livery, Class 14 No. D9513 moved from the Emsay & Bolton Abbey Steam Railway to a new home at the Wensleydale Railway in October after being purchased by WR director and volunteer Tim Williamson.

No. D9513 is currently out of service awaiting a new starter motor, but plans are under way for a Class 14 running day with the Wensleydale's other 'Teddy bear', No. D9523, on a date to be announced in 2024. NIGEL COCKBURN

Dartmouth Railway runs rare track special

THE Dartmouth Steam Railway ran a charity railtour on October 14 covering tracks normally out of bounds for passenger use.

Class 37 No. D6975 (37275), Class 08 No. D3014 and Class 03s Nos. D2192 and 03371 all took turns hauling three Mk.1 carriages as the 'Four Stroke Explorer' in

aid of the Stroke Association.

No. D6975 worked the first train at 09.45 from Paignton Queens Park to Kingswear via the down platform at Churston and terminating in platform 1 at Kingswear, where No. D2192 was attached to the other end. The '03' worked out of the station and

toured the lines around Kingswear's station limits, allowing the '37' to be shunt released. The special then went back north to the Torbay sidings behind No. D6975 as the 11.30 to Paignton Queens Park via the up platform at Churston. After arriving at Paignton, the '37' was detached and Nos. 03371 and

D3014 took the train to Thurston Long Siding and towards the paint shed.

Having worked in and around Churston, the train headed for the Goodrington Sands Relief Line, where it traversed the sidings and neighbouring lines. The train then made its way back to Paignton Queens Park station shed.

Class 08 No. D3014 works up the gradient from Goodrington Sands with the special short formation on October 14. DAVID HUNT



Class 101 Nos. M51189 and Sc51803 depart Oxenhope with the 12.10 to Keighley on October 28. MARTYN TATTAM

DMU livery changes at Keighley & Worth Valley

THE Keighley and Worth Valley Railway's Railcar Running Weekend on October 28/29 saw resident Class 101, 143, 144 and railbus units in action.

Class 101 DMU Nos. Sc51803+M51189 had only returned to service on October 20 following seven months of maintenance in the shed at Haworth, the unit being outshopped in BR blue livery to replace the previous BR green.

Also recently returned to

traffic following repairs was 'Pacer' No. 143625, which has been vinylled in 'Worth Valley' green livery similar to that carried by railbus No. M79964 when the KWVR opened as a heritage line in 1968. The gala weekend was one of its first runs in preservation on the line.

The '101' and '143' were joined in the gala by 'Pacer' No. 144011, carrying West Yorkshire Metro red and cream livery, plus railbus No. M79964 in BR green.

EE shunter upgraded for passenger use

ENGLISH Electric 0-6-0DH No. D1120 *David J Cook* hauled a passenger service at the Somerset & Dorset Railway Heritage Trust at Midsomer Norton on October 29, one of its first workings since being fitted with vacuum brakes.

The shunter was withdrawn in March 2020 so it could be sent to Darley Dale, near Matlock,

for fitting with vacuum brakes. This would allow it to work passenger trains at the S&DRHT should there be an issue with the line's resident Class 08 No. D4095 (08881).

Delayed return

However, the Covid-19 pandemic delayed its departure until August 2020, and it did not

return to Midsomer Norton until January this year.

The loco was built in 1966 and spent its working life at the NCB Lea Hall Colliery in Staffordshire until withdrawal in 1991. It moved to Midsomer Norton in 2003 after years of being in store at the Yeovil Railway Centre, but was subsequently only used to power permanent way trains.



No. D1120 heads passenger stock into Midsomer Norton South on October 29. JOSH BRINSFORD

CLASSIC TRACTION PORTFOLIO



'WHISTLER' TO THE RESCUE: The East Lancashire Railway's DMU gala on November 18/19 included some loco-hauled drags using Type 2 No. 25279 and, as pictured here, Type 4 No. 40012 *Aureol*. The loco is seen on the evening of the first day at Ramsbottom waiting to haul Class 104 Nos. M50517+M50455 south towards Bury. The rain-soaked platforms only add to the atmosphere. CHRIS GEE



First quarter kick off for InterCity

Operator announces three new all-first class tours for 2024.

INTERCITY, one of the railtour arms of the Crewe-based Locomotive Services Group (LSG), has released details of three excursions to cover the opening quarter of 2024 – two of which are to Scotland.

The first of these tours which will feature all first class accommodation is 'The Ayr Extension' on January 13, which will see both a Class 86 and 87 working different sections of the train from Crewe to Ayr via Glasgow Central.

With an expected start at 08.15 from Crewe, pick-up points are Warrington Bank Quay, Wigan North Western, Preston and Carlisle before an arrival at Glasgow Central (circa 12.00) where some passengers may opt to depart and visit the city.

Understood to be running

in top-and-tail mode, the train takes the route via Paisley Gilmour Street to Ayr where there will be a break and photo opportunity of rare traction at the seaside resort.

The train will retrace its steps to Glasgow Central before returning south over Beattock and Shap, setting down as the outward pick-ups, with a planned arrival back at Crewe at around 19.30.

Ticketing

Fares are £199 first class which includes full English breakfast and a three-course dinner on the return journey. A guaranteed window table for two is available at a supplement of £25 per person. First class non-dining fares are £99, again with the £25 per person supplement for a

table for two. In standard class, passengers will have access to a buffet bar for the purchase of hot and cold beverages, light refreshments and alcoholic drinks.

The second tour is planned for February 10, and will feature a Class 90 working over the East Coast Main Line from London King's Cross to visit Leeds, Bradford and Skipton.

With an approximate departure from King's Cross at around 08.15, the 'West Riding Limited' will pick-up at Stevenage and Peterborough only before running to Leeds. After reversal, the excursion will visit Skipton (photo stop), at the west end of the Aire Valley electrification, before returning to Leeds for a break of around two hours.

With a second westward departure from Leeds, at Shipley the train will take the line to Bradford Forster Square where there will be

a second photographic stop, before returning to Leeds and eventually London, with an estimated arrival at 21.20. Fares are the same as the train to Ayr, outlined above.

Haulage

The third train is a weekend trip on March 24-25 from Crewe to Inverness hauled by Class 40 No. D213 (40013) *Andania*.

The 'Whistling Highlander' has an outline departure time from Crewe at 08.15, and will pick up passengers at Warrington Bank Quay, Wigan North Western, Preston and Carlisle before being routed via Cumbernauld, Larbert, Perth and the Highland Main Line to Inverness for an overnight stop. Accommodation is not included in the tour, leaving passengers to choose what suits their own budget.

On Sunday, March 25, departure from Inverness will be at 09.00, taking the route

via Elgin to Aberdeen, then via Montrose, Dundee, both the Tay and Forth Bridges before passing Falkirk Grahamston on the way back to Crewe with an estimated arrival at 19.50.

Being a weekend, the fares are £249 first class which includes full cooked breakfast and lunch as the train threads its way through Scotland. On the return, first class passengers will be given a three-course lunch and a light supper. A guaranteed window table for two is available at a supplement of £50 per person.

First class non-dining fares are £159, again with the £50 per person supplement for a table for two, and the buffet car will be open for drinks and snacks.

Full details of all these tours are at inter-city.co.uk where passengers can also book online, or alternatively call 0800 038 5364, or email enquiries@inter-city.co.uk

HIGH SPEED TRAIN CHARTER:

The debut of the 125 Group's HST came on October 28 when two power cars and six trailers worked the 'Midland Venturer' tour, with the train visiting its old Midland Main Line haunts. Starting at Ilkeston, the set ran via Barrow Hill, Sheffield, Derby and Leicester to London St Pancras. With power car No. 43159 *Rio Warrior* leading, the train is pictured passing Barrow-upon-Soar as the autumn tints begin to show. At the rear in East Midlands Stagecoach livery is power car No. 43089. The train operator for the charter was Rail Adventure, and the Branch Line Society handled the bookings for the group. CHRIS MILNER



DB Cargo Class 60 to bow out on Pathfinder festive season excursion

PATHFINDER Tours has confirmed its Class 60 hauled pre-Christmas railtour with a DB Cargo Class 60, top-and-tailing with a Class 66, will be the last Class 60 passenger working before DB withdraws the class on December 31.

The tour is over freight

lines and loops around the West Midlands, as well as traversing the line leading to MoD Kineton as far as the Network Rail boundary as well as the Royal Mail platform at Stafford. The 'Midland-lan' starts at Gloucester and will pick up at Cheltenham Spa, Worcester

Shrub Hill, Kidderminster, Stourbridge Junction and Birmingham Snow Hill. A small number of first class seats were still available at £185 as this issue closed for press.

There are also a few seats available on a tour the previous weekend, December 9, which

will feature a pair of West Coast Railway Class 33s working from Eastleigh to Chester. The 'Chester Christmas Cromptons' will use Mk. 1 rolling stock and pick up at Southampton, Romsey, Salisbury, Warminster, Westbury, Trowbridge, Bath Spa and Filton Abbey Wood, before

taking the Marches route to set down at Shrewsbury en route to Chester, allowing passengers to visit Christmas markets in both locations. Adult class fares are £129, first class is £185 and premier dining is £299. Visit www.pathfindertours.co.uk or call 01453 834477.



DOUBLE-HEADER AFTER DARK:

LMS 'Black Fives' Nos. 44871 and 45407 *The Lancashire Fusilier* sit at Carlisle on October 30, returning with empty rolling stock to their Carnforth base at the end of this season's 'Jacobite' duties in Scotland. The 2024 season is expected to begin in early April. TIM BOOTH

Railtour option for that 'awkward' week?

WITH quite a few businesses closing their doors for the Christmas and New Year holiday period, finding something to do during that lull can be a problem.

Following last year's railtour success, UK Railtours is offering the appropriately named 'Awkward Week Adventurer' excursion on December 30.

This year, the tour will start at Peterborough (07.30) and pick up at Huntingdon, Stevenage, Potters Bar and Finsbury Park before crossing London via Kilburn and Feltham to a final pickup at Staines.

The train will be routed over some rare track on its way to the first set down point of Eastleigh, where passengers can

take advantage of an off-train excursion to the National Motor Museum at Beaulieu, palace and gardens. This option is at an additional cost of £30, with motor coaches provided between Eastleigh and Beaulieu.

For those wanting to sample more rare track, the 'Awkward' tour will visit Southampton Eastern Docks, Southampton

Up Yard Reception and Southampton Western Docks, all subject to track inspection and approval.

After the docks visit, the train returns to Eastleigh where during a break of around an hour, the stock will be serviced and cleaned.

Returning to Peterborough, the route will be via Romsey, the

Laverstock Loop, Basingstoke and Reading.

Fares start at £119 adult standard (£109 junior), first class non-dining £169, first class dining £269 or £1056 for a party of four. Dining is not available from Staines.

Online booking is available at ukrailtours.com or by calling 01438 715050.



BAHAMAS HAULAGE: LMS 'Jubilee' 4-6-0

No. 45596 *Bahamas* passes Goostrey, between Stockport and Crewe, on October 21 with the Railway Touring Company's 'Mancunian' charter returning to London Euston from Manchester Victoria via Crewe.

BARRY J MARTIN

BLS tour raises £12000 for charity

THE Branch Line Society's 'The 5:08 Sunset' tour of the Mersey rail network on October 29 raised £12,200 for good causes.

The four charities, nominated by Merseyrail, were: KIND – helping children and families across Liverpool and Merseyside cope with the effects of poverty and disadvantage; SWACA –

supporting Sefton's women, young people and children; Paper Cup Project – a Liverpool charity which supports local rough sleepers and homeless people; and Tam O'Shanter Cottage and Community Farm – aiming to provide an enjoyable and educational experience for kids and adults in Birkenhead.

STEAM TOURS: DECEMBER

Date	Name	Steam Section	Locos	Promoter
5	Merchant Venturer	Solihull-Oxford-Bath-Bristol	5043 or 7029	VT
6	Sussex Christmas Belle	London Victoria-Redhill-Eastbourne	WCRC 'Black 5'	RTC
8	Shoeburyness-Barking-Winchester-Hanwell loop		61306	SD
9	Lincoln Christmas Express	King's Cross-Spalding-Lincoln-Newark-King's Cross	44871	RTC
10	Christmas Waverley	York-Settle-Carlisle-York	60103	RTC
12	Christmas White Rose	Crewe-Man Vic-Sheffield-York-Hebden Bridge-Crewe	LSL Pool	ST
13	Worcester Christmas Express	Cambridge-Leicester-Worcester Shrub Hill-Leicester	60103	RTC
16	Christmas Golden Arrow	W London-Ashford-Canterbury W-Tonbridge-W London	34046 or 70000	ST
16	York Yuletide Express	Norwich-Ely-Grantham-York-Norwich	WCRC 'Black 5'	RTC
16	Edinburgh Christmas Market	York-Newcastle-Edinburgh-York	WCRC Pool	RTC
20	Spirit of Christmas	Paddington-Paddington (circular dining tour)	61306	SD

Notes: WCRC Pool: Locos from 45596/45680/45699/46115/35018/34067

LSL Pool: Locos from 34046/45231/46100/4498/70000

DIESEL AND ELECTRIC TOURS: DECEMBER

Date	Name	Steam Section	Locos	Promoter
9	Chester Christmas Cromptons	Eastleigh-Westbury-Bath-Shrewsbury-Chester	2 x WCRC CI 33s	PF
9	Edinburgh Christmas Pullman	Oxford-Solihull-Stafford-Edinburgh	LSL Blue Pullman	MP
9	Manchester Christmas Markets	Euston-Rugby-Man Victoria-Bolton-Preston-Man Vic-Euston	2 x CI 50s	UKR
14	Edinburgh Christmas Pullman	Cardiff-Shrewsbury-Edinburgh	LSL Blue Pullman	MP
16	The Midland-lan	Gloucester-Stourbridge-Banbury-Stafford-Gloucester	DB 60	PF
19	Edinburgh Christmas Pullman	Holyhead-Chester-Preston-Edinburgh	LSL Blue Pullman	MP
23	Carols at Sherbourne	Peterborough-Finsbury Park-Reading-Sherbourne-Yeovil Jct	DB Class 67	UKR
30	Another Awkward Adventure	Peterborough-Potter Bar-Staines-Southampton Docks	2 x DB 66s	UKR

All tours listed above may be subject to cancellation due to industrial action – check with tour promoter.

SIDELINES

Camping coaches in holiday park sale

BRUNEL Holiday Park at Dawlish Warren, where holidaymakers sleep in converted railway carriages, is for sale with offers in the region of £550,000 invited. The sale includes five recently refurbished Mk.1 carriages, plus another three to be refurbished, along with a two-bedroom chalet for an owner/manager. The Warren site was first used by the GWR as staff holiday accommodation using converted carriages from 1935, before being made available to the public.

Herne Bay station to become step-free

NETWORK Rail has started work at Herne Bay station, Kent, to make it step-free. Two new 16-person lifts and a new footbridge will be installed as part of a £6m improvement scheme. Other changes include revised lighting and CCTV cameras. The funding is coming from the Department for Transport's (DfT) 'Access for All' scheme.

Thetford 'box' a concern

CONCERN over the condition of Thetford's Grade II listed signalbox has been raised by Thetford Town Council. The 'box', a Great Eastern Railway type 4, has continued to deteriorate externally since the area was resignalled in 2012. It remains boarded up with vegetation growing up one side. Network Rail said it was aware of the concerns and has a schedule of inspections and repairs, but is open to discussions with interested parties to seek opportunities to improve their appearance or find a new use for the 'box' for benefit of the local community.

Northumberland line reopening progress

ANOTHER step forward in the progress to reopen the Northumberland line from Newcastle-upon-Tyne to Blyth and Ashington has been achieved with the installation of the station footbridge at Newsham. The line is due to open in the summer of 2024.

Old station transformed

Amazing restoration of Wingfield's North Midland station.

THE restoration of a once derelict Victorian station building has been completed in a project led by the Derbyshire Historic Buildings Trust (DHBT).

Situated between Derby and Chesterfield, South Wingfield was opened in 1840 by the North Midland Railway, before eventually being renamed to just Wingfield by the Midland Railway in May 1862. Designed by Francis Thompson, the building is said to be one of the world's oldest rural stations and is the only survivor of 13 designed by Thompson for the North Midland and built between Belper and Eckington.

Thompson was also responsible for a number of buildings around Derby station, including the roundhouse, several streets of terraced houses for railway workers, the Brunswick Inn public house and the Midland Hotel, which give the area a particular character.

Wingfield station was a casualty of the Beeching report, closing to passengers on January 2, 1967, with the building falling into disrepair under a private owner. Aware of its status, the South Wingfield Local History Group, campaigned for the building to be upgraded to Grade II*, which

was achieved in 2015.

In 2016, a DHBT report identified 12 of the most 'at risk' buildings in the county, which included Wingfield station. This resulted in Amber Valley Borough Council inviting the DHBT to work with it to secure a compulsory purchase order for the station. This was achieved and the station site transferred to the trust on December 10, 2019.

With the station in a poor condition inside and out, work to make the building watertight was undertaken, funded by Historic England. Further conservation work was undertaken from October 2021, and required specially designed scaffolding to be erected during night-time possessions of the adjacent line.

A key aim of the trust was the authentic restoration of Thompson's design, and removal of some of the later unsympathetic alterations. Also restored is a parcels shed next to the main building.

In May 2022, the DHBT was awarded £667,000 from the National Lottery Heritage Fund to complete the repair and conservation of the building and proceed with plans to use the old station as office space.



With trees growing in the roof, this was the sorry state of Wingfield station prior to restoration commencing in 2019. DHBT



A remarkable and worthy transformation of Wingfield station showing the completed restoration work as seen on October 28. Trains regularly pass by the station at speed and can be safely viewed from behind fencing. A footpath runs through the station site so makes the building accessible. CHRIS MILNER

The restoration has cost around £1.7m. Reopening of the station on October 27 was performed by Enid Buxton, daughter of the last stationmaster of Wingfield.

Further public openings are expected. Visit www.derbyshirehistoricbuildingstrust.org.uk for details, including more about the work of the DBHT.

£250,000 grant to restore Gobowen station buildings

REPAIRS to the Grade II listed station buildings at Gobowen are able to proceed, following a Community Ownership Fund grant of £246,146 from Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities.

Completed in 1848 by the Shrewsbury and Chester Railway, the main building is notable for its Florentine style. Owned by the Oswestry Station Building Trust, it provides small business accommodation.

The grant will be used to

repair the building, with the cement render removed and replaced with lime render. Roofs and gutters will be repaired, and doors and windows repainted.

Meanwhile, the brick booking office and waiting room on the Up side, which is used by the independent travel agent and ticket seller, Severn-Dee Travel, as well as a cafe run by Derwen College, will have its roof and gutters repaired, and doors, windows, and signage repainted.



The main station building on the Down line at Gobowen. OSBT

When this renovation work is completed, landscaped areas and planting beds will be formed to improve the

surroundings of the buildings, and swift nest boxes will be introduced to the tower of the main building.

£13m information upgrade in Scotland

SCOTLAND'S two busiest stations, Edinburgh Waverley and Glasgow Central, are being upgraded with new high-definition passenger information screens.

The new screens, part of

a wider £13.3m investment across Scotland's railway, display clear information with white text on a black background, providing an easy-to-read format. Work at Glasgow and Edinburgh is due

to be completed in November.

The new digital screens are low energy devices and are clearer in all lighting conditions – plus they will respond to changes in ambient lighting.

Land slip disrupts MML

UNSTABLE land on a section of the Midland Main Line at Braybrooke between Kettering and Market Harborough led to the temporary closure of the Down line on November 2.

Network Rail has been monitoring a section of

track in the area for several weeks. However, with a visible distortion of the track, the land needed more intrusive work to stabilise it. Soil nails were installed to reinforce the land and protect the track. The line reopened on November 9.

Plans for five new stations in South Wales

AMBITIOUS plans by Transport for Wales (TFW) for five new stations in South East Wales between Cardiff and Severn Tunnel Junction have moved a step closer following the launch of a 13-week public consultation, which runs until January 14, 2024.

The proposals form part of the South-East Wales Transport Commission's recommendations for tackling vehicle congestion on the M4 motorway. The scheme aims to improve connectivity between suburban communities and key regional destinations in SE Wales and SW England.

TFW is planning new stations

at Cardiff East, Newport West, Somerton, Llanwern and Magor & Undy, along with new train services.

The consultation will include what type of facilities are envisaged at each station by prospective passengers, who are also being asked for their views on new train services between Cardiff, Bristol and Cheltenham Spa.

TFW envisages that at least two, and up to four trains per hour in each direction will call at the proposed new stations. These will include the existing hourly Cardiff to Cheltenham services, supplemented by an additional Cardiff-Newport-

Cheltenham service, also calling at all stations. A two trains per hour (30 minute frequency) service between Cardiff, Newport and Bristol Temple Meads calling at all stations will supplement the existing two trains per hour 'fast' services.

Geoff Ogden, chief transport planning and development officer, said: "Our vision for Wales is one in which we all have more opportunities to live healthier and happier lives. For us, unlocking the capability of the South Wales mainline is key to changing how people travel in the region.

"We are proud to share our proposals for five new stations



A computer-generated image of how a new station at Newport West might look. TFW

between Cardiff Central and Severn Tunnel Junction, that together with the new services will offer more people the opportunity to travel on the railway."

The consultation can be

accessed at: haveyoursay.tfw.wales/seo-new-stations-and-services. Emails on the proposals can be sent to engagement@tfw.wales with the subject 'New stations and services consultation'.

Contract awarded to construct new Cambridge South railway station

A CONTRACT to build the new £93.4 million station at Cambridge South has been awarded to J Murphy and Sons Ltd by Network Rail.

The new station will be situated next to the city's biomedical campus and forms part of the proposed East-West Rail route, which aims to unlock £103 billion of economic growth.

The station will have four platforms and the actual building will be a two-storey design, and its facilities will include lifts providing step-free access to all platforms, accessible toilets, baby change facilities, waiting area and space for retail/catering and ticket vending machines.

There will be access for pedestrians and cyclists from both sides of the railway, with capacity for 1000 cycle parking spaces. There will be some modification to local roads and crossings to cater for the new station.

Changes are also needed



A visualisation of the new Cambridge South station. NETWORK RAIL

to the rail infrastructure which will be remodelled to accommodate two new loops for the four platforms, signalling modifications, a new substation, modification to the railway on the southern approach to Cambridge station, enhancements to Shepreth branch junction and the closure of two private footpaths and the provision of alternative access.

Enabling works are underway.

A worksite compound has been established, new overhead line masts have been installed and the front walls of the platforms constructed. Work will now continue to deliver the station through to completion, currently planned for 2025.

When open, the station will provide services for stations towards London, Ely, Birmingham and Stansted Airport.

Hope for Ayr station hotel?

FOLLOWING a second devastating fire on September 23, there is optimism that Ayr station hotel might be saved for the community.

As reported last month, a deliberately started fire caused considerable further damage to the hotel, and led to ScotRail services being suspended as the station and canopy is linked to the hotel.

Since the blaze, the site has been sealed off for safety reasons and there have been inspections of the damage using both drones and a high-level platform. Further safety work began on October 4. The site has now been handed over to South Ayrshire Council.

With the council's preferred option of demolishing the building's south wing, a group of more than 20 architects and conservationists spearheaded by conservation charity SAVE Britain's Heritage have written to the council pleading with them to save the hotel.

The letter calls on the council to begin compulsory purchase proceedings against the owner as 'the vital first steps to bring

the building back to useful life'.

Architect Gordon Murray, who worked on the refurbishment of Glasgow Central station, has said the decision to demolish the structure would be 'both ironic and foolhardy', adding that reuse and renovation is central to any sustainable regeneration, especially as many Scottish towns are struggling economically and physically.

The collective view of the architects is being supported by Ayr Station Hotel Community Action group, and the group SAVE Britain's Heritage wrote to the council offering the services of an experienced conservation structural engineer to undertake a detailed survey of the fire-damaged areas.

With no decision on demolition as we closed for press, the option of compulsory purchase, possibly by the Ayr Development Trust, as a precursor to possible restoration, was being investigated.

Meanwhile, ScotRail services remain suspended from Glasgow to Ayr until further notice.

Hertfordshire's LNWR Bricket Wood station restored – and gains a tearoom

BRICKET Wood station, between Watford Junction and St Albans Abbey has emerged from an extensive restoration, with the added attraction of a tearoom.

The 1903 LNWR station building became a bricked up shell after a fire in the 1970s destroyed much of the interior. However, the Bricket Wood Station Heritage Trust had the vision to restore the building with the aim of creating a heritage-themed

tearoom to provide future income. A 99-year lease was agreed with Network Rail at a peppercorn rent.

The trust has worked with a number of organisations, including West Midlands Trains, the Railway Heritage Trust, the Abbey Line Community Rail Partnership, Network Rail and the Abbey Flyer Users' Group, to restore the interior and exterior, create the tearoom and make the station an asset

for the local community. On the walls of the tearoom are maps, photos, information and artefacts detailing the history of the station and the surrounding area, as well as the restoration of the building.

Formal reopening was on October 22, the ribbon being cut by Henry Holland-Hibbert, chairman of the Hertfordshire Community Foundation, and whose grandfather was an employee of the LNWR.

Far North line sea wall damaged

A NUMBER of recent storms which have hit north east Scotland have damaged the sea wall adjacent to the railway line between Brora and Helmsdale.

Eighteen metres of the wall have been washed away in two locations and structural engineers for Network Rail have attended the site to assess options to repair the wall. Repairs are being made more complex because work can only take place at low tide.

A further complication is the

area is a Site of Special Scientific Interest and permission is required from Scotland's nature agency, NatureScot, to have specialist track machines and the stone needed to repair the wall delivered to site.

Until repairs have been completed, ScotRail services on the Far North Line will run between Inverness and Lairg, and a limited service between Wick and Forsinard, with rail replacement road transport running to supplement this.

SIDELINES

GBRf Peterborough sidings open

SIDINGS have been opened on the north side of GB Railfreight's Peterborough yard to connect its £5.75 million maintenance hub to the rail network.

The company says several new sets of points have been installed and the track has been slewed to create five intermodal length sidings which can be reached from the north and south. There is also capacity for spare wagons.

"The new sidings at the north end of our yard are a huge step forward in bringing our maintenance hub into operation," said GBRf chief executive John Smith.

"This will enable us to run even more intermodal services, allowing our current and future customers to move an even wider range of goods by rail."

Concrete plans for rail use

HEIDELBERG Materials (formerly known as Hanson UK) has opened a multi-million pound ready-mixed concrete plant on a rail-connected site at Sutton Courtenay near Abingdon in Oxfordshire.

The company says this offers the potential to receive deliveries from any of its rail-linked quarries, avoiding the need for 3000 lorry journeys each year, equating to road mileage totalling over 346,000 miles.

"Our new ready-mixed concrete plant is perfectly placed to support our customers in Oxfordshire and the surrounding area," said Gordon Napier, the company's managing director for concrete.

Grounds for sustainability

NEWELL & Wright says it is hoping to develop its relationship with Sheffield coffee producer Cafeology and further reduce the carbon footprint of the traffic.

Coffee supplies arrive in intermodal containers at the haulage firm's Templeborough rail terminal at Tinsley in South Yorkshire, before being transferred to lorry for the five-mile journey to Cafeology's premises.

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Wagons roll as VTG trial aims to transform freight

A total of nine vehicles will be used to test the 'iWagon' monitoring technology.

WAGON leasing company VTG Rail UK and braking equipment supplier Knorr-Bremse Rail Systems (UK), are carrying out a main line trial of nine wagons fitted with digital technology which they claim has the potential to revolutionise performance of rail freight.

VTG says the initial 'iWagons' feature 12 innovations including new wheelsets which feature four axle end generators to power patented Wheel Flat Prevention (WFP) technology, which monitors slide of wheelsets and condition of the brakes. The information can be accessed remotely, giving the ability to highlight issues as they occur and the potential to help Network Rail to locate areas where there is low rail adhesion. The 'iWagons' also feature axle lock detection.

"Our patented Wheel Flat Prevention technology increases wheel life and reduces potential deep wheel flats which may result in track

damage, or in worst cases, derailment," commented Knorr-Bremse engineering and innovation director Sanjay Albert, adding that digital monitoring would offer insights to customers and the wider industry to enable more efficient maintenance and operation.

Future trials

In future trials, it is anticipated that the axle end generators will provide the energy for equipment to gather further real-time data for maintenance and identify wagon and bogie imbalances. VTG says the on board technology is capable of offering further advantages when used in conjunction with its 'i-Maintenance' data platform (which can predict wheelset damage) and the VTG Connect information system.

"The iWagon has been over a decade in development and we are delighted to be at the stage where we can commence countrywide trials of the UK's



Representatives of VTG Rail UK, Knorr-Bremse Rail Systems and Tarmac are pictured in front of one of the three JPA wagons modified at Tarmac's maintenance depot in Dunbar as part of the initial 'iWagon' technology trial. VTG RAIL UK

first digitalised freight wagon which will enable real-time data to ensure safer railways and better wagon utilisation," explained VTG UK managing director Colin Denman.

Three vehicles given the 'iWagon' modifications are JPA tank wagons, operating between Tarmac's Dunbar cement plant in East Lothian and its site at Seaham in County Durham. They received the upgrade at Tarmac's Dunbar

maintenance depot and went back into traffic on October 2 for four months of testing on the daily return diagram. The remaining six wagons to undergo fitment will see service within the Hanson and Mendip rail fleets.

Initial data from all of the vehicles on trial is expected to be available next month, ahead of the introduction of the technology on 50 further wagons.



PREPARING THE WAY: Between October 30 and November 1, a series of Freightliner locomotive movements took place, originating at the operator's Southampton Maritime Terminal for route learning ahead of planned new aggregate traffic between Westbury and Crawley New Yard. The trains will be pathed via the Coastway West route, with the Arun Valley line, which was also included in the itinerary, as a diversionary route. Class 66 No. 66501 Japan 2001 is pictured passing through Goring-on-Sea station on the outward (Southampton Maritime-Crawley New Yard) leg of the first run on October 30. JOHN VAUGHAN

'Greener' sea, rail and lorry journey

OPERATED by DB Cargo UK for Maritime Transport, the London Gateway to SEGRO Logistics Park East Midlands Gateway working on the morning of September 28 formed part of a three-leg lower emissions journey for one of the intermodal containers onboard.

Unloaded from the *Laura Maersk*, a new vessel built with the aim of reducing greenhouse gas output by running on methanol, the rainbow container headed northwards as part of a train hauled by a hydro-treated vegetable oil-fuelled Class 66. HVO emissions are estimated to be up to 90% lower than diesel.

The final leg of the container's trip was to Maersk's warehouse facility by electric lorry.

No 'Metrocars' for community reuse

Two Tyne & Wear Metro Class 599s will be preserved, but Nexus says costs and complexity prevent it proceeding with a scheme to repurpose five further units.

TWO of Tyne & Wear Metro's existing Class 599 'Metrocars' are to be preserved, but operator Nexus has abandoned plans to offer vehicles to local groups for repurposing once they are displaced by its new Stadler Class 555 fleet.

As previously expected, No. 4001 will become part of the collection at the Stephenson Railway Museum on North Tyneside. The site was home to the unit and fellow prototype No. 4002 when it was the test track for the system in the 1970s. Beamish Museum will also receive a 'Metrocar'.

Bids were invited

Applications were invited two years ago with the aim of turning up to five further Class 599s into community assets, but despite what a Nexus spokesman described as a "fairly high level of community interest", resulting in a dozen separate bids being considered, the project has been shelved.

Nexus customer services director Huw Lewis said: "We and Stadler really hoped that we would be able to donate a further five trains to local community groups, but this

proved a lot more complex and expensive than we first thought, so sadly it's not going to happen."

No. 4002 was sent for scrapping in October, followed by No. 4083. Along with Nos. 4055 and 4062 (both moved earlier this year) they were no longer serviceable and had been used as a source of spare parts.

With the exception of the two units set aside for preservation, J Denham, based at Bishop Auckland in County Durham, will dismantle the vehicles and recycle metal from them.

Mr Lewis thanked organisations for taking an interest in reusing some of the redundant trains, stating that the decision not to proceed with the project was down to "the complexity of delivery arrangements". He added that this would "in many cases" have needed cranes and other machinery or significant preparation work on the sites receiving the vehicles.

No viable plan

"This means we have been unable to arrive at a viable delivery plan for the vehicles to be transported to the potential



Class 599 No. 4055 was the first of four unserviceable Tyne & Wear 'Metrocars' to be sent for scrap between June and October this year. Having been loaded onto the trailer at Howdon depot on North Tyneside, it is pictured on June 28 emerging from the Tyne Tunnel at Jarrow on its way southwards for disposal. Following a decision by Nexus to abandon a community repurposing scheme, all but two Class 599s will be scrapped. ALFIE GASCOIGNE

locations that could be justified as a reasonable use of public money at a time of rising inflation and operating costs that we face," he explained.

Nexus acknowledged to *The RM* that it had known there would be "some costs involved" before expressions of interest were invited, but said it was only possible to accurately gauge costs once the full plans from each group were known. It said organisations understood from

the start that it was based on exploring options rather than "a definite commitment".

Following a period of improvement earlier this year, Metro punctuality has declined in recent months, dropping to 70% in September-October (down from 79% in August-September), putting it lower than where it was at the beginning of 2023. Nexus served a formal improvement notice to Stadler (which has

a contract for maintenance of the existing fleet as well as the yet to be introduced Class 555s) in the spring, but interim managing director Cathy Massarella has warned that the system is now entering the most challenging period in its history for performance. It will continue to rely on the life-expired Class 599s for a number of months after the first of the 46 new five-car trains are introduced in the first quarter of next year.

Subway passengers overcharged

NEARLY 4000 payments for Glasgow Subway smart card top-ups were double-charged after what Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT) explained as a "technical issue" experienced by its card system provider.

It confirmed that 3996 transactions resulted in debit and credit cardholders being charged twice on September 17. Some were still waiting for refunds into October.

"This was a one-off error on the part of a third-party contractor responsible for administering card payments," SPT explained.

"We have expressed our disappointment that this has not been resolved more quickly by our suppliers."

Refunds were expected to be made without the need to contact SPT.

Sheffield Supertram fares increase

SOME single fares went up on Sheffield Supertram from November 1, as part of wider rises on public transport in South Yorkshire aimed at helping to sustain bus services.

Unlike the single fare bus cap, which is a national Department for Transport-subsidised scheme that continues until the end of next year, the £2.00 single fare on the Supertram had been funded by the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority. The Supertram cap rose to £2.80, a price which is fixed until November 30 next year.

Concessionary child single fares for holders of Zoom Under 16 and Zoom 16-18 Travel passes increased from 80p to £1.00.

Single fares for users of Zoom Beyond 18-21 passes rose from 80p to £2.00, with return fares £4.00.



With a poppy attached to the cab side, 'Bringing People Together' Pride-liveried Siemens-Duewag Sheffield Supertram No. 120 is seen at Cathedral with a Malin Bridge-bound service on October 27. JED KENDRAY

Ricardo and GCRE agree future strategic alliance

RAIL contractor Ricardo is to provide advice for the Global Centre of Rail Excellence (GCRE), currently under development on the site of the Nant Helen opencast mine and Onllwyn Washery in Neath Port Talbot, South Wales.

Ricardo, which has agreed a memorandum of understanding with GCRE, will work with the centre's management with a particular focus on how the site will deliver approvals and certification processes for the rail industry.

The company is expected to draw upon its previous experience with clients from around the world.

When completed, the 1700-acre GCRE complex will be a fully integrated testing and research base, featuring two electrified test loops, one for vehicle trials and the other for infrastructure evaluation.

50th depot contract for Zonegreen

RAIL safety equipment specialist Zonegreen has been awarded a contract to maintain the depot personnel protection system (DPPS) at Northern's Hull Botanic Gardens depot.

The deal is the 50th maintenance agreement secured by the Sheffield-based company for a UK depot. It will perform inspections twice a year to ensure the equipment is in good working order.

DPPS (which protects staff by using Network Rail-approved derailleurs to create safe zones in which they can work) was installed in the two-road shed at the site as part of a multi-million-pound project to modernise and increase maintenance and servicing capacity which was completed last year.

The widespread winter wind of fleet changes

December timetable sees TransPennine Express 'Nova 3' sets and Northern Class 319s removed from traffic, but also the introduction of Southeastern's final Class 707s.

TRANSPENNINE Express (TPE) says it is in "active discussions" with the Department for Transport and Transport for the North regarding the future deployment of its Mk. 5a 'Nova 3' coaching stock.

With effect from the introduction of the winter timetable on December 10, TPE will operate 16 fewer trains per day, a move it claims will be short term, to simplify operations and improve reliability. This will lead to the removal from traffic of its 'Nova 3' sets (for which Beacon Rail-owned Class 68 diesel locomotives have been sub-leased from Direct Rail Services) and the use of Class 185 DMUs and Hitachi Class 802 'Nova 1' bi-mode trains between Manchester Piccadilly and Scarborough instead.

Twelve out of 13 'Nova 3' sets were used in rotation to cover five diagrams per day with 14 locomotives (Nos. 68019-032) allocated to work them. In a short-term arrangement lasting until January 2024, four (Nos. 68019/020/022/031) were loaned back to DRS from October. However, TPE says this was at the request of DRS and "does not affect" plans to "stabilise and build back" operations. It added that no final decisions have been made regarding the future of the 'Nova 3' sets, also owned by Beacon.

Northern

All 15 of Northern's Class 319 EMUs are due to be withdrawn from traffic when the timetable changes. A total of 17 Class 323s from West Midlands Railway will be cascaded as



One of Northern's complement of 15 Class 319s, all to be removed from traffic from the start of the winter timetable, No. 319386 is seen with the 11.04 Blackpool North-Liverpool Lime Street service at Edge Hill station on September 21 this year. MARK ARNOLD

replacements over the next six months, the first (No. 323208) having made its own way to Allerton depot on October 28. Although this brings to a close more than eight and a half years of operation in the north of England (the first units having been introduced on Liverpool Lime Street-Manchester Airport services in March 2015), the eight Class 769s with Northern (converted from Class 319s into bi-mode trains by Wabtec at the Brush works in Loughborough with the addition of diesel engines) will remain with the operator for Southport-Manchester services.

TfW

The last day in service for the Transport for Wales Class 175s was October 17, the number required in service having dwindled to five by the middle of the month. Some

units remained with TfW into November while they were prepared for handback to owner Angel Trains, which has listed all 27 (two car Nos. 175001-011 and three car Nos. 175101-116) as available for lease or disposal from the second quarter of 2024.

The Alstom-built DMUs, which have completed 23 years of service, have been replaced by Class 197s assembled by CAF in Newport. By early November, 36 Class 197s were part of the fleet, with 26 being used in service and units were being delivered at a rate of one every 10-13 days.

Testing on the Treherbert, Aberdare and Merthyr routes awaits the Stadler Class 756s which have so far arrived in Wales. As November got under way, 17 units (all seven three-car and 10 four-car sets) from the 24-strong class had been delivered. Already in service are

all 11 of the Class 231s from the Swiss manufacturer, while the second half of 2024 remains the target for introduction of the Class 398 Stadler Tram-trains.

Southeastern

Southeastern was on target to complete the introduction of Class 707 EMUs by December. Branded 'City Beam' by the operator, the 30 units were transferred from South Western Railway, where preparations are being made for the phased introduction of the long-awaited Class 701 'Arterio' units, beginning with Waterloo-Windsor & Eton Riverside services. The '707s' made their Southeastern debut in September 2021, but SWR retained 12 in order to maintain capacity. All have now been received and refurbished, and will displace further Class 465/466 'Networker' units.



CrossCountry Class 220 'Voyager' No. 220011 at Alstom's Central Rivers depot on July 27, 2021. PAUL BICKERDYKE

Alstom's £824m eight-year XC deal

CROSSCOUNTRY has agreed an eight-year extension to Alstom's contract to maintain, overhaul, service and clean the operator's Class 220 'Voyager' and Class 221 'Super Voyager' trains at Central Rivers depot near Burton-on-Trent.

The deal for the continuation of the Train Services Agreement (TSA), which will run until 2031, is worth around £824 million and covers 34

Class 220s and 24 Class 221s. It will also include a further seven Class 221s which are to be transferred to augment the CrossCountry fleet once they are released by Avanti West Coast.

The contract extension covers plans to reduce the weight of the units and install an intelligent engine stop start system (IESS) to reduce emissions and fuel usage.

Brodie offers refurbished Class 156 for sale

FORMER ScotRail-operated Class 156 DMU No. 156478 has been put up for sale via online auction by its owner, Kilmarnock-based Brodie Leasing.

The deadline for bids for the unit, which has covered 480,000 miles since its last major overhaul, is 15.00 on

December 6.

No. 156478 had been leased to ScotRail by Angel Trains until it was severely damaged by floodwater in December 2014 after becoming stranded between Kilmarnock and Auchinleck while working a Glasgow Central-Carlisle service. It spent several days

partially submerged, resulting in damage to the underframe and associated equipment and its interior.

Declared an insurance write-off, the unit was bought by Brodie Leasing, the sister company of Brodie Engineering, which spent around six months on the complex project to

return it to service with ScotRail in October 2016. This included electrical work, C4 and C6 overhauls and full interior and exterior refurbishment.

ScotRail's lease on the unit expired on March 31 last year, five and a half years after it re-entered service. It was no longer required due to the upcoming

timetable changes of May 2022 and was returned to Brodie shortly afterwards.

ScotRail still leases a total of 42 Class 156 units from Angel Trains, but fewer will be needed once Class 380 electric multiple unit services are inaugurated between Glasgow Central and Barrhead on December 10.

On April 2, 2017, around six months after its return to service following extensive repairs to flood damage and refurbishment, No. 156478 is pictured approaching Stonehouse bridge, west of Gretna Green, with a Dumfries to Carlisle service. THE CARLISLE KID/CC BY-SA 2.0



A BRACE OF NAMED 'TUGS': At the DCRail sidings at Willesden in north west London on November 3, DCRail Class 60 No. 60029 *Ben Nevis* (left) awaits departure with the 6Z23 14.12 empties to Tytherington Quarry in Gloucestershire, which originated at the temporary railhead at Quinton, north of Aylesbury, established for HS2 construction supplies. On the right No. 60046 *William Wilberforce* awaits departure with the 6Z33 13.47 loaded train to Quinton which had arrived from Tytherington a little earlier. The traffic, which began on October 31 to supply materials for HS2, is generating two trains per day from the quarry, each formed of 24 wagons. Constraints at Quinton mean that workings are 'topped and tailed' from Willesden, the other locomotive either being another 'Tug' or a Class 56. DCRAIL

IN REMEMBRANCE: At Hitachi's Doncaster Carr depot on November 2, London North Eastern Railway Class 800 'Azuma', No. 800111 received a cabside decal of the Royal British Legion poppy. In the run-up to events to remember those who died in the line of duty, millions of the poppies are sold each year on behalf of the RBL to raise funds to support veterans and serving armed forces personnel and their families. No. 800111 also bears the words 'To those who have served, thank you.' LNER



Plans for depot digitalisation

Automated inspection technology to be introduced at Southeastern's Ramsgate depot.

SOUTHEASTERN'S Ramsgate depot will be the location for an automated train inspection system.

It will be developed by the operator in partnership with Siemens Mobility and leasing company Eversholt Rail.

Using high-sensitivity cameras and optical laser sensors, the equipment will be capable of gathering and analysing data regarding the condition of train brake pads, third rail traction current collector shoes, wheel profiles and tread thickness. The system will also run underframe inspections.

"The technology will provide detailed information on each train in the fleet which can then be used to reduce maintenance time in the depot, ensuring the trains can continue to run reliably," explained John Butler, head of rail infrastructure customer service for Siemens Mobility in the UK and Ireland.

Programme

Southeastern says the information obtained through the technology will enable



A Class 395 'Javelin' unit and Class 375, Nos. 375621 and 375813 are in attendance at Southeastern's Ramsgate depot as classmate No. 375605 stands at the neighbouring station on June 21, 2016. SOUTHEASTERN

it to run a more efficient maintenance programme, based on demand and avoiding the need for work which would be carried out even if not needed as part of a purely mileage-based overhaul regime.

The operator believes it also has the potential to improve safety through performing consistent measurements and assessments which can be used to forecast problems and trigger alerts. "We're always looking at how we can deliver a more

reliable and sustainable railway to give better journeys for our passengers, and running a fully automated vehicle inspection system certainly helps us to do that," added Southeastern's engineering director Mark Johnson.

Design work on the system will begin at the end of this year with the aim of installing it in mid-2024.

The first automated inspections are expected to take place using it the following year.

Wagon Report

Compiled by Steven Fredrick Lappage

DEUTSCHE Bahn acquired EWS from Canadian National Railway in June 2007, rebranding the company as DB Schenker. Historically, Schenker was a road-based logistics company and today, Schenker-branded lorries and containers are a common sight on British roads.

Only one fleet of new wagons was built during this period, HLA's Nos. 82 70 6956 000-7 to 011-4, delivered by WH Davis in 2010 to design code HL 003A. Ordered to replace older stock carrying

dredged aggregates from Angerstein Wharf, they were short-lived and scrapped by 2021.

Since March 2016, railfreight operations have been carried out under the DB Cargo UK banner. Notably, this company and its forerunners have taken over various private owner wagon fleets, including British Gypsum, Brunner Mond, Marcon, National Power and RMC Roadstone. Not all the wagons remain in use, but others with now-obsolete branding are still to be seen,

especially in the Peak Forest and Warrington areas.

■ DELIVERIES from WH Davis to Drax Ltd have been IIA biomass hoppers Nos. 83 70 0698 226-3 to 239-6/ 241-2. Also new from Greenbrier Europe are FEA-G container flats Nos. 81 70 4663 201-6 to 220-6 for GB Railfreight and JNA-T box opens Nos. 81 70 5932 807-7 to 811-9.

■ RECENTLY given general repairs by Arlington Fleet Services at Eastleigh Works have been PFA container flats Nos. DRSL 92703/777/779/784/801. London Underground wagons overhauled have been hopper wagons Nos. HW 204/214/217/219/222, rail wagons Nos. RW 804/809/816, general purpose flats Nos. GP 902-904/911/913/934/938. Still on-site at Arlington are former Transplant FEA-S 'Slinger' rail handling flats Nos. 640931/933-943. The missing wagon is No. 640932, which also carried No. CM 932, for its role as a cement mixer for the B2F paved track project.

■ LORAM UK is currently rebuilding surplus Network



HTA coal hopper No. 311144 still had its EWS livery when seen at Warrington Arpley on September 9.

Rail MRA side-tippers with low side box bodies as JNA-Ys at its Derby RTC site. The programme is around two-thirds complete, the latest conversions being Nos. 81705831162-9 to 171-0. More MRA's arriving at Derby for rebuilding have been Nos. 501026/051/057/086/111/117/196-198/271-273/289-291.

■ DISPOSALS of DB Cargo UK stock have been dominated by the scrapping of redundant CDA china clay hoppers in Cornwall. Wagons were cut into sections to facilitate onward movement by road to a local scrapyard. Elsewhere a variety of other wagons have also been delivered to breakers yards at Kingsbury, Rotherham

and Sheffield.

Withdrawals have been OAA 'Squid' opens Nos. 100054/096, OBA'Bass' dropside opens Nos. 110023/706, OCA opens Nos. 112003/086/120/137/156/192/218/221/270/375/379, CDA china clay hoppers Nos. 375000-003/005-012/015-020/022/023/025/030/032/033/035/037/038/040/041/043-046/049-052/054/055/057-061/063/064/066/067/069/071/072/074-078/082/083/085/087/090/091/093-095/097/099/102-108/112-114/116-118/120/121/125/135/137, MHA/MPA* 'Coalfish' spoil and ballast opens Nos. 394112*/394*/618/812, Nos. 396112*/123/157/165.



Land Recovery JNA box wagon No. 81 70 4932 718-6 pictured at Longport (Stoke) on September 23.

LOCOMOTIVES

Allocations

37218 XHSO-XSDP
 37401 XHSO-XSDP
 37424 XHSO-XSDP
 43007 EC/EHPC-HQ/SCXL
 43008 EC/EHPC-HQ/SCXL
 43009 LA/EFPC-HQ/SCXL
 43016 LA/EFPC-HQ/SCXL
 43184 EC/EHPC-HQ/SCXL
 43238 EC/IEPC-HQ/SCXL
 43239 EC/EHPC-HQ/SCXL
 43285 EC/EHPC-HQ/COTS
 43301 EC/EHPC-HQ/COTS
 43303 EC/EHPC-HQ/COTS
 43304 EC/EHPC-HQ/SCXL
 43321 EC/EHPC-HQ/COTS
 43357 EC/EHPC-HQ/COTS
 43366 EC/EHPC-HQ/SCXL
 43378 EC/EHPC-HQ/SCXL
 57002 XWSS-XSDP
 59002 MD/DFHG-FE/DHLT
 59103 MD/DFHG-FE/DHLT
 60001 WQ/WQAA-TO/WQBA
 60015 TO/WCBT-WQ/WQBA
 60044 WQ/WQAA-TO/WQBA
 66063 WBRT-WBAE
 66068 WBRT-WBAR
 66088 WBAE-WBRT
 66089 WBAE-WBRT
 66107 WBRT-WBTT
 66186 WBRT-WBAE
 66552 LD/DFIM-FE/DHLT
 67028 WQ/WQAA-CE/WAAC
 70011 LD/DFGI-FE/DHLT
 91131 SAXL-MBEL

Liveries

DB Cargo red: 66110
FL orange: 08624
Northern Belle: 57315
+ Colas decals: 43285

Named

66508 *City of Doncaster*
 66623 *Lest We Forget*

Names removed

20132 *Barrow Hill Depot*
 43088 *Dartmouth Castle*
 43160 *Castle-an-Dinas*
 66413 *Lest We Forget*

Exported to Poland:

66526



Harry Needle's Type 1 No. 20311 being prepared for a return to service at Barrow Hill on November 14. HARRY NEEDLE

Exported to Nigeria:

43008/09/10/ 16/40, 43172/84/
 92, 43239, 43304/66

Stored/stopped locations

Crewe Gresty Bridge: 37401
EMD Longport: 56303
Great Yarmouth: 43007,
 43306/07/16/20/78
Leeds Midland Road: 59002,
 66552, 70011
Loughborough:
 92021/40/45/46
Merehead: 59103
Toton: 60015

Operational

67028

MULTIPLE UNITS

Allocations

197108/09 HQ-CH
 319215 sent for disposal
 319220 sold to MoD

323208 SO/EJHQ-AN/EDHQ

508112/37 sent for disposal
 701518/20/21/22 newly
 delivered HQ/HYHQ
 1720128 HQ-IL
 720603/07/11/12 HQ-EM
 730006/07/10/11 HQ-BY
 730044 newly delivered HQ/
 EJHQ
 730205 newly delivered HQ/
 EJHQ
 756111-15 newly delivered HQ/
 HLHQ
 777020/23/31/36 HQ-KD
 777021/22/25/27/32/34 newly
 delivered HQ/HEHQ
 777152 HQ-KD
 805006/07 newly delivered
 HQ/HFHQ

Liveries

EMR purple: 170423
Eurovision decals removed:
 777013
SWR: 444039/44,
 450085, 450112/25,

458405/16/23/25/28

+ **Andysmanclub decals:**
 185111

Named

196102 *The Shropshire Flyer*

Names removed

323208 *Five Ways*
 507026 *Councillor George Howard*
 508111 *The Beatles*

Now in passenger traffic

197108/09
 720128
 720603/07/11/12
 730006/07/10/11
 777020/23/31/36
 777152

Stored/stopped locations

Cardiff Canton: 756111-15
Crewe Basford Hall: 197031,
 197118
Derby: 730027
Doncaster Belmont: 730023/24
Eastleigh: 701004,
 701518/20/21/22
Gascoigne Wood: 730036
Holyhead: 175006/07, 175105
Iford: 175102/10
Kirkdale: 777028/30
Landore: 175003/09, 175106
MoD Bicester: 701021,
 701505/06/13/14
Old Dalby: 730031/33
Oxley: 730044, 730205,
 805006/07
Walton Old Junc: 777021/25/27
Wembley: 777022/32/34
Worksop: 465917, 466032

Disposals

EMR King George V Dock,
Glasgow: Arrival date: October 2:
 71950, 77944 (321402)
Raxstar at Eastleigh Works:
 Cut dates: October 25: 77053;
 October 30: 71582; October 31:

77005; November 2: 62666 (all
 317506)

Sims Metals, Newport: Arrival
 dates: November 9/10: 319215;
 November 11: 508112/37;
 November 14: (45)5722

HAULED COACHING STOCK

Allocations

4932 sent for disposal
 48101/03/13/15/25/31/32/33
 exported
 49101/07/11 exported

Stored/stopped locations

Crewe TMD: 12215,
 12447/52/54/61
Great Yarmouth: 40750, 40902,
 41087, 41193, 42036/38/52/
 53/97, 42234/90, 42366/68/69/
 71/72/73/76/ 80, 42585,
 44012/17/52/72, 45001/02/03/
 04/05
Spa Valley: 5035
Wensleydale Railway: 5292,
 5376
Wolverton: 40608, 42019/55,
 42571

Exported to Nigeria

48101/03/13/ 15/25/31/ 32/33,
 49101/07/11

Disposals

C.F. Booth, Rotherham: Cut
 dates: October 30: 42217;
 November 8: 42310
Ron Hull at Carnforth: Cut
 dates: Feb-April: 1644/50/
 52/70, 2108/27, 4860, 5453/63,
 5740/56, 5943, 17168(99319),
 92908, 94408/28/98, 94512/25/
 26/42, 95300, 96110/65/ 82/92
EMR Kingsbury: Arrival date:
 October 23: 4932

■ **STOCK CHANGES CORRECT AS OF NOVEMBER 15, 2023.**



Former LNER power cars Nos. 43306/320/316/307 pass Narborough, Leicestershire, on November 13, working light engine from store at Kidderminster SVR to Great Yarmouth for export. CHRIS MILNER

TRACTION PORTFOLIO



WEST COAST SURVIVORS: As they approach 50 years old, it is strange to think these former British Rail Class 87 locomotives have now spent more than a quarter of their working lives abroad in Bulgaria. Built in the first half of the 1970s, when electrification of the West Coast Main Line was extended from Weaver Junction (Cheshire) to Glasgow, 21 of the fleet of 36 were exported in the late-2000s/early 2010s for use by Bulgarian state railway company BZK and open access operator Bulmarket. This scene was captured at the locomotive stabling point at Iliyantsi on October 11 – the photographer noting that, despite some reports to the contrary, the BZK '87s' are still very much active. Visible in the line are the former Nos. 87003, 87004 (still named *Britannia*), 87029, 87028 and 87012. Also present in the line is a Grup Feroviar Român (GFR) Electroputere Class 40 electric loco, while Bulmarket Smartron No. 80 029 and EA Class No. 86 006 double-head a freight on the left. STEPHEN GINN





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The network's notable moves

RHTT

A visit to Marylebone station on Sunday, October 1, found Class 66 Nos. 66522 and 66507 top-and-tailing a Rail Head Treatment Train in the Wall Siding, having arrived as a 3J04 from Kings Norton On Track Plant Depot.

The Rail Head Treatment Train (RHTT) season along the southern section of the Midland Main Line commenced on October 3, when DB Cargo Class 66 Nos. 66041+66169 had charge of the 3J92/23.17 Toton TMD-West Hampstead Thameslink and 3J93/12.01 return. When next seen on October 6, No. 66041 had been joined by No. 66104 and this pairing became the staple for the month, including when seen on October 13, 23 and 30.

Class 66 Nos. 66010 and 66085 have been hauling RHTTs from Stapleford & Sandiacre and were observed in Nottingham on October 3, 5 and 6 and on November 6, 7 and 9.

RHTT 3570 from Broxbourne Down Tamper Siding to Broxbourne Down Tamper Siding runs via Hertford East, Cheshunt, Seven Sisters, Enfield Town, Shoeburyness, West Ham, Pitsea, Upminster and Grays. On Tuesday, October 10, the train was seen three times as it travelled on the London Tilbury & Southend system.

Top-and-tailed by Class 69 Nos. 69002 *Bob Tiller CM&EE* and 69003 *The Railway Observer*, it was first seen passing through Thorpe



Transport for Wales 'Flirt' No. 231010 slows for a stop at Hengoed on November 1, while working the 2R12/13.03 Penarth to Rhymney. The former high level line through the village from Pontypool Road to Neath ran on the bridge behind the unit until closure in June 1964. STUART WARR

Bay with No. 69003 leading, having visited Shoeburyness. Somewhat later it was seen arriving from Tilbury at Pitsea station with No. 69002 now leading. At Pitsea the train reversed heading back towards Tilbury. The train was seen for a third time at Grays station before reversing and heading back towards Rainham with No. 69003 in the lead.

On a visit to Eastleigh on October 11, GPV units Nos. DR98913+DR98963 were noted on RHTT 3580/06.16 Effingham Junction to

Effingham Junction passing by platform 3 at 12.45 with fellow units Nos. DR98915+DR98965 on 3S81/05.50 Totton Yard to Totton Yard passing through the same platform 10 minutes later, the latter returning through the same platform at 14.20.

The RHTT 3W90 from Tonbridge West Yard to Tonbridge West Yard was found alongside platform 10 at London Bridge on Sunday, October 15, headed by a very grimy Class 73 No. 73141 *Spa Valley Railway* with No. 73212

Stephen Eaves at the rear. The train was seen a little later passing platform 2 at Brockley station, where No. 73141 was observed carrying '90' in the head code display, a reference to the train number 3W90. This diagram runs via Redhill, Brighton, Three Bridges, Horsham, Dorking, London Bridge, Uckfield, East Grinstead, Norwood Junction, Horsham and Redhill.

GPV unit Nos. DR98921+DR98971 visited Littlehampton on the Horsham to Horsham RHTT on October 17, working via Bognor Regis, Havant and Brighton. The same working on October 25 had Nos. DR98919+DR98969 when noted at Littlehampton. The same pairing visited Littlehampton twice on October 29. The next day saw Nos. DR98966+DR98916 for a change.

On Sunday, October 29, RHTT 3W94 from East Grinstead to Tonbridge West Yard was seen passing platform 1 at Sutton top-and-tailed by Class 57 Nos. 57306 *Her Majesty's Railway Inspectorate 175* and 57305. It was noted again passing platform 9 at Wimbledon.

Although the leaves have taken their time to drop from the trees this year, the East Anglian RHTT season began in earnest at the beginning of October from the revitalised GBRf depot at Stowmarket.

Before the arrival of Class 66

DRS-loanees Nos. 66421 *Gresty Bridge TMD* and 66430 at the Suffolk depot, the first few trips on the southern route as 3S30 (overnight) and 3S60 (daytime) were in the hands of the pairings of Class 66 Nos. 66753 *EMD Roberts Road* and 66776.

Nos. 66779 *Evening Star* and 66760 *David Gordon Harris* were noted at Harwich International as they used platform 3 to stop and reverse down the Harwich branch – the first port of call on the southern RHTT working that takes in Shenfield and the branch to Southend Victoria, returning down to Colchester for the Clacton-on-Sea branch before heading back to base at Stowmarket.

These six locomotives have changed pairings occasionally and on October 26 at Harwich International on the 3S60 diagram No. 66779 was noted working with No. 66421. Towards the end of the month, GBRf Classmates Nos. 66724 *Drax Power Station* and 66728 *Institution of Railway Operators* also joined the fray.

Avanti West Coast

A journey south from Manchester to Euston on October 10 on the 09.15 found the service leaving 16 minutes late due to the late arrival of the incoming train from Euston. Progress was not bad going south but arrival was 19 minutes late



Class 37s Nos. D6851 (37667) *Flopsy* and D6817 (37521) open up as they head south-west from Eastleigh on November 3, hauling Mk.1 No. 3140, Mk.3 No. 41162 and HST power car No. 43049 *Neville Hill* as the 5Z43/10.00 Eastleigh Arlington to Crewe via Salisbury, Bath and Hereford on November 3. STEVE STUBBS

at Euston, nonetheless. The return journey was on the 15.33 from Euston to Piccadilly, via Crewe. The train ran well until Lichfield, where slow running was experienced and when the service left Crewe, 12 minutes late, it was stuck behind local service trains, so more time was lost and arrival at Piccadilly was 23 minutes late.

A correspondent travelled from Oxenholme The Lake District station to Carlisle on Monday, October 23, and encountered the following: at 10.15 passengers were told that a freight train had broken down between Penrith and Oxenholme that would have a huge impact on all rail services north of Lancaster.

The 10.38 Oxenholme to Glasgow Central TransPennine Express service met no trains heading south until it encountered the errant freight locomotive and its containers heading slowly south at Great Strickland at 11.03.

The Avanti West Coast 08.52 Edinburgh Waverley to London Euston via Birmingham New Street was held in Penrith station, while the TransPennine Express 09.06 Glasgow Central to Manchester Airport was held at signals by Thacka Lane, Penrith and the Avanti West Coast 09.36 Glasgow Central to London Euston was held at

signals near the River Petteril. The TransPennine Express 13.00 Edinburgh Waverley to Manchester Airport was held at Carlisle station. The Avanti West Coast 10.38 Glasgow Central to London Euston was cancelled.

Services had not been restored fully at Carlisle by 20.00. The TransPennine Express 18.04 Manchester Airport to Edinburgh Waverley terminated at Carlisle platform 3 and passengers heading north had to transfer to platform 1 where the 18.12 Edinburgh Waverley to Manchester Airport service had been terminated at Carlisle. The train at platform 3 now formed the 20.23 Carlisle to Manchester Airport service which arrived at Oxenholme two minutes late at 21.10.

LNER

Disruption hit the ECML on Monday, October 16, when at around 13.00 on Doncaster station it was announced that there were signalling problems between Huntingdon and Peterborough, and trains would be subject to delay.

The 1A29/12.47 to King's Cross with No. 800113 was held at platform 3A. The train had started at Leeds as there was no train crew to start it as booked from Harrogate.

Next to arrive was 1A30 with Class 91 No. 91109 from Leeds which formed the 13.19 to

King's Cross. This was held at platform 1.

The 1A94 from Hull which forms the 13.25 to King's Cross arrived on platform 3B at around 13.50 and it was announced that all passengers affected on the three trains, as well as those that had arrived since, could choose to continue their journey via Sheffield.

It was also announced that 1A94 from Hull would be going no further and 1A31/13.47 to King's Cross was also cancelled. A mass migration then took place from the 23 coaches on platforms 1 and 3 as passengers and luggage headed to platform 4 to try and board the five-coach CrossCountry Voyager which would take them to Sheffield.

Between 13.00 and 19.00, 25 trains were subsequently cancelled either going to or from London. Of the aforementioned services, the 1A30 departed at 14.34, 75 minutes late, arriving at King's Cross at 16.48, 110 minutes late. The 1A29 departed at 14.36, 109 minutes late arriving King's Cross at 17.00 150 minutes late.

The following information was taken from the Network Rail website: "Teams have been informed by Network Rail of a number of incidents earlier today between Huntingdon and Peterborough. Services may be cancelled or altered

at short notice. Please check before leaving to start your journey today.

"All lines have reopened following a number of incidents between Huntingdon and Peterborough. Trains may still be severely delayed by up to 45 minutes or cancelled. Major disruption is expected until 21.00."

Great Western Railway

During a visit to West Ealing station on Saturday, October 14, evidence was seen of preparations for running battery trains on the Greenford Loop. Two short sections were noted on the track beside platform 5 where three short lengths of rail, divided by insulating boards, were in place between the running rails. The two short sections were about a carriage length apart.

On October 18, the 1C55/06.00 Paddington to Penzance worked by Class 802 No. 802102 was stuck by an 'exceptional' wave and coasted to a stand at Teignmouth Down platform. With the down line blocked by the failed Class 802, all traffic after 09.10 was being worked via the reversible line.

ScotRail

A forecast of heavy rain and the yellow weather warning in place on October 27 resulted in speed restrictions being imposed. Direct services between the Central Belt to Aberdeen and Inverness did not run.

Passengers travelling between Edinburgh or Glasgow and Aberdeen/Inverness needed to change at Perth, for travel to Inverness, or Dundee for travel to Aberdeen. A shuttle train service ran between Inverness and Perth calling at all stations but was subject to delay due to the imposed speed restrictions.

At 16.39 on the afternoon of Thursday, November 2, Scottish Power Networks alerted its customers of an unplanned power outage affecting parts of Edinburgh. Very shortly afterwards it was reported that all train movements which operated to or via Edinburgh Waverley were at a standstill due to a power cut.

It would appear that with the exception of the 2G38/16.00 Cowdenbeath to Edinburgh, and the 1S41/07.27 from Plymouth, all trains were stopped in station platforms.

A check using Real Time Trains showed no train movements taking place from the loss of the signalling until the close of the ScotRail service.

By the following morning

signalling had been restored, but with stock out of position, and the blanket speed restrictions because of the weather warning for heavy rain, cancellations and short-formed trains were highly evident.

Transpennine Express

Following repairs at Brodies, Kilmarnock Class 397 No. 397007 was returned to Longsight on November 3, top-and-tailed by Class 37 Nos. 37608 and 37510.

First Hull Trains

On November 8 the 07.53 Hull Trains Beverley-King's Cross with No. 802303 suffered what seemed to be an electrical systems failure whilst on the up fast line near Werrington. The train came to a stand between Tallington and Werrington. After a delay of about 10 minutes, it switched to diesel power and arrived in London 19 minutes late.

Grand Central

On a visit to King's Cross station on Monday, October 2, the 1D73/14.56 departure to Bradford Interchange was seen alongside platform 2 formed of Voyager No. 221143, the driving cars of which now carry Grand Central livery. The remaining cars have not been reliveried, and viewed from the footbridge it was clear the Virgin red roof remains throughout the train.

Also present was the 1N95/14.27 to Sunderland at platform 4 formed of Class 180 No. 180101.

Transport for Wales

A further delivery of new Class 756 units Nos. 756111+756113+756112 were moved from Dollands Moor to Ripple Lane by Class 92 No. 92015 and Class 66 No. 66001 on October 24, with the Class 66 taking them through to Cardiff overnight.

Class 153 Nos. 153906+153327 were seen while passing through Heaton Norris Junction on October 27, making an interesting appearance with 1V46 Manchester Piccadilly to Cardiff Central TfW service.

West Midlands Railway

Movements of the new Class 730 units reported include new No. 730206 being delivered to Oxley from Derby behind No. 37510 on October 13, after which the Class 37 took Nos. 730025+730034 from Oxley to Doncaster Belmont. This was followed by No. 730205 delivered to Oxley by Class 37 No. 37611 on October 26, after which the Class 37



A wide angle view of Wigan Wallgate from the adjacent car park on November 2, as Northern Class 158 DMU No. 158759 has just arrived with the 11.17 from Leeds via Brighouse and Rochdale, while an unidentified classmate prepares to leave with the 13.49 to Leeds in the background. PHIL WALLIS



The throb of diesel engines can still be heard at King's Cross in the form of Grand Central DMUs, which include 'Adelantes' Nos. 180114 (left), and former EMR No. 180110 seen side by side in platforms 1 and 2 on October 31, forming the 10.57 to Bradford Interchange and 11.27 to Sunderland respectively. JOHN HEATON



Sleeping giants at a spotless Neville Hill depot, Leeds, on October 15, as LNER electrics Nos. 91130 *Lord Mayor of Newcastle* (left) and 91101 *Flying Scotsman* (right) await maintenance, while DVT No. 82205 lurks in the background. Note the buffers on No. 91130 have been turned through 90 degrees. RICHARD GENNIS

took No. 730023 from Oxley to Doncaster Belmont.
 The same Class 37 moved Nos. 730031+730033 from Oxley to Old Dalby on October 30.
 New No. 730044 arrived at Oxley behind No. 37611 on November 2. The following day No. 37800 moved No. 730024 from Oxley to Doncaster Belmont, followed by the Class 37 then taking No. 730036 from Belmont to Gascoigne Wood. November 6 found No. 730027 being returned from Oxley to Derby by No. 37611.
 In a highly unusual move on October 15, Class 08 No. 08805 was towed from Soho to Nemesis Rail, Burton-upon-Trent by Class 47 No. 47815.

MerseyRail
 Further new Class 777s have been delivered with Nos. 777025+777027+777021 being taken north from Dollands Rail to Wembley on November 1 by Class 66 No. 66065 before RailAdventure Class 43 Nos. 43468+43480 and 43465+43484 top-and-tailed the rake from Wembley to Walton Old Junction.
 As new stock arrives, so the Class 508s are sent for scrap with Nos. 508112+508137 taken from Birkenhead to Sims Metals, Newport by Class 37 No. 37800 on November 6.

Chiltern Railways
 The stock on Wembley Light Maintenance Depot was noted from a passing train on Monday, October 30. Amongst the multiple units were Class 68 Nos. 68012, stabled on its own, and 68013 *Peter Wreford-Bush* stabled on a rake of Mk.3 coaches.

London Overground
 On Tuesday, October 17, Class 378 No. 378220 was seen at Kensington Olympia forming the 2L47/16.22 from Clapham Junction to Stratford carrying a measuring instrument attached to the forward facing lamp bracket.

Govia Thameslink Railway
 During the afternoon of November 2, Class 700 No. 700102 working 9J42/13.55 Horsham to Peterborough, was involved in a de-wirement just north of Huntingdon at approximately 16.35, blocking the down slow line. Behind it was the 4E39 which was heavily delayed and arrived at Peterborough 369 minutes late. With the slow line blocked, a train-to-train rescue involved Azuma No. 800108 sent as 1Z99 from Peterborough.
 Traffic was stopped north and south of Huntingdon to allow the Azuma to reverse over

crossovers north of the station and position next to No. 700102.
 Some LNER trains were diverted via Cambridge and March, while all electric Lumo services were cancelled. Some sets stuck south of Huntingdon were able to work past the stricken unit using their emergency engines.
 Delays were very heavy, in some cases in excess of four hours. Most afternoon LNER trains to Edinburgh terminated short at Newcastle because of the power failure on the afternoon of November 2, which completely disrupted arrivals and departures at Edinburgh Waverley for around seven hours. There were also dozens of cancellations. The failed Thameslink unit was not finally removed towards Peterborough until 10.40 the following morning.
Elizabeth Line
 During a visit to Ealing Broadway on Saturday, October 14, Class 345 No. 345055 was noted forming the 9R92/14.17 from Abbey Wood to Reading. The unit now carries Every Story Matters livery on the driving cars.
c2c
 The first day of operation in regular service for the new

Class 720 trains is reported to have been Wednesday, September 27. From their entry into service, a pair of Class 720s Nos. 720609+720610 has worked one morning train from Thorpe Bay to Fenchurch Street and then one evening train from Fenchurch Street to Shoeburyness. Early in October a second pair of Class 720s has been allocated to one morning and one evening train. By the end of October, all but 720608 had been reported in traffic.
 A correspondent took a ride on the new units on Tuesday, October 10, from Pitsea to Shoeburyness on the 1B80/17.16 from London Fenchurch Street to Shoeburyness with Nos. 720602+720604. At Shoeburyness the pair were then seen as empty stock 5S17 to Shoeburyness Carriage Servicing Depot. A little later, still at Shoeburyness Nos. 720609+720610 were noted arriving as the 1B86/17.43 from Fenchurch Street. Apart from their livery and interior colours there is little difference between the Class 720 now in use on c2c and their fellows on Greater Anglia.
 Both operators have the trains configured with a mix of 2+2 and 2+3 seating, with a very narrow aisle where there

is 2+3 seating. They also share the same poor window to seat alignment. In comparison with the Class 357 used by c2c, the Class 720 have firmer seats and a livelier ride.
South Eastern Trains
 Further units have been moved away from Gillingham to Worksop for storage with Nos. 465934+466030 being towed by Class 37 No. 37884 on October 12, followed a week later on October 19 with the class 47 taking Nos. 466004+465915. A change on October 26 had No. 37800 used to move Nos. 465917+466032.
Southern Railways
 Weekend engineering work on the Brighton Main Line between Earlswood and Purley saw the fast lines blocked with services diverted via Redhill on October 14/15. This did not prevent the Eastleigh to Earlswood ballast trains running along the Sussex West coastway route. Class 66 Nos. 66709 *Sorrento* and 66850 *David Maidment OBE* and Class 70 No. 70802 were all noted passing Ford on October 14. The return trip for No. 70802 to Eastleigh was some 80 minutes late and was diverted from Redhill via Guildford possibly making this the

first Class 70 along the Surrey Downs route.

Disruption to services on Monday, October 16 was caused due to a points failure within the depot at Brighton resulting in short formations and a few cancellations with units trapped in Brighton Depot.

The 06.40 Littlehampton to London was formed of Class 377 Nos. 377445+377119 instead of the booked 12. Likewise, the 07.10 Littlehampton to London was short formed of Nos 377441+377440. The 07.06 Littlehampton to Portsmouth was formed with No. 377123. The 08.13 service to London was cancelled as the stock was trapped in the depot at Brighton.

Further disruption followed on Tuesday, October 17, due to defective track and signalling issues in the Clayton Tunnel, with services terminating short of their destination, including the 07.40 Littlehampton to London terminating at Gatwick Airport.

Additionally, on October 17, there was a Class 377 variation on the Littlehampton to Portsmouth and Bognor Regis services with unit No. 377450 running instead of a Class 377/3. However, it did not last for long as No. 377317 became available at Selhurst and was tripped to Littlehampton as the 11.20 ECS (Empty Coaching Stock) move. On arrival at Littlehampton, it formed the 12.55 service to Portsmouth.

The problems continued on Thursday, October 19 when

signalling issues occurred in the Balcombe Tunnel area. All services from Littlehampton were terminated at Haywards Heath with passengers changing for other services heading towards London.

The terminations of the Littlehampton services at Haywards Heath meant that the services from London bound for Littlehampton were starting at Hayward's Heath. However, one train ran throughout from London to Littlehampton and that was the 17.33 from London Bridge formed of Nos. 387215+387222 which arrived in Littlehampton some 20 minutes behind schedule.

The 14.46 Victoria to Littlehampton was in trouble on October 25, at Haywards Heath, with a fault underneath the train formed of Nos. 377121+377153 which needed fitters from Brighton to attend. The units were taken out of service, resulting in the 16.42 ex-Littlehampton to London and the 18.46 return to Littlehampton all being cancelled. Eventually the 18.46 to Littlehampton was reinstated with Nos. 377109+377127 as they became available.

The East Coastway services were strengthened due to the Brighton & Hove home game at Falmer and also no access to the main line due to engineering work between Brighton and Three Bridges on October 29. Units utilised were Nos. 377143, 377210, 377309/11/19/28, 377405/10/27/36/37/47/55/75

and 378216/24. Meanwhile, Brighton to London and return services were diverted via Littlehampton and the Arun Valley Line with the following noted at Littlehampton: 377123/28, 377211, 377425/34/48/58/70, 387202/06/09/15/19/21/23/26/27.

Services were disrupted due to a trespasser on the line at Angmering on October 30, with the 07.17 Portsmouth Harbour to Brighton, formed of No. 377458, diverting into Littlehampton. Passengers were detrained and had to wait for the 08.43 to London which had a 15 minute late start with unit No. 377208. The 09.00 Brighton to Portsmouth started from Littlehampton.

The opposite direction saw the 08.16 Victoria to Littlehampton formed with Nos. 377127+377413 diverted from Three Bridges to run nonstop via the Arun Valley Line due to signalling problems at Preston Park. The 10.13 return to London ran via its booked route via Hove.

Heavy rain in Sussex on October 31 played havoc with the Class 377s. The 05.11 Littlehampton to Victoria and 07.46 return was formed of No. 377431 only, the other unit No. 377104, was pulled from service with a leaky cab. The 06.55 Bognor Regis to Victoria with No. 377121 was also taken out of service with a leaky cab.

The portion from Portsmouth Harbour with No. 377460 was terminated at Barnham unit but continued in the 06.55 timings ex-Bognor

Regis also running as a single unit. No. 377121 was sent to Littlehampton and combined with No. 377104; the defective pair put away into the sidings to avoid blocking the station with the running of other services.

The 07.46 ex-Victoria with No. 377431 was combined with Nos. 377104+377121 to form the 09.50 ECS move to Brighton depot running as a 12-car '377' instead of eight.

South Western Railway

Refurbished Class 458 No. 458425 was returned to Eastleigh top-and-tailed by Class 50 Nos. 50007+50049 on October 11.

Further deliveries of new Class 701 units in recent weeks include No. 701516 from Derby to Eastleigh on October 11, hauled by Class 47 No. 47727. This was followed by No. 701518 also behind No. 47727, on October 23. No. 701002 was moved south on October 27 behind No. 47749. On November 1, No. 701520 made the journey south hauled by No. 47727.

Just as new deliveries take place, others are being moved to MoD sites for secure storage prior to entering traffic, with No. 701506 being hauled to Bicester by No. 47749 on October 26 with the Class 47 taking No. 701513 there on October 30. No. 701021 joined them at Bicester on November 2, hauled by No. 47727.

A further move on November 9 found the Class 47 again in use, this time, to move Nos. 701514+701505 from

Willersden to Bicester.

Observations at Romsey on the afternoon of Saturday, October 14, saw general late running and a signal failure. At 12.07, Class 158 No. 158880 on a service to Salisbury via Chandler's Ford, Eastleigh, Southampton and Romsey started six minutes late at 12.13, calling nine minutes late at Romsey at 13.01 and it arrived nine late at Salisbury.

The signals at the southern end of both platforms failed, remaining red for much of the rest of the afternoon with trains passing at danger under the control of Eastleigh signalmen.

Class 159 No. 159006 on the 13.07 Romsey to Salisbury via Chandler's Ford, Eastleigh, Southampton and Romsey again left 13 minutes late at 13.20, calling at Romsey again 14 late at 14.05.

No. 158880 reappeared on the 13.20 ex-Salisbury, arriving at Romsey four minutes late and left nine late at 13.29. It remained nine late via Southampton and Eastleigh and arrived 12 minutes late at Romsey at 14.15. This formed the 14.07 to Salisbury via Chandler's Ford, Eastleigh, Southampton and Romsey again, but was held to 14.40, (33 late) and was terminated on arrival at Southampton Central from Eastleigh 34 minutes late at 15.09.

Things began to improve when the 14.19 (13.56 ex-Salisbury) to Southampton, Eastleigh and Romsey, left only three minutes late with No. 158888 in charge.



Taken with permission and from a position of safety, this shot at Goonbarrow Junction – the passing loop on the Par to Newquay line – shows a GWR 'Castle' set with power cars Nos. 43189 *Launceston Castle* and 43186 working the branch on November 13, deputising for DMU No. 150219 which had a warning horn fault. The HST ran three round trips, and is pictured returning from Newquay at lunchtime, passing the recently introduced JIA wagons for the Carne Point china clay service on the left. CRAIG MUNDAY



ROG No. 37611 *Denise* hauled a rake of former CrossCountry Mk.3s from Barrow Hill to Great Yarmouth carriage sidings on November 13, the 5L48/08.48 departure seen passing Barrow upon Soar as GBRf's No. 66717 heads away light engine. CHRIS MILNER



GBRf's No. 69009, painted in green undercoat, is seen at Petts Wood Junction, South East London, on October 24, hauling the 4Y19/12.24 Mountfield to Southampton Western Docks gypsum empties. WILLIAM CLARK

Charter Trains

On Saturday, October 21, the Pathfinder Railtours excursion 'The Cumbrian Coastal Express' top and tailed by West Coast Class 47 Nos. 47802 and 47812, departed from Bristol Temple Meads a couple of minutes late on its scheduled 05.34 departure heading to Carlisle. All went well until it reached Bromsgrove where the train was halted by platform 2 at 07.11.

It transpired that Network Rail workers were on the Blackwell Summit at the top of the 'Lickey Incline' and were waiting for daylight before they could inspect the track. The Network Rail website said that the line would not reopen until 09.00, so everyone settled down for a long wait. However, at 07.21 the train was given permission to proceed, which it did, just nine minutes late.

At Bromsgrove North Junction the train crossed over to the down Gloucester (not a bi-directional signalled line and so an extremely unusual movement) and then proceeded up the Lickey 'wrong line' at a very slow speed. At Barn Green the train was 19 minutes behind schedule as it took the first facing crossover and went via the 'Up Gloucester Slow' line before crossing back to the up Gloucester fast at Longbridge. The tour then went as planned and arrived in Carlisle just two minutes down.

During the two-hour break, the train was serviced with the Class 47s detached and sent back light to Carnforth to refuse so that they would take the train back south. In their place was SR 'Merchant Navy' Pacific No. 35018 *British India Line* which would haul the train around the Cumbrian coast. The train departed on time and in good weather made its way out to and then along the coast; the Isle of Man

could be seen on the horizon.

It was 19 minutes late leaving Sellafield after stopping to take on water, but had made up five minutes when it passed Barrow-in-Furness. It was then that the problem occurred; going up towards and across Dalton Junction the loco ran out of 'puff' and as there was no back-up diesel on the rear of the train it came to a halt just before Dalton (Cumbria) station. The train was now completely blocking the Up Main and although a number of down trains passed, all the up trains were either cancelled or held at Barrow-in-Furness.

The two Class 47s then came out as 'Thunderbirds' but had to go towards Barrow-in-Furness before they could crossover and proceed back towards the rear of the train. Having arrived and coupled up, they then put on full power to push the train over the summit and Dalton (Cumbria) station was passed 136 minutes down. At Carnforth the steam loco was uncoupled and one of the '47s' (too dark to see which one) then uncoupled from the rear and ran round and coupled up at the front. The train departed from Carnforth 161 minutes down.

No time was made up as the train headed south until it reached Bushbury Junction, and instead of taking the Grand Junction line as scheduled, it was routed into Birmingham New Street. It left there 147 minutes down and as it was now so late there was no need to take the Ashchurch Loop in order to allow a service train to pass; this got back another 18 minutes.

Another problem then arose because as the last scheduled service train had left Bristol Parkway at 23.23 (the charter train had been scheduled to set down passengers and depart at 22.55), GWR had closed the station and so the train

passed through at 00.45 and finally arrived at Bristol Temple Meads at 00.52, 102 minutes late. There was then a long queue of taxis waiting to take the passengers, stewards and catering staff back to Bristol Parkway, while everyone else headed to their hotels or home, after what had been a very long day.

Operated by RailAdventure, the 125 Group's Midland Venturer HST railtour on October 28 ran with Class 43 Nos. 43159 and 43089 top-and-tailing six trailers as the 1Z43/07.50 Ilkeston to London St Pancras and 1Z46/16.19 return.

DB Cargo

Observations at Eastleigh on October 11 produced Class 66 No. 66143 4M71/09.51 Southampton Western Docks to Birch Coppice fully-loaded intermodal, while No. 66200 worked through at 12.15 with 03.30 Wakefield Europort to Southampton Western Docks, returning later in the afternoon at 16.15 with the return 4E68 to Wakefield Europort. A pristine-red No. 66079 *James Nightfall G.C.* sped through on the down fast in charge of 4O39/12.57 Morris Cowley MAT to Southampton Eastern Docks covered car-wagons.

The only DB Cargo scrap working these days runs from Cardiff Tidal to Sunderland and back, with No. 66061 working the diagram on October 12 and again on October 17 and 19. A change of power on October 24 found No. 66019 work from Cardiff to Sunderland and through to Tees Yard with No. 66032 returning the loaded wagons to Cardiff. Further changes on October 28 had No. 66099 work throughout, with No. 66152 on November 2.

Class 66 No. 66061 moved Class 37 No. 37703 from Worksop to Westbury on

October 16, continuing the following day to Paignton and preservation on the Dartmouth Steam Railway.

Parcel units Nos. 325013+325005+325015 worked a Shieldmuir to the new postal facility at Daventry on October 17.

On Wednesday, October 18, the 4M25/06.04 Mossend to Daventry fully loaded container service, pulled by green liveried DB Class 66 No. 66004 coupled in front of original liveried No. 66174, passed through Lancaster 119 minutes late at 14.08 having been earlier delayed in Carlisle.

Class 60 No. 60015 was observed hauling the empty steel to Boston (6E01 Wolverhampton to Boston and 6E02 Toton to Boston) and the loaded steel from Boston until October 18.

The Humber Refinery to Kingsbury tanks were disrupted by flooding in the Midlands caused by Storm Babet. 6E54 Kingsbury to Humber Refinery empty tanks was cancelled due to severe flooding on Friday, October 20 and then ran as 6E68 on October 22, but via Nottingham rather than Derby, which is the normal route for this Sunday working.

No trains ran on October 21. Class 60 No. 60040 *The Territorial Army Centenary* hauled 6E54 Kingsbury to Humber Refinery empty tanks from October 27 to November 6. It hauled 6M00, the afternoon Humber Refinery to Kingsbury loaded tanks, on November 4, when 6M35 and 6E54 were cancelled.

Class 60 No. 60062 *Sonia* was observed hauling the 6H02 Warrington Arpley to Tunstead hoppers through Acton Bridge on October 31.

Freightliner

Freightliner has announced the launch of 25 additional

weekly services. From October 2, Freightliner is running a new route from Felixstowe to Daventry. A new route from Southampton to Cardiff was also introduced on October 2. Other services launched on October 2 include Grangemouth to Daventry, Southampton to Leeds, Felixstowe to Manchester, Manchester to Birmingham, Birmingham to London Gateway and Birmingham to Felixstowe.

The only freight seen through Luton on October 2 was Class 66 No. 66623 on the empty Tarmac tanks from West Thurrock to Tunstead.

Noted at Eastleigh on October 11, Class 66 No. 66591 working 6V62/13.21 Southampton Up Yard to Whatley Quarry empty box wagon consist through platform 1, followed by No. 66570 on 4S59/14.57 Southampton MCT to Coatbridge FLT intermodal. Later in the afternoon, a double-headed Class 70 Nos. 70015 and 70008 (DIT) were in charge of 4O35/09.55 Crewe Basford Hall to Southampton MCT.

Class 66 No. 66526 has been exported to Poland, being hauled from Leeds Midland Road to Immingham Docks by No. 66413 on October 24.

Class 66 No. 66501 was noted running light engine from Eastleigh via Worthing and the Brighton Main Line on October 30 and 31, in use as a route refresher from Southampton to Crawley New Yard as a freight service is to start in December from Westbury to Crawley New Yard to run via Salisbury, Fareham, Chichester, Worthing, Hove and the Brighton Main Line.

It is assumed this will replace the Merehead to Chichester yard service. If this is the case, it will be the first freight service for over 20 years ▶

since the Sussex Thunderer, which ran from Westbury to Ardingly, mainly hauled by Class 56 locomotives with the occasional Class 33s and 47s.

DRS

Class 68s Nos. 68003+68033 pulled a single white FNA flask from Sellafield as 6K73/08.23 via Ulverston to Crewe on the morning of October 21.

Class 68 No. 68018 *Vigilant* and Class 88 No. 88007 *Electra* (pantograph down) pulled four white FNA flasks on Saturday, October 28, from Sellafield as 6K73/08.27 via Ulverston to Crewe.

TP liveried Class 68 No. 68020 *Reliance* ran light on Tuesday, October 31 on 0Z20/12.23 from Crewe to Carlisle.

GBRF

Reports from the Harwich area include on October 4 Class 66 No. 66799 *Modern Railways Diamond Jubilee* was dispatched from Peterborough MPD to work 6P41 empty tanks from Harwich Refinery to North Walsham, with a return loaded trip occurring the following day. A week later, on October 11, it was the turn of No. 66711 *Sence* to be allocated, with again the loaded set returning the next day.

The next week, however, saw a double working for the tank train – the first on Monday, October 16, when ex-DRS Class 66 No. 66303 ran to North Walsham, returning on the 17th, followed by a repeat with the same loco on October 18/19. The '66' then ran back to Peterborough later in the evening on the 19th under the normal light engine 0E06 movement. That double trip in the week was followed by a run-less week on October 23-28.

It was no surprise on Monday, October 30, to see No. 66748 *West Burton 50* arrive from Peterborough MPD as the 0L23 to prepare the empty tank consist to leave on the normal 6P41 diagram to the Norfolk terminal, returning the loaded set the following day before embarking on another repeat on November 1 and 2 and then taking the normal 0E06 back to Peterborough MPD in the evening.

Weekend stopovers into Harwich Parkeston Quay yard on October 7 featured No. 66703 *Doncaster PSB 1981-2002* on 4R08 from Felixstowe at an early 07.00 and No. 66758 *The Pavior* with 4L03 (ex-Doncaster) arriving two hours late at 15.20 after delays at Peterborough. Their departures on Monday, October 9, constituted

No. 66758 working 4Y66 round to Felixstowe at 11.02, while No. 66703 now departed with 4M22 bound for Trafford Park via London North Orbital route.

October 14 saw No. 66780 *The Cemex Express* arrive with 4L43 (ex-Doncaster i-Port) intermodal and later in the day No. 66701 brought 4L28 round from Felixstowe and a similar switch around occurred with the latter taking 4Y66 round to Felixstowe at 10.06 with No. 66780 taking 4M22 to Trafford Park on October 16. It was No. 66715 *Valour* on 4L43 (ex-Peterborough) and No. 66749 *Christopher Hopcroft MBE 60 Years Railway Service* coming round from Felixstowe with 4A28 on October 21. Their departures on October 23 were unusual again with No. 66749 taking 4M22 to Trafford Park and No. 66715 waiting until 17.30 to leave for Doncaster 1-Port as 4Z43 – neither working round to Felixstowe.

No. 66715 turned up again on October 28, working 4L43 from Doncaster i-Port and No. 66780 on 4A28 from the Suffolk port at 21.15. The switch happened again on October 30, the former hitched onto 4M22 for Trafford Park leaving at 11.20 and the latter going back to Felixstowe with 4Y66 at 09.15.

Unusually, on Wednesday, November 1, perhaps because of the impending Storm Ciaran predicted to have winds in excess of 80mph along the exposed Essex/Suffolk coast, No. 66701 arrived in Harwich Parkeston Quay yard late that evening with 4Z66 from Felixstowe; the storm having passed through and winds abating, No. 66701 left on November 2 at 17.35 with 4Z03 bound for Doncaster i-Port.

A trip to Eastleigh by a correspondent on October 11 discovered Class 59 No. 59003 *Yeoman Highlander* in the East Yard sidings, a few days after release from Arlington Depot, later taking a light engine workout trip over and back to Salisbury via the Romsey branch in the early afternoon. Class 66 No. 66721 *Harry Beck* was noted on 4046/03.10 Trafford Park to Southampton Western Docks through platform 3 at 09.45, and later that afternoon working the return 4M46/15.00 Southampton Western Docks to Trafford Park.

No. 66725 *Sunderland* worked over from Westbury light engine under 0V41 and proceeded to work into Arlington Depot to remove Rail Milling Machines Nos. DR79601-04 and leave them in East Yard sidings before heading back to Westbury. The

4M19/11.50 Southampton Western Docks to East Midlands Gateway intermodal with No. 66789 *British Rail 1948-1997* worked through platform 1 at 12.40.

Scrap trains reported from and to Liverpool include on October 18 No. 66797 working from Small Heath yard to Swindon where the train is loaded before returning to Liverpool. The same diagram on October 25 was powered by No. 66719. Two days later, No. 66719 worked a Liverpool-EMR Kingsbury-Liverpool diagram. The same loco was again reported on November 3 on the Liverpool-Swindon-Liverpool circuit. A change on November 8 found No. 66797 on a Liverpool-Kingsbury-Liverpool diagram.

MoD traffic reported includes Class 66 No. 66791 working from Marchwood to Kineton and through to Longton on October 23, returning to Kineton the following day. It was out again on October 31 working from Donnington to Marchwood and then to Southampton Western Docks.

Class 69 No. 69009 was seen passing Barnes station on Tuesday, October 24, at the head of the 4Y19 from Mountfield Sidings to Southampton Western Docks. The next day, it was seen passing Staines station on the 6Y48 from Eastleigh East Yard to Hoo Junction Up Yard.

Class 66 No. 66302 was seen

at Heaton Norris Junction working 6H56 Salford Hope Street-Peak Forest Empty Cemex stone hoppers on October 27.

The daytime Hams Hall (4557) to Mossend container service was, on Monday, October 30, double-headed by Class 66s Nos. 66744+66766 pulling a train of just three containers. On the following day No.66744 single-handedly worked this same service which comprised of four containers.

Colas Rail

Class 70 No. 70808 hauled 30 tanks through Nottingham on 6M57 Lindsey Refinery to Kingsbury on Sunday, October 8. The train was delayed 212 minutes at Branton Junction and was 257 minutes late at Kingsbury Oil Sidings. The Class 70 was left at the south end of Kingsbury sidings and was rescued late afternoon on October 10. The Lindsey Refinery to Kingsbury tanks were disrupted by the flooding in the Midlands caused by Storm Babet: the 6M57 Lindsey Refinery to Kingsbury loaded tanks was stranded at Elford loop from October 20-23.

Not long out from repair, Class 70 No. 70802 worked into Eastleigh East Yard from Oxford Hinksey Sidings on October 11, where it parked up before taking a return trip back to Oxford with DB Cargo Class 66 No. 66012.

Class 37 No. 37175 was

seen passing through Heaton Chapel on October 27, working test train stock back to Derby RTC via the Hope Valley Line.

Observed at Hellfield during the morning of November 3, was Class 56 No. 56078 and the log train being loaded prior to leaving for Chirk.

West Coast Railway Co.

WCR Class 47s Nos.47813+47815 top-and-tailed a short ECS set consisting of Nos. 21269+80041+6042+9507 on Tuesday, October 17, from Burton Wetmore Sidings (5Z47/11.07) to Carnforth.

The 5Z53/09.10 Tom Na Faire depot (Fort William) to Carnforth Steamtown was observed passing Thankerton on Monday, October 30, formed of 'Black Fives' Nos. 44871 and 45407 *The Lancashire Fusilier* and nine coaches.

On November 2, Class 37 Nos. 37516 and 37668 were observed passing Thankerton hauling the second set of stock from Fort William to Carnforth, running as 5Z68/08.30.

DC Rail

Class 56 No. 56091 *Driver Wayne Gaskell* double-heading with No. 56301 were seen and heard as they roared through Wandsworth Common station on Tuesday, October 3 at the head of the 6015 from Willesden DC Rail sidings to Chessington South.

Class 60 No. 60046 *William*





DB Cargo Class 66 No. 66100 *Armistice 100* is neatly captured on Armistice Day (November 11) as it crosses the Royal Border Bridge, Berwick-upon-Tweed, with the 4E98/08.50 Mossend Euroterminal to Tees Dock intermodal working. PAUL BIGGS

Wilberforce hauled 18 box wagons of stone from Chaddesden to Brandon (6Z28) as far as March Up Refuge Siding on October 6, where it was cancelled due to a locomotive failure, thought to be a freight train already at Brandon. A train ran from March Up Refuge Siding to Barrington Unloading Pad (6Z39) on October 9 and 60046 hauled 18 empty box wagons from Barrington Unloading Pad to Chaddesden (6Z41) later that day.

Class 60 No. 60055 *Thomas Barnado* took over from No. 60046 *William Wilberforce* on the Chaddesden, Peak Forest Cemex, Brandon, King's Lynn, Middleton Towers, Ravenhead, Chaddesden circuit on October 10. The trains of 18 box wagons convey stone from Peak Forest to Brandon, sometimes direct and sometimes via Chaddesden, and sand from Middleton Towers to Ravenhead.

The Middleton Towers to Ravenhead loaded sand train (6M89) normally runs on Saturdays. On Saturday, October 14, 21 and 28 it ran only to King's Lynn, and continued to Ravenhead on the Monday or Tuesday.

Class 56 No. 56301 in Fastline livery hauled the Acton Yard to Burton-upon-Trent Maurice Hill spoil train and the Burton-upon-Trent Maurice Hill to Chaddesden train on October 18. Class 56

No. 56301 was seen arriving at Reading light engine running as 0Z60 from Acton Main Line to Reading on Wednesday, October 25. After a short pause by platform 12, it returned towards London, now running as 0Z61 from Reading to Willesden DC Rail Sidings.

These light engine moves are reported to have been for the purposes of route learning and are hopefully indicative of DC Rail winning more work on the Great Western Main Line.

Following a lengthy engineering occupation between Aylesbury and Princes Risborough, on the first day the line reopened, Monday, October 30, the 6Z22 from Quainton Railhead to Willesden DC Rail sidings was seen passing West Ruislip station top-and-tailed by Class 56 No. 56091 and Class 60 No. 60046.

Eastleigh Works

Cutting of the Class 313s was completed on October 17 when vehicle No. 62604 from unit No. 313212 was dispatched. Before this, units Nos. 313208, 313206 and 313215 had been cut by Raxstar. Just unit No. 313201 remained intact and was then sold for preservation to the 400 Series Preservation Group. It is planned it will remain at Eastleigh Works for the foreseeable future.

Other news from the site included HST power car

No. 43049 repainted in Midland Pullman blue and white livery. Also repainted is Mk.1 No. 3140 into BR carmine and cream.

Arriving at Eastleigh on October 18 was Class 317 No. 317506 from Ely hauled by Class 37 No. 37884.

A rake of three coaches Nos. 5919+6046+6173 were moved to Eastleigh from ERS Great Yarmouth on October 31 by Class 37 No. 37521.

On November 2, Class 37 No. 37667 delivered coaches Nos. 10212+44078+41182 from Crewe, returning to Crewe the next day with Nos. 37521+41162+3140+43049.

Great Yarmouth

Great Yarmouth has become a centre of attraction in recent weeks as HSTs have been sent there for dispatch by sea to overseas destinations. The power cars and coaches arrive by road and are placed in the carriage sidings before being taken the short distance by road to the docks for loading on ships for onward movement.

Following the dispatch of the first ship to Mexico in August, further stock has arrived with the following reported, on October 4 power cars Nos. 43040+43172 took Nos. 48140+48141+48142+49114 from St Philip's Marsh to Yarmouth.

On October 13, No. 43008 was moved by road direct to the docks from Laira. Three

days later Nos. 43184+43304 arrived from Neville Hill. Also, on October 16, a rake formed: 43239+41026+42051+42379+41035+42037+42342+43366 arrived from Ely.

The next reported move followed on October 30 with the following also arriving from Ely: 43007+42038+42053+42017+44012+42052+42380+43378. Two further vehicles arrived by road from Ely with No. 42036 on November 2 and 44017 reportedly the next day.

By November 5, 11 power cars and 11 coaches had been loaded onboard the *Panthera J* which set sail at 21.15 reportedly bound for Nigeria – see stock update for lists. Further stock continues to arrive with RailAdventure power cars Nos. 43468+43480 top-and-tailing Nos. 40750+42585+41087 from Ely on November 7.

Loram

Observed at King's Cross on Monday, October 2, was the 1Q18, from Darlington Up Sorting Sidings formed of Class 43 Nos. 43251 and 43274 top-and-tailing Nos. 72612+975091+72631+6263. After around 10 minutes at King's Cross the train left for Cambridge.

On Monday, October 30, the 1Q06 from Darlington formed of Nos. 43272+977984+975814+977993+977994+975984+43277 was seen at

King's Cross, departing as 1Q07/14.23 to Cambridge.

Ex-EMR Class 153 No. 153385, Video Inspection Unit No. 3, was noted through Harwich International on the afternoon of October 31, running under as 2Q30/11.08 Cambridge LHS to Norwich Goods Yard that encompassed Ipswich and the Harwich branch down to Harwich Town.

On Tuesday, October 10, the 1Q95 from Ferme Park Reception to Ripple Lane West sorting sidings was seen passing platform 4 at Pitsea station, top-and-tailed by Class 37 Nos. 37099+37421.

Inspection saloon No. 975025 *Caroline* was seen on Tuesday, October 17, being propelled into Waterloo station by Class 37 No. 37418 *An Comunn Gaidhealach* as the 2Z05/14.46 from Basingstoke. A little later No. 37418 was seen hauling *Caroline* through Kensington Olympia station, now running as empty stock 5Z03/16.10 from London Waterloo to Ferme Park Reception.

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Foynes takes shape

Track laying is scheduled to get under way in the new year as the Foynes line rebuild continues to progress.

TRACK laying on the Foynes Rail Project is due to start in January, an Iarnród Éireann spokesman confirmed to *The RM*. He said that all track on the 42km-long line had been removed with the redundant sleepers being sent to Sweden. In addition, the first 2.4km of track of the mothballed Cement Factory branch to Castlemungret which runs parallel to the Foynes line has been lifted but will also be relaid.

Lead contractor Sisk has engaged a specialist contractor to install the track from Foynes towards Limerick. This work is expected to begin in early January, with the aim to deliver 1000 metres of Continuously Welded Rail (CWR) a week, completing track laying by the end of 2024. Track will be CWR and welded by IÉ's new mobile welder, with a tamper being brought on site to tamp the newly laid track at a later stage.

Vegetation removal within the railway boundaries and

refencing continues. Substantial clearance had been completed between Adare and Foynes by early November. It is expected that the rest of the line to Limerick will be totally cleared by the end of the year.

Boundaries

A combination of fencing is being installed, including 16,000 metres of post and wire fencing with concrete posts and 1600 metres with wooden posts. In addition, two kilometres of specialist horse fencing has been installed near stud farms – while two kilometres of palisade fencing has been put up on the approaches to Limerick City and Foynes.

New drainage is being installed where required and despite recent high rainfall, the route's existing drainage has been found to be in good condition. Part of the work includes rerouting the fibre optic cable installed on the line between Limerick and

Ballingrane in the late 1990s.

By the end of October, the installation of the signalling and cabling duct routes on both sides of the trackbed had started. Ballast and aggregates, piping continues to be delivered to all bedside compounds. With 24,000 concrete sleepers from Germany already delivered and distributed to compounds along the line in advance of track laying, a third delivery of sleepers arrived by ship at Foynes on October 23.

The lifting out of all five structures which need to be replaced or removed for refurbishment has been completed. The three span Deel viaduct (UBF (LB) 7) was lifted out of place on September 6 for assessment and repair on site. Adare's three span Maigue viaduct (UBF (LB) 18) was lifted out over September 13/14 and moved to a compound nearby.

Both structures will be repaired and reinstated. A planning application as



Work continues on refencing and clearing the Foynes line of all vegetation within the railway boundary. With all track now removed, Sisk contractors are seen at Clonshire, near Adare, preparing the trackbed for the installation of the signalling and cabling ducts and track laying. The wooden fencing to the right is horse fencing and the orange flexi piping is for diverting the fibre optic cable which was laid in the line in the late 1990s. Track laying is due to start in January. HASSARD STACPOOLE

submitted to raise the River Maigue bridge by a metre to mitigate future flood events is currently subject of a planning appeal to An Bord Pleanála.

Construction

Piling for the new abutments at Robertstown viaduct (UB (BF) 18) was completed by late October and work on building the abutments for the new structure started. The new 45m single truss steel bridge is being manufactured and will be taken on site, assembled and jacked

into place early in 2024.

Sightings for the final signalling design for level crossings, including a passing loop at Adare, have been undertaken and are being finalised for final sign-off and funding confirmation. A run-around loop is set to be installed between the Port Level crossing and the former station area and will include a diamond crossover halfway, allowing trains to be split and shunted with the old coal and oil loading area used initially for loading of trains.

Green light given for Midleton doubling as work starts on extra platform

AN Bord Pleanála approved the railway order to allow the 10km Glounthane to Midleton line to be double tracked throughout. The order granted on October 26 gives Iarnród Éireann powers to double seven kilometres of single track line which reopened in July 2009, close one level crossing and widen the Owenacurra river overbridge outside Midleton station, as well as track and signalling alternations. Work is due to start in the new year and when completed will allow a 10-minute frequency to be introduced as part of the Cork Area Commuter Rail programme.

As part of this programme, construction started on October 23 at Cork Kent station on delivering an extra platform which will increase capacity at and facilitate the through-running of commuter services between Mallow and Midleton/Cobh. The existing platform 5 will have a 220-metre long, six-metre wide, double-sided extension built which will enable the creation of a new platform 6. As part of the enabling works for the new platform the former 1925 GSR signal cabin was demolished on November 4. The work also sees the reinstatement of the eastern access to the existing underpass, and the installation of canopies on the new platform.

Jim Meade, IÉ chief executive, said: "This is a hugely significant milestone for the expansion of Cork rail services, and I congratulate our project teams for bringing us to the beginning of construction."



VEG-POWER ALLOWS CARBON NEUTRAL FREIGHT: 201 Class loco No. 218 is undergoing trials to use Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) instead of diesel fuel as part of Iarnród Éireann's strategy to become carbon zero. On November 7 it worked its first freight services since conversion and is seen north of Foxford on the Ballina branch working the Dublin North Wall to Ballina liner. NOEL ENRIGHT



WEEKEND TOUR:

The Railway Preservation Society of Ireland operated a two-day 'Liffey Leisider' diesel tour to Cork via Clonmel and Limerick over the weekend of October 21/22. On the Sunday, the return leg operated to Cobh but did not go to Midleton because of flooding. It ran to Killarney instead before returning to Dublin Connolly via Dundalk. On October 21, No. 083 is seen passing Holycross south of Thurles on its way to Clonmel via Limerick Junction, before heading to Cork via Limerick. STEPHEN KING

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Indonesia opens first high-speed line

Track laying only began in April 2022 and the line was fully operational within 18 months.

THE Indonesian capital Jakarta is now connected with the city of Bandung by a 142.3km (88 miles) long 350km/h (217mph) high-speed line which was opened by Indonesian President Joko Widodo on October 2.

Branded as Whoosh, services on the new line, the first of its kind to open in the southern hemisphere, will be operated by a fleet of 12 new 350km/h EMUs built in China by CRRC. A joint venture of Indonesian and Chinese state-owned companies called PT Kereta Cepat Indonesia China (KCIC) operates the trains.

The eight-car CR400AF Yawan high-speed EMUs have seats for 600 passengers. The new line, which is electrified at 27.5kV AC, serves a combined population of more than 45 million people (the Jakarta conurbation has 34 million people and Bandung around 11 million). KCIC is planning to operate 34 train pairs daily with multiple departures per hour. There are two intermediate stations in addition to termini at both ends.

The line was funded by both the Indonesian and Chinese governments and built by Chinese construction companies. As well as trains,

the line uses signalling and communication systems supplied from China. Construction was delayed by disputes over cost increases – the project was even briefly cancelled, only to be restarted – and the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic leading to the line opening several years later than originally planned. However, construction was at an impressive rate when these difficulties had been overcome. Track laying only began in April 2022 and the line was fully operational within 18 months of this.

Diesel locos elsewhere

Plans to extend the new high-speed line east to Surabaya at the eastern end of the island of Java were originally developed but these have now been cancelled due to the forecast cost. Unlike the new standard gauge high-speed line, most other railways in Indonesia are 1067mm gauge and operated by Kereta Api Indonesia (KAI). KAI operates diesel-hauled long distance and regional services.

Services east of Jakarta connect the capital with Surabaya by two main line routes. Trains are hauled by a



One of the oldest diesel locos in passenger service, GE U18C design No. CC201 77 05 (right), dating from 1977, waits at the small station of Gedangan on May 14 with a suburban train heading into Surabaya, while an express train from Malang headed by 2013-built GE CM20EMP design No. CC206 13 47 (left) rushes past. MARK TORKINGTON

mixture of diesel locos – most are General Electric built either in the USA or with local partners in Indonesia since the 1970s. The principal loco types are GE U18C operating as KAI Class CC201 (built 1977-91) and three classes of full-width cab design locos delivered as Classes CC203, CC204 and CC206 delivered between 1995 and 2016.

KAI originally dieselised its fleet in the 1950s and 60s with several EMD export designs and Alco engine 'Shovelnose' locos. These are now withdrawn from passenger use. There are also more modern EMD diesels mainly used for freight; the older type Class CC202 are EMD type G26 (G26MC-2U) and



Repainted in the livery it was delivered in back in 1983, GE U18C design No. CC201 83 31 pauses at Cebu with a local express train from Semarang to Surabaya on May 13. MARK TORKINGTON

were built in London, Ontario between 1986 and 2002. The more modern EMD design is the

Class CC205 or EMD GT38Ace delivered from both Canada and the USA in 2011-2021.

SIDELINES

Chinese locos for Kazakhstan

KAZAKHSTAN Railways (KTZ) has agreed a contract with Chinese rail engineering company CRRC for up to 200 new mainline and shunting locomotives plus support services. CRRC has promised to invest \$200 million in a new rolling stock engineering plant. KTZ has previously bought rolling stock from CRRC but most of its latest locos have come from Alstom and Wabtec.

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STEAM SPECTACULAR AT BENEŠOV: The now regular international steam and diesel gathering in Benešov in the Czech Republic in mid-September saw multiple main line specials including several from neighbouring countries. Visiting locos also worked local trains during the event. Austrian Railways (ÖBB) 2-6-4 No. 310.23, dating from 1911, departs Kácov with the 12.15 Zruč nad Sázavou - Benešov service on September 16. DONALD TAGGART

The tour train hauled by two ONCF EMD GT26 design diesels led by No. DH411 with No. DH367 seen at Tendirara on October 5 which is the highest point on the Moroccan rail network at 1350m asl and famous as the location where James Bond went by train in the movie Spectre. ANDY DAVIS



Branch Line Society tours the Sahara desert

UK-BASED group the Branch Line Society ran a special train in Morocco in October, the first the society has ever run in Africa. Highlight of the two-day tour was a trip on the line into the Sahara Desert to Bouárfa, although plans to visit another long branch line to Jerada,

closed to passengers since the 1960s, were cancelled the day before by Moroccan Railways (ONCF) which ran the train.

The line into the Sahara Desert to Bouárfa formed part of the planned Trans-Saharan Railway. Plans had been drawn up in France in the 1920s and

in 1941 the Vichy government, allied with Germany, decided to build the line which was destined to end in Bamako in present-day Mali, from where trains could use an existing line to Dakar on the Atlantic coast of what is now Senegal. The line was never completed but

had reached Bouárfa around 290km south from the junction with the Fes to Oujda line in Morocco in 1931 and was then extended south on to Béchar in Algeria, opening in 1942.

Much of the wartime construction was done by forced labour. A 90km

extension further south to Abadla opened in 1948 but by 1962 traffic had ceased south of Bouárfa and the fact that by the mid-1960s Morocco and Algeria were separate independent countries ended the prospects for further development.

Unique US diesel hydraulic runs again

FOR the first time in decades the sole surviving German-built diesel hydraulic loco built for use in the US by Southern Pacific (SP) was fired up in late August. The loco, ex-Southern Pacific No. 9010, has been under restoration at the Niles Canyon Railway in California since 2008.

Parts have been sourced from all over the world, including the Diesel Traction Group in the UK. The SP locos were powered by the Maybach engines as used in the various BRWR diesel hydraulic designs. No. 9010

only has one working 2000hp Maybach MD870 engine (as used at a lower power rating by BR Class 35 'Hymek' locos) but that will be sufficient for operation in the future.

After six prototypes were delivered from Krauss Maffei in Munich (nowadays Siemens owns the Munich Allach factory) in 1961 – three to SP and three to Denver & Rio Grande Western (later bought by SP) a further 15 production type ML4000 locos were built in 1964 for SP. No. 9010 is one of these production locos and the sole

survivor. SP wanted to use diesel hydraulic locos as they offered much more power (two 2000hp MD870 engines per loco) than contemporary North American locos and using direct gearing did not have traction motors. However, operating experience soon showed they were much more expensive to maintain and after just five years all were withdrawn.

No. 9010 was withdrawn in September 1968 and survived as a camera-equipped trailer used to capture driver training films. When built, the locos featured cast bogies and these were made in England as Krauss Maffei did not have a German supplier which could produce them (its locos for European railways used fabricated bogies).

Many years later, the bogies now under No. 9010 would return to California via the UK too as they had been sold by SP when the rest of the locos were scrapped and a pair ended up under a track machine operated by Colas in France.

When it was scrapped, the bogies were shipped via Southampton to San Francisco.



Ferrocarriles Argentinos Baldwin No. 5037 seen at Plaza Constitución on September 23. DARIO SAIDMAN

'Sharknose' on the mainline

THE only operational Baldwin 'Sharknose' loco in Argentina visited Plaza Constitución station in central Buenos Aires on September 23 as part of the city sponsored museums weekend. Unfortunately, due to a lack of cab safety equipment the loco, No. 5037, had to be hauled by another more modern diesel. The loco is preserved at the biggest rail museum in the city; the Ferroclub located in part of the Remedios de Escalada workshops site in the southern suburbs. The Ferroclub hopes to return it to main line use in due course.

No. 5037 was built by Baldwin in the US and was one of 51 locos delivered to Argentina's state railroad Ferrocarriles Argentinos in 1953/54 (as Baldwin works numbers 75856-

75906), numbered 5001 to 5051 designated as Baldwin model RF615E. The bodywork on the export loco varied slightly from 'Sharknose' designs built for US railroads. The six-axle locos were equipped with an eight-cylinder Baldwin 608-A engine producing 1500hp and six Westinghouse model 561-A traction motors.

They were used on Argentina's General Roca broad gauge (1676mm gauge) network serving the south of the country until the early 1990s when the last one was retired; by then the locos had been renumbered 7001-7051. Three have survived – No. 5037 is operational and two others, Nos. 7044 and 7010, exist in storage at or near the Ferroclub site with some cosmetic restoration work being done to loco No. 7044.



Days before its successful engine test, SP No. 9010 is seen inside the workshop at the Nile Canyon Railway on August 19. KEITH FENDER

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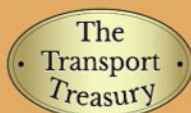
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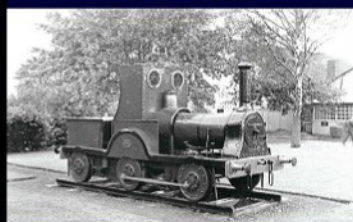
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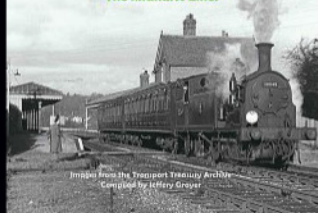


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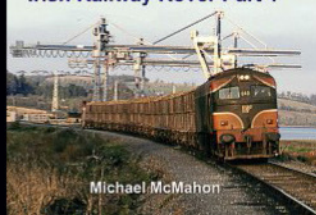
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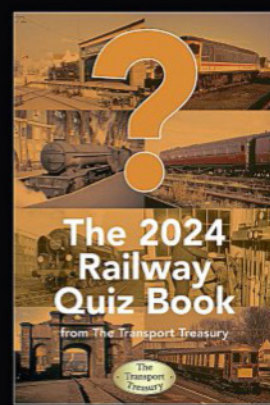
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The Peaks: Classes 44, 45, 46

By Simon Lilley

WITHOUT a doubt, this is one of the best locomotive history books I have read in recent years. The depth of research and quality of photographs (around 250 colour and black and white images in total) immediately sets this apart from many others and upholds the kind of standards readers of Oxford Publishing Company titles (these days part of Crécy Publishing) have come to expect.

The story begins with the British Transport Commission's requirement for locomotives of 2000 horsepower and above, and the author uses surviving records of meetings to give a detailed account of the discussions that took place as the specifications for the first 10 machines (later to be known as Class 44s) were finalised, before looking at the follow-up Class 45 and 46 orders.

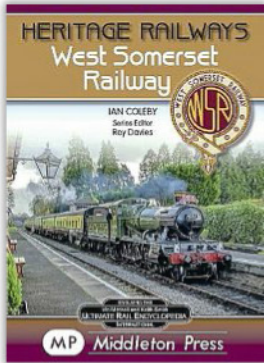
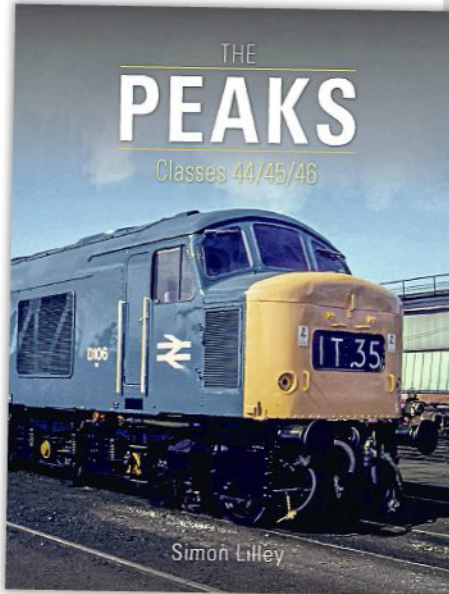
There are chapters on namings and

livery variations, technical issues and modifications. The story is completed with sections on disposals and preservation.

Tables have been used to advantage. As well as offering illustrations and comparisons within the various chapters on areas such as costs and equipment requirements, those within the appendices give the reader 'at a glance' histories of each locomotive, as well as technical and refurbishment details.

However much or little you already know about these three 1Co-Co1 variants of Sulzer-engined Type 4s, you should find plenty within the 240 pages to interest you. It is the kind of book that would certainly be worthy of consideration as a Christmas present for any main line diesel fan.

GP
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Heritage Railways – West Somerset Railway

By Ian Coleby

THIS new book covers the West Somerset Railway as a heritage railway since BR closed the Taunton to Minehead line in 1971 (a detailed history of the line up to 1971 was previously produced in the publisher's Branch Lines series).

After a brief historical overview of the line's closure and reopening, plus how the WSR is run today, individual

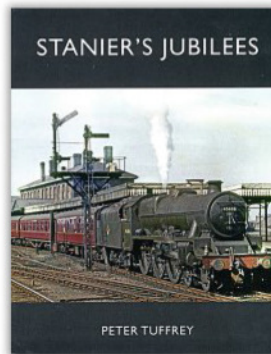
chapters cover the railway in detail. Each covers the track layout, history in preservation and heritage operation of every station from the Norton Fitzwarren junction with Network Rail through to Minehead.

Well-illustrated with a range of good pictures spanning the period from reopening in 1975-79 through to 2023, the book illustrates the wide variety of motive power used over the last 40 years (some of it no longer in use on the WSR) and concludes with photographs of several commercial freight operations by mainline companies delivering stone to the area in 1997-2010. Highly recommended. **KF**
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Stanier's Jubilees

By Peter Tuffrey

THE author's latest book focuses exclusively on the numerous



locomotives of Stanier's 'Jubilee' class of 4-6-0 express and mixed traffic engines, which entered service on the LMS from 1934.

The book is a feast of high-quality photographs recording the varied work and duties these invaluable locos performed right up until the final withdrawals from British Railways in 1967. Four of these superb locomotives survive in preservation and three are in use at the present time.

The author has included

more than 200 images to cover this 191-strong class of steam locomotives, mostly in monochrome but with nearly a quarter in excellent quality full colour. Reproduction is first rate and the photographs are a really decent size.

The detailed picture captions include a wealth of information about the individual class members and their very varied workings on the LMS. West Coast, Midland Main Line, Scottish and cross-country activities are covered.

All in all, this is a valuable photographic record of one of the outstanding LMS steam designs of Sir William Stanier. Strongly recommended. **RSS**
Published by Great Northern Books
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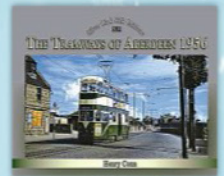
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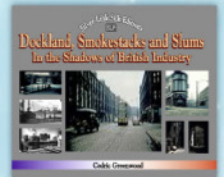
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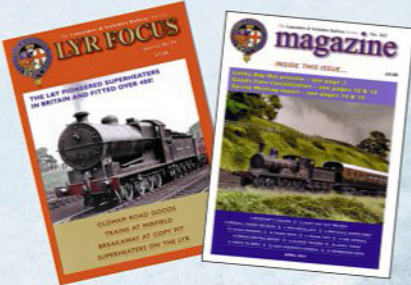
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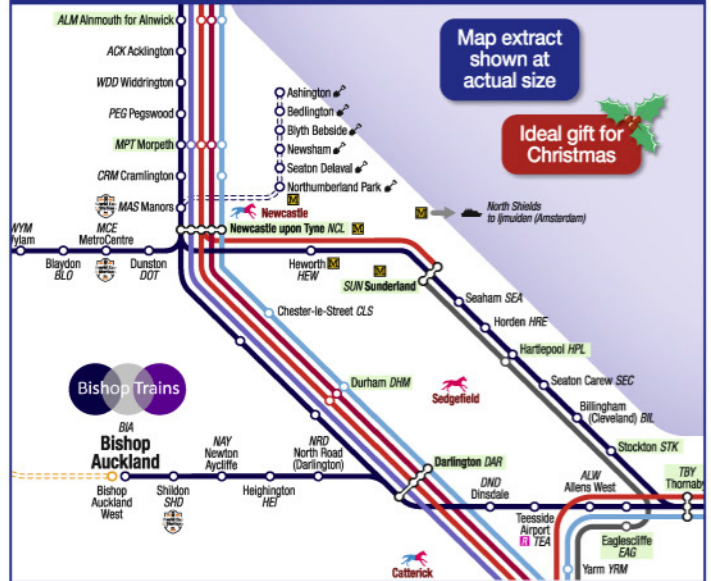
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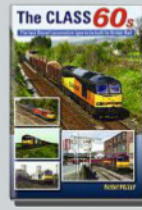
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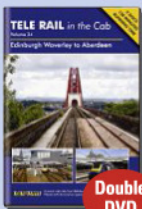


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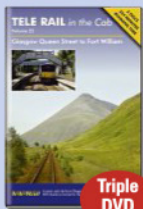
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Calendar reviews

LMS-Patriot Project

THE fundraising calendar for the LMS-Patriot Project, the group behind new-build No. 5551 *The Unknown Warrior*, has for several years showcased paintings by railway artists. This year, however, it is host to 13 expertly colourised images featuring locos and scenes from the heyday of the LMS.

In addition to 'Patriots', locomotives include examples of Fowler '2P' 4-4-0, Streamlined 'Princess Coronation' Pacifics, a rebuilt 'Claughton', a 'Crab' 2-6-0 and a 'Jubilee'.

The calendar measures 476x238mm (18.5x9.5in) when opened.

£10.00+p&p from the

LMS-Patriot Project
www.lms-patriot.org.uk

Footplate

IF attractive paintings of the steam era appeal to you, this calendar will doubtless be of interest. The images are all the work of Philip D Hawkins, a founder member of the Guild of Railway Artists.

It is a sizeable publication measuring 495x340mm (19.5x13.5in), while each image measures 380x265mm (15x10.5in). Each print serves two months and includes a simple list of dates – there is no space provided to write events.

When the year is over, however, these high-quality reproductions will look



superb if mounted and framed. £25 from Quicksilver Publishing
www.quicksilverpublishing.co.uk

The Great British Railway Scene

THIS A4-sized calendar is the work of multi award-winning photographer and RM contributor Jack Boskett, whose delightful photographs will resonate beyond just rail enthusiasts.

Household loco names such as *Flying Scotsman* and *Tornado* are part of the selection, along with *Camelot*, double-headed Class 50s and a GWR IET. A hole has been punched into the top enabling it to be hung with ease. £12.99 from Jack Boskett Media
www.jackboskett.co.uk

Lost Lines of Britain

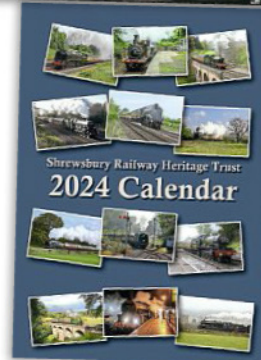
IF archive images from the days of steam is your thing, this calendar is for you. While the title mentions Britain, all the locations depicted are in England and Wales – including Barnstaple, Blaenau Ffestiniog, Builth Road, Folkestone Harbour, Dunmere Junction, the Lickey Incline and Umlerleigh.

The 24-page publication measures 200x200mm (8x8in), and the box for each date is approximately 25x20mm (1x0.75in).

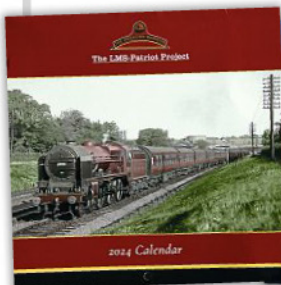
£7.99 from Graffeg
graffeg.com

Shrewsbury Railway Heritage Trust

THIS calendar features images by local photographers of steam locomotives in Shropshire on the main line and the Severn Valley Railway. Proceeds



from the sales will aid the Abbey Foregate Visitor Centre, which tells the story of the Shropshire & Montgomeryshire Railway. Locos featured include No. 4498 *Sir Nigel Gresley*, No. 44871 and No. 2999 *Lady of Legend*. £8.50 from SRHT
Email: abbystationshrewsbury@gmail.com

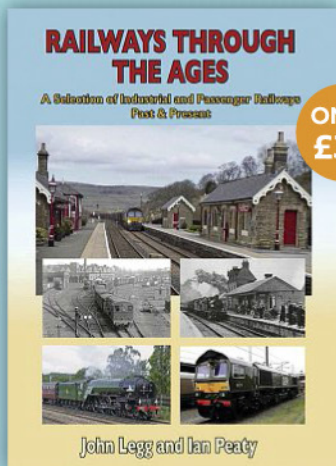


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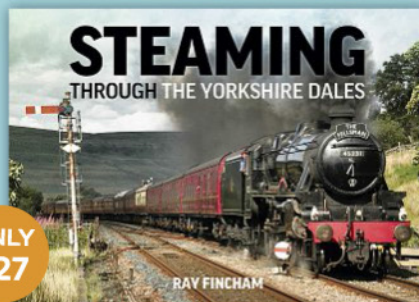


Railway Through the Ages

By John Legg & Ian Peaty

Dive deep into the history of railways from their early beginnings to today.

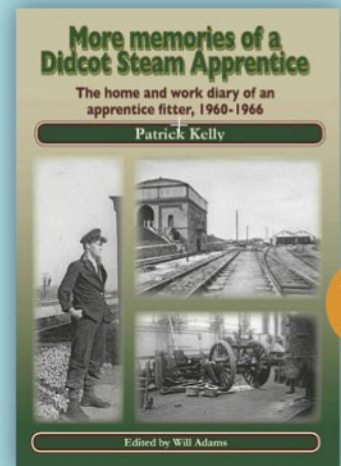
This book features a mixture of standard and narrow-gauge tracks, industrial and heritage lines, and iconic train stations.



Steaming Through the Yorkshire Dales

By Ray Fincham

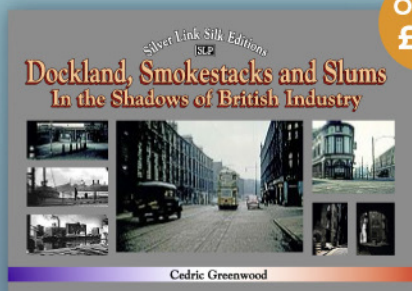
Explore the history of the 73-mile link between Settle and Carlisle that ran through the high fells and dales of Yorkshire and Cumberland.



More Memories of a Didcot Steam Apprentice

by Patrick Kelly

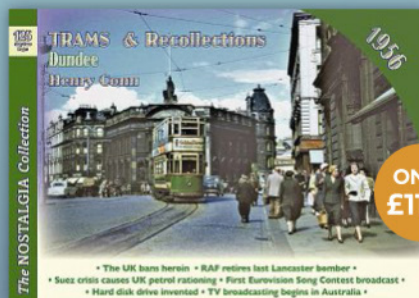
Pat Kelly's day-to-day life at Didcot shed on BR's Western Region in the dying days of steam, as a young inexperienced 15-year-old.



Dockland, Smokestacks and Slums

by Cedric Greenwood

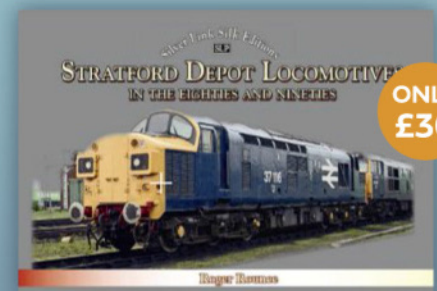
This book provides a photographic study of the 19th and early 20th century British industrial scene from its recovery following the Second World War to its decline in the mid-1980s.



Trams and Recollections: Dundee 1956

By Henry Conn

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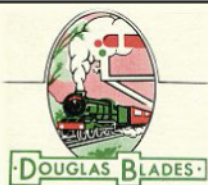
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As reviewed by the Railway Magazine

"The book traces the route radiating from Wigan and looks at each key destination in detail, making good use of descriptive introductions and high quality mapping. Where the book really scores for this reviewer is in the lavish use and quality of the photographs, both colour and monochrome that take the story from the glory days of Webb 0-6-0s through to 9 Fs, Black Fives and BR blue diesels. This book is a must for any enthusiast with connections to the North West and those with an interest in the coal industry"

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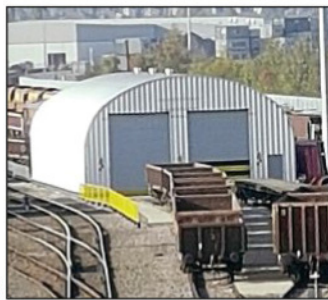
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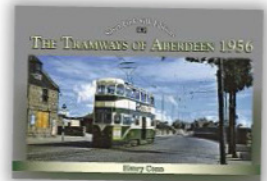


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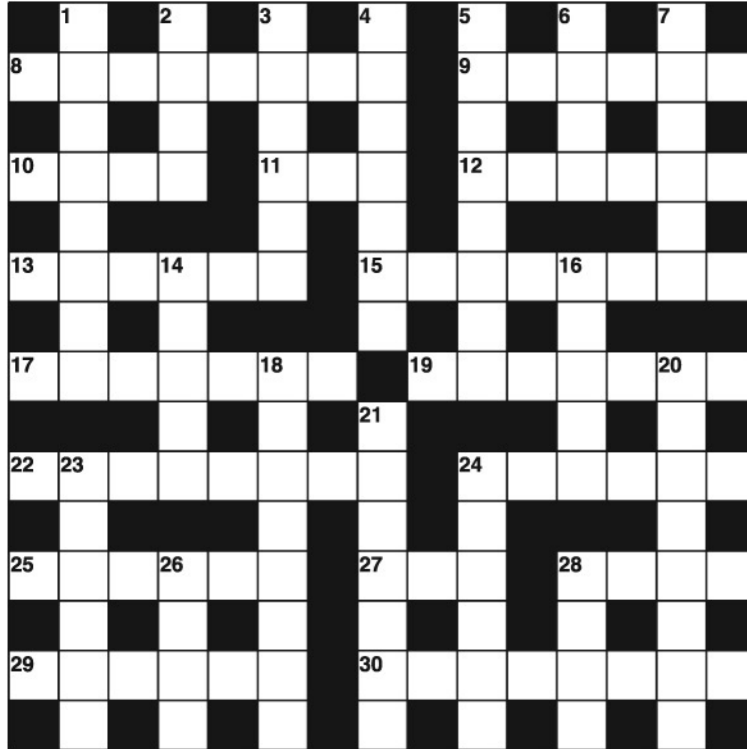


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Across

- 1 and 4 Terminus of the Vale of Rheidol Railway (6,6)
- 8 and 9 Former Caledonian Railway terminus in Glasgow (8,6)
- 10 Initials of one of the constituents of the SECR (1,1,1,1)
- 11 Spooner ____, station between Norwich and Thetford (3)
- 12 ____ & Bolton Abbey Steam Railway (6)
- 13 Intermediate station on the NER's Selby to Cawood branch (6)
- 15 Station on the Piccadilly Line's Heathrow branch (8)
- 17 Station at the south end of the M&SWJR (7)
- 19 GER station between 23 down School and Wells (7)
- 22 NBR 1 down for the Rothbury branch (8)
- 24 'Jubilee' Class No. 45575 (6)
- 25 George ____, the 'Railway King' (6)
- 27 Windsor ____, 'A3' No. 60035 (3)
- 28 Christopher ____, Class 60 No. 60003 (4)
- 29 Distance that the piston travels in a steam loco cylinder (6)
- 30 'Britannia' No. 70036 (8)



Down

- 1 Place where railway lines join (8)
- 2 Class 47 No. 47091, and before that No. D1671 (4)
- 3 ____ West, Keighley & Worth Valley station (6)
- 4 ____ Mountain Railway, between Llanberis and Summit (7)
- 5 Headquarters of the Cambrian Railways (8)
- 6 Nickname of an LMS Hughes 2-6-0 (4)
- 7 The ____, 'D49/2' 'Hunt' No. 62740 (6)
- 14 Salmon ____, 'A3' No. 60041 (5)
- 16 ____ Oak, GWR station between Stourbridge 1 down and Dudley (5)
- 18 US term for a locomotive driver (8)
- 20 Next station west of 17 across (8)
- 21 ____ East, hoped-for northern terminus of the Eden Valley Railway at Warcop (7)
- 23 ____ March, summit on the Far North Line (6)
- 24 and 26 Former noon Euston-Glasgow express (6,4)
- 28 Chaloners ____, former 1 down south of York (4)

December crossword entry form

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Send completed form (photocopies are accepted) to: December Crossword Quiz, The Railway Magazine, Mortons Media Group Ltd, Media Centre, Morton Way, Horncastle LN9 6JR. Open to UK entrants only. Winners will be announced in the February 2024 issue. The winners will be the senders of the first all-correct solutions opened in our office. **You can email entries to RMcomp@mortons.co.uk** Please list the answers to the clues for across, then down. There are no cash alternatives available. The winners will be the first names drawn at random from the people who answered correctly. Terms and conditions apply. To view the privacy policy of MMG Ltd (publisher of *The Railway Magazine*) please visit www.mortons.co.uk/privacy

Solution to the October issue.

Across: 9 Royal Scot 10 Idaho 11 Shildon 12 Open Day 13 Ryde 14 Wordsworth 17 Dornoch 18 Burnham 20 Locomotion 23 Earl 25 Prairie 26 William 28 Crewe 29 Tadcaster

Down: 1 Arms 2 Cylinder 3 Clyde 4 McIntosh 5 Stroud 6 Sir Edward 7 Cawdor 8 Pony 13 Rydal 15 Hemel 16 Todmorden 18 Bronwydd 19 Hyacinth 21 Craven 22 Twenty 24 Elgar 25 Pick 27 Mars

October winner: H Blair, Southport.

Runners-up: Norman Naylor, Great Ayton; Colin Brown, Bexleyheath.

The closing date for this month's crossword is Friday, January 5, 2024.

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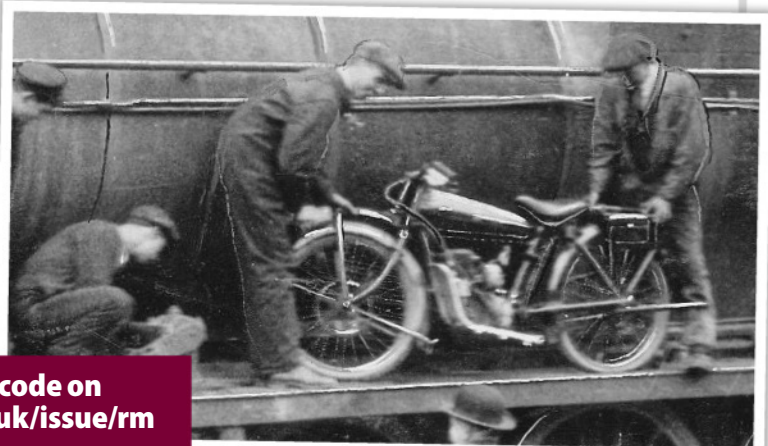
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