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■ **COVER:** Renamed by Ron Watson-Jones in May 1982, No. 40029 ***Saxonia*** is seen emerging from Culgaith Tunnel (Settle & Carlisle Line) on September 29, 1983.

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What's in store for '24?

AS this is the first issue of the new year, it is traditional to look ahead to what we can expect to see happen over the coming months – but this year seems to be one of the most difficult to read in quite some time.

Perhaps the biggest cause for uncertainty is the looming general election, which has to take place before the end of January 2025, but is widely predicted for either spring or late autumn. As this issue went to press, the ruling Conservative party was trailing Labour in the polls by a wide margin, with political pundits therefore expecting there will be a change in Government after 14 years.

What this will mean for our railways, however, is still very much unknown: The Conservatives in recent years cannot be described as wholly 'pro-rail', but then again details of what Labour would do instead are thin on the ground. Meanwhile, the major reorganisation that would create 'Great British Railways' has stalled awaiting legislation to be presented to Parliament, and it feels like the political will needed to get this through is ebbing away fast.

Below these 'top level' issues, there is a myriad of other problems to resolve on the everyday railway, such as how to square rising passenger numbers with new or fairly new stock being either withdrawn (such as TransPennine Express's 'Nova 3' trains) or marooned in sidings (like South Western Railway's Class 701 EMUs); or the growing number of weather-related infrastructure failures and maintenance backlog; or how HS2's new trains will be accommodated on an already busy West Coast Main Line north of Lichfield now that the high-speed line to Manchester has been cancelled.

Away from the main line, however, things are looking brighter for the heritage movement – as illustrated in our fascinating interview with Severn Valley Railway boss Gus Dunster this month about how he is turning round the fortunes of this premier league line. This work has led to Gus being nominated for *The RM*-sponsored prize at the forthcoming HRA Awards, but the list of HRA nominees (page 12) highlights an excellent range of successful heritage projects over the past year. The awards dinner will be held in Brighton on February 10, and tickets are open to members and non-members alike – so see the HRA's website at www.hra.uk.com if you fancy coming along to this always excellent event.



Paul Bickerdyke,
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Rail Holidays of the World



Classic Rail Tours through Scenic Settings

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



The Green Hills of Spain ~ Departs 13 June 2024 - 15 days from £3,140pp

Forget the usual Costa Spain coastal holidays and travel from the UK by train through France and along Spain's 'green' coastline, taking in the vibrant cities of San Sebastian, Bilbao, Santander, Gijon, Leon and A Coruña en route. Encounter some of the country's most beautiful and unspoilt beaches before returning via France to ride the La Rhune Rack Railway.

- Scenic rail journey between San Sebastian and Bilbao
- Journey on the metre gauge FEVE network
- Luggage transfer between hotels in Spain
- Basque Railway Museum
- Petit train de la Rhune Rack Railway
- Time to explore Bilbao, Santander, Gijon, A Coruña and León
- A mix of coastal, moorland and mountain scenery

Switzerland – Rails & Trails ~
Departs 11 June 2024 - 12 days from £2,995pp

A new escorted tour that combines the best of the Swiss Alps - walking trails and amazing rail journeys! Switzerland boasts some truly breathtaking scenery and what better way to view it than by jumping on board its railways and by foot. With stays in Chur and Interlaken this tour includes fabulous First Class rail journeys with easy strolls through stunning Alpine landscapes.

- First Class 8-day Swiss Pass for unlimited use whilst in Switzerland
- Journey on the Bernina Express from Chur to Alp Grüm
- A chance to photograph the famous Landwasser Viaduct
- Chur-Brambruesch Cableway
- Männlichen to Grindelwald Gondola





Northern France ~
Departs 19 June 2024 - 15 days from £2,895pp

This new escorted tour takes you on a rail journey through some of Northern France's 'must see' places. Travel via Eurostar via Lille to Amiens to begin your holiday before continuing by rail to visit some of the most picturesque cities including the beautiful island of Belle Ile, the ancient walled town of St Malo and Quimper, Brittany's oldest city. This tour also includes some special rail and sightseeing excursions en route.

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- Visit Pegasus Bridge and Memorial Museum
- Return river cruise along the Seine River
- Free time in Amiens, Rouen, St Malo, Quimper and Nantes
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The RAILWAY Magazine

CDA WAGONS SECURED FOR PRESERVATION

1:
Nine withdrawn china clay wagons left St Blazey Yard in Cornwall on December 6, for a new life in preservation, with eight bound for the Bodmin Railway (Nos. 375050/061/063/067/090/091/113/117) and one for the Plym Valley Railway (No. 375030). The rake of nine was propelled down the short branch from St Blazey to Par Docks by DB Cargo's No. 66165, then prepared for onward transport by road. The last CDAs were withdrawn from traffic on August 11, 2023 – meaning this movement (seen about to pass under the Cornish Main Line) could be the last for the type on Network Rail metals. A tenth CDA No. 375102 has been purchased by MPower Kernow, the science and technology social enterprise that operates the turntable at St Blazey, but this has been left in the yard.

2:
No. 66165 shunts the wagons at Par Docks on December 6, with No. 375030 separated for the Plym Valley Railway and the rake of eight for the Bodmin Railway. DRONE SHOTS TAKEN BY JON HIRD COMPLYING WITH ALL RELEVANT REGULATIONS

3:
One of the CDA wagons en route from Par to Bodmin on December 8. JON HIRD

4:
The second CDA to arrive at Bodmin General, No. 375061, is prepared for offloading in the station yard on December 8. JIMMY JAMES.

5:
The full rake of eight CDAs is seen safely in the refuge siding at Bodmin General on December 8. JIMMY JAMES

DB Cargo no longer dominant

Latest industry figures reveal that Freightliner and GBRf are now the top two rail freight companies.

By 'Industry Update'

DB Cargo has lost its crown as the UK's largest rail freight haulier, according to the latest figures released by the Office of Rail and Road on December 12.

Covering the period from June to September 2023, the overall total was similar to the same period in 2022 at 8.11million train kilometres operated (a marginal decline of 0.3%), but DB Cargo fell by 12% to 2.25m km, representing a market share of 28%. This compared to 2.54m km worked by the two Freightliner divisions (Intermodal and Heavy Haul, a combined 31% market share), and 2.38m km hauled by GB Railfreight (representing a 29% share).

The remaining 12% of the market was shared between Direct Rail Services, Colas Rail, and Devon & Cornwall Railways.

In terms of the amount of traffic moved, a total of 4.11billion net tonne km was recorded, which was an increase of 3% over the same period in 2022 (the figure being calculated based on a multiple of the tonnage lifted and distance travelled).

Sector changes

The current total has been supressed by the end of coal movement to power stations, but there was healthy 9% growth in maritime (international) intermodal business, which accounted for 36% of the total market.

There was also growth in domestic intermodal traffic, which although accounting for only 5% of total activity, grew by 14% in no small part due to the expansion of the network operated by Maritime Transport on behalf of supermarket Tesco.

Coal movements had previously been required to ensure sufficient fuel was available for the three power stations at Ratcliffe, West Burton and Drax (coal-fired element), which remain available to meet power shortages at peak times. But the use of these facilities has diminished, as also has the demand for biomass at Drax.

The movement of construction materials also saw significant growth of 16%, reaching 35% of the total market on account of deliveries to HS2 construction sites and the removal of spoil.

Other commodity activity was quiet, with significant reductions in the movement of metals and petroleum.

This reflects the changing nature of the national economy, as renewable energy policies become more dominant, as well as weakness in industrial construction activity.

The trainload commodity business had been the core of DB Cargo activity, reflecting the inheritance of traffic flows moved by BR before Privatisation in the mid-1990s and by EWS after that, and its decline reflects the change in the market share of train haulage that has taken place.

Fleet rationalisation

Reduced demand has seen a continuing rationalisation of the DB Cargo fleet, with the withdrawal of the Class 90 electric fleet and retirement of its remaining Class 60 diesels.

What remains are the Class 66, 67 and 92 types, which represent a flexible number in service given seasonal demand, and provide around 185 locos in total (see separate story, right).



The final flow of domestic coal – once a staple of British rail freight and the reason why many lines were built – ended with the closure of Ffos-y-Fran opencast colliery and the railhead at Cwmbargoed, near Merthyr Tydfil, on November 30. Ffos-y-Fran was a source of high quality 'steam coal' used by many heritage railways, and was the last operational rail-served colliery in the UK. This view on November 21 shows No. 66024 heading one of the last coal trains at Cwmbargoed. KEVIN BOORMAN

To meet traffic growth handled by GB Railfreight, there has been a scramble to provide sufficient resources, with Class 66s imported from European sources supplemented by a range of legacy equipment that includes Class 56 locomotives under conversion to Class 69s. With the addition of resources needed for hauling the Caledonian Sleeper trains, the GBRf fleet now stands on a roughly equal footing to that of DB Cargo.

The total Freightliner fleet is not far short of these operators, with its standardised traction of Class 66s offered varying power characteristics, plus Class 59 General Motors diesels and Class 90 electrics that have been retained despite the present uneconomic use resulting from the cost of electric traction current.

It is a difficult statistic for policy makers to absorb that electric freight train haulage in the three months to September declined compared to two years ago, from 17.59million km then to 11.10million km this year. Quite simply, it is cheaper to use diesel traction given the current level of charges for electricity traction.

Poor financials

The ORR has also published statistics covering the financial performance of the freight operators, and it does not make good reading.

In the year ended March 2022 (the latest data period available), revenue earned was £992million but costs were calculated at £1,061m – meaning there was a deficit of £69m.

Freightliner had the worst outcome, with revenue for its intermodal division totalling £214m with costs of £237m, while the heavy haul division recorded revenue of £100m against operating expenses of £133m, meaning that the combined loss was £56m.

The decline in the size of DB Cargo can be demonstrated by comparing 2016 with 2022. In 2016, recorded revenue was £519m with operating costs of £659m, which represented a loss of £140m.

Much has been cut back since, as the 2022 revenue was £329m, but these earnings again failed to cover the cost of operations and there was a loss of £20m.

GB Railfreight has continued to be profitable, but the most recent results showed that while customers paid £250m for haulage services, allocated costs were £247m, meaning there was a wafer thin profit.

Access charges

The rail regulator (ORR) has acknowledged that the financial reality in the market for freight has required track access charges to be held down to a level that does not cover costs – which, although unwelcome, is much the same position as the failure to recover the cost of providing infrastructure for heavy good vehicles on roads from vehicle excise duty.



Three of the five DRS Class 37s (Nos. 37407, 37419 and 37425) which took part in the charity photoshoot at York Holgate depot on December 16. CHRIS MILNER

Photoshoot raises £3000 for charity

A NIGHT photoshoot at Network Rail's Holgate Engineering Works in York on December 16 raised £3000 for the Yorkshire-based charity Martin House Children's Hospice.

The one-off photoshoot was organised by Chris Gee, programme director for Network Rail, and involved the five DRS Class 37 locos that had been used hauling the seasonal railhead treatment trains (RHTT) around Yorkshire.

The locos involved were Nos. 37407 *Blackpool Tower*, 37419 *Driver Tony Kay*, 37422, 37425 *Sir Robert McAlpine/Concrete Bob* and 37716.

This was due to be the last year that DRS Class 37s were used on RHTT trains, and the well-supported event proved a fitting finale.

With the RHTT programme ending on December 15, the locos were in a filthy condition, and so a number of the 70 participants that attended the two sessions volunteered to clean the locos for the event before they were returned to DRS for an expected sale as part of the company's modernisation programme.

Mr Gee said: "Network Rail has supported Martin House's incredible work for a number of years now, and it is amazing that we have been able to raise even more money for them through this special event."

Funding promised to improve connectivity

THE Government announced on December 7 that funding is to be provided for projects identified as a priority in the Union Connectivity Review (UCR) that was produced by Network Rail chairman Peter Hendy.

The poor state of rail services between North Wales and employment centres in North West England were identified as a significant factor in the social deprivation of Welsh coastal towns such as Bangor and Llandudno, where average earnings are far below those available in English employment centres such and Liverpool and Manchester.

Using the 'Gross Value Added' economic statistics at the time of UCR submission in 2020, people living in local authority areas such as Conwy and Denbighshire had average earnings that were below £17,000 per annum. The rail service has been frozen in time, and reflects the much-reduced demand for travel to the seaside towns for leisure purposes rather than the ability for residents to use rail to access higher paid jobs.

North Wales electrification

In response to the findings, the intention is to provide £1 billion to upgrade and electrify the North Wales Main Line between Crewe and Holyhead, as well as connections to Warrington and Liverpool, to allow access to electrified routes in the North West. An upgrade of the Borderlands Line between Bidston and Wrexham is also included.

The business case for North Wales electrification was weak when it was last assessed by Network Rail prior to the effect of the pandemic. It was suggested that the benefit/cost ratio was a low as 0.2, meaning that investment would not survive scrutiny by public spending auditors.

But the Government acknowledges that traffic levels need to be increased in the short term, and for that reason £700,000 has been allocated by the Department for Transport to enable Transport for Wales to identify the capacity improvements needed to enable a viable timetable that will make rail competitive for commuters. The study will include the need for an improved layout at Chester, faster line speeds and reduced signalling headways, with an ability for express services to overtake slower trains.

South Wales and the Midlands

TfW will also receive £2.7 million to develop the use of the South Wales Main Line between Cardiff and the Severn Tunnel, which will include new stations and increased services to Bristol, again to improve employment opportunities.

Approval has been also given to implement the £1.75billion Midlands Rail Hub proposal, which will provide greater capacity and allow faster and more frequent services around the West Midlands, including the route between Birmingham and Cardiff.

The core proposal is to increase capacity at Birmingham Moor Street, which will be adjacent to the new HS2 station at Curzon Street, with the aim of reducing congestion at New Street station. This project involves constructing a new railway formation that will connect the Camp Hill line to the Chiltern route, allowing greater use to be made of Moor Street.

Network Rail is currently preparing the Strategic Business case to support a new chord for this between Bordesley and central Birmingham, allowing an improved timetable that will allow more services to operate from stations in the East Midlands and Worcester.

DB Cargo lists further Class 60, 67 and 90 locomotives for sale

FOLLOWING recent tender lists for Classes 60 and 90, DB Cargo has put out a new sales tender as it continues to remove redundant assets from its books, *writes Ashley Butlin*.

The latest list includes the 12 Class 90 locomotives that were removed from traffic at the beginning of 2023, Nos. 90019-21/24/26/28/29/34-37/39. All are currently located at Crewe Electric depot and were fully serviceable when they were withdrawn from traffic.

The second group of 10 Class 67s Nos. 67001/03/04 /09/11/18/19/26/28/30 are located at Crewe and Toton depots – except for No. 67028, which is currently in traffic. Of these, No. 67019 has been out of traffic since March 2015, with Nos. 67009/11/26 from the following year.

DBC states that: "These locomotives will be sold as seen and where lying without any warranty, condition or undertaking, including (without limitation) as to quality, position in any programme or cycle of maintenance, or fitness for a particular purpose. Nothing in the foregoing limits or excludes any liability which would be unlawful for DB Cargo to limit or exclude (including having title to dispose of the locomotives).

"The successful bidder(s) will be required to remove the locomotives from site at their own expense and at times to be agreed by DB Cargo.

"In addition, DB Cargo has a significant number of spares available which would be offered on the same basis but under a separate agreement.

"DB Cargo would also be willing to discuss any requirement for ongoing maintenance or reinstatement services as part of a separate discussion and agreement."

A reserve price has been set against each locomotive offered for sale, and all tenderers will be given the opportunity to undertake inspection of these locomotives by prior arrangement only.

Interested parties should register an interest by e-mailing DBUKLocoSales@deutschebahn.com by noon on January 19, 2024.



A view of Toton depot on May 26, 2023 showing many of DB Cargo's now redundant Class 60 and 67 locos, along with still active Class 66s. GEOFF GRIFFITHS

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Clayton's Class 18 hybrid loco fleet is ready for use

After an initial trial with GBRf in 2022, this year should see more of the diesel-battery hybrids brought into use.

By Graeme Pickering



A CBD90 loco, similar in specification to the Class 18, was being prepared for Tata Steel at Clayton's factory on December 5. RICHARD GENNIS

THE first Class 18 hybrid locomotives are expected to be handed over to the customers leasing them within the next couple of months, according to their manufacturer Clayton Equipment in Burton-on-Trent.

Fifteen of the 90 tonne Bo-Bo shunters were ordered by Beacon Rail in 2020. Of a kind already in use in industrial settings (the seventh for Tata Steel's Port Talbot to the same CBD90 specification was completed in December), the aim was to break through into the mainstream rail market as a replacement for conventional diesel locomotives, such as Class 08s.

Although they have a Stage V emissions-compliant JCB diesel engine, the Class 18s can also operate solely on battery power, which can be recharged through regenerative braking and by plugging into an energy supply, as well as by the power unit.

After initial testing in November 2021 at the Chasewater Railway in Staffordshire, No. 18001 was given a three-month trial by GB Railfreight at Whitemoor Yard in Cambridgeshire in 2022.

All 15 locomotives are being stored at Wolverton Works, where some will receive modifications to meet individual requirements.

'Goyle' sent for scrap is another Covid 'victim'

A LOCOMOTIVE which would have had a new lease of life had it not been for Covid, is being scrapped, *writes Ashley Butlin*.

Hanson & Hall's Class 31 No. 31106 was delivered to EMR's Kingsbury scrapyard on November 29. Purchased before the pandemic, the Type 2 locomotive was to have been overhauled and used by H & H for a specific project requiring a low-powered locomotive. Unfortunately, Covid put an end to the project and the locomotive was stood down idle.

To bring it back to mainline status would require expensive work, not least replacing defective wheelsets. The firm contracted to carry out the work went out of business due to the pandemic, while a replacement firm has quoted a 300% increase in the cost, putting the price of repairs way beyond the value of the locomotive or the work that may be available in the future.

Consequently, H & H made the decision to cut its losses and dispose of the loco. No preservation groups are looking at taking on the project, hence the move to EMR Kingsbury.

However, it is not quite a total end for No. 31106, as parts will be made available for groups to keep their locomotives running. The remains will then be cut and recycled.

ORR warning over fees

THE Office of Rail and Road has written to seven third-party ticket retailers asking them to review how they present their fees when customers are buying tickets online.

The move stems from concerns with 'drip pricing', where the customer is shown an initial price for goods or services then additional fees are revealed later in the sales process.

The ORR reviewed the ticketing websites and apps of 19 third-party ticket retailers. Twelve of the 19 charge booking fees, however, seven of these did not include their fees in the upfront price. ORR's review found booking fees ranged from 45p per ticket to £6.45.

The review also looked at 21 train companies, who are not permitted to charge ticket booking fees, although they can charge for postage costs for ticket delivery.

It is intended the ORR's action will ensure any booking or finder's fee are included within the upfront price, that there is a clear breakdown of the fee and ticket price is shown at every stage, with appropriate prominence given to the fee and customers are provided with transparent and accurate information about in advance of starting the booking process.



BEATTIE IS BACK IN BODMIN: LSWR 2-4-0WT No. 30587 returned to its former Cornish stamping ground on December 7 after a three-year loan was agreed between the National Railway Museum and the Bodmin Railway. The out of ticket 149-year-old loco will be displayed at Bodmin General's platform 2 on selected days, and be housed undercover in the running shed the rest of the time (*RM* October 2023). The railway's appeal to cover the transport cost remains open – see the website at https://bodminrailway.co.uk for details of how to donate. WILL DINGLE/BR

SIDELINES

David Elliott RIP

THE A1 Steam Locomotive Trust's chairman Steve Davies has paid tribute to the group's David Elliott, who died on December 20.

Mr Davies said: "Although we all knew David was not well and that time was against him, this news nevertheless comes as a body blow to all those who knew him. We will in due course pay a more fulsome tribute to David and his wonderful engineering achievements. We wish David's immediate family well at this difficult time."

GCR reunification

THE project to reunify the surviving Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire sections of the Great Central Railway continues to progress and fundraising has now passed £2 million. This has allowed a contract to be let for final design work before a formal planning application.

Directors from both 'halves' have signed a memorandum of understanding that they will work together on issues from operating standards to publicity. A project board made up of rail industry professionals has also been established.

Two new stations

THE December timetable change saw two new stations open at Brent Cross in London and East Linton in Lothian.

The £40million, four-platform Brent Cross West is the first major new mainline station in London in over a decade. It is on the Midland Main Line and served by Thameslink trains between St Pancras International and Bedford, with up eight trains an hour at peak times.

The £15 million two-platform East Linton is on the East Coast Main Line between Edinburgh and Dunbar. Services will be a mix of ScotRail and TransPennine Express, with 12 southbound and 10 northbound departures on weekdays.

Clapham memorial

RAIL industry partners came together on December 12 to lay wreaths at the memorial in Clapham to the 35 people who lost their lives on that date in 1988. Faulty signal wiring caused three trains to collide on the approach to Clapham Junction.

A service is held every year at the Spencer Park memorial site, but extra events included a series of 'lessons learnt' talks hosted by Network Rail and Siemens Mobility.

SIDELINES

Barrhead electrics

ELECTRIC services to Barrhead, south-west of Glasgow, commenced on December 11 following the completion of a £63 million electrification scheme. The first train was formed of set No. 380107.

It has taken Network Rail two years to electrify just over six miles of the railway on the line towards Kilmarnock, a project which has involved major modifications to bridges.

Darjeeling agreement

THE Darjeeling Tank Locomotive Trust has signed a key cooperation agreement with the Statfold Narrow Gauge Museum Trust for its 1889-built Himalayan and Darjeeling Railway 'B' Class loco No. 19. The agreement covers the loco's imminent overhaul and next 10 years of operation, including use at Statfold, operating standards and ongoing maintenance, while also detailing the DTLT's plans to visit other railways.

ORR looks at catering

AN investigation by the Office of Rail and Road into station catering has revealed that the market is not working effectively and there is a lack of competition.

The rail regulator is of the opinion that a more competitive market would provide better options for passengers and allow station operators to increase investment in the railway. Its report finds that outlets can stay in the same hands for extended periods because their leases are protected.

Higgins mayoral group

FORMER HS2 chairman and Network Rail chief executive Sir David Higgins is leading a group established by West Midlands Mayor Andy Street and his Greater Manchester counterpart Andy Burnham to explore improved rail connections between their regions following the Government's cancellation of Phase 2 of HS2.

HS2 had been designed to release capacity on the WCML, but as its own trains will now use the route, the group aims to examine alternative, private sector-funded, ways to improve capacity and reliability.

Railway holidays

OUR winter guide to railway holidays is now available online via our website at: www.railwaymagazine.co.uk/category/advertisement-feature.

'Jacobite' hangs in the balance

Central door locking issue impacts on the future of two players in the railtour market.

By Chris Milner

THE future of the 'Jacobite' steam train operation between Fort William and Mallaig, as well many other steam tours operated by the West Coast Railway Company for third party promoters, rests on the decision of a Judicial Review, with a decision expected in late January.

At the heart of the review is the decision by the Office of Rail and Road (ORR) to revoke West Coast's (WCR) exemption to operate carriages on the main line without central door locking (CDL), which WCR is challenging.

The company has operated its steam excursions using a manual door bolt system, rather than power operated CDL system controlled from a central point, since 2003. WCR says a trained steward is positioned in each vestibule, who will only unlock the doors when the train is in a station platform. The stewards also ensure no one leans out of the window, which is another safety concern of the ORR.

Exemptions

The ORR has previously provided WCR with two 10 year exemptions on door locking rules allowing it use manual bolts. However, a spot inspection of the 'Jacobite' in June 2023 plus a follow-up visit the next month revealed safety lapses in the use of the manual bolts – a situation the ORR said put passengers at risk of serious personal injury. As a result, the 'Jacobite' was suspended for several weeks while WCR made representations to the ORR and also recruited additional stewards.

Once the situation was acceptable to the ORR, a temporary exemption allowed the 'Jacobite' to run to the end of its planned season in October. The temporary extension expired at the end of November 2023.

With the review pending, the ORR gave WCR a further exemption covering December 1 to February 29, allowing it to continue operating trains.

At a High Court hearing on November 21/22, both parties – West Coast and the ORR – gave evidence in which WCR argued that to fit all its rolling stock with a compliant CDL system would cost around £7m, creating a massive financial hit on the company and wiping out profits for the next 10 years. It would, the company said, effectively make railtour operations unviable.

Should the review go against WCR, the current charter market could shrink by around half, although it is not known how the company might react.

WCR's door locking situation has also affected the Scottish Railway Preservation Society (SRPS). The society will run a limited number of excursions in 2024, which will allow work to begin to improve the structural integrity of its carriages and install central door locking.

Appeal for funds

The volunteer-led SRPS, a charity, has launched an appeal for £500,000 to fund the work, but remains optimistic of getting a derogation from the ORR that will avoid having to complete the upgrades until 2028. Its appeal is at https://cafdonate.cafonline.org/20942#!/DonationDetails.

The SRPS said CDL would take three years to install, but it is still feeling the pressures from the fact Covid-19 forced delays to carriage overhauls and was a contributory factor in the loss of £400,000 in tour revenue.



NEW 'BRANCH LINE' OPENS: Britain's newest agricultural railway opened on December 16 for the commercial haulage of Christmas trees. The 12¼ inch gauge Oakberry Farm Railway at Dunton Bassett, Leicestershire, has been almost five years in the making since rails were acquired from Shropshire's Hughley Light Railway and the Romney, Hythe & Dymchurch Railway in 2018 (*RM* March 2019).

A line of just over a kilometre (two-thirds of a mile) now runs through the farm's extensive fir tree plantations and began operations nine days before Christmas using Hughley-built Class 37 No. 37309 *Endurance* to convey freshly-cut trees from the fields to the sales area on custom-built bogie wagons.

A double-track section is planned to enable two-train running but owner Richard Underwood is keen to stress the line is not open to the public – although seasonal specials might be possible once regulatory conditions have been met. NICK PIGOTT

Heritage Railway Association awards shortlist revealed

CONTENDERS for the Heritage Railway Association's annual awards have been announced ahead of the awards ceremony in Brighton on February 10.

The **Coiley Award for Steam Locomotive Engineering** will be contested by the Sir Nigel Gresley Locomotive Trust for the overhaul of No. 60007; the Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Railways for the construction of 'Double Fairlie' 0-4-4-0T *James Spooner*; and the Richmond Light Railway for the overhaul of 2ft Bagnall 0-4-0ST *Pixie*.

The award for **Diesel and Electric Locomotion** features the North Norfolk Railway's restoration of Class 104 DMU driving trailer No. M56182, Seaton Tramway's accessibility upgrade of Tramcar No. 9 and the Severn Valley Railway's events celebrating 50 years of diesel preservation.

The **Railway of the Year** category has an all-narrow gauge shortlist of the Seaton Tramway, Ravenglass & Eskdale, and Volks Electric Railway.

The **Morgan Award for Rolling Stock Preservation** features a shortlist of four: the Isle of Wight Steam Railway's restoration of a MR six-wheel crane; the Manx Electric Railway for the restoration of car No. 19; the Severn Valley Railway for the restoration of LMS-designed corridor composite carriage No. 24617; and the National Wagon Preservation Group for its MGR coal train project.

The Keith & Dufftown Railway's 'Dram Tram' conversion of a DMU car, Seaton Tramway's Natural Seaton Festival and the Kent & East Sussex Railways' Santa Specials 'quiet day' are all contenders in the **Award for Business and Customer Innovation**. The Natural Seaton Festival is also in the running for the **Award for Environmental Innovation** alongside the Kent & East Sussex Railway's Looking Inwards and Outwards environmental initiative.

Shortlisted for the **Lord Faulkner Young Volunteer** award are the Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway's Daisy Shennan; Downpatrick & County Down Railway's Jonathan King; Peak Rail's Jacob Short; and Avon Valley Railway's Joseph Dean.

The RM-sponsored **Preservationist of the Year** will go to Jonathan 'Gus' Dunster, managing director of the Severn Valley Railway and co-founder of the Class 50 Fund/Alliance (for an interview with Mr Dunster, see page 38).

For more details see the website at www.hra.uk.com.

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Infrastructure failures leave passengers stranded

Great Western and East Coast main lines were badly hit by a series of de-wirements in the run up to Christmas.

By Chris Milner

THOUSANDS of passengers were trapped for several hours after overhead wires came down near Ladbroke Grove, West London, on the evening peak of December 7.

Although the exact cause of the overhead line equipment failure has not yet been determined, seven trains were affected, impacting services on the Elizabeth Line, Heathrow Express and Great Western Railway.

On board one of the trains was Andrew Haines, CEO of Network Rail, who was trapped on a train with 980 other passengers (see also story on page 16). Without power, passengers on some of the affected trains were in total darkness and in the cold. Those on Elizabeth Line services also faced the prospect of no toilet facilities.

Many passengers were trapped for up to four hours, while some took a riskier approach, forcing doors open to exit the trains just to go to the toilet, frustrated at the time it was taking for rail staff to come and guide them to safety. Many had been heading into London for Christmas shows or office parties, while others on the Heathrow Express were travelling into the capital from the airport.

Widespread disruption

One of the trains involved was the 18.30 Paddington to Cardiff (set No. 802111) but numerous other trains were affected too. After several hours' delay, and with the damaged wires removed from over the GWR unit, the train was allowed to reverse into Paddington under diesel power, where passengers were offered hotels or sent to Waterloo for services to Reading to connect with longer distance trains.

The incident resulted in 24 hours of disruption for trains using Paddington, with only a couple of lines repaired overnight for services the next day. It will take some weeks to disseminate the information from the Paddington incident, which is expected to review procedures regarding train rescue and evacuations.

A further issue with the OLE out of Paddington was reported at Slough on December 10, affecting in and outbound services. In addition to the OLE failures, the Great Western line between Paddington and Reading suffered four broken rails in eight days up to November 29. As yet the causes are undetermined.

The Office of Rail and Road launched a wide-ranging investigation into poor train punctuality and reliability in the Network Rail Wales & Western region at the end of November. The investigation will look at whether Network Rail is complying with its licence obligations, and the company could face enforcement action if it's failing to meet them.

East Coast issues

The Paddington incident is one of several recent OLE failures nationally which have resulted in substantial delays – three of these were on the East Coast Main Line in a period of 10 days.



Overhead wiring on the roof of 'Azuma' No. 800201 on December 9.

The first was on the evening of December 1, on a twin track section between Retford and the Tuxford Crossovers that left eight trains stranded either side of the incident, each waiting a turn to move after single line working was implemented on the up line. A few trains were also diverted via the GN/GE Joint Line route via Spalding and Gainsborough.

This was followed on December 9, by another failure of the OLE at Corby Glen, south of Grantham, involving the 18.03 King's Cross-Skipton formed of five-car 'Azuma' No. 800201. While more services were diverted via the Joint Line, the 'Azuma' stood for several hours while Network Rail disentangled the unit before it was allowed to proceed on diesel power to Leeds, where it arrived some six hours late at 02.19.

There was a third incident of OLE damage on the ECML between Sandy and Biggleswade on December 11, emphasising the frailty of the East Coast electrification. This incident was caused by a broken registration arm.

Another delay in reopening the Northumberland Line expected

COMPLETION of the £236 million scheme to restore passenger services between Newcastle and Ashington, almost 60 years after they were withdrawn, is expected to be further delayed, *writes Graeme Pickering*.

The 'Northumberland Line' project involves the construction of stations at Northumberland Park, Seaton Delaval, Newsham, Blyth Bebside, Bedlington and Ashington, and reconfiguration of 15 miles of the current freight-only route running north-easterly from the East Coast Main Line at Benton North Junction on the outskirts of Newcastle.

Originally scheduled for opening in December 2023, a new target of summer 2024 was announced last year after it was concluded considerable additional spending was likely to be required to meet the original deadline.

An even later launch is now anticipated after Northumberland County Council (NCC) Leader Glen Sanderson said there had been "some delays with some of the key partners".

Financially supported by the Department for Transport as part of its 'Restoring Your Railway' programme, the project is being managed on behalf of NCC by AECOM.

Although hopeful of passenger services beginning by the end of 2024, Coun Sanderson said it was "too early" to say when and suggested some stations may be completed after that.

Mining subsidence

From the outset, the prevalence of former mine workings in the area was known to present one of the biggest challenges for construction. Last summer, AECOM programme delivery director Neil Blagburn reported "an improving picture" with mitigating their impact and told *The RM* that Northumberland Park station posed the biggest remaining challenge in terms of ensuring ground stabilisation so that building could begin.



A Class 158 passes the signalbox and crossing at Bedlington South in early August 2023, with a special working for Northern along the route of the Northumberland Line. NORTHERN

Despite a request from *The RM* for further information, NCC did not elaborate on the cause or extent of the delays cited by Coun Sanderson. However, it is understood that work on Bedlington and Blyth Bebside stations is behind schedule.

A council spokesman responded: "While there have been some delays, not entirely unexpected in a complex infrastructure project of this scale, all partners are working hard to get the Northumberland Line open, and we will share further updates once timings are clear."

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Will 2024 be a year of railway reckoning, wrecking or renaissance?

Career railwayman **Phil Marsh** describes the main challenges currently facing our railways as we head into an election year.

I JOINED the railways in 1973 and continue to enjoy working in a rail industry that, given recent controversial decisions on railway policy, perhaps deserves some scrutiny. The cancellation of HS2 north of Birmingham, dropping plans for ticket office closures, and no prospect of any Great British Railways legislation before the looming general election have all created industry uncertainty.

A major question is just how much political or Department for Transport support there actually is for the GBR project or railways in general.

For example, Network Rail and HS2 Ltd were given just a few minutes' notice in the autumn ahead of the prime minister's announcement to cancel HS2 to Manchester. It is understood that a maximum of just a dozen people were involved in that decision – including Boris Johnson's former transport advisor and anti-HS2 journalist Andrew Gilligan, who is now understood to be advising Rishi Sunak on HS2.

Another tricky subject is open access (OA) operations, such as those on the East Coast Main Line, which are politically and operationally complicated. The Rail Regulator authorises OA operations, while the Treasury is concerned about revenue abstraction from the tightly managed DfT contracts with former franchisees – but Transport Secretary Mark Harper announced in February 2023 he was very much in favour of private competition.

Maximising track capacity is more difficult with OA operations, so the DfT needs to decide whether it wants to maximise capacity (and thus the return on any NR investment) through the contracted operators, or to encourage further OA services. Only then can NR plan a timetable that maximises recent ECML enhancements, which may now be introduced in December 2024.

Mixing HS2 and WCML

The HS2 decision will create congestion on the West Coast Main Line north of Handsacre Junction, near Lichfield, when the non-tilt HS2 trains are restricted to running at 110mph while the existing tilt-fitted 'Pendolinos' can run at 125mph. With five trains an hour in each direction due to run off HS2 onto the WCML, then performance, capacity and punctuality are guaranteed to decline without infrastructure upgrades.

Signalling and general infrastructure upgrades between Crewe and Carlisle have been postponed beyond CP7 as too expensive, so the largely 1960s infrastructure is likely to become more expensive to maintain as time goes on.

The DfT has led the procurement of trains for HS2 but, to maximise seats, it originally specified just one door per carriage – increasing station dwell times and thus decreasing network capacity. The DfT has now realised this fundamental error and is discussing contract variations with the manufacturers.

The HS2 decision not to go straight to Euston impacts the Great Western Main Line, given that the new station at Old Oak Common looks like it will be a part-terminus station for some years to come. Punctuality and capacity will reduce during its construction phase, which also reduces maintenance access periods, as possessions are required instead to create the new infrastructure. Unlike the Reading station project a decade ago, there are no diversionary routes available to avoid the OOC works.

Infrastructure failures

The GWML electrification and Elizabeth Line interface works over the last decade also reduced available engineering time and so now, although the railway remains safe, infrastructure failures are causing more frequent delays.

The slightest delay caused by Elizabeth Line services can affect the whole of the GWML with knock-on issues. This has been made worse by non-compatibility between trains, making recovering any failures difficult and time consuming.

In December, there was a spate of dewirements, including one that saw NR chief executive Andrew Haines trapped on a train for hours outside Paddington! Mr Haines posted on social media about his delay: "…importantly, we failed as a system. Too many individual actors seeing risk from their own perspective meant it was harder than it should have been to get things done whilst maintaining safety. Multiple self-evacuations, because of the pace at which we were able to move or even access trains, cannot be regarded as good safety practice.

"We have gone backwards on customer service. We can do better than we did last night when we take customers' legitimate concerns seriously. My heartfelt apologies to anyone caught up in last night's problems. I intend to use my own painful experience in committing to improve how we deliver for our customers and support our colleagues, especially when things go wrong.

"I witnessed first-hand some outstanding colleagues from across the railway family busting a gut to do the right thing. It was a privilege and humbling to work alongside them. You know who you are, thank you!"

Dewirements on the ECML south of Grantham and near Sandy in early December, plus a lengthy Eurostar failure near the Channel Tunnel, all led to more passengers being trapped for hours, leading to the question: why does this keep happening? (See also story on page14.)

Perhaps the current dysfunctional state of the rail industry can be summed up with this example of a disaggregated railway. Six different wheelchair ramps are required on platforms at Edinburgh given incompatibility in train and associated equipment design.

We await 2024 railway developments with interest!



Rail's 'big three' (from left): Minister of State for Rail and HS2, Huw Merriman; NR chairman Peter Hendy; and NR chief executive Andrew Haines – pictured at Waterloo on July 11, 2023. PHIL MARSH

> "We have gone backwards on customer service"
>
> **Andrew Haines, NR chief executive**

Liverpool Street now Britain's busiest

AFTER being Britain's busiest railway station for all but one of the past 18 years, London Waterloo has lost its top spot to Liverpool Street, which has moved up from fourth place. Waterloo is now the third busiest station in the country according to 2022/23 station usage figures released by the Office of Rail and Road on December 14.

The figures, which are based on passenger entries and exits, reflect the significant impact the opening of the Elizabeth Line has had on London travel patterns since it opened on May 22, 2022. Paddington is the capital's second busiest station with 59.2 million passengers, and the Elizabeth Line's Tottenham Court Road station appears in the annual figures for the very first time. Another station to benefit from the Elizabeth Line fully opening is Farringdon, which has risen in popularity from 38th place to 9th.

Looking at provincial stations, Birmingham New Street remains the busiest outside London with 30.7 million passengers, followed by Leeds (24 million) and Manchester Piccadilly (23.6 million). Glasgow Central was the most used station in Scotland with 20.8 million passengers, while Cardiff Central remains Wales' most used with 10.2 million entries and exits.

Right: Britain's 10 most used stations. ORR

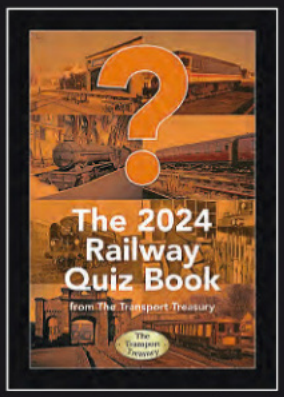
Top 10 stations in Great Britain	Total entries and exits April 2022 to March 2023
London Liverpool Street	80.4 million
London Paddington	59.2 million
London Waterloo	57.8 million
London Bridge	47.7 million
London Victoria	45.6 million
Stratford (London)	44.1 million
Tottenham Court Road	34.9 million
London St Pancras Int.	33.3 million
Farringdon	31.5 million
London Euston	31.3 million

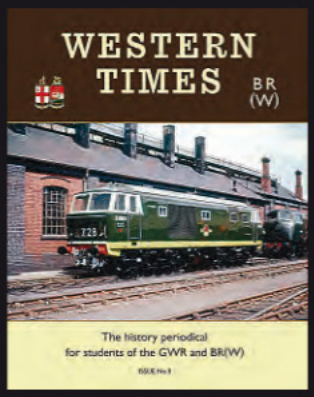
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SIDE LINES

'Great progress' with Chiltern tunnel

BY late November, 19 of the 38 emergency cross-passages, linking the northbound and southbound bores of HS2's 10-mile tunnel under the Chilterns, had been completed.

"We're making great progress on the Chiltern tunnel, with approaching nine out of the 10 miles complete, and our cross-passage teams are catching-up fast," said HS2 Ltd project manager Aaron Harrison.

Contractor sought for people mover works

THE process of finding a contractor to take charge of the enabling works for the automated people mover (APM) – which will link HS2's Interchange station, north-east of Solihull, with the National Exhibition Centre, Birmingham International railway station and Birmingham Airport – is underway. Topographical and utility surveys and ground investigations will form part of the enabling programme in a deal worth up to £2 million.

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Striding out with spans on major Midlands bridges

All beams are in place at Highfurlong Brook in Northamptonshire, and concrete is poured for the structure of Curzon Viaduct No. 3 in Birmingham.

IT was announced in early December that the 163 metre-long (178 yards) Highfurlong Brook Viaduct near Aston le Walls in Northamptonshire had become the first HS2 structure to have all of its deck beams installed.

One of more than 50 major viaducts being built as part of the project, it consists of seven spans and crosses Highfurlong Brook and its floodplain at a height of nine metres (30 feet).

Each of the spans contain four beams weighing up to 56 tonnes, which were lifted into position over a two-month period. The viaduct deck itself and the parapets will be among the next phases of work.

November saw over 2000 cubic metres (over 6500 cubic feet) of concrete poured to create the first two 90 metre (295 feet) deck sections of Curzon Viaduct No. 3, one of five connected structures which will form part of the approach to HS2's Curzon Street station in Birmingham.



Over 11,000 cubic metres of concrete will be required to complete the deck sections on Curzon Viaduct No. 3 in Birmingham. This November 2023 image shows part of the operation to create the first stages of deck structure. To lessen the impact on local roads, delivery and pouring operations took place at night. HS2

As concrete is poured for each section of the 300 metre (328 yard)-long bridge, shuttering and scaffolding will be removed from the structure.

The section of the viaduct over Digbeth Canal is due to be constructed this summer using 34 steel girders for support while the formwork is completed.

Railways in Parliament Compiled by **Jon Longman**

Value for money

BATH MP Wera Hobhouse asked the Department for Transport for an estimate of the benefit/cost ratio for each new station built and reopened line in each of the last 10 years.

Transport Minister Huw Merriman said: "Benefit Cost Ratios (BCRs) within the economic case are only one element of decision-making on schemes and should be considered alongside the other cases in the five-case business model used in Government (strategic, economic, financial, commercial and management cases). Therefore, we do not routinely make BCRs available.

"In practice, it can take a number of years for long-term demand patterns to emerge for new stations. The DfT and bodies who promote their own schemes have a long standing and established appraisal framework to help scheme promoters forecast passenger demand of new stations and lines.

"We are continuing to monitor our framework and use evaluation to understand the impacts of schemes."

Reducing suicides

ROMFORD MP Andrew Rosindell asked what steps the DfT is taking with companies to reduce rates of suicides and self-harm at stations.

Hugh Merriman replied: "Every rail operator is required to have a live Suicide Prevention Plan, which covers requirements such as training of public facing staff in suicide prevention, putting in place mitigation measures at stations, and promoting help seeking behaviour to vulnerable people at risk of suicide or self-harm.

"Furthermore, every operator is also required to obtain and maintain accreditation to the Safeguarding on Rail Scheme, which is assessed independently by British Transport Police (BTP). The scheme requires operators to demonstrate how they are actively supporting vulnerable people on their network.

"BTP carries out a site visit following every suspected suicide on the railway to mitigate against future loss of life at the same location, and has a dedicated Harm Reduction Team who work one-to-one with vulnerable individuals, joining up local authorities, the NHS and others to ensure the person is cared for and prevented from harming themselves on the rail network."

East West potential

RICHARD Fuller, the North East Bedfordshire MP, asked whether the Government has established a board and working group for the purposes of realising the economic growth potential of East West Rail.

Treasury Minister Gareth Davies said: "HM Treasury has recently established an official-level East West Rail economic growth board with representatives from relevant Government departments, including the DfT.

"The board will ensure that central Government is fully joined up in its support for locally led plans to maximise the benefits of East West Rail and will co-ordinate activity accordingly.

"The Government provided £15 million of funding at Spring Budget 2023 to support local authorities along the East West Rail route to further progress their plans to make the most of the railway for their communities."

See also pages 20-23.

Bashed bridges

LIFE peer Baroness Scott of Needham Market asked what steps the Government is taking to reduce the incidence of HGVs hitting railway bridges.

Transport Minister Lord Davies of Gower said: "The DfT has invested £3 million to help create a digital road map developed by Ordnance Survey for SatNavs, which includes information on height and weight restrictions.

"In addition, the DfT works with bridge owners, including Network Rail, to raise driver awareness of, and offer advice on, avoiding low bridges. It has published a suite of documents under 'Prevention of bridge strikes: a good practice guide' on the Government website at www.gov.uk."

ECML signal failures

NEWCASTLE upon Tyne Central MP Chi Onwurah wanted to know how many signalling failures occurred on the East Coast Main Line in 2021 and 2022.

Mr Merriman replied: "The average time between Service Affecting Failures on the ECML has become less frequent since 2010 and is trending downwards. I can confirm there were 312 signalling failures in 2021/22, and 247 in 2022/23."

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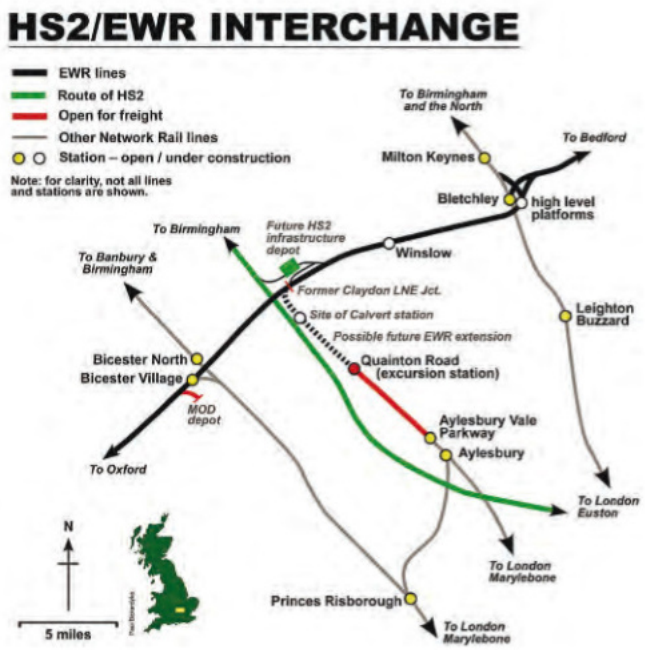
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EWR tracks link up at Calvert

East West Rail track laying between Bicester and Bletchley has been completed with the handover of the final section where it crosses the HS2 route at Calvert, as Phil Marsh reports.

Above: A general view of the HS2/EWR interface area on November 29, 2023 looking west along EWR towards Bicester from Addison Road (bridge No. 27). The gradient up to the rail bridge taking EWR over HS2 can be seen, with the site of the future HS2 infrastructure maintenance depot on the right and the trackbed for the possible future EWR Aylesbury branch on the left.
ALL PHOTOS BY PHIL MARSH



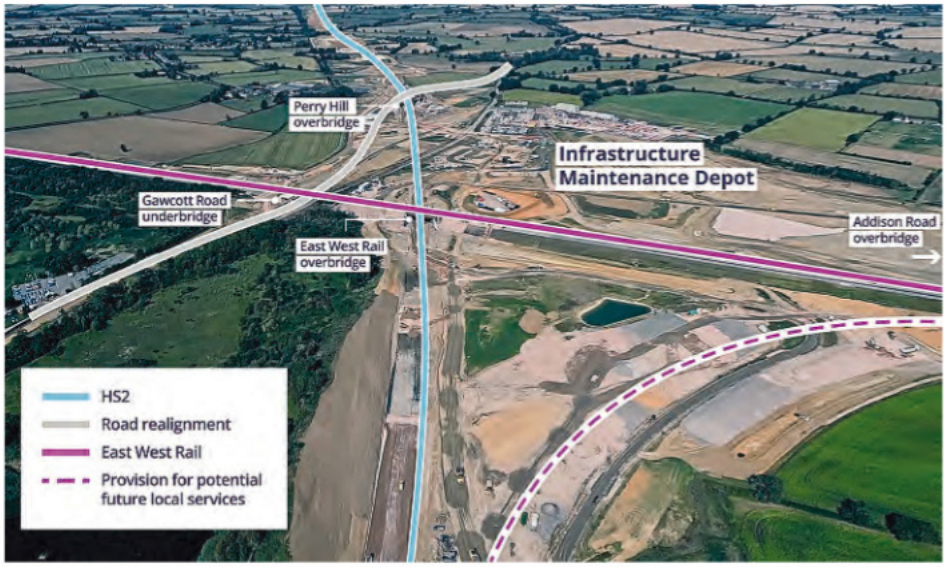
Left: A schematic map of the lines around the HS2/EWR interface.

A KEY stage in two major rail projects was reached on December 1 when HS2 contractors completed their responsibilities for the East West Rail route at the point where the two new lines cross in rural Buckinghamshire.

The handover gave the East West Rail Alliance (EWRA comprising Atkins, Laing O'Rourke, Network Rail and VolkerRail,) full control of its route from Bicester to Bletchley, thus allowing the final tracks to be laid connecting Oxford with Milton Keynes and Bedford.

HS2's contractors EKFB (a joint venture between Eiffage, Kier, Ferrovial Construction and BAM Nuttall) had been responsible for building the section of EWR trackbed from just west of the former Claydon Crossing (at 11 miles 17 chains from Bletchley) to just east of bridge No. 29 (at 13 miles 39 chains from Bletchley). This section has been progressively released to the EWRA from Claydon towards Calvert since May, with December 1 seeing the final 420 yards (385 metres) handed over.

The work involved demolishing two road-



An aerial view of interface, looking north along the route of HS2 with EWR running left to right, showing the location of the future infrastructure maintenance depot and the Aylesbury chord. HS2



Looking west from the old Addison Road bridge (No. 27) on July 6, 2021 as the former Claydon Loop track is being lifted. The road-over-rail bridge No. 28 (Gawcott Road) can be seen in the distance, which has now been demolished and the road diverted under the railway via a new bridge instead.



Looking east along EWR at the site of the former Claydon Loop to the new Addison Road bridge No. 27 on September 27, as Freightliner's No. 66416 heads track laying train. The rising gradient from here to bridge over HS2 (behind the camera) can be seen.



The former Claydon LNE Junction on January 22, 2020 with the portacabin signal box being decommissioned. This view is east along the EWR route past Claydon Loop to the Addison Road bridge (just visible in the distance), with the chord from Calvert and the Aylesbury line coming in from the right.

over-rail bridges (Nos. 27 Addison Road and 28 Gawcott Road) and then building: A new road-over-rail bridge for Addison Road; a bridge for East West Rail tracks to cross HS2; and a rail-over-road bridge for Gawcott Road.

The package of works also provided a ballasted four-track section of trackbed for a new 775 metre (850 yard) freight loop, a reception line providing access to and from the HS2 Infrastructure Maintenance depot (still to be built), plus the up and down Bletchley lines for EWR. The access line to the HS2 depot will allow track components for the high-speed line to be delivered by rail using EWR tracks rather than by road.

Final tracklaying across the remaining gap began on December 11, joining up the rails already laid from Bicester in the west and Bletchley in the east.

Sleepy backwater

The crossover point is near Calvert in Buckinghamshire, where HS2 is using part of the former Great Central Main Line route, while EWR is rebuilding the former 'Varsity Line' that connected Oxford and



Left: A photo taken looking east from the former bridge No. 28 (Gawcott Road), now replaced by a new bridge taking EWR over the road. This view on February 21, 2015 shows Colas Rail's No. 70803 at the rear of a ballast train (headed by another unidentified Colas '70') waiting to proceed into Claydon Loop then reversing and leaving in the Aylesbury direction (right).



Right: Looking east along EWR from bridge No. 28 (Gawcott Road) to bridge No. 27 (Addison Road) on October 17, 2021. The route of HS2 runs left (north) to right (south) through the middle of this shot. The train is sitting roughly where the EWR-over-HS2 bridge is now.

Cambridge. A south-to-east connecting chord was also built between these two lines during the Second World War. The decline of both these routes after the 1960s meant the location became a sleepy railway backwater, particularly so from September 1993 when the line between Claydon Loop (just east of Claydon LNE Junction) and Bletchley was mothballed.

The remaining route between Bicester, Claydon (reverse) and Aylesbury was then only really used for waste trains to the Calvert landfill site and, more recently, for new Tube Stock deliveries from Derby Litchurch Lane to Ruislip Underground depot. A few charter specials also ran, plus engineering trains associated with the upgrade of the Oxford to Bicester section in the mid-2010s.

The area's landscape has changed beyond recognition since January 2020, when ownership was transferred from Network Rail to HS2. As part of this change of ownership, Claydon LNE Junction signal box – in reality, a portacabin – was moved about four miles south to the site of Waddesdon station on the former GCR/Metropolitan Railway Joint Line between Quainton Road and Aylesbury.

Claydon Loop's track was lifted in July 2021, leaving the 'emergency' Claydon curve to be used for HS2 aggregate deliveries until October 2021, when that too was lifted all the way south through the former Calvert station area to Quainton, the current end of the line from Aylesbury.

Due to Government 'funding efficiencies' cutting around £250 million from the budget, road-over-rail bridge No. 29 (Main Street) has been retained, while the railway now runs over what used to be road-over-rail bridge No. 28 (Gawcott Road). This meant that the former lightly-graded alignment had to raised on a new embankment by 10 metres (32 feet), creating a gradient profile of 1-in-50.

This engineering work took over three years to plan, mainly due to the quantity and variety of services that had to be diverted (such as water pipes, telecoms and electricity lines), involving time-consuming negotiations with local authorities and utility companies to co-ordinate the works.

HS2 will run in a cutting up to 9.7 metres deep from south of the former Calvert station site, requiring an estimated 685,000 cubic metres of material to be excavated in the interface area. Crucially, this will also enable EWR's Aylesbury connection to be built alongside should the Government funding be made available for this badly needed line.

The earthworks and spur off the EWR line for a possible future Aylesbury connection have already been created and ballasted ready for tracklaying. But, although it is believed that the design and operational requirements having being agreed (such as signal sites and line speeds), the go-ahead to build the Aylesbury line has not been given so far.

Flora and fauna

There was a huge protest against the environmental effects of all these earthworks, and large areas of landscaping and new woodland planting will surround the new maintenance depot (creating 180 jobs) to the north of the EWR tracks. Around 15,000 trees and 20,000 shrubs will be planted, with a footbridge provided in 2024 to replace a former public foot crossing over what has now become a four-track section.

Other environmental considerations included a rare bat of the Bechstein's variety (amongst others) and the black hairstreak butterfly was found to be living in Sheephouse Wood to the south of Calvert station, opposite the Calvert waste recovery plant. A 900 metre-long (1000 yard) bat and butterfly-friendly mesh cage over HS2 will be provided to accommodate the various winged locals.

In addition to the new Addison Road bridge (bridge No. 27), which is due to open in early January over the new four-track section, the still-under-construction Perry Hill bridge just north of Calvert will span four HS2 tracks. This 99 metre-long (110 yard) structure will carry a local road over HS2 at the point where the access tracks to the new infrastructure maintenance depot will split off from the high-speed line. Both bridges potentially offer great railway photographic locations in the future.

With the final EWR track laid, installation of signalling, power and comms to the interface area will follow, allowing the first engineering and test trains to operate over the full 18 miles between Bletchley and Bicester. Public services are due to commence in May 2025 – some 25 years after the author of this article announced the reopening in a Railtrack Network Management Statement. ■





Above: Looking east over the completed EWR-over-HS2 bridge on November 29, 2023.

Left: Looking east along EWR from bridge No. 28 (Gawcott Road) to bridge No. 27 (Addison Road) on March 3, 2022 showing the intersection bridge under construction.



Looking west from bridge No. 28 (Gawcott Road) towards Bicester on March 3, 2022 showing bridge No. 29 (Main Street) in the distance.



Looking west from the intersection bridge down the gradient towards Bicester on November 29, 2023. Bridge No. 29 (Main Street) has been retained and can be seen in the distance. Note the illuminated signal.



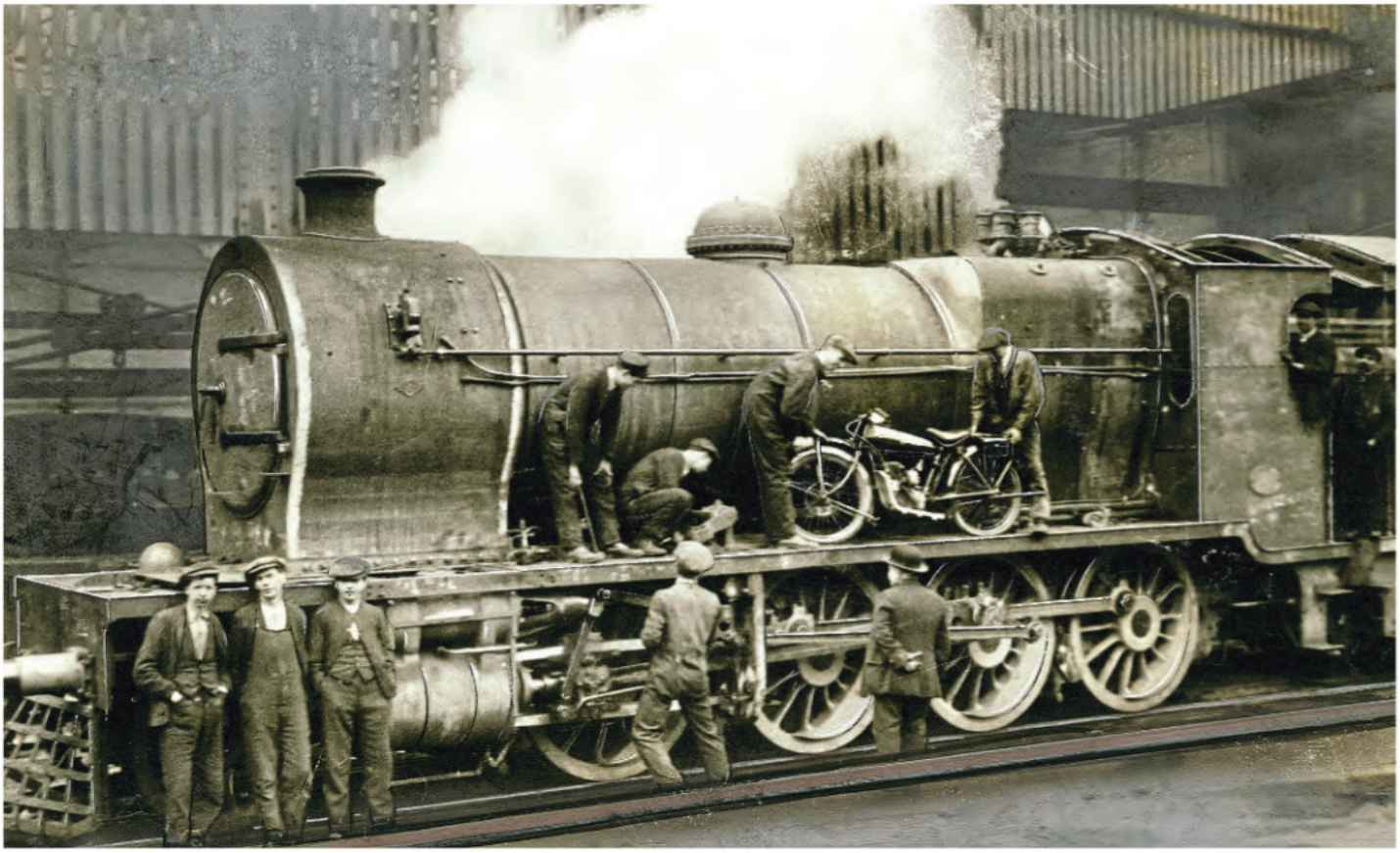
Looking south over the overgrown platform of the former GCR Calvert station on February 26, 2021 as No. 66156 approaches with a rake of wagons carrying aggregate for HS2. The Calvert waste transfer terminal is the background.



Looking south along the route of HS2 through the site of the former GCR Calvert station on November 7, 2023. The road bridge where this photo was taken from (School Hill) has now been demolished, but it will eventually be replaced by a new bridge over HS2.

Below: Looking south from the EWR-over-HS2 bridge on November 29, 2023 along the route of HS2 towards the site of Calvert station. School Hill road bridge can be seen in the distance being demolished.





A Beardmore publicity shot from 1920 showing one of its 350cc Precision motorcycles on the running board of a HGS Class 2-8-0 loco being built for the East Indian Railway Company, as featured in the February 15, 1923 issue of *The Motor Cycle*.

Beardmores Both

For a brief period in the early 1920s, Glasgow-based engineering firm William Beardmore and Company had motorcycles and locomotives on its order books, resulting in this recently rediscovered press photo.

THIS fascinating photograph (above) was passed to us by James Robinson, editor of our sister title *The Classic Motor Cycle*, a publication that can trace its lineage back to the founding of *The Motor Cycle* in 1903, just six years after *The Railway Magazine* was established.

James discovered the photo while doing research in the magazine's archives. It is presumably a publicity shot showing two products built by Glasgow-based engineering firm William Beardmore and Company in the early 1920s, namely a Beardmore Precision motorcycle and a HGS Class 2-8-0 loco for the 5ft 6in gauge East Indian Railway Company.

The photo appeared in an issue of *The Motor Cycle* dated February 15, 1923, illustrating an article comparing the engineering and performance characteristics of locomotives and motorcycles – the conclusion of which, perhaps understandably given where it appeared, was that future locomotive development was "prohibited" whereas motorcycles had "almost unlimited scope"!

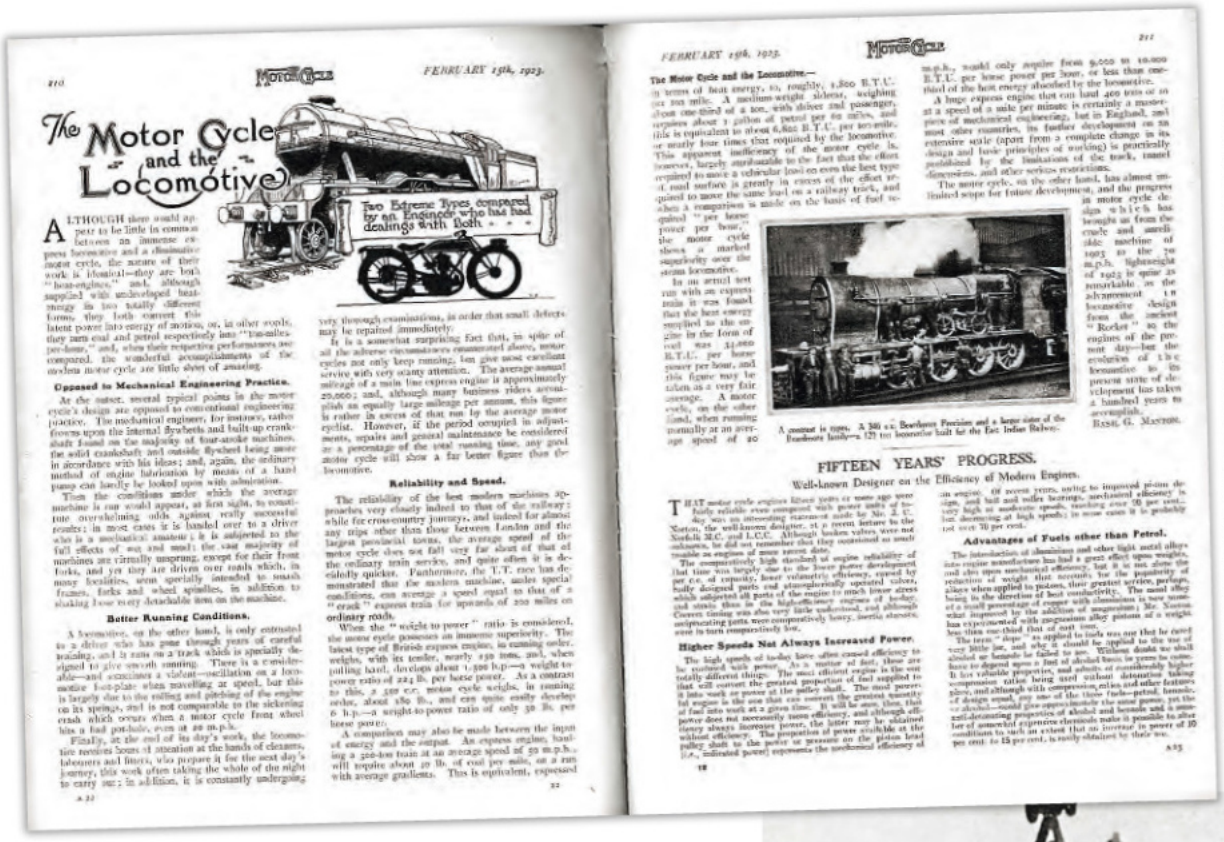
Company history

William Beardmore founded his company in 1886 at Parkhead Forge in the east of Glasgow, making steel products for the naval industry before moving into shipbuilding in 1900.

After the First World War however, the company struggled for orders and so diversified into other areas, including building locomotives, aircraft, motorcycles and other road vehicles. It was all mostly in vain, as much of the business had been closed by the time of Beardmore's death in 1936 – although Parkhead Forge continued under various owners until 1983, the land now occupied by a shopping centre called The Forge.

Beardmore only manufactured motorcycles from 1919 to 1925. Its Precision Motorcycles brand was formed when the company teamed up with motorcycle engine manufacturer F E Baker, which was also struggling after the war. The first model featured a 350cc two-stroke engine, with others following in the power range 250 to 600cc. Baker regained the manufacturing rights in 1924 and started up his own company in Birmingham, but sold it on to James Cycle in 1930.

Beardmore's locomotive manufacturing lasted slightly longer than motorcycles, from 1920 to 1930, based at a factory adjacent to its shipyard in Dalmuir on the Clyde, north-west of Glasgow. During this time, the company built around 400 locos, just over half of which were for use in Britain with the remainder for export, mostly to India.



The Motor Cycle and the Locomotive.

Two Extreme Types compared by an Engineer who has had dealings with Both.

ALTHOUGH there would appear to be little in common between an immense express locomotive and a diminutive motor cycle, the nature of their work is identical—they are both "heat-engines," and, although supplied with undeveloped heat-energy in two totally different forms, they both convert this latent power into energy of motion, or, in other words, they turn coal and petrol respectively into "ton-miles-per-hour," and, when their respective performances are compared, the wonderful accomplishments of the modern motor cycle are little short of amazing.

Opposed to Mechanical Engineering Practice.

At the outset, several typical points in the motor cycle's design are opposed to conventional engineering practice. The mechanical engineer, for instance, rather frowns upon the internal flywheels and built-up crankshafts found on the majority of four-stroke machines, the solid crankshaft and outside flywheel being more in accordance with his ideas; and, again, the ordinary method of engine lubrication by means of a hand-pump can hardly be looked upon with admiration.

Then the conditions under which the average machine is run would appear, at first sight, to constitute overwhelming odds against really successful results; in most cases it is handed over to a driver who is a mechanical amateur; it is subjected to the full effects of wet and mud; the vast majority of machines are virtually unsprung, except for their front forks, and yet they are driven over roads which, in many localities, seem specially intended to smash frames, forks and wheel spindles, in addition to shaking loose every detachable item on the machine.

Better Running Conditions.

A locomotive, on the other hand, is only entrusted to a driver who has gone through years of careful training, and it runs on a track which is specially designed to give smooth running. There is a considerable—and sometimes a violent—oscillation on a locomotive foot-plate when travelling at speed, but this is largely due to the rolling and pitching of the engine on its springs, and is not comparable to the sickening crash which occurs when a motor cycle front wheel hits a bad pot-hole, even at 20 m.p.h.

Finally, at the end of its day's work, the locomotive receives hours of attention at the hands of cleaners, labourers and fitters, who prepare it for the next day's journey, this work often taking the whole of the night to carry out; in addition, it is constantly undergoing very thorough examinations, in order that small defects may be repaired immediately.

It is a somewhat surprising fact that, in spite of all the adverse circumstances enumerated above, motor cycles not only keep running, but give most excellent service with very scanty attention. The average annual mileage of a main line express engine is approximately 20,000; and, although many business riders accomplish an equally large mileage per annum, this figure is rather in excess of that run by the average motor cyclist. However, if the period occupied in adjustments, repairs and general maintenance be considered as a percentage of the total running time, any good motor cycle will show a far better figure than the locomotive.

Reliability and Speed.

The reliability of the best modern machines approaches very closely indeed to that of the railway; while for cross-country journeys, and indeed for almost any trips other than those between London and the largest provincial towns, the average speed of the motor cycle does not fall very far short of that of the ordinary train service, and quite often it is decidedly quicker. Furthermore, the T.T. race has demonstrated that the modern machine, under special conditions, can average a speed equal to that of a "crack" express train for upwards of 200 miles on ordinary roads.

When the "weight to power" ratio is considered, the motor cycle possesses an immense superiority. The latest type of British express engine, in running order, weighs, with its tender, nearly 150 tons, and, when pulling hard, develops about 1,500 h.p.—a weight-to-power ratio of 224 lb. per horse power. As a contrast to this, a 500 c.c. motor cycle weighs, in running order, about 380 lb., and can quite easily develop 6 h.p.—a weight-to-power ratio of only 30 lb. per horse power.

A comparison may also be made between the input of energy and the output. An express engine, hauling a 300-ton train at an average speed of 50 m.p.h., will topple about 30 lb. of coal per mile, on a run with average gradients. This is equivalent, expressed in m.p.h., would only require from 9,000 to 10,000 B.T.U. per horse power per hour, or less than one-third of the heat energy absorbed by the locomotive.

A huge express engine that can haul 400 tons or so at a speed of a mile per minute is certainly a masterpiece of mechanical engineering, but in England, and most other countries, its further development on the extensive scale (apart from a complete change in its design and basic principles of working) is practically prohibited by the limitations of the track, tunnel dimensions, and other serious restrictions.

The motor cycle, on the other hand, has almost unlimited scope for future development, and the progress in motor cycle design which has brought us from the crude and unreliable machine of 1903 to the 70 m.p.h. lightweight of 1923 is quite as remarkable as the advancement in locomotive design from the ancient "Rocket" to the engines of the present day—but the evolution of the locomotive is its present state of development has taken a hundred years to accomplish.

BASIL G. MAYBON.

A contrast in types. A 300 h.p. Beardmore Precision and a larger sister of the Frankfurt Railway—120 ton locomotive built for the East Indian Railway.

FIFTEEN YEARS' PROGRESS.

Well-known Designer on the Efficiency of Modern Engines.

THAT motor cycle engines fifteen years or more ago were fairly reliable even compared with power units of to-day was an interesting statement made by Mr. J. C. Gotton, the well-known designer, at a recent lecture to the Norfolk M.C. and I.C.C. Although broken valves were not unknown, he did not remember that they occurred as usually as modern engines of more recent date.

The comparatively high standard of engine reliability of that time was largely due to the lower power development per c.c. of capacity, lower volumetric efficiency, caused by fully designed parts and atmospherically operated valves, which subjected all parts of the engine to much lower stress and strain than in the high-efficiency engines of to-day. Covers finding was also very little understood, and although unobjectionable parts were comparatively heavy, inertia stresses were in turn comparatively low.

Higher Speeds Not Always Increased Power.

The high speeds of to-day have often caused efficiency to be confused with power. As a matter of fact, these are totally different things. The most efficient engine is the one that will convert the greatest proportion of fuel supplied to it into work or power at the pulley shaft. The most powerful engine is the one that can convert the greatest quantity of fuel into work at a given time. It will be seen, then, that power does not necessarily mean efficiency, and although efficiency always increases power, the latter may be obtained without efficiency. The proportion of power available at the pulley shaft to the power or pressure on the piston head (i.e., indicated power) represents the mechanical efficiency of

Advantages of Fuels other than Petrol.

The introduction of aluminium and other light metal alloys into engine manufacture has had a great effect upon weights, and also upon mechanical efficiency, but it is not alone the reduction of weight that accounts for the popularity of alloys when applied to pistons, their greatest services, perhaps, being in the direction of heat conductivity. The most alloy being in the direction of heat conductivity. The most alloy being in the direction of heat conductivity. The most alloy



What started it all off: No. 40129 with wooden *Dracula* nameplate fitted with double-sided tape for a few minutes at Pen Yard on May 17, 1978. Several other Springs Branch '40s' had 'non original' names painted on them during this period. Ron was told by traincrew that those in charge ordered their removal, but were quite happy with Ron's efforts to resurrect the original names.

ALL PHOTOS BY RON WATSON-JONES UNLESS STATED



Pen Yard during the summer of 1978 and No. 40011 has just had its original name *Mauretania* reapplied by Ron freehand to the 'B Bank' side. Ron later produced a stencil for a neater application, but never got the opportunity to do so as the loco was reallocated to Healey Mills and withdrawn early in October 1980.

Names reunited

Steve Morris tells the story of how one man set about renaming Class 40s for their final years in service.

JUST a few years after their introduction in the late 1950s, a batch of 25 EE Type 4s (Class 40s) were given names honouring ocean liners owned by shipping firms Cunard Line (19), Elder Dempster Lines (3) and Canadian Pacific Steamships (3).

Only Nos. D210-212 were given official naming ceremonies, the remainder (Nos. D213-225, D227-235) receiving theirs during routine works visits. The first to be named was No. D210, which became *Empress of Britain* at Euston on May 12, 1960; the last was No. D229 *Saxonia* on March 5, 1963 at Crewe Works.

No. D226 was earmarked to carry the name *Media*, but as far as is known it never did. Some debate continues as to whether the plates were ever fitted or not, but the lack of any photographic evidence or the presence of fixing holes in the locomotive's bodysides suggests not. It seems as though the plates were cast, however, as one exists in Pete Waterman's collection.

Removal of the nameplates began as early as 1968, with at least two examples from the 'A Bank' side of Nos. D219 *Caronia* and D227 *Parthia* missing by then. The 'A Bank' plate from first-named No. D210 had also gone by the end of the following year. The remaining plates were removed during the early 1970s – the main reason being reported as issues with depot bodyside washing plants, particularly at Manchester Longsight, as pieces of the leather washing brushes were getting trapped in gaps that had formed over time between the nameplate and loco bodyside.

At least 11 of the original 50 plates applied made it through to 1974 – all except one of these being on the 'B Bank' side of locos, as their removal from this side was made more difficult due to limited access internally. It seems as if only one made it through to 1975, however, with the 'B Bank' side of No. 40035 (D235) *Apapa* being removed early that year, and then that was it… at least for the time being.

Ron Watson-Jones was born in Penmaenmawr, North Wales. He was a trained carpenter, but also a keen railway enthusiast and photographer. His enthusiasm waned following the end of steam in the 1960s, but returned with a vengeance during the summer of 1977 when, in his own words, he became "obsessed with diesels".

> "Removal of the nameplates began as early as 1968"



The plain white version of Ron's work seen applied to the 'A Bank' side of No. 40023 *Lancastria,* which had been applied at the end of June 1979.

Sowing the seeds

Ron soon got to know many of the local railwaymen and, during the late 1970s, was asked by the local area manager Jack Hayes if he would take on the job of official photographer to cover events such as namings, Royal visits, and operational incidents. Imagine a member of the public being asked to do this today! Not surprisingly he accepted, and payment came in the form of a UK-wide rail ticket allowing him to travel for nothing and pursue his passion.

Many of his regular trips were to Scotland, where he could photograph more of what had become his favourite class, the '40s'. This new-found role also gave Ron access to places not normally open to the general public, allowing him to forge close relationships with railway staff – something that would later come in useful.

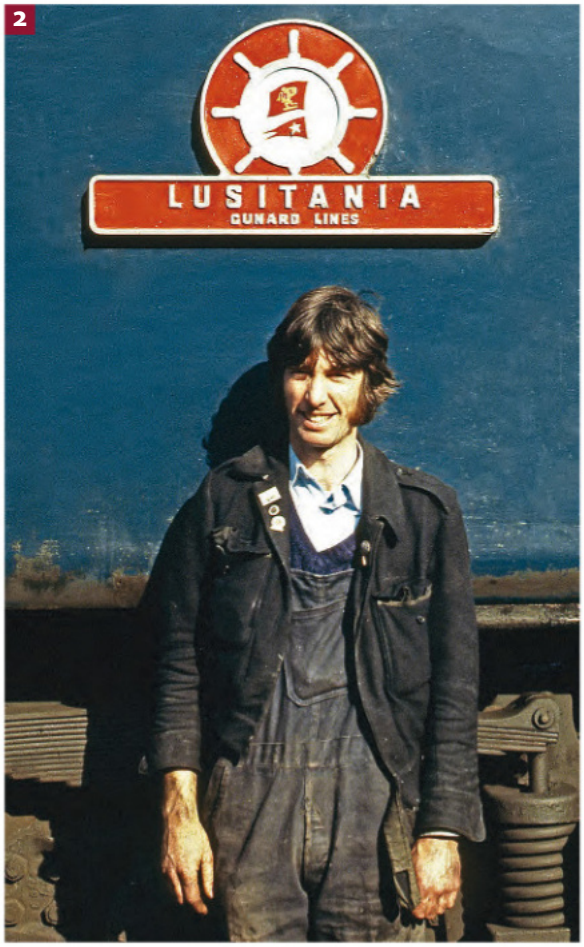
One such location was Penmaenmawr ('Pen') Yard, where trains were loaded



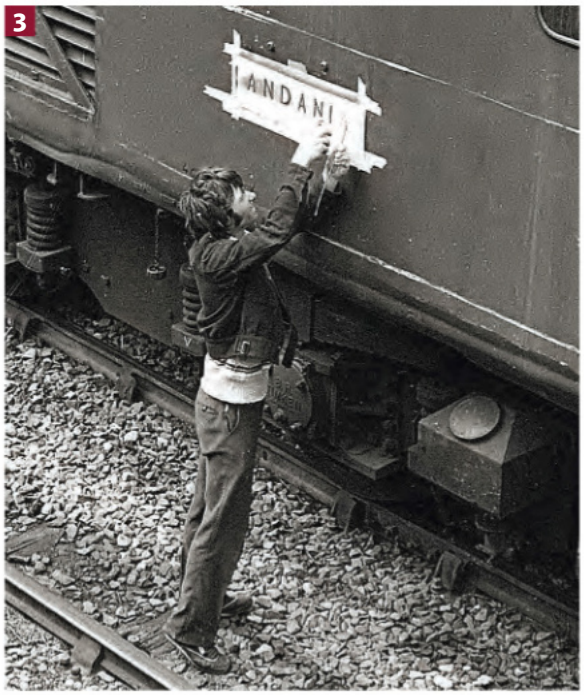
Ron still lives within a short distance of Penmaenmawr Yard, and remains well known by local enthusiasts and railwaymen alike. He is pictured on October 27 with a selection of the original templates he used, along with the author's flamecut nameplate panel from the 'A Bank' side of No. 40024. An original Lucania plate recently sold at auction for £12,000. STEVE MORRIS.



1: The red background version as applied to the 'A Bank' side of No. 40024 *Lucania* and seen on March 25, 1984. Signs of the original plain white version applied the previous May can be seen underneath.



2: Ron is pictured with an original nameplate from No. 40025 *Lusitania* that he had temporarily fitted to the 'B Bank' side of No. 40035 *Apapa* during a layover in Pen Yard on March 28, 1983. This was the position of the last of the original plates to be removed from the class in early 1975, and No. 40035 was certainly the only '40' to be fitted with two different original nameplates.



3: Ron seen at work on No. 40013, the last to be treated, in Pen Yard applying *Andania* to the 'B Bank' side using the red background method on June 21, 1984. Ron would apply the names during stationary periods as the loco moved along the yard whilst the wagons were loaded with ballast. PHIL THOMAS.

with ballast from the nearby quarry for use in the North West. Here he became acquainted with the ground staff and visiting drivers, particularly those from Wigan Springs Branch depot.

On May 17, 1978, regular Springs Branch driver Ozzie Sharrock turned up with No. 40129, his secondman having a wooden 'Dracula' nameplate in his bag. Ron managed to temporarily fit it to the loco for a photo, which would later appear in the railway press causing much discussion.

With no way to permanently fit the nameplate, depot staff applied a white painted stencilled version instead, although – along with several other non-original names applied to the class during time – this practise was frowned upon by BR management, and none actually ran in service like this for long. However, this idea sowed the seed in Ron's mind to rename those members of the class that had lost their original plates.

Stencils at the ready

Class 40s were daily visitors to Penmaenmawr Yard, including examples from the formerly-named batch, with their appearances becoming more common as the boiler-fitted examples began to lose their passenger duties in the early 1980s. Ron had access to the yard, knew the staff, and his job at the time allowed him the flexibility to pop down at short notice and do what was needed during the loading process. So everything was in place to make Ron's plan a reality.

The first loco he 'renamed' was No. 40011 *Mauretania* during the summer of 1978, with a freehand name applied in white to the 'B Bank' side. Wishing to improve on things, Ron then went about producing cardboard stencils for each of the names. He had another 23 to go at; one was not needed for No. 40021 *Ivernia*, as the loco had been withdrawn in the summer of 1976.

The names were initially painted white using the pre-prepared stencils direct onto the locos' blue bodysides in the area where the cast plates were originally fitted. The first to be dealt with in this way was No. 40019 *Caronia*, with both sides being completed on September 6, 1978. Unfortunately, along with two other examples (Nos. 40012 and 40020), Ron's work would be painted over during final classified repairs to the class – but he did manage to reapply them again at a later date.

A further improvement came by applying a red background with white borders onto which the white letters were then stencilled. No. 40027 *Parthia* was the first to be so treated, with the 'A Bank' side applied in November 1978. The red background version was more time consuming, however, as it needed the base coat to dry before applying the border and letters – although the locos' bodysides were hot immediately after arrival, which helped to cure the paint.

The majority of the renamings took place in Penmaenmawr Yard, but one was done at Bangor station and another at Llandudno Junction shed. The final application came on the 'B Bank' side of No. 40013 *Andania* on June 21, 1984. By then, Ron's work had spanned six years, during which he had applied over 40 'nameplates' to 20 of the originally-named members of the fleet, some being treated several times. See Table 1 for details of what he did to brighten up the lives of railwaymen and fellow enthusiasts alike. ■

■ *Many thanks to Ron Watson-Jones for help compiling this article, the proceeds from which will be donated to The Class Forty Preservation Society to help fund the upkeep of its three locomotives Nos. 40106, 40135 and 40145. See the website at www.cfps.co.uk for more information.*

Right: Penmaenmawr station on March 6, 1981, when Ron had just completed No. 40020 *Franconia* with the red background version on the 'A Bank' side in the yard, while No. 40015 *Aquitania* (a plain white version on the same side applied the day before) calls with the 11.30 Bangor-Manchester. This was the second time Ron had attended to No. 40020, the previous plain white version having been painted out during the loco's final classified repair at Crewe Works in the summer of 1979.



No. 40024 *Lucania* departs Llandudno Junction March 26,1984 with the daily Warrington freight. Ron had applied the red background version to the 'A Bank' side while it was stabled at the shed here the day before. No. 40024 would only remain in traffic for a few more weeks.



Above: Ron has just completed No. 40033 *Empress of England* 'B Bank' side during a layover at Bangor station on July 6, 1979.

THE RON WATSON-JONES CLASS 40 'RENAMINGS'

Loco	Name	Date painted	Notes
40010	*Empress of Britain*	Not done	Stencil produced but not used.
40011	*Mauretania*	Summer 1978	Freehand 'B Bank' only. Painted out by June 1979. Stencil produced but never used.
40012	*Aureol*	June 6, 1979	Both sides plain white.
		February 9, 1982	Both sides red background.
40013	*Andania*	June 6, 1984	Red background 'B Bank' only. Final one done.
			Freehand white on 'A Bank' seen June 1984, not applied by Ron.
40014	*Antonia*	February 5, 1980	Both sides plain white.
40015	*Aquitania*	March 5, 1981	Red background 'A Bank'. White border followed later due to running out of time, as loco was borrowed to rescue failed No. 40004 from Bangor on the 11.30 to Manchester. 'B Bank' never treated.
40016	*Campania*	August 5, 1980	Plain white 'A Bank' only. 'B Bank' never treated.
40017	*Carinthia*	October 3, 1979	Both sides plain white.
40018	*Carmania*	July 10, 1979	Both sides plain white.
40019	*Caronia*	September 6, 1978	First with stencil, both sides plain white. Painted out Crewe Works February 1979.
		October 8, 1979	Plain white 'A Bank' only.
40020	*Franconia*	April 30, 1979	Both sides plain white. Painted out Crewe Works August 1979.
		March 6, 1981	Red background 'A Bank' only.
40021	*Ivernia*	Not done	Loco withdrawn July 1976.
40022	*Laconia*	December 13, 1979	Both sides plain white.
		February 4, 1982	Red background 'B Bank' only.
40023	*Lancastria*	June 27, 1979	Both sides plain white
40024	*Lucania*	October 2, 1980	Red background 'B Bank' only. Painted out by July 1981.
		February 1983	Plain white 'B Bank' by this time
		May 1983	Plain white 'A Bank'.
		March 25, 1984	Red background 'A Bank' at Llandudno Junction shed.
40025	*Lusitania*	November 6, 1981	Both sides red background.
40027	*Parthia*	April 22, 1980	'A Bank' only red background, the first red background done.
40028	*Samaria*	Not done	
40029	*Saxonia*	May 24, 1982	Both sides red background.
40030	*Scythia*	Not done	
40031	*Sylvania*	August 7, 1980	Red background 'B Bank' only.
40032	*Empress of Canada*	August 1, 1979	Plain white both sides. 'A Bank' painted out by February 1981
40033	*Empress of England*	July 6, 1979	'B Bank' plain white at Bangor station. Painted out Crewe Works March 1980.
		April 27, 1982	Both sides red background.
40034	*Accra*	Not done	
40035	*Apapa*	February 16, 1984	Both sides red background. Freehand name in white seen on 'A Bank' in May 1982, but not applied by Ron.



'The Surrey'

John Heaton FCILT details the history of a lesser-known through working that took the long way round from the Kent Coast to London via Redhill.

RAILWAY systems in south-east England developed many complications, both geographical and organisational, as the rival London, Chatham & Dover Railway (LC&DR) and South Eastern Railway (SER) vied for territory. Rationalisation of the ensuing duplication was undertaken once the two companies had merged in 1899, but the system was still developing when the 1923 Grouping took place – one result being the new Southern Railway's introduction of a through train from Margate to London Bridge via Ramsgate, Deal, Dover and Redhill.

Reflecting the routing of this train via the original SER Redhill line, the train was afforded the soubriquet 'The Surrey' and the original schedule of this circuitous 117 mile amble took more than four hours. The train was to run for 35 years with only minor variations, and my attention was drawn to the existence of this remarkable working by Railway Performance Society (RPS) steam specialist Michael Rowe, who outlined the developments that had influenced the service's eventual introduction.

Early rivalry

The SER had opened its 101 mile route to Margate (Sands) on December 1, 1846, running from London via East Croydon, Redhill, Tonbridge (then spelt Tunbridge), Canterbury and Ramsgate (Town, a terminus until replaced by a through station on today's site in 1926). The Bradshaw timetable lists five services each way in its September 1849 edition. The down trains departed London Bridge at xx.30 at three-hourly intervals from 7.30am to 4.30pm, but the already burgeoning business peak resulted in two more trains at 5.30 and 6.30pm. The express at 4.30pm had 12 intermediate stops before reaching Margate in 199 min, its 30mph overall average speed in such circumstances representing a determined effort. In the opposite direction, the 7.10am from Margate performed similarly, with 200 min for the same number of stops.

In 1847, the SER opened a branch from Minster Junction to Deal, which remained a terminus until an armistice with the LC&DR resulted in a joint venture to connect Deal directly to the latter company's line from



L Class No. 31768 leaves Ashford on April 28, 1959 with the 12.42pm to Tonbridge. 22 of these locos were built before the First World War, 10 of which were constructed in Berlin by Borsig. D C OVENDEN



TABLE 1: 4-4-0s ON 'THE SURREY'

Loco Class and Number			L1 1789		L1 1787		L1 1785		V 30936	
Vehicles/tare/gross tonnes			-/175/185		-/243/355		-/128/133 (203/215 ex Dover)		6/159/165 (inc 2 vans)	
Date			November 14, 1939		March 26, 1940		June 5, 1940		July 19, 1954	
Recorder			S A W Harvey		S A W Harvey		S A W Harvey		P W B Semmens	
Miles	Timing Point	Sch*	M S	Ave MPH	M S	Ave MPH	M S	Ave MPH	M S	Ave MPH
0.00	RAMSGATE d	0	0 00	-/tsr	0 00	-/45	0 00	-/50	Note: 29mph minimum on 1-in-70 after Deal and 23mph on 1-in 71 after Walmer	
8.34	Sandwich a	14	14 21	34.9	13 59	35.8	13 38	36.7		
0.00	d	0	0 00		0 00		0 00			
4.13	Deal a	7	7 08	34.7	7 25	33.4	7 00	35.4		
0.00	d	0	0 00		0 00		0 00		0 00	'-/max33
1.61	Walmer a	4	4 32	21.3	4 55	19.7	4 05	23.7	4 08	23.4
0.00	d	0	0 00		0 00		0 00		0 00	'-/max31
2.73	Martin Mill a	6	7 18	22.4	8 58	18.2	6 18	26.0	7 34	21.6
0.00	d	0	0 00		0 00		0 00		0 00	
4.05	Buckland Jct		8 10	29.8 sigs	7 30	32.4	7 39	31.8	7 31	32.3 (45max)
5.06	DOVER PRIORY a	10	10 31	25.9	9 27	31.1	9 37	30.8	9 47	26.8
0.00	d	-	0 00				0 00		0 00	
2.16	Shakespeare Halt a	-	Up/Down/Up line				5 59	21.7	5 46	22.5
0.00	p/d	-	Single Line Working				0 00		0 00	
3.10	Warren Halt a	-							5 52	31.7 (46max)
0.00	p/d	-	15 05	20.9			6 40	27.9	0 00	-/tsr
1.09	Folkestone Jct a	-	18 38	18.4			8 50	30.2	3 48	17.2
0.00	d	0	0 00				0 00			
0.99	FOLKESTONE CEN a	3	3 02	19.5			2 55	20.3		

* Schedule of the three S A W Harvey runs

"The train was afforded the soubriquet 'The Surrey' and the original schedule of this circuitous 117 mile amble took more than four hours"

Canterbury East to Dover at Buckland Junction, just north of Dover, in 1881.

A south-to-east Minster avoiding line was also opened at the same time, meaning through trains between Ramsgate and Dover no longer had to reverse at Minster.

The SER had the Isle of Thanet traffic to itself until the LC&DR opened its extension from Herne Bay to Ramsgate Harbour on October 5, 1863. In response, the SER undertook the construction of its more direct route from London to Tonbridge via Chislehurst and Sevenoaks, which opened to initial traffic in May 1868 and express trains a month later, thereby reducing the company's journey to Margate from London Bridge by 11% to 89½ miles.

This initiative relegated the original Surrey-Kent route via Redhill to secondary status. By 1889, there were just two through London services from Margate via Redhill, departing at 4.20pm and 6.40pm; both stopped at all stations taking 271/272 mins respectively to Charing Cross. Through passengers who were in a greater hurry than this could select the front portion, which split from the parent train at Tonbridge to run via Orpington to save 30/39 min to its London Bridge destination.

Only one through service between Margate and London via Redhill remained in the June 1914 Bradshaw timetable, leaving Margate Sands at 2.25pm to reach London Bridge at 5.24pm and Charing Cross 12 min later. After stops at Ramsgate Town (reverse) and Canterbury West, it combined at Ashford with the 2.50pm from Dover Town. There were further stops at Headcorn (Mondays only), Paddock Wood, Tonbridge, Redhill Junction, Purley and East Croydon.

It is difficult to envisage what market this train was attempting to reach at that time with only a single service. Perhaps it was a way of getting the stock up to London for a late-peak down train, but what was the reason for a 'Mondays only' afternoon stop at Headcorn? Perhaps management was also asking such questions at the time because, the following year, the service ran only on Saturdays, leaving Margate 10 minutes earlier and calling at all stations to Canterbury.

Above: V Class 'Schools' No. 30929 *Malvern* heads an up Kent Coast Express through Chelsfield (south of Orpington) on May 22, 1952. C R L COLES

Below: Schematic map of railways in South East England, showing the various possible routes between Kent and the capital.

Pre-Grouping efforts

With the two rival protagonists combined as the South Eastern & Chatham Railway (SE&CR), the June 1919 summer timetable earmarked the company as one of the first to attempt a return to pre-First World War schedules, one of the novelties being a return express service from London Bridge Low Level to Ramsgate and Margate via Redhill. The down train left at 10.15, ran to Redhill in 36min, combined with a portion from Reading and ran to its next stop at Ashford in 54min, where the train divided into portions for Folkestone and Margate Sands, the latter being reached at 1pm (165min).

Day traffic was presumably not the market, as there was scarcely time for an ice cream before the return train left at 3.10pm (Ramsgate Town 15min later).

After further stops at Minster Junction and

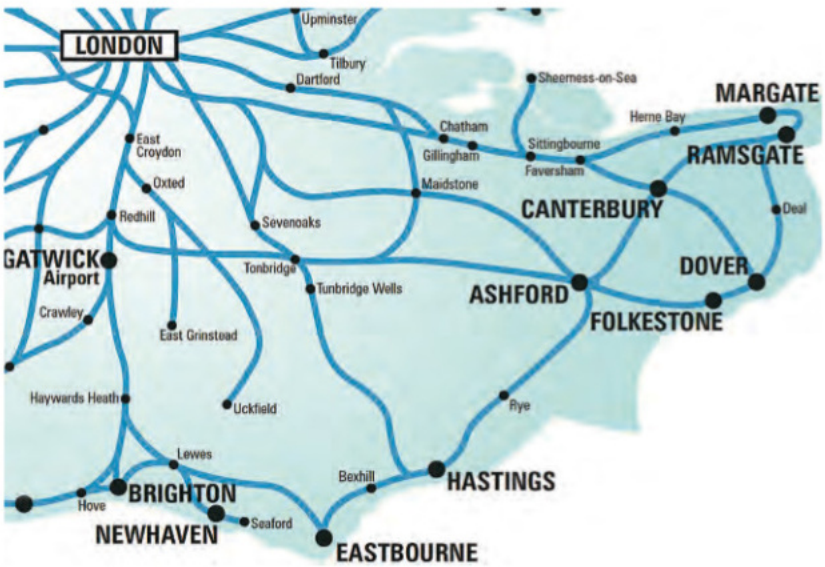


TABLE 2: CLASS L1S FOLKESTONE CENTRAL TO REDHILL

Loco		1758			1754			1784			1785		
Load* to Ashford		-/125/130						-/230/250			-/203/215		
from Ashford		-/217/230			-/190/200			-/240/260 (252/270 ex Tonb)			-/228/245**		
Date		September 22, 1936			December 12, 1936			March 23, 1940			June 5, 1940		
Recorder		S A W Harvey			S A W Harvey			S A W Harvey			S A W Harvey		
Miles	Timing Point	Sch	M S	MPH	Sch	M S	MPH	Sch	M S	MPH	Sch	M S	MPH
0.00	FOLKESTONE CEN d	0	0 00					0	0 00		0	0 00	
0.69	Shorncliffe a	2	2 12	18.8				2	2 25	17.1	2	2 29	16.6
0.00	d		0 00					0	0 00		0	0 00	
0.50	Cheriton Halt a								1 51	16.2		1 48	16.7
0.00	p/d		1 38	18.4					0 00			0 00	
0.61	Cheriton Jct a								3 10	11.6		3 09	11.7
0.00	p/d		2 42	34.5					0 00			0 00	
2.72	Sandling Jct a							7	7 47	21.0	7	7 36	21.5
0.00	p/d	7	6 15	52				0	0 00		0	0 00	
1.28	Westenhanger a							3	3 38	21.1	3	3 30	21.9
0.00	p/d		7 38	58				0	0 00		0	0 00	
3.78	Smeeth a							7	6 03	37.4	7	6 15	36.2
0.00	p/d		11 22	65				0	0 00	-/sigs		0 00	
4.28	ASHFORD a	18	16 30					8	8 44	29.4	7	7 33	34.0
0.00	d	0	0 00		0	0 00	-/sigs	0	0 00		0	0 00	
5.66	Pluckley		8 10	68		8 30	40.0		8 27	72		9 05	37.4
10.86	Headcorn		12 35	76		15 30	44.6		12 56	68		14 30	57.6
14.23	Staplehurst		15 12	78		18 33	70		16 15	58		17 39	64.0
16.73	Marden		17 16	70		20 42	68		18 46	62		20 10	59.6
21.29	Paddock Wood	23	21 02	73	24	24 38	72	24	22 55	70	25	24 42	60.4
26.58	TONBRIDGE a	30	26 49		31	30 35		31	28 45		34	31 27	47.0
0.00	d	0	0 00		0	0 00		0	0 00			0 00	-/tsr
4.19	Penshurst		6 32	56		7 10	56		7 03	56		9 30	26.4
9.19	Edenbridge		11 28	66/ease		12 10	62		13 25	47.1		17 25	37.9/tsr
11.49	Crowhurst Jct S								16 18	58	13	20 30	44.8
14.08	Godstone a				18	17 53		18	19 41				
0.00	p/d		16 18	60/-	0	0 00		0	0 00			23 30	51.8
3.58	Nutfield a				6	6 26	25.5	6	6 46	31.7			
0.00	p/d		20 00	60/sig stop 55s		0 00		0	0 00			27 45	50.5
2.06	REDHILL a	26	25 40		4	6 04	20.4	4	5 03	24.5	25	31 40	31.6

* Load=vehicles/tare/gross tons
Numbered italics - notional adjudtments in view of averages
No. 1785 Tonbridge-Redhill net time 27½min
Speeds with decimal points are averages
**Load 241/260 from Tonbridge

"Was the brake application caused by the footplate crew sighting adverse signals or the guard reminding the driver there were restricted vehicles in his train?"

Canterbury West, Ashford was timed at 4.15pm and, after attachment to the 3.05pm from Deal via Dover, the train ran to Redhill in 62min. After a further stop at East Croydon, arrival at London Bridge was scheduled for 6.15pm (185min).

The Railway and Transport Monthly welcomed the 10.15am down express as the revival of prewar express standards, but greeted the 20min longer up train with less enthusiasm. However, the difference was less about running speeds than station times, because the down train spent a total of only five minutes at Redhill and Ashford, whereas its up equivalent dallied at these two stations for a total of 21min. Whatever the purpose of the through train via this route, it was not long before the frequency was again reduced to 'Saturdays only', with complete withdrawal taking only four years from inception.

The SE&CR Management Committee had intended to rationalise the competing routes that it had inherited from its LC&DR and SER constituents. It set about doing so around Rochester and Chatham but, apart from a connecting line between the old LC&DR and SER at Margate, it was left to the Southern Railway to rationalise the Margate and Ramsgate infrastructure.

An early SR closure was the SER's Ramsgate Town to Margate Sands Branch and the LC&DR's Ramsgate Harbour station (including its tunnel approach), these being replaced by a new 1½ mile connection from the LC&DR route (before it entered the Harbour tunnel) to where the SER route split for Margate and Ramsgate. The new route, plus new stations at Ramsgate and Dumpton Park, opened on July 2, 1926, thus paving the way for 'The Surrey'. Rationalisation back then did not then seem to be the euphemism for 'closure' it has become in later years.

Ramsgate to Folkestone

During the era that followed, S A W Harvey was a regular observer of loco performance on 'The Surrey'. He was an avid follower



N15 Class 'King Arthur' No. 763 *Sir Bors de Ganis* leaves Dover Marine with the up Boat Train Continental on an unknown date in the Southern Railway era. F E MACKAY



of steam in Kent, particularly the various inside cylinder 4-4-0s, and there are over 70 of Mr Harvey's logs with these locos on 'The Surrey' within the RPS Archive. However, only one traces the train's progress for the whole of its marathon 4¼ hour journey, made in 1936 behind an N15 Class 'King Arthur' 4-6-0 to Dover and an 'L1' 4-4-0 forward.

The majority of Mr Harvey's journeys were made between either Tonbridge or Ashford and London. Table 1, however, includes three of his logs between Ramsgate and Dover behind 'L1s' and one from Deal timed by Peter Semmens with 'Schools' Class 4-4-0 No. 30936 *Cranleigh*. The main interest is the six mile section from Deal almost to Guston Tunnel entrance, and particularly the three miles through Walmer to Martin Mill, mainly adverse at around 1-in-70. The line then descends through Guston Tunnel and beyond on similarly inclined track for 2½ miles to Buckland Junction.

The RPS Archive also has four logs that include speeds between Walmer and Martin Mill, one on 'The Surrey', two on the 'Man of Kent' and one on the 11.30am stopper from Ramsgate.

'Schools' Class 4-4-0 No. 30929 *Malvern* with six coaches, and 'Battle of Britain' 4-6-2 No. 34076 *41 Squadron*, loading to seven vehicles/233 tons tare/245 tons gross, passed MP94 in 5min 34sec and 5min 16sec at 22 and 24mph respectively, attaining 27 and 30mph on the easier grades before the stop, reached in 8min 20sec and 7min 41sec. 'Schools' Class No. 30924 *Haileybury* on 'The Surrey', with a lighter load of 5/163/175, gave times of 4min 36sec and 6min 49sec at 28 and 32mph. A Wainwright L Class 4-4-0, introduced in 1914, No. 31774 with 7/230/235 on the 11.30am 'stopper' from Ramsgate completed the section in 7min 35sec with speeds of 23 and 30mph.

Judging by the RPS Archive logs that specify speeds, Mr Rowe estimates the Table 1 runs with 'L1' Nos. 1789, 1787 and 1785 passed MP94 at 24, 20 and 30mph respectively, requiring an equivalent draw bar horsepower (edbhp) of around 630, 640 and 645. This narrow range, allowing for the assumptions that are unavoidable when making such calculations, suggests remarkably uniform driving techniques.

Nos. 30924 and 34076 developed approximately 720 and 850edbhp, with No. 31774 mustering about 720. Perhaps this is prima facie evidence that the 'Ls' were superior to the 'L1s' on the banks. No. 31774 at this time, like all its class, had long-travel piston valves, 19½in diameter cylinders and a 180psi boiler equipped with a Maunsell-type super-heater.

TABLE 3: 'THE SURREY'. TONBRIDGE TO REDHILL 1940s

Loco Class and Number		V 912		L1 1755		L 1761		N15 799	
Load*		-/296/310		-/302/325		-/277/300		-/233/240	
Date		October 9, 1941		March 23, 1942		September 10, 1943		December 31, 1947	
Recorder		S A W Harvey		S A W Harvey		S A W Harvey		S A W Harvey	
Miles	Timing Point	M S	MPH	M S	MPH	M S	MPH	M S	MPH
0.00	TONBRIDGE d	0 00		0 00		0 00		0 00	
2.53	Lyghe Halt	5 02	45	5 22	28.2	5 15	28.9	5 05	30
4.18	Penshurst	7 10	50	7 50	40.1	7 35	42.4	7 18	51
9.19	Edenbridge	12 45	54	13 36	52.1	14 05	46.2	12 58	54
11.49	Crowhurst Jct S	15 13	56	16 14	52.4	5 10	26.7	15 34	53
14.04	Godstone	18 00	55	18 57	56.4	8 37	44.4	18 30	52
17.64	Nutfield	21 55	55/sigs	22 52	55.1	12 49	51.4	22 40	51.8
19.70	REDHILL a	26 11		28 36	21.6/sig stop 1m	15 52	40.6	26 46	

* Load=vehicles/tare/gross tons
Numbered italics - minor notional adjudtments of original figures in view of averages
Decimal point speeds are averages
Schedules of 912 and 1755 were 13min to pass Crowhurst Jct S, 25min to arrive Redhill. 799 schedule not stated.
Schedule of 1761 was 14min to arrive Edenbridge, three minutes from there to pass Crowhurst Jct S and a further 12min to Redhill

Above: The L1 Class was a development of the earlier L Class, with a fleet of 15 being built in 1926. 'L1' No. 1787 is seen leaving Folkestone Central in 1939 with a train for Charing Cross. R F ROBERTS

Folkestone to Redhill

The first log in Table 2 is not on 'The Surrey' but the 9.33am from Sandwich, which combined at Ashford with the 8.40am from Margate via Canterbury to form what the public timetable describes as 'Thro, Restaurant Car Train to GW Line via Reading' and the working timetable, more succinctly, 'To Birkenhead GWR via Reading'. There was also a portion detached at Guildford: 'Thro train to Bournemouth', which ran via the Portsmouth Direct, Fareham and Southampton. After the 1938 electrification to Portsmouth, the through carriages were routed as a separate train, usually three carriages, via Aldershot, Alton and Winchester. Mr Harvey returned from Redhill behind No. 1758 on the southbound working as far as Ashford.

Regarding the other three logs in Table 2, all maintained the generous schedules from Ashford, allowing up to 25min to pass Paddock Wood and 34 min to the Tonbridge stop. The morning train was allowed only 23 and 30min. The 1936 schedule on to Redhill was 26min, whereas the Saturday trains were booked 18min to Godstone, six to Nutfield and four for the final leg.

No. 1758 on the Birkenhead train clearly took the honours, with 26min 49sec to Tonbridge, maximum speed 78mph at Staplehurst, on a 30min schedule – then 25min 40sec to Redhill, maximum speed 66mph on the rising grades past Edenbridge on its 26min booking. The first of the 1940 runs maintained prewar performance, but No. 1785 showed more restraint, perhaps in acknowledgement of the wartime 60mph limit.



Above: Delays to the Kent Electrification project saw some of the first built Sulzer Type 2s (later Class 24s) sent to work in the South East from 1959-1962. Third-built No. D5002 is seen departing Maidstone East on April 8, 1961 with the 12.28pm to Margate via Ashford. J C BECKETT

Table 3 has three runs all made during the Second World War, with the schedule remaining at 13 minutes to pass Crowhurst Junction South and 25 minutes to the Redhill stop. For a period in 1943, a stop at Edenbridge was inserted; schedule 14 minutes to Edenbridge and 15 minutes on to Redhill. Class L No. 1761 almost kept the initial booking on the first of these sections, despite a check before the station, but lost a minute on to Redhill, the three minutes schedule to pass Crowborough Junction South having proved more than a challenge.

Mr Harvey marked (probably mourned) the passage of the Southern Railway into nationalised British Railways on the last day of its independence, December 31, 1947.

It was the second time he had timed a 'King Arthur' 4-6-0 on 'The Surrey', the first having also been behind No. 799 *Sir Ironside* seven weeks earlier, beating the second run by just 1 sec carrying a 60 ton lighter load.

'King Arthur' Nos. 798 *Sir Hectimere* and 799 had been employed on the testing 9.15am Charing Cross to Dover and Margate, but their appearances on the Surrey lasted for only a few months, being replaced by 'Schools' 4-4-0s on both the 9.15am and 'The Surrey'. Incidentally, Mr Rowe says C J Allen (in *TRM* April 1952) quoted 232 experiences by A J Baker on the 9.15am with 'Schools' and 'King Arthurs', the latter appearing in a poor light. The Class V 'Schools' had many devotees, including RPS and SLS stalwart Bruce Nathan.

TABLE 4: 'THE SURREY'. POST WORLD WAR 2

Loco Class and Number		L1 31782		V 30924		WC 34003		Diesel 24 D5001	
Load*		-/225/245		12/279/295		11/314/-		11/236/250	
Date		August 15, 1953		June 7, 1958		August 19, 1960		July 13, 1961	
Recorder		S A W Harvey		M J Rowe		C Hudson		M J Rowe	
Miles	Timing Point	M S	MPH	M S	MPH	M S	MPH	M S	MPH
0.00	ASHFORD d	0 00		0 00	-/sigs	0 00			
5.72	Pluckley	8 50	62/57	7 57	71	9 00	59/75		
10.98	Headcorn	13 46	72	11 46	90/brake	13 35	70/76		
14.34	Staplehurst	16 35	69	14 26	72	16 24	71/77		
16.79	Marden	18 45	67	16 26	78	18 26	71/80		
21.38	Paddock Wood	22 42	71/sigs	20 15	72/sig stop 90s	22 15	72/74		
26.65	TONBRIDGE a	28 40		30 20		29 22			
0.00	d	0 00		0 00		0 00		0 00	
2.50	Lyghe Halt ^	5 27	27.8	5 05	29.5	5 17	48/53	4 32	51
4.18	Penshurst	8 05	37.9	7 29	42.0	7 16	47/60	6 27	57
9.19	Edenbridge	14 00	53	12 23	63	12 35	58/63	11 36	61
14.04	Godstone	19 20	57	17 15	57	17 47	Note A	16 23	60
17.64	Nutfield	22 55	62/ two sig stops	21 02	61/sigs	6 21	56/sigs	20 39	45
19.70	REDHILL a	30 56		25 44		11 38		24 21	

* Load=vehicles/tare/gross tons. Vehicle figures include vans.
A= Special stop. Depart 18m 55s.
^ Lyghe Halt renamed Leigh Halt in June 1960
Figures in italics have been notionally altered to fit averages or different distances from those used by the recorder
Speeds using decimal points are average speeds
No. 31782 schedule 25min to pass Paddock Wood, Ashford arrive 32min. Tonbridge to Edenbridge pass 13min, 29min to arrive Redhill. No. 34003 schedule 24min to pass Paddock Wood, 31min to arrive Ashford. Tonbridge-Redhill 28min.

British Railways era

Post Nationalisation, the 'Schools' became regular weekday performers on 'The Surrey', although 'L1s' still appeared occasionally, particularly on Saturdays. Michael Rowe's first sighting of 'The Surrey' was in 1949 when staying for a weekend outside Redhill, the nine year old being particularly impressed to see a 'Schools' in contrast to his normal diet of Maunsell Moguls and tank engines.

In the Oxted line P&P article (January 2021 issue), we saw that loco utilisation could be more intensive than is now generally thought to have been the case. The 'Schools' Class V used on 'The Surrey' had left Bricklayers' Arms at 3.50am and worked a trip freight before running to Charing Cross to work the 4.50am to Margate via Ashford. It then retired to Ramsgate shed before working 'The Surrey' up to London, then the 10.50pm down to Dover, where it went on shed shortly after 1.00am. At 5.30am the next day it worked to Ashford, Hastings, Charing Cross, Hastings, Charing Cross and finally reaching Bricklayers' Arms shed at 9.45pm. With ancillary movements, Michael reckons that is 559 miles in 43 hours.

Table 4 includes a Saturday 'L1' performance timed by Mr Harvey. The run by 'Schools' No. 30924 was by far and away the best of Michael's three trips on this service – and also of those shown in the table, including 'West Country' Pacific No. 34003 *Plymouth*. Acknowledging a favourite term of past performance writers, Michael describes the start by steam loco *Haileybury* as 'electric'. His timings were being taken by rail joints and it was soon clear an exceptional performance was taking place, with a momentary 90mph being noted before a severe brake application. Mr Rowe

conservatively claims at least the 'upper 80s' and quotes D W Winkworth's publication of four runs by 'Schools' on this stretch at 81-84mph with similar or heavier loads.

Was the brake application caused by the footplate crew sighting adverse signals, or had the guard decided to use the 'setter' as a reminder to the driver there were 75mph restricted vehicles in his train? Despite the subsequent restraint, speed was maintained in the mid-70 mph range and Paddock Wood was passed well inside even time. The continuation to Redhill was good, with 63mph attained on the rising grades, a similar performance to that of 'L1' No. 1758 in Table 2, albeit with a load 50 tons heavier.

Two years later, loco engineer Cliff Hudson was travelling home from Ashford Works to Derbyshire each weekend. 'The Surrey' was nearing the end of steam haulage and gaining a short-term benefit from the displacement of more powerful locomotives following electrification. 'West Country' Pacifics, even with a reasonable load, were hardly extended against schedules of 31 minutes from Ashford to Tonbridge and 28 on to Redhill. Other than the Allhallows and Westerham branch lines' passenger trains and some freight, regular Kentish steam power ceased with electric working to Folkestone and Dover from June 12, 1961.

The final leg

Turning to the running of the steam-hauled 'Surrey' between Redhill and London, the train was invariably subject to signal checks, particularly between Coulsdon and Norwood Junction. For much of its 35 years' existence, loads were light, particularly after detachment of any Reading vehicles before leaving Redhill.

Table 5 shows four runs up to London Bridge with loads in excess of 200 tons. A typical schedule, taken from the working timetable for summer 1949, entailed a 13 min run to a Purley stop then hops to East Croydon (six mins), Norwood Junction (four) and finally London Bridge (13) via Forest Hill (pass five) and Bricklayers' Arms Junction (pass nine).

The fastest time recorded by Mr Harvey to Purley was on a Saturday in 1938 with Class E1 4-4-0 No. 1511 and a lightweight train of only 110 tons gross. Merstham was passed in 3min 15sec at 58mph, Coulsdon South in 7min at 70mph, with Purley reached in 10min 6sec, assessed by the recorder as 9min 15sec net after a "bad PWR check".

Of four runs behind 'King Arthur' 4-6-0s during the winter of 1947/48, the best – after making allowance for the load – was with No. 803 (not yet renumbered) *Sir Harry le Fise Lake* with a 270 tons gross train reaching Purley in 12min 8sec, then on to Croydon (5min 25sec), Norwood Junction (3min 56sec) and London Bridge (15min 17sec) after a 20 second stop outside the station. The only speed noted was 60 at Coulsdon, with passing time averages indicating low-50mph figures descending Forest Hill bank.

Michael Rowe's last encounter with 'The Surrey' came later that year. After a gentle trip from Tunbridge Wells West to Tonbridge behind a 'Schools' on a Brighton working, he then sampled a Sulzer Type 2 (subsequently Class 24) to Redhill on 'The Surrey'. Full power to Edenbridge gave an excellent performance, but it was not steam and, what is more, it was only an interim measure. 'The Surrey' and the down equivalent, the 4.50am London Bridge to Margate via Canterbury West, both ceased to run after the completion of Kent electrification in early 1961. ■

■ I am grateful to Michael Rowe for making his research available to readers of *The Railway Magazine*. His substantial book 20th Century Southern Steam is available to read online without charge through the RPS website at www.railperf.org.uk

TABLE 5: 'THE SURREY'. REDHILL TO LONDON BRIDGE

Loco Class and Number		L1 1753		E1 31165		V 30911		WC 34013 (rebuilt)	
Load*		-195/205		-/228/250		-/237/250		9/202/-	
Date		November 21, 1936		August 18, 1951		March 11, 1948		August 5, 1960	
Recorder		S A W Harvey		S A W Harvey		S A W Harvey		C Hudson	
Miles	Timing Point	M S	MPH	M S	MPH	M S	MPH	M S	MPH
0.00	REDHILL d	0 00		0 00		0 00		0 00	
1.76	Merstham	3 25	'-	3 29	47	4 23	24.1	4 06	43/54
5.51	Coulsdon South	8 34	57	9 15	sigs Note A	9 20	60	9 38	44/50 Note A
7.34	Purley a	11 17		11 21		12 02	40.6	12 09	
0.00	d	0 00		0 00		0 00		0 00	
2.11	South Croydon	3 33	52/sigs	5 09	sigs	3 45	33.8	3 44	44/48
3.01	EAST CROYDON a	5 40		7 57		5 30	30.9	5 50	
0.00	d	0 00	-/sigs	0 00		0 00	-/sig stop	0 00	
1.50	NORWOOD JCT a	3 52	23.3	3 39	24.7	6 46		3 43	
0.00	d	0 00		0 00		0 00		0 00	
1.55	Penge West	3 00	31.0	3 08	29.7	3 35	26.0	3 04	54
3.10	Forest Hill			5 05	47.7	5 35	46.5	4 43	61/66
3.95	Honor Oak Park	6 10	57	6 04	51.9	6 32	60	5 31	60
5.00	Brockley	7 22	47	7 06	61.0	7 32	64	6 31	67/ease
5.80	NEW CROSS GATE	8 23	47	7 53	61.3	8 28	51.4		
6.50	Bricklayers' Arms Jct		sigs	8 40	53.6/sigs	9 48	31.5/sigs	8 27	41/sigs
8.65	LONDON BRIDGE a	13 54		12 32	33.4	15 44		13 42	

* Load=vehicles/tare/gross tons. Vehicle figures include vans
A= Mileages do not apply. Coulsdon North SB. See text.
Speeds using decimal points are averages
Figures in italics have been notionally amended to match averages or different mileages
Postwar schedules Redhill-Purley 13min then six minutes to East Croydon, four minutes to Norwood Jct and 13min to London Bridge
Prewar schedule the same except six minutes Purley to East Croydon

> "The Surrey gained a short-term benefit from the displacement of more powerful locomotives following electrification"



Below: 'West Country' No. 34003 *Plymouth* storms through Tonbridge with the up 'Man of Kent' in the late 1950s. A A SELLMAN

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If anyone can, Gus can

Gareth Evans talks to Jonathan 'Gus' Dunster, managing director of the Severn Valley Railway, about the line's challenges... and how they are being overcome.

EARLY in 2023 the Severn Valley Railway hit the national headlines when a package of measures was announced to help the midlands-based heritage line secure its future.

It was a worrying time for what is regarded as a 'premier league' line in the sector after it was hit with both a significant drop in passenger revenue as well as a fall in 'secondary spend' – the extra revenue earned when customers are with you. Add this to escalating costs, and the outlook was becoming bleak.

Managing director Helen Smith stood down and the railway began a consultation period for compulsory redundancies. Jonathan 'Gus' Dunster stepped into top job, with his appointment appearing to be welcomed internally. In the words of one volunteer at the Severn Valley (SVR): "If anyone can, Gus can."

With all this in mind, I wanted to talk to the man himself, so arrived at the SVR's Kidderminster head office, just around the corner from the station. Having pressed the button on the intercom I was greeted by a friendly voice – which turned out to be Gus.

At the top of the stairs I was welcomed by a smiling face and outstretched hand. He showed me to his office and he offered a drink, which came served in a GWR mug. What's already clear is that he's a people person.



Gus is a volunteer diesel driver at the SVR. He is pictured on one of his 'beloved' Class 50s – No. 50031 *Hood*. TED DUNSTER/SVR

Background

***RM*: What's the story about you being known as Gus?**

Gus Dunster (GD): It's just my nickname. When I joined BR in 1987, my first job was working in the booking office at Paddington. It seemed everyone gained a nickname there.

Everyone used it apart from my mum and sister. When I was working for Virgin Trains in the late 1990s, Chris Green was chief executive – he was a great guy to work for. When Chris started calling me Gus, I thought there's little point in trying to dodge it – everyone knows me as that.

***RM*: Tell us about your involvement with the SVR?**

GD: I first visited the Severn Valley Railway in May 1987 when the inaugural diesel gala was held. I came particularly because the Deltic Preservation Society was running No. 55015 *Tulyar* here.

I felt the SVR was an amazing railway and it stood out among some of the other heritage lines. Even though there was still a lot of main line diesel action in those days, I regularly came to the SVR – and I attended all the diesel galas.

In 1988 I co-founded what became the Fifty Fund with a friend of mine, Dave Keogh. It raised money quickly and we successfully bought the first Class 50 for preservation – No. 50035 *Ark Royal* – in August 1991.

Of course, the hunt then began to find somewhere it could be housed. During winter 1991 we actually acquired two more 'Fifties' – one of which, No. 50031 *Hood* was in full working order.

I wrote to the SVR's then-general manager Michael Draper and offered him No. 50031 for the main 1992 diesel gala, which he accepted.

I think as an organisation we hit it off with the SVR management. On the last evening of the event, Alun Rees, then chief engineer who later became GM, a brilliant guy, shook hands and said: "You'll be welcome to come back anytime."

We returned for the main 1993 diesel gala, but that time agreed to stay for the entire main summer season until mid-September. During this time, Alun had become GM and in the middle of the year I asked him whether it would be possible for the loco to stay on the Severn Valley.

The proposal was accepted by the board to base Nos. 50031 and 50044 on the SVR and the locos became permanent residents in May 1994.

Therefore, my involvement with the railway began three decades ago in May 1992 as



GWR 'Hall' No. 4930 *Hagley Hall* recreates a typical 1930s scene at Arley station with a mixed goods train on the morning of September 25, 2023, during a photo charter organised by Matt Fielding. JACK BOSKETT


4930

a volunteer in the diesel department. Fast forward to 2010 and I was pleased to accept an invitation to join the holdings company board, which was a voluntary position. It enabled me to contribute a bit more to the Severn Valley.

It was interesting to work with Nick Paul, Mike Ball and David Williams – people who had been around for a long time.

In 2021 Nick Paul retired as plc chairman and the deputy chairman at the time, Mike Ball, stepped up to become chairman. In 2022, Mike asked me whether I would consider becoming deputy chairman.

At that point, I was still working full-time but I had made my intention known to retire from the main line railway.

Later in the year, when I retired from Avanti West Coast, I was able to do two days per week here alongside Mike and managing director Helen Smith.

In early 2023 Helen announced her intention to move on. The board asked me if I would consider helping by taking the MD's role. After a little bit of thought, particularly with my family, I agreed to do that on an ongoing basis – and here we are.

Financial position

***RM*: As a director, you would have had greater insight into how things were on the SVR than an 'ordinary' volunteer – so you were aware of the scale of challenges before you.**

GD: I knew exactly what position the railway was in. I would not have agreed to do the role without that level of knowledge – it would have been impossible to do.

The railway is in a similar position to many other heritage lines. The SVR has not always been blessed with a strong cash position in its history – again, a lot of heritage railways struggle with that. We are cash businesses, let's be clear about that.

Prior to Covid-19, under Nick Paul's chairmanship the railway was assiduous in ensuring it had a reasonable cash reserve – we got that to £1.3million, which is always important for two reasons.

Firstly, heritage railways don't generally trade 52 weeks of the year, so you need to have cash behind you for the period between Christmas and February/March – i.e. the closed season.

You also need to have cash behind you to deal with unplanned eventualities. During Covid-19 we started to use that cash. Yes, we furloughed people and took up the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan, like a number of other heritage lines. Nonetheless, our cash position did get eroded eventually.

We were one of the first heritage lines to restart operations in 2020. However, it was more to be seen to be here and not necessarily the most profitable experience as clearly, we were restricted in the numbers of people we could accommodate.

Then we went through the ebbing and flowing of different restrictions and lockdowns etc and came out of that in January 2022 with a reasonably positive economic message – with the Government announcing Covid-19 restrictions were over and all businesses were thinking how to get back to normal.

Then we had the Russian invasion of Ukraine which interrupted a lot of supplies – and for heritage railways, it impacted on the availability of coal – and the price of utilities.

In early 2022 we set out to effectively try and return to something nearly 'normal' – although we were going to reduce the number



As part of the strategy to diversify revenue streams, photographic charters have returned and in the words of Gus they "now have a little more procedure around them to ensure they're undertaken safely". On September 26, a scene from Old Oak Common was recreated at Kidderminster diesel depot during a photo charter. Pictured from left are diesel hydraulics Hymek No. D7076, Warships Nos. D832 *Onslaught* and D821 *Greyhound* with Western D1015 *Western Champion* on the turntable. DON BISHOP

of operating days. On the days that we were open, the timetable we were offering in 2022 was similar to pre-Covid – i.e. three trains per day, with two starting from Kidderminster and one from Bridgnorth. That's been the SVR model for generations.

Initially in April and May 2022 we thought our strategy was the right one as we had some strong events – our spring steam and diesel galas that year were well patronised.

However, things then started to drop off a cliff because inflation began to rise, leading to people becoming very discerning about their spending. Utility prices rose from September – so it was a perfect storm.

Some will look back at that time and ask whether this business managed sensibly. I would say as a board member we managed the business based on the information available at the time. In retrospect, you could say we could have cut costs in 2022. It's very easy to be critical in hindsight.

The reality is that in 2022 we had 95,000 fewer passengers than we'd had in 2019 when we'd carried 225,000, so it was a significant reduction. That is really due to inflationary pressures.



Volunteers are important stakeholders in the railway and Gus is a keen advocate of engagement. A team helps prepare visiting 'B1' No. 61306 *Mayflower* at Bewdley during the Autumn Steam Gala on September 16.
ROBERT BATTY



Like most other heritage lines, Christmas is our commercial 'make or break'. In 2022 we put extra capacity on compared with 2021 as there were no social distancing restrictions. Many tourism bodies anticipated the public would focus on Christmas – and I think a lot of attractions followed that advice and provided additional capacity.

We ran Steam In Lights, Enchanted Express (an interactive festive experience) and our normal Santa operation. They were all popular enough. If you compare them with the previous year, we sold pretty much the same amount as we did in 2021, as people were feeling the inflationary pressures.

As a result of that, this year we've done something slightly different and given Steam in Lights a rest – and we've concentrated on Enchanted Express and traditional Santa.

That's the background to where we came to this position. Having made another loss, we needed to do something differently.

***RM*: What action did you take to deal with the situation?**

GD: At the beginning of 2023 we looked carefully at our staffing, the number of operating days and we reviewed all our costs. We looked at what we could do without, what days we should run and the number of trains we should run on those days. We've operated fewer trains, because in 2022 we carried a lot of fresh air around, which we clearly cannot afford to do.

Those things were not 100% popular with our stakeholders. Our passenger number forecast was pretty conservative, but at the end of the main season it turned out to be pretty much spot on.

We started with a very low base proposition which was just two trains running on normal days. Both those trains started at Kidderminster as more than 80% of our passengers begin their journey there.

We tweaked it as we went along. In the peak summer service, we added an extra steam-hauled train and on Saturdays in the main school summer holidays we put on a train starting at Bridgnorth but only going as far as Highley (for The Engine House) as there was no justification to do any more.

There's a check and balance with all this because at the beginning of the year we noticed that in the enthusiast demographic there appeared to be some income around. People were prepared to spend if you were putting on a reasonable show.

In April we had our traditional spring steam gala. That was a highpoint – it included *Pendennis Castle* making its first appearance on a heritage railway.

There was a great feel around the SVR. We were 600 passengers ahead of our forecast for that event.

A month later, we had the spring diesel festival which broke all records. It attracted over 6000 visitors, 2000 more than we expected. We made a healthy profit.

As a result of the success of those two events, we quickly looked again at what we were going to do for the autumn enthusiast events.

We decided to go a little more ambitious – clearly, if we get it right people will come. At the steam gala we had some issues with the timetable, but nonetheless it was well supported – 5100 people attended.

The autumn diesel bash, which focused on the 'Westerns', attracted 3700 people, about 1200 more than we had at the same event last year.

Interestingly, we've had 10,100 people come to the steam galas this year and we've had exactly the same number come to our diesel events. For the first time ever in my experience we've had the same number of visitors for both sectors of the enthusiast community.

I've been out talking to visitors at all those events. People often say the SVR puts on a really decent show. We're unashamedly looking at doing that again in 2024.

Again, we're trying to trade responsibly. When we can do things that we know stand a good chance of being viable, we are gradually reintroducing things.





Special events aimed at enthusiasts drew in the crowds in 2023, providing a welcome boost to the SVR's coffers and giving the railway's management confidence to organise further galas. Overnight running was a feature which made a welcome return to the Autumn Steam Gala. 'S160' 2-8-0 No. 2253 *Omaha* crosses another train at Arley on September 16. ROBERT BATTY

Approach

***RM*: It seems you have learned a lot by just being out and talking to people?**

GD: Yes, you can learn a lot... but in addition to that, people have the chance to hear news first-hand and to ask questions, which I believe is really important. I found the majority of people were very understanding of the situation.

Volunteers are of course important stakeholders in the railway. When we announced our plans at the beginning of 2022 to cut back operations, a lot of volunteers were disaffected by that as they felt they would be unable to come and do what they enjoy so much. I empathise with that as I'm a volunteer myself – it meant fewer opportunities for me.

I made it almost my first priority as the railway reopened again in March 2023 to get out and about to talk to volunteers. I've always done that, but I do it more now.

We haven't had a lot of social media trolling going on – I think that's largely due to taking the time to explain what's happening and what we're trying to do to fix the situation.

I know not everyone is happy. However, we would be irresponsible to say we'll continue indulging our hobby – it's not affordable. If you explain it to people in those terms – i.e. that we're trying to ensure the railway remains viable – I haven't found anyone who would argue with that.

The pre-Covid business model for the SVR and probably for most other heritage railways no longer stacks up. The operation of trains by themselves is not a profitable exercise. This railway has been no different over the years. We have made a technical surplus through contract engineering but also by receiving quite a lot of donations and legacies.

Pre-Covid, we didn't really look at this stuff too closely as we didn't need to. We were making a small surplus each year.

We are now in a very different situation. We've got increased costs which are outside our control and we've got fewer visitors, so we have to do things differently.

Revenue diversification

***RM*: What steps have you taken to diversify and boost your revenue streams?**

GD: We've reintroduced photo charters, driver experience courses, on-train dining and more importantly we've introduced a winter steam gala (January 6-7) – something the SVR has never done. We put the tickets on sale and the response was overwhelmingly positive.

We've been worked with Network Rail, GB Railfreight and many others in the Network Rail supply chain for some while.

Therefore, another area I've been looking at to help diversify our revenue stream is maximising our interaction with the mainstream railway industry. I have unashamedly gone through my address book and said to people we have facilities at the SVR I know you could usefully use – and of course it's worked well and it's now gathering momentum.

We recently signed a formal partnership agreement with Network Rail, which is brilliant.

We're also doing smaller things on vehicle maintenance. We've been hiring out space in our diesel depot to main line operators to use. We're also quoting for some wagon maintenance for main line operators.

***RM*: What are your thoughts about operating photographic charters on the SVR?**

GD: I'm very happy to do them. We have put a little more procedure around them to ensure they're undertaken safely. We dipped our toe in the water earlier on in the 2023 season with *Pendennis Castle*. That was done in partnership with Timeline Events. We've done one more recently with Matt Fielding involving *Hagley Hall*.

We've also done some static ones around the diesel depot.

***RM:* What's the latest regarding driver experience courses?**

GD: We had to pause the driver experience courses on the steam side due to Covid-19 and social distancing. We are relaunching them for 2024 with some tweaks based on feedback from participants.

We tweaked the diesel courses in 2023 and the feedback has been very positive from staff operating it and from customers.

***RM:* Can you explain the changes to on-train dining?**

GD: We used to do a lot of on-train dining. During the redundancy process in early 2023 we sadly had to let go quite a lot of our catering staff because, again, we set up in 2022 thinking we would be able to take all the business back on, but it just didn't happen.

We found a solution, which is a partnership with Paisley Flour, a Bewdley-based event catering company. The quality of the food and presentation is amazing.

Doing it in partnership with another organisation means we've now got a commercial model that works as we could not sustain having all the overheads of our own catering operation.

We put on three or four fairly high end dining experiences. I was criticised when they went on sale at £132 each as they were deemed quite expensive – yet they sold out within a couple of days. It was a trial for us as we had not done that in the past at that sort of specification.

We can't sell enough afternoon teas. They've



BR '4MT' 2-6-0 No. 43106 'The Flying Pig' crosses Falling Sands viaduct with the first train of the day from Kidderminster on October 15, 2023. Gus said that more than 80% of SVR passengers begin their journey at the line's southern terminus. JOHN TITLOW

been so popular – to the point we offered them with a Christmas theme. We've also gone back into offering murder mysteries.

Another new thing for the railway was a curry evening. All 110 seats sold out.

We offered an Oriental train, but it was effectively Chinese food. Again, on a Saturday evening, it almost sold out.

Gin trains also returned in 2023. For this year we're partnering with a local gin distillery.

When you look at it, these are all good stories working with local businesses – it's something we're keen to continue to do.

Bewdley buffet is entirely volunteer run, but the team sources all produce from local suppliers. The cooked breakfast at Bewdley buffet is very popular. The fact that lots of people are going there tells you that quality does matter.

Well-being

RM: **Working at height is a big focus for the Office of Rail and Road (ORR), the industry regulator. I understand SVR staff and volunteers are no longer permitted to go up signal ladders, for example – a cherry picker has to be used.**

GD: Working at height is a big focus for the heritage railway sector. ORR has been clear but also helpful about it.

We have been as proactive as we think we possibly can be to ensure all our people are made aware of the risks of working at height. We have an in-house training video that we make everyone watch as part of the induction but also on a cyclical basis for existing staff and volunteers.

As a driver myself, I had to do it. If I'd failed to do it, I would have been prevented from doing further driving.

We've also become much more focused on ensuring the correct equipment is available in all the workshops; that it's regularly inspected, that people know how to use it and that only people who are qualified to use it do so.

These are all the things you would expect us to do – even the understanding of getting people to do what would be called a dynamic risk assessment. Every time you do a job, just think carefully – have I got all the right equipment? Is it safe to use? Should I be doing this if I'm on my own? Should I be doing it at all?

I think the culture here is reasonable, but you can never be complacent.

RM: **What are your thoughts about young volunteers?**

GD: About 65% of our volunteers are aged over 55 – and that now includes me. It's not sustainable. I first visited the SVR when I was 19 years old and I became a volunteer at 23. I started off relatively young – that does shape my attitude to young volunteers as they are absolutely key.

Fortunately, there's a swathe of 16 to 21-year-olds around the railway in all areas. All this type of stuff is great to see.

I ensure I talk to them all, make them feel part of the railway and I encourage them to bring their friends here to get involved. That's the future. ■

■ To donate to the SVR's ongoing Survival Fund appeal, visit www.svr.co.uk or call 01562 757900.

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Years apart... Stockton

Our occasional series looking at past and present scenes takes a trip to historic Stockton-on-Tees.





Above: Stockton-on-Tees was famously at the eastern end of the Stockton & Darlington Railway, which opened in 1825, but the S&DR terminus was on a different site to today's station, which opened in 1852 for the Leeds Northern Railway. It was rebuilt in 1893 by the North Eastern Railway, when it gained its impressive overall roof – similar in style to those that can be found at Darlington. 'Deltic' No. D9020 (55020) *Nimbus* is seen on November 3, 1968 bypassing Stockton station on the goods lines as it heads south with the diverted 1A39/13.30 Newcastle-King's Cross. JOHN M BOYES

Left: Stockton today is much reduced from its heyday, the overall roof falling into disrepair through the 1960s and 70s until finally it was dismantled in 1979. The amount of traffic through the station, particularly freight, has also diminished and so gone are the myriad of goods lines and sidings. On a dull November 27, 2023, Nos. 68022 *Resolution* and 66426 top-and-tail the 3J77/06.07 Carlisle Kingmoor to Nunthorpe RHTT working through the platforms at Stockton, the reference points to the 1968 shot being the remaining brick support for the overall roof (right) and the station buildings (left), which are no longer in rail use having been converted to flats. ALEX AYRE

Send your letters to: *The Railway Magazine*, Media Centre, Morton Way, Horncastle, Lincs LN9 6JR. Email: railway@mortons.co.uk

Selby on the radar

I THOROUGHLY enjoyed the article on the Selby Diversion (October issue), and it brought back a memory of an unusual occurrence every time a train ran.

I spent two years at RAF Church Fenton between 1984-86 and I worked in Air Traffic Control. The airfield is very close to, and clearly visible from, the diversion and the Runway 24 threshold is about a kilometre from the line by Ryther.

When Runway 24 was in use, the Precision Approach Radar (PAR, used for 'talking down' an aircraft) would face towards the railway line and whenever a train passed by, it would show up on the glide path radar screen as a fuzzy return at the bottom of the screen running left to right or vice versa, depending on the direction of travel. The type of train, freight or express passenger, could be gauged by the speed of the fuzzy return moving across the screen.

When working in the visual part of the control tower during the dark hours, passenger trains were called a 'string of pearls' with just the window lights visible.

I wanted to stay there for ever, sigh!

Jules Hathaway, Dunfermline



HS2 missed opportunities from the start

I IMAGINE that you have been inundated with letters and emails about the HS2 fiasco, as well as the two contrasting responses on your December letters page.

Your November issue provided a very good analysis of the reality of cancelling this major project at this stage.

I am no overpaid consultant, but ever since this project began I have been saying to people around me that I saw several flaws in the UK's version of a high-speed rail project, which overall I support.

Firstly, the decision to build it to a higher level of speed than in Europe, resulting in greater cost.

Secondly, the decision to take it through virgin territory, which has resulted in miles of expensive tunnelling, rather than the more sensible way the French, for example, make use of following existing transport corridors such as motorways (although I accept we are more congested than France).

And thirdly, that HS2 should have been linked to HS1, even if this involved tunnelling to Stratford, which is probably the best connected station in the London area with main lines, London Overground lines, two Docklands Light Railway lines, two Tube lines, and the new Elizabeth Line through central London to Heathrow and elsewhere.

The thought of people arriving at Euston and lugging their suitcases to St Pancras by bus, Tube or on foot would be amusing if it wasn't so depressing.

Kirk Martin, London

British train building woes

THE two articles on page 9 of the December issue go some way to explain the problems at the Alstom railway works in Derby: '€500 million for new trains for LNER purchased from Spain' and 'redundancies loom in Derby as orders dry up'.

Once upon a time, Britain built trains for the world. Today Germany, France, Italy, Switzerland, Japan all build their own trains – and, to the detriment of British industry, also build ours.

M Cohen, Huntingdon

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

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A French loco-hauled bonus

IT was with particular interest that I read 'End of the line for classic French locos' in the November 2023 *RM*. On October 24, my wife and I travelled from Lyon Part Dieu to Geneva's Cornavin station. We boarded in something of a rush in Lyon and it wasn't until some way into the journey that I realised we had a locomotive at the front.

Attached is a picture taken at Geneva just after our arrival. I have no idea whether this is a regular working for these sets (there was what I would call a DVT at the other end of the push-pull set), but to be hauled once more by an actual locomotive gave this enthusiast much pleasure and reminded me of many trips in the mid-1980s when I lived in Toulouse.

Vaughan Parry, Horley

A fitting tribute to Second World War heroes

AS a boy, 11 years old in the summer of 1940, I saw the squadrons of Hurricanes fly over our house after taking off from RAF Northolt to join the Battle of Britain.

Although we did not know at the time, one of these was 303 Squadron.

So it is very pleasing to read in the December issue (page 63) that 'Battle of Britain' Pacific locomotive No. 34053 is to temporarily carry a nameplate in memory of the Polish pilots who gave distinguished service in 303 Squadron. I often remember the sight and sound of their Hurricanes.

Humphrey Platts, Grantham

Seasonal railway concerts

AN item caught my eye on page 14 of the December 2023 edition, advertising a Rail Staff Christmas Carol Service at St Mary's Church on Eversholt Street, beside Euston station.

Eversholt Street was formerly named Seymour Street and when the church was consecrated in 1826, it was on the edge of the notorious slums of Somers Town. St Mary's was (and remains) a church of the Anglo-Catholic tradition and became closely associated with work in the slums and promoting housing reform.

As part of this, a curate there from in the 1920s, named Father Desmond Morse-Boycott, started a choir for boys from the slums, and from this grew into what became the independent St Mary of the Angels Song School, which lasted until 1972.

From 1960-63 I was a chorister at the school, by then located at Beaconsfield, and on December 21, 1961 we sang a carol concert in the former Great Hall at Euston. This was an annual event organised by the London Midland Region Staff Choir, who sang 11 carols interspersed with two groups of three carols from us. It was an appropriate venue, being so close to the birthplace of the choir, but alas it was also the last to take place in the Great Hall, which was soon demolished to allow the redevelopment of the station.

It would be interesting to know if the 2023 concert was the successor to this earlier tradition, or was that never resumed after the destruction of the old Euston?

Tim Edmonds, Banbury



Where is it? Our pictorial quiz, for fun only

OUR December photo by Vic Smith (below), was taken in March 2023, and showed two hopper wagons from the closed narrow gauge Crickheath Tramway at Llynclys, Shropshire, at the point where it crossed over the Cambrian Railways main line between Oswestry and Welshpool (now part of Cambrian Heritage Railways). The tramway connected nearby quarries to part of the Montgomery Canal at Crickheath Wharf from the 1820s to 1913.

For our first quiz of 2024 (above, by Paul Griffin), at what station can you find this running in board. The clue is it is not Camelford!



THURSDAY, JANUARY 4

Lutterworth Railway Society. Lutterworth Bowls Club LE15 4RB. 19.30. 'From Loughborough to Euro Disney via Khartoum – a railway engineer's journey': David Coxon.
Norfolk Railway Society. Zoom meeting. 19.30. 'Slovakian Railways': Robert Pritchard.
Nuneaton Railway Circle. Chilvers Coton Conservative Club, Nuneaton CV11 5UD. 19.45. 'Popping Back': Pete Waterman.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 5

Kettering & District Locomotive Society. Corn Market Hall, Kettering NN15 7QA. 19.45. 'The Kettering to Cambridge Line': Robin Cullup.
RCTS. St Teresa's Church Hall, North Filton BS34 7PL. 19.30. 'Somerset & Dorset': Hugh Ballantyne.
Slough & Windsor Railway Society (SWRS). The Manor, Slough station. 19.30. 'Epidiascope Night': Members' photographs.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 6

RCTS. RCTS Library, Station Approach, Leatherhead. 11.00-16.00. Open day.

MONDAY, JANUARY 8

Oxfordshire Railway Society. Kidlington Baptist Church OX5 2DS.19.00. 'Railways of Oxfordshire 1965-1989': John Hubbard.
Lincoln Railway Society. St Hugh's Church, North Hykeham LN6 8JG. 19.30. 'Colorado Railroads – Then and Now': Graham Lightfoot.
Southern Electric Group. Deall Room, Southwick Community Centre, Southwick BN42 4TE. 19.30. Members' evening.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 9

Enfield Transport Circle. Drill Hall Sports Club EN2 6PJ. 20.00. 'Railways in the Edmonton Hundred': David Cockle.
Great Western Society. Room 4, BAWA, 589 Southmead Road, Filton, Bristol BS34 7RF. 19.30. 'Railway Roundabout – A Pastiche of Railway History': Canon Revd Brian Arman.
LCGB. Red Lion Hotel, Newburgh, Wigan WN8 7NF. 19.30. Members and visitors' digital photographs.
Meon Valley Locomotive Society. St Peter's Church Hall, Bishop's Waltham SO32 1EE. 19.30. TBC.
Pewsey Vale Railway Society. Woodborough Social Club SN9 5PL. 14.45. TBA.
RCTS. The Swifts, Fulbourn, Cambridge CB21 5HD. 19.30. 'March': Richard Munns.
RCTS. Zoom meeting. 19.30. 'That Was The Year That Was – 1966': Geoff Plumb.
RCTS. Tilehouse Street Baptist Church, Hitchin SG5 2EE. 19.30. 'Hitchin – 2013 to the present day': Richard Allen.
RCTS. The New Mechanics, Nottingham NG1 4EZ. 19.00. 'The Ripley Rattlers': Kurt Hatton.
The 8E Railway Association. The Gladstone Club, Northwich CW9 5RB. 19.45.
Wells Railway Fraternity. Town Hall, Wells, Somerset. 19.30. TBA.

WEDNESDAY, JAN 10

Bradford Railway Circle. Bradford Mechanics' Institute Library BD1 1SZ. 14.00. 'The Isle of Wight and Back – Twice in a Day': Robert Clarke.
LCGB. Friends Meeting House, South Street, Dorking RH4 2LE. 19.30. 'Yugoslavia in Communist Times and Adventures in South America': Donald Wilson.
NYMR. St Lawrence's Church Hall, York YO10 3WP. 12.00. 'The Covid Years – On the Lineside': Dave Birtle.
RCTS. Old Church Rooms, Park Road, Radyr CF15 8DF. 19.00. Branch annual meeting followed by 'On Mona's Isle': Nigel Wassell and 'Statfold Barn Railway': Phil Stallard.
Sutton Coldfield Railway Society. St James' Church Centre, Sutton Coldfield B75 5BW. 19.30. 'The LMS 10000 Project': Mark Hambly.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 11

Continental Railway Circle. St Paul's Church Centre, Marylebone, London NW1 6NJ. 18.30. 'Wandering around Asia including India, Pakistan & China': Ken Chitty.
LCGB. St Bartholomew's Church, St Albans AL1 2PE. 19.30. 'That Was The Year That Was – 1971': Geoff Plumb.
Shropshire Railway Society. Gateway Education and Arts Centre, Shrewsbury SY1 1NB. 19.00. 'Fun with southern steam in the Sixties'.
South East Essex Railway Soc. Friends' Meeting House, Leigh-on-Sea SS9 1NB. 19.30. TBA.
SLS. Conference Room, 1st floor (access via Black Swan Courtyard), Newcastle Arts Centre, 67 Westgate Road, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 1SG. 19.00. 'An overview of GER Locomotive Design Part 2 1882-1923': George Falkner.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 12

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

SATURDAY, JANUARY 13

RCTS. Friends Meeting House, 7 Victoria Terrace, Edinburgh EH1 2JL. 14.30. Photographic review of 2022 and 2023.
SLS. Langdon Square Community Centre, Coulby Newham TS8 0TF. 14.00. 'Photographs from the NYMR archive': Ian McInnes.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 16

Leicester Railway Society. Braunstone Civic Centre, Leicester LE3 2PP. 19.30. 'A Scottish Ramble in 1960 and 1970s': Robin Mathams.
RCTS. Didcot Civic Hall, Didcot OX11 7JN. 19.00. 'Rail reminiscences': Phil Darlaston.
RCTS. Black Beauty, Keddington Road, Scunthorpe DN17 2QU. 19.30. 'Diesels in the Peak District': Phil Lockwood and Enid Vincent.

WEDNESDAY, JAN 17

Grimsby & Cleethorpes Rlwy Grp. 19.30. 'The South Yorkshire Joint Railway from Maltby to Kirk Sandall': Bob Gellatly.
Pennine Railway Society. Doncaster Town Fields Sports Club, Doncaster DN2 6AA. 19.30. 'Some Reflections of the early days of HSTs on the ECML': Steve Hoather.
RCTS. Eastleigh Railway Institute, 2 Romsey Road, Eastleigh SO50 9FE.18.30. Branch annual meeting.
Sutton Coldfield Railway Society. St James' Church Centre, Sutton Coldfield B75 5BW. 19.30. Steam images from Ken Hale's collection.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 18

Gravesend Railway Enthusiasts' Society. Emmanuel Baptist Church, Gravesend DA12 1BB. 19.30. Social evening and quiz.
Lutterworth Railway Society. Lutterworth Bowls Club LE15 4RB. 19.30. 'Rugby (Midland)-Peterborough (East) Line': Gavin Ramsay.
Marlow & District Railway Society. Bourne End Community Centre SL8 5SX or on Zoom. 19.30. 'The Patriot Project': Colin Hall.
Monmouthshire Railway Society. Lysaght Institute, Newport NP19 0RA. 19.00. 'British railways on plate glass negatives': David Postle.
Norfolk Railway Society. United Reformed Church Hall, Norwich NR4 6QR. 19.30. TBA.
Nuneaton Railway Circle. Chilvers Coton Conservative Club, Nuneaton CV11 5UD. 19.45. 'Kent mining in the 1970s to 1990s': David Hayes.
RCTS. Victory Club, Burlington House, Cheltenham GL50 2SY. 19.00. 'Rails in Japan': Sholto Thomas.
RCTS. Saltaire Methodist Chapel, Shipley BD18 3HJ. 19.30. 'Steam Day Rails in the South Pennines': Steve Armitage.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 19

Great Western Society. Village Hall, Stoke St Mary, Taunton TA3 5DE. 19.30. 'Transport of Delight': Rev Robin Lodge.
LCGB. Keen House, London NW1 9DA. 18.30. 'Great Central Reunification': Tom Ingall.
SWRS. The Manor, Slough station and on Zoom. 19.30. 'The Marlow Donkey': Adam Baxter's film evening.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 20

LCGB. St Cyprian's Church, London NW1 6AX. 10.00-17.00. Annual reunion.
SLS. Friends' Meeting House, Manchester M2 5NS. 14.00. 'Becoming an International Treasure: The Talyllyn Railway': Ian Drummond.

MONDAY, JANUARY 22

LCGB. Brighton Model Railway Club Room, London Rd station, Brighton BN1 4QS. 19.30.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 23

RCTS. The New Mechanics, Nottingham NG1 4EZ. 14.00. 'The Master Cutler': Chris Youett.

WEDNESDAY, JAN 24

Giggleswick Railway Circle. Settle Victoria Hall, Settle BD24 9DZ. 19.30. TBA.
RCTS. Bassil Shipham Centre, Chichester PO19 7LG. Meeting on Zoom. 19.15. 'Steam in the British Isles': Tony Bowles.
Sutton Coldfield Railway Society. St James' Church Centre, Sutton Coldfield B75 5BW. 19.30. 'German Steam': Andy Smythe.
Talking of Trains. Library Hall, Ewell Road, Surbiton KT6 6AG. 19.00. 'Welcome to 2024 – a review of likely developments on the national and heritage railways': Dick Crane.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 25

Shropshire Railway Society. Gateway Education and Arts Centre, Shrewsbury SY1 1NB. 19.00. 'Cornish Branch Lines': Malcolm Garner.
South East Essex Rlwy Soc. Friends' Meeting House, Leigh-on-Sea SS9 1NB. 19.30. TBA.
Stevenage Locomotive Society. Community Arts Centre, Roaring Meg Retail Park, Stevenage. 19.30. 'Railworld and Wildlife Haven – from steam engines to wildlife. How volunteering changed my life': Brian Pearce.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 26

Rlwy Club of the New Forest. Village Hall, Highwood Road, Brockenhurst. 19.30. 'Western Enterprise': Colin Brading.
SWRS. The Manor, Slough station. 19.30. 'The Yorkshire Wolds Rlwy': Matthew Brown.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 30

RCTS. Digswell Village Church Hall, Welwyn AL6 0DH. 14.00. 'Steam in the King's Cross area in the 50s and 60s': David Percival.

WEDNESDAY, JAN 31

Pennine Railway Society. Zoom meeting. 19.30. 'Ups and Downs': Geoff Griffiths. Joining details on www.penninerailwaysociety.com.
Talking of Trains. Library Hall, Surbiton KT6 6AG. 19.00. 'From the Tyne to the Tweed': Dennis Lovett.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 1

Great Central Railway Society. Farm Road Sports & Social Club, Sheffield S2 2TP. 19:30. 'The GWR Broad Gauge': Ken Grainger.
Lutterworth Railway Society. Lutterworth Bowls Club LE15 4RB. 19.30. 'Bring a transport related thing and talk about it': LRS members.
Nuneaton Railway Circle. Chilvers Coton Conservative Club, Nuneaton CV11 5UD. 19.45. 'Travels of a Railway writer': *The RM's* Chis Milner.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 2

SWRS. The Manor, Slough station. 19.30. 'Slide Show': Peter Greatorex.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 5

Peak Rail Association. Farm Road Sports & Social Club, Farm Road, Sheffield S2 2TP. 19.30. 'Waterloo to the West Country': Rhys Jones.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 6

Enfield Transport Circle. Enfield Drill Hall Sports Club EN2 6PJ. 20.00. 'The History and Development of Engines – Pt 2: Peter Moore and Kenneth Crane.
Gravesend Railway Enthusiasts' Society. Emmanuel Baptist Church, Gravesend DA12 1BB. 19.30. 'Inside the Royal Train': Geoff Griffiths.
LCGB. Red Lion Hotel, Newburgh, Wigan WN8 7NF. 19.30. Members and visitors' digital photographs.
LCGB. St John's Church Hall, Bedford MK42 0DL. 19.30. 'Blue is the Colour': Richard Crane.
RCTS. Beeching Grove Baptist Church, Watford WD17 1JJ on Zoom. 19.00. 'Railways in and around the Second World War': Robin Mathams.
Southern Electric Group & Light Rail Transit Association. Eastleigh Railway Institute, Romsey Road, Eastleigh. 19.30. 'Railways of the West Country': Stephen Bigley.

WEDNESDAY, FEB 7

Bradford Railway Circle. Mechanics' Institute Library BD1 1SZ. 14.00. 'Old Fashioned Slide Show': Alan Ward.
Pennine Railway Society. Doncaster Town Fields Sports Club, Doncaster DN2 6AA. 19.30. 'Retford through the lens of Keith Pirt': Bob Gellatly.

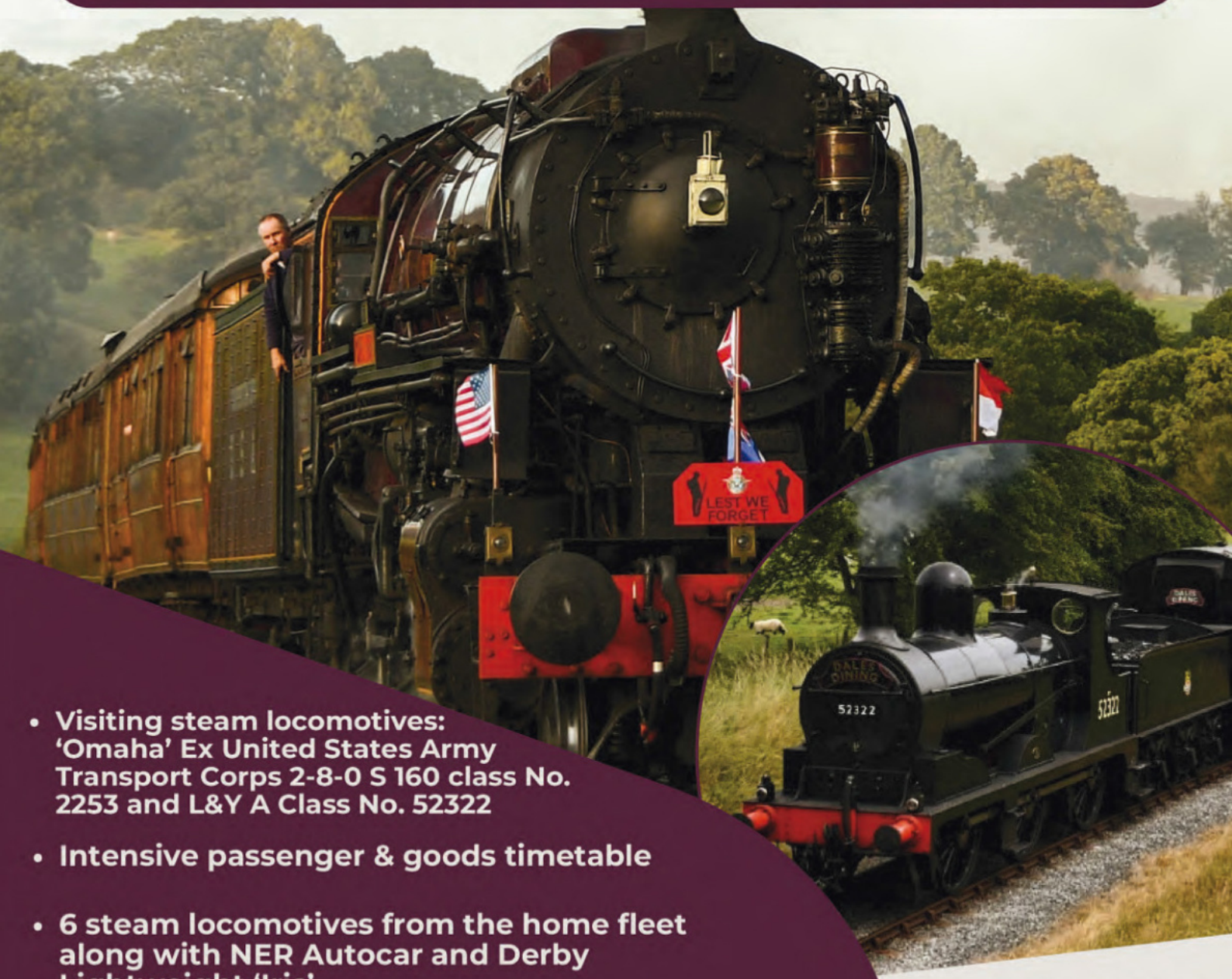
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1
AUTUMN GLORY: Looking more like a scene from North America than North Yorkshire, the Midland Pullman (with power cars Nos. 43059/43055) departs Glaisdale for Whitby on November 7 with 'The Whitby Jet' charter from Ayr. COLIN IRWIN

2
MOTION BLUR: Type 4 No. 47593 *Galloway Princess* gets little attention as it passes through Chippenham on December 5 with a Saphos Trains excursion from Bath to Dorridge. JACK BOSKETT

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1
WAGONS ROLL: A different angle at the popular Kinchley Lane location over the Great Central Railway, as black-liveried '9F' No. 92214 heads south with the 'Windcutter' wagons during a Timeline Events charter on November 24. ROBERT FALCONER

2
TYPE 1 ON SHOW: An organised photoshoot at Breedon Cement at Hope, Peak District, on December 4, gave participants the chance to photograph the three resident Class 20s Nos. 2 (20168) *Sir George Earle*, 3 (20906), and spare 20309. Blue-liveried No. 2 is pictured in the melting snow under the floodlights with three cement wagons. No. 3 is expected to leave the site at the end of the year to be overhauled to the same standard as No. 2. CHRIS GEE

3
FROM NEAR AND FAR: Manchester Metrolink tram No. 3142 heads away from the airport toward the city centre on November 13 as an easyJet flight from Reykjavik, Iceland, comes in to land. GREG MAPE

4
TUNNEL VISION: Neatly framed by the tunnel mouth at St Leonards Warrior Square on November 22, GBRF's electro-diesel No. 73107 *Tracy* heads back to Tonbridge after visiting St Leonards depot for fuel and a filter exam during a break from railhead treatment work. There was clearly not enough time to also clean the loco while it was there on this occasion. JOHN VAUGHAN

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100 YEARS AGO
JANUARY 1924

LNER proposals

SEVERAL new works are proposed in the London and North Eastern Railway Bill, including connections between the Great Northern and City Railway at Drayton Park and the Canonbury lines at Finsbury Park, widenings between Liverpool Street and Stratford and between Fenchurch Street and Stratford, a new railway connecting the Alexandra Park and the Enfield branches, a connection just outside Lincoln between the Sleaford and Market Rasen lines, new railways at Scunthorpe and Frodingham, a new railway at Rufford, widenings near Pyewipe Junction and between Hull and Selby, and the conversion into cutting of the Thurgoland and Hattersley tunnels on the Sheffield and Manchester Railway.

The South Yorkshire Joint Line Committee will also be authorised to construct a line connecting the Firbeck Light Railway with Harworth Colliery. It is proposed to abandon a portion of the Newmarket Branch Railway.

50 YEARS AGO
JANUARY 1974

Governments sign Channel Tunnel agreement

AT separate ceremonies on November 17, representatives of the two governments signed parallel agreements with the British and French Channel Tunnel Companies, setting out arrangements for the financing and construction of the tunnel; and later a treaty authorising the second phase of the project, costing about £30m, covering access works on the Kent and Normandy coasts and the driving of initial lengths of service tunnel.

Full powers necessary to complete the construction of the tunnel and to establish a British Channel Tunnel Board will be sought in a major Bill being presented to Parliament during the current Session.



The APT-E on the Old Dalby test track in the 1970s.

Prototype APT-E passes first testing targets

ONLY six weeks after starting technical trials under its three-year development programme, by October 11 British Railways' APT-E was running at 125 mph over the 13 mile-long Old Dalby test track along which normal trains would be limited to 80-90mph.

The cant deficiency reached so far is 8in, which corresponds to about 8 degrees of body tilt, achieved using soft air-spring hydraulic roll and self-levelling suspensions. The two articulated end power cars and one of the trailers – housing scientific equipment and instrumentation – of the wholly experimental train were involved, while the second trailer car has been used in structural resonance experiments at the Railway Technical Centre, Derby. Having completed the initial track-testing session, the APT-E set returned to Derby for equipping a hydrokinetic braking system.

20 YEARS AGO
JANUARY 2004

'Pendolino' tilts at 125mph

ANOTHER milestone in the move to full introduction of Virgin's fleet of 53 'Pendolinos' was achieved on November 26 when No. 390033 *City of Glasgow* tilted at 125mph between Rugby and Lichfield… while passing other trains

A stretch of track through the Trent Valley has been upgraded for 125mph use and the run was the first time the tilt mechanism had been used in normal traffic. All other instances have been during special possession arrangements. No. 390033 had been accepted from Alstom two days earlier.

Daily tilt training for drivers and instructors has now begun.

The end for Connex

SOUTH Eastern Trains, the business set up by the Strategic Rail Authority, took over operation of the Connex franchise from November 9, several weeks earlier than expected.

Connex held a 15-year franchise won in 1996 but was sacked after the SRA allegedly lost confidence in its ability to manage a £58 million cash injection, which Connex denied.

It is the first time a train operating franchise has been taken back under state control since Privatisation, and it puts the SRA in the position of train operator, although it strongly denied that it was anything other than a temporary measure.

SRA chairman Richard Bowker told MPs in November that he intended to hand the franchise back to a private operator even if the SRA proved it could run it cheaper. The SRA will operate the franchise until the commencement of the Greater Kent franchise in early 2005.

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The RCTS: then and now



Entering Shalford on the Guildford-Redhill line, 'Merchant Navy' No. 35028 *Clan Line* heads the VSOE/Belmond 'British Pullman' luxury train on a circular tour from London Victoria via the Surrey Hills on June 28, 2014. JIM TUCKER/RCTS

THE London and South Western Railway main line from Waterloo reached Exeter in stages from Salisbury, opening first to Yeovil Junction on June 18, 1859. The last section to Exeter Queen Street (Central from 1933) was finally carrying passengers from June 18, 1860 – a great relief to the LSWR as it allowed it to link up with its long-held acquisition the Bodmin and Wadebridge Railway of 1847.

From the start, the route was in direct competition with the Great Western Railway from Paddington, in those days still running via Bristol but with the advantage of broad gauge and its suitability for higher speeds.

Relatively modern motive power started to appear once William Adams succeeded W G Beattie as chief mechanical engineer in 1877, with a series of elegant 4-4-0s such as the T3 Class – which included No. 563, recently beautifully restored by the Swanage Railway. But in Dugald Drummond's time as CME from 1892, services started to accelerate.

The LSWR route to Exeter was, on the whole, very direct, tackling the landscape head on without widespread deviation. This made for a number of serious ascents, such as the five miles uphill from Tisbury to Semley and the notorious Honiton bank, seven miles climbing eastwards from Seaton Junction at up to 1-in-80. Each climb is followed by an equally steep descent, so that more modern and powerful engines soon acquired a taste for exciting running. Enthusiasm was cooled early on, however, when a Drummond 'L12' 4-4-0 was involved in the catastrophic Salisbury derailment in 1906 while unofficially competing with the GWR for ocean liner traffic from Plymouth.

Robert Urie took over as the LSWR's CME in 1912, and it was in 1918 that the first of his 'King Arthur' 4-6-0s appeared. Richard Maunsell's development and proliferation of the class from 1925 saw them in charge of all the important, and now much heavier, expresses west of Salisbury. It was during the Second World War that Oliver Bulleid, in charge at Eastleigh from 1937, introduced his revolutionary air-smoothed 4-6-2 'Merchant Navy' Pacific locomotives, followed in 1945 by the lighter and more numerous versions, the 'West Country' and 'Battle of Britain' classes.

In British Railways days Bulleid engines had a virtual monopoly, keeping time on this demanding route with even heavier trains. But the best was yet to come, with an elegant and more easily maintained rebuilt version from 1956, eventually covering all the larger machines and around half the smaller ones. This was arguably the golden age for Salisbury to Exeter trains, with many a rebuilt 'Navy' powering uphill with 12 or more coaches and tearing along the downgrades – stretches such as the approach to Axminster, which occasionally saw speeds of up to 100mph, with the 'Atlantic Coast Express' (11am ex-Waterloo) or the 7.00pm service.

It was appropriate that the last one to be rebuilt, No. 35028 *Clan Line*, should be privately preserved. First returning to main line operation in 1974, this loco has been active longer in preservation than under the SR and BR, many of its exploits being recorded in the Railway Observer.

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

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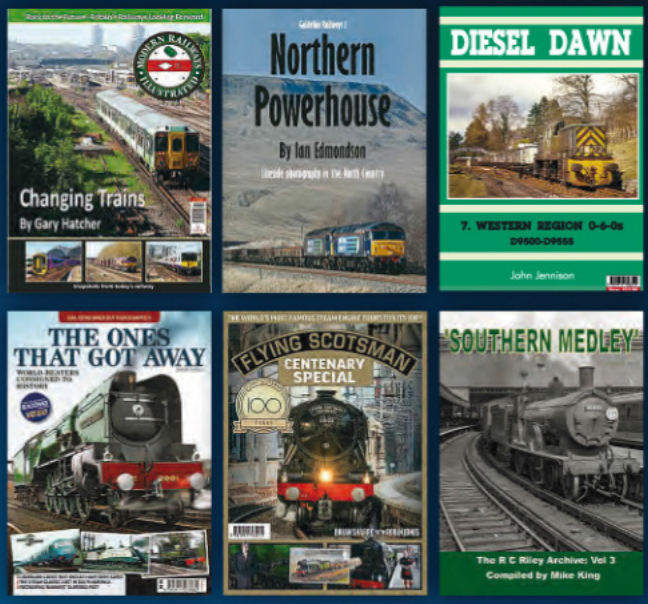
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TRACK RECORD

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CASTELLATION!
A GWR loco at a classic GWR location as 'Castle' No. 5043 *Earl of Mount Edgcumbe* emerges from Twerton Tunnel, west of Bath, with the Vintage Trains 'Merchant Venturer' tour from Solihull to Bristol via Oxford on December 5. Diesel No. 47773 was at the rear. JACK BOSKETT

P56 STEAM P61 INDUSTRIAL P62 NARROW GAUGE P65 MINIATURE P69 HERITAGE TRAMS
P70 CLASSIC TRACTION P72 RAILTOURS P74 FREIGHT P75 METRO P76 NETWORK
P78 TRACTION & STOCK, WAGONS P81 STOCK UPDATE P84 OPERATIONS P91 IRISH P92 WORLD

Compiled by **Gareth Evans**

SIDELINES

Management change

STEVE Backhouse has stepped down as general manager of the Isle of Wight Steam Railway after four years in the role. As an interim measure, fellow director and trustee Marc Morgan Huws is covering the role with immediate effect, nominally working three days a week to fit in with his other commitments. Marc will be standing down from the board while he fulfils this role. It is expected that the recruitment process for a replacement GM will begin in mid-January with a view to having the successful candidate in post by the end June.

Saint to visit Ongar

THE Great Western Society's 'Saint' No. 2999 *Lady of Legend* is to star in the Epping Ongar Railway's (EOR) April 26-28 steam gala. The 4-6-0 is set to appear alongside GWR 'Hall' No. 4953 *Pitchford Hall*, 'Small Prairie' No. L150 (5521), and Hawthorne Leslie 0-6-0ST *Isabel* (3437/1919). The railway said it is hoped further visiting locomotives will be announced in due course. Trains will additionally run until late evening on the Saturday. All trains will be running in conjunction with EOR's fleet of vintage London buses, which will provide connections with Epping Underground and Shenfield National Rail stations.

Buy a bag of ballast

THE West Somerset Railway Association (WSRA) is inviting well-wishers to aid winter permanent way work by sponsoring the purchase of ballast. While the stone is bought by the lorry load, WSRA is asking for donations of £12 to buy a single bag of ballast. A lorry load is about 40 bags (20 tonnes). The charity is aiming to purchase six lorry loads of ballast, which now cost £480 each. Visit www.wsra.org.uk/buy-a-bag-of-ballast for details.

Boiler lifted

A MILESTONE in the overhaul of 'Black Five' No. 45305 *Alderman A. E. Draper* was reached at the Great Central Railway on November 22. The boiler was lifted out of the loco and placed on a well wagon by Loughborough shed's Cowans Sheldon steam crane. Following a visit by a boiler inspector, a detailed plan will be formulated to establish what work is required on the boiler. The loco is owned by the 5305 Locomotive Association and last ran on October 24, 2021.

No more locomotive sales

Severn Valley Railway clarifies asset review approach and confirms there are no plans to steam *Gordon*.



Recently restored Stanier Mogul No. 2968 departs Bridgnorth with an Enchanted Express service to Highley on December 9. JOHN TITLOW

THE Severn Valley Railway (SVR) has no plans to sell further locomotives for the foreseeable future. The news was revealed by managing director Jonathan 'Gus' Dunster as part of his interview with *The RM* (see page 38).

As previously reported (*RM* September 2023), LMS 'Black Five' No. 45110, which last ran in 2008 and was unlikely to steam, was sold in summer 2023 to help raise valuable funds for the railway's Survival Fund.

Asked whether any other assets are being considered for sale, Gus replied: "In terms of locos, we have no plans for further disposals. We are looking at selling things we have been given or have acquired over the years and never really used.

"We've recently sold a redundant permanent way wagon to the Telford Steam Railway. They approached us, not the other way around – and we said actually, we've got a spare one of those, we'll sell it."

Rudd wagon No. DB972677 moved to Telford on November 16, where it will assist with the project to re-lay track to Doseley.

Turning to the future of WD 'Austerity' 2-10-0 No. 600 *Gordon*, which last steamed in 1999, Gus said: "There are no immediate plans for *Gordon*. It needs a costly overhaul. The loco has actually been fulfilling a more active presence on the railway for the last few years in the Engine House where it is a very popular exhibit."

Pipeline

Following the revamp of Bridgnorth works, the SVR's strategy is to undertake three or four overhauls at any one time – whereas in the past up to six locos would be in the works. "If you take on too many at once, you cannot manage a project properly," said Gus.

"Following the recent return of Stanier Mogul No. 2968 we've got a couple of exciting locos in the pipeline – No. 4150, the last Barry 'wreck' on the SVR which has yet to steam in preservation; and at the opposite end of the spectrum, new-build BR '3MT' No. 82045. We expect those will be in steam in 2025, which also happens to be the SVR's 60th anniversary."

Gus said the next loco to be tackled is SR Bulleid Pacific No. 34027 *Taw Valley*, which is due an intermediate overhaul.

"We are going to have to fit something else in behind *Taw Valley* – but I would not like to confirm which one that will be at this stage," he added.

With GWR 0-6-0PT No. 7714 having approximately three to four years remaining on its boiler certificate, Gus said something will be required to fill that smaller loco slot.

He said that beyond the next two to three years, the plan remains fluid.

"*Taw Valley* is on a commercial agreement," explained Gus. "Given where the railway is financially, it makes much more sense to do these locos which are on commercial agreements."

He cited the Erlstoke Manor Fund (EMF) as an example of a loco owning group with a commercial agreement in place.

"EMF is a fully commercial group – a master of its own destiny. We pay a steaming fee to the EMF. Members of the group are busy working on No. 7802 *Bradley Manor* at Tyseley and we expect the loco to return to the SVR later in 2024. EMF has also taken on No. 5164, which it plans to get stuck into as soon as *Bradley Manor* is finished."

Funding

"A lot of the loco owning groups are actively raising funds to see their locos overhauled," added Gus. "That's going to be the way to go in future – we will end up with a sort of hybrid situation where if the owning groups are actively raising funds, then we can work with them. I think we're unlikely to go back to the old way of doing things where the railway pays it all.

"I have met with all the loco owning groups – they all understand the position we are in. We're trying to get some of them to amalgamate and share resources etc."

At the risk of singling them out, Gus said the 2857 Society and the Stanier Mogul Fund are "other great examples", adding: "They've got some younger blood in their groups. It's so important to bring younger people on board."

'Standard' loco donation for West Somerset Railway

BR '4MT' No. 80064 has been gifted to the West Somerset Railway Association (WSRA) by the loco's owning group, the 80064 Locomotive Fund.

The 2-6-4T has been out of service for approximately 30 years and latterly in store at the Bluebell Railway. It departed for its new home in Williton on November 29.

Geoff Garfield, WSRA chairman of Trustees said: "It is our intention to restore No. 80064 as soon as possible, so that it can see regular use as part of the home fleet of WSR locomotives. We see it as ideal for that purpose, well able to cope with the challenging gradients and heavy loadings on our line.

"We have been working for some time on plans to restore the locomotive. Our current restoration project, WSRA-owned GWR 'Small Prairie' No. 4561, is well under way. We are planning to restore No. 80064 in tandem.

"We are very grateful to Colin Turner, Martin Nichols, and the other members of the 80064 group for this opportunity and look forward to welcoming them into our railway family."

The WSR PLC is working with the WSRA to deliver the restoration plan which will be completed at Williton.



No. 80064 is seen following arrival at Williton on November 30.
HARRY BROOK/WSRA



No. 7820 (running as 1225) is seen on Stretchford straight, South Devon Railway, on November 22, with the return from the 14.00 Buckfastleigh to Woodville Polar Express dress rehearsal. The BR logo on the tender was covered up in time for the official start of the 2023 services two days later. Bulleid No. 1456 is immediately behind the loco. DAVID HUNT

Rolling stock hired for Polar Express diagrams

ADDITIONAL resources were drafted in by the South Devon Railway to operate the Polar Express trains during the 2023 Festive period.

As in previous years, No. 7820 *Dinmore Manor* was hired from the Gloucestershire Warwickshire Steam Railway, while SDR resident GWR 2-6-2T No. 5526 headed to Toddington (see separate story on page 58).

In the spirit of the Polar Express film, No. 7820 was 'Americanised' with the addition of a cow catcher, a light and a bell on the front – and the number 1225 on the left-hand side of the cab, the side visible when in Buckfastleigh station. The nameplate on the same side was encased in a wooden housing and the WR type whistle was changed to an American-sounding type.

Among the carriages hired in was Mid-Hants Railway-based 1947 built Bulleid Open Third No. 1456. The trains were top-and-tailed with SDR resident Class 33 No. 33002 (D6501) *Sea King* in its standard livery.

Polar Express journeys ran from Buckfastleigh to the 'North Pole' at Woodville level crossing, approximately a mile from Totnes.

New 'Grange' loco to debut at Battlefield Line gala

NEW-BUILD GWR 'Grange' No. 6880 *Betton Grange* is booked to work its inaugural public trains at the Battlefield Line's February 3/4 gala.

The newly created 81st 'Grange' is due to arrive at Shackerstone for running in trials following completion at Tyseley Locomotive Works.

The 4-6-0 is set to star in the gala alongside GWR Large Prairies Nos. 5199 and 4144. While No. 5199, which is owned by the 5199 Project has been at the Battlefield Line operating Christmas trains, No. 4144 is to visit courtesy of the Great Western Society at Didcot.

One part of No. 6880 will be no stranger to the Leicestershire heritage line – the tender from WR 'Manor' No. 7822 *Foxcote Manor*, which is under overhaul at Tyseley. No. 7822 has previously operated on the Battlefield Line. In December, the tender was being prepared for repainting and other maintenance was also being carried out.

Visit www.battlefieldline.co.uk for further details of the gala.



GWR No. 5199 is due to perform alongside Nos. 4144 and 6880 at the Battlefield Line's February 3/4 Winter Warmer gala. On November 26, No. 5199 is seen prior to departure from Shenton with the first Santa train of the 2023 season. The wreath was in honour of the late Roy Etherington (See tribute and photograph on page 63). Roy was instrumental in laying most of the track around Shackerstone in the early years on the Battlefield Line. ADRIAN LOCK/BL

'Q6' to get a new cylinder – and 'J72' cylinders and boiler progress

THE North Eastern Locomotive Preservation Group (NELPG) has confirmed the damaged cylinder for its 'Q6' No. 63395 is to be replaced rather than repaired.

As reported in *RM* June 2023, the 0-8-0's right-hand cylinder failed at Grosmont station on the North Yorkshire Moors Railway on May 16, resulting in the loco being withdrawn from traffic.

The old cylinder has been sent to a contractor, where the component has been 3D scanned, which along with a copy of the original LNER drawing has enabled the production of a brand-new cylinder drawing. The next stage will be to examine and snag the new drawing and iron out any issues before placing the order for the new cylinder.

Meanwhile, the overhaul of 'J72' 0-6-0T No. 69023 reached a milestone in early December when both halves of the new cylinder castings were joined together. While other components remain to be machined, it is expected that the cylinder will be fitted to the frames in the coming weeks.

The boiler continues to progress at contractor Northern Steam Engineering Limited. The firebox and new boiler barrel were put together for the first time in mid-November. Excellent progress was subsequently made drilling and fastening everything together.

The pressure vessel has received extensive work. With the exception of the dome, the top of the outer firebox, the top quarter of the outer backplate, the inner backplate and the foundation ring, everything else has been made new.

SIDELINES

Prairie gathering

THREE GWR Prairies will be on site at Didcot Railway Centre on two weekends in February. The 5199 Project's No. 5199 is due to be in action alongside resident No. 4144, while No. 6106 will be on static display on February 10, 11, 14, 17 and 18. This will present the line-up of '41XX', '51XX' and '61XX' 2-6-2Ts together.

Furness progress

THE boiler for Furness Railway Trust's GWR 0-6-2T No. 5643 received a non-destructive test on November 24. While the initial results were positive, a visit from the boiler surveyor is awaited to confirm the extent of work required on the boiler during its 10-year overhaul. Meanwhile, work continues on the restoration of GWR 'Hall' 4-6-0 No. 4979 *Wootton Hall* from Barry scrapyard condition. Another water test is due to be carried out on the tender, the exterior of which continues to receive cosmetic attention.

'Coal Tank' to visit WSR

LNWR 'Coal Tank' No. 1054 is set to make its debut on the West Somerset Railway during the line's May 3-6 Spring Steam Spectacular. The 0-6-2T will haul local passenger trains and.

DIARY

JANUARY
Jan 3 Bo'ness & Kinneil Railway: Black Bun Specials
Jan 5-7 Epping Ongar Railway: Lights Express
Jan 5-6 Watercress Line: Steam Illuminations
Jan 6 Helston Railway: Winter Steam Up
Jan 6-7 Swanage Railway: Winter Warm Up
Jan 26-28 Great Central Railway: Winter Steam Gala
Jan 27 Spa Valley Railway: Burns Night Dining Experience

FEBRUARY
Feb 3-4 Spa Valley Railway: Paw Patrol
Feb 9-11 Spa Valley Railway: Winter Steam Gala
Feb 14-15, 17-18, 21-22, 24-25 Epping Ongar Railway: Kids For A Quid
Feb 17-18 Spa Valley Railway: BR Standard Weekend
Feb 25 Epping Ongar Railway: Winter Country Buses Event
Feb 29-Mar 2 East Anglian Railway Museum: Winter Beer Festival

Bats to benefit from railway reconstruction

Environmental surveys continue to progress as part of Rother Valley Railway restoration.

BATS are among the species which stand to gain from the reopening of the Rother Valley Railway (RVR).

Work on surveying bats began in August 2023. "We've carried out bat transect surveys once a month," explained Giles Coe, RVR's environmental expert.

"We've accompanied that with activity surveys for bats for which we've set out static monitors approximately every 500 metres along the route of the line. Those are left to record for five nights. We then investigate the data to see what bats are there and roughly what kind of abundance."

Giles said that sections of the trackbed are currently covered by densely thatched secondary woodland. He added: "While some species are able to move through that quite easily, groups such as bats will find that extremely difficult. We anticipate that once that is opened up, the railway will provide a far more functional corridor for bats to move across the landscape."

Surveys of dormice, another protected species, has also been underway. "We've been sample surveying all the suitable woody habitats along the route of the railway," said Giles. "It involves us setting out little tubes every 15 metres in which the dormouse can nest in suitable vegetation. We check them each month through the year. The objective is to get the railway rebuilt but also causing as minimal harm as possible."

Physical reconstruction of the two-mile long 'missing link' central section of the line – namely from Northbridge Street to Udiam, formerly the site of Junction Road Halt – could begin this year.

Mike Hart, trustee, said: "The in-depth ecological survey looking into the environmental impacts of the railway is currently underway. Depending on the section, some bits where there are lots of habitats will take 12 months to complete, while other sections of the railway could be complete earlier.

"We can't put a shovel in the ground until the ecological survey is completed and approved by the appropriate government departments. All things being equal, physical work will hopefully begin by late spring or summer 2024."

Meanwhile, the construction of the new engine shed at Robertsbridge has taken a further step forward. While the earthworks for the North Bank had been completed in October (*RM* December), a window appeared to get ahead of the next phase of this project, i.e. to lay crushed stone/concrete. This is a precursor to ballasting for track laying.

The entire top side of the Northbank is being prepared. Terram matting has already been laid, over which 30cm of crushed Kentish ragstone from the North Downs will be laid and levelled.



PRAIRIE POWER: GWR '45XX' Small Prairie No. 5526 paid a short visit to the Gloucestershire Warwickshire Steam Railway over Christmas, from the South Devon Railway, as part of a locomotive swap with No. 7820 *Dinmore Manor* (see separate story on page 57). The 2-6-2T is seen at Gotherington with a Santa Special on December 2. BRYAN NICHOLLS



'MANOR' BACK IN THE VALLEY: No. 7812 *Erlstoke Manor* returned 'home' to the Severn Valley Railway in time to assist with the operation of the line's Christmas services, after spending the main season at the West Somerset Railway. No. 7812 is pictured climbing towards Bewdley Tunnel and Kidderminster with a Santa Special on December 9. Along with GWR 0-6-0PT No. 7714, the 4-6-0 is due to be in use on footplate experience courses in February and March. Visit svr.co.uk/ for details.
JOHN TITLOW

Patriot moves to Tyseley

NEW-BUILD 4-6-0 No. 5551 *The Unknown Warrior*, which is under construction by the LMS-Patriot Project, has relocated to Tyseley Locomotive Works (TLW).

As previously reported (*RM* September 2023), on July 27 the LMS-Patriot Project was formally notified by the Princess Royal Class Locomotive Trust (PRCLT) that it was withdrawing from third-party contract work to focus on the development of its own locomotives.

The project took an important step forward in early December with the transfer of the loco chassis to its new assembly base at Tyseley. TLW will be unable to accommodate the chassis in its workshop until the spring.

Colin Hall, LMS-Patriot company chairman, said: "We are now much better placed to go on to rewheeling at Tyseley when the new wheelsets are delivered by Riley & Son."

The project's 12T box van has also been moved – to the Ecclesbourne Valley Railway, where it will be accessible to the project under the care of the railway's general manager Simon Scott, who is now supporting the project as a volunteer following his resignation as PRCLT CME in July 2023.

Arrangements are also being made to relocate storage containers from Midland Railway-Butterley land.



No. 5551 *The Unknown Warrior* is seen following arrival at Tyseley on December 6. ANDY COLLINSON/LMS-PATRIOT PROJECT

Paintwork gets attention

COSMETIC work is underway on new-build LNWR 4-4-0 No. 1215 *Prince George* by the LNWR George the Fifth Steam Locomotive Trust at Crewe Heritage Centre.

The cab handrails have been removed for welding and polishing and it is planned to paint inside the cab shortly. The goal is to apply gloss paint on the parts which currently have matt black primer, with red on the buffer beam and red inside the cab. It is hoped the loco will look its best for the year ahead.



No. 71000 *Duke of Gloucester* at Tyseley Locomotive Works on December 3. BR CLASS 8 LOCOMOTIVE TRUST

Duke appears in light steam

THE overhaul of No. 71000 *Duke of Gloucester* for main line operation reached a milestone at Tyseley Locomotive Works on December 3. Members of the BR Class 8 Steam Locomotive Trust were invited to see the Pacific on the turntable in light steam.

Despite the poor weather and industrial action on the national rail network, around 70 members were in attendance.

The coming year promises to showcase a number of exciting developments for No. 71000. Firstly, the 4-6-2 is due to return to the main line with improvements which it is believed the loco's designer Robert Riddles would have made following its period of main line working, had he been allowed the time.

In addition to celebrating the loco's 70th anniversary, 2024 will also mark half-a-century since No. 71000 was rescued from Barry scrapyard.

"The primary objective of our current overhaul was to return *Duke* to the main line in the most reliable condition possible," explained Trevor Tuckley, chairman of trustees.

"This has involved the meticulous reviewing of every component. The non-destructive testing of the coupling and connecting rods highlighted a few small cracks in the centre con rod, all the other rods were sound. This has involved the ordering of a new forging along with a complicated machining process."

Trevor said the unexpected expenditure has cost £6000 for the forging and £14,000 for the finishing, which has included heat treatment and retesting. While the trust has been able to cover this cost, it has reduced the organisation's planned financial float. The trust is therefore asking well-wishers to help reduce this deficit.

Donations can be made at www.theduke.uk.com or by cheque payable to BR Class 8 Steam Locomotive Trust and posted to Aurora House, Deltic Avenue, Rooksley, Milton Keynes MK13 8LW.

MNR Polar Express paves way for upgrade

CONFIRMATION that the Mid-Norfolk Railway (MNR) is to continue to run the Polar Express (PE) has resulted in a platform extension project going ahead.

The MNR has now signed a seven-year contract to run the special trains during the festive period. Having been an aspiration for some years, the extension of platform 2/3 at Dereham has now been completed. This work removes the costs of the temporary platform for PE duties which can now be dispensed with and therefore improves the profit margin for this key activity for the railway.

In the run up to Christmas, the MNR operated a trip on the PE, in conjunction with Dereham Ukraine Centre, for 145 Ukrainian refugees and their Norfolk host families from the local area.

Changes

Meanwhile, the work of the MNR's Change Management Working group continues, having been given a remit to review, update and introduce new policies and procedures for the better governance of the railway.

As part of this work the Trust Council has appointed Mark Collinson as the new full-time operations manager.

Work to replace the life expired waybeams which carry the rails across Crownthorpe Bridge will, together with associated track work replacement that is needed to run to Wymondham, be completed before this summer's running season begins. This work has been partially funded due to the generosity of supporters who have donated over £40000 so far. This sum, together with some funding from general railway funds, and through the efforts of the MNR personnel to source materials, means the project can now proceed at a lower cost than first anticipated

Railways receive recognition

Regional tourism organisations praise the work of heritage lines at award ceremonies.

FOUR heritage lines have received recognition in recent weeks at award ceremonies organised by their respective regional tourism bodies.

On November 23, the Llangollen & Corwen Railway won Attraction of the Year for 2023 at the Go North Wales Tourism Awards. The annual event organised by North Wales Tourism celebrates the dedication, skill and achievements of the region's tourism and hospitality industry.

Tom Taylor, the line's general manager, said: "We had to work with the rest of the tourism industry just to survive, but in 2023 we fulfilled our long-held ambition of taking the railway back to Corwen, which is already making a big difference to the town.

"The amazing team of volunteers and staff at our railway have been key to getting us back from the brink of collapse to where we are now. This award is for them.

"We are totally focussed on moving forward now; supporting our partner organisations in the Dee Valley as we head towards it becoming a National Park. As part of this vision, the Llangollen & Corwen Railway needs to continue to stabilise, recover and develop a really polished offering – for both the local community and our visitors to enjoy and benefit from for many years to come."

At the recent Leicestershire Tourism and Hospitality Awards, the Great Central Railway (GCR) was voted Best Day Out in Leicestershire.

Malcolm Holmes, GCR general manager said: "We have made significant changes to our approach to customer experience this year, and this award highlights that we are travelling in the right direction, we have even more exciting plans for 2024 with new events and experiences."

The Gloucestershire Warwickshire Steam Railway (GWSR) won two categories in The Cotswold Awards organised by the online and social media guide, Cotswold Concierge.

The awards are voted for by the public, who rated the GWSR the 'Best Attraction in the Cotswolds' in the 'Experience Awards' category. Other winners in this category included Cotswold Wildlife Park and Blenheim Palace.

Taking top spot in the 'Events Awards' category was the railway's Cotswold Festival of Steam, voted 'Best Event in the Cotswolds 2023'.

Another award was for 'Professional Services' and the 'Best Photographer' category was won by *RM* contributor Jack Boskett, who also edits the GWSR journal.

Richard Johnson, GWSR plc chairman: "The Cotswold Festival of Steam has long been considered a 'railway enthusiast' event and while that remains true, it is broadening its appeal and drawing families excited by the wide range of things to do on our railway, which really is a 'living museum'. It is the premier event in our summer range of activities."



The Kent & East Sussex Railway was awarded Bronze for its Santa specials. BR '2MT' No. 78019 was hired from the Great Central Railway to assist with the 2023 Christmas services. The 2-6-0 is pictured arriving at Tenterden on December 2 as resident 'Austerity' 0-6-0ST No. 25 *Northiam* waits to head the next departure. ROBIN COOMBES/KESR

In mid-December, the Kent & East Sussex Railway was awarded Bronze in the Tourism South East Beautiful South Awards in Brighton. The operation of the line's Santa specials was recognised in the Tourism event/festival of the year category.

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Infrastructure Manager

The Dart Valley Railway Limited Company operates the Dartmouth Steam Railway in South Devon, which runs between Paignton and Kingswear and is currently seeking to appoint an Infrastructure Manager to be responsible for both the physical safety and the maintenance and repair of the railway's infrastructure. Prospective applicants for the post must be able to provide relevant evidence of practical experience in Permanent Way maintenance work, ideally within a traditional jointed track and S&C environment. Additional practical experience of P.W. renewals, P.W. design work, together with any structures, track drainage, earthworks and other associated railway civil engineering types of work would also be beneficial.

Ideally applicants will have had some prior Supervisory or Management experience of both P.W. and railway civil engineering works, both directing company staff and also contractors. Good IT literacy will be essential due to the works planning and budgeting requirements of the role and the need to maintain work and safety records for audit and reference purposes. Any relevant qualifications in these areas would be an advantage, but this is not essential for what is a very practical, hands on, lead the team from the front role.

A competitive package will be offered.

If this opportunity is of interest to you then please apply via the following email address attaching a CV and covering letter

paulmerrington@dsrrb.co.uk

The closing date for submitting applications is 28/02/2024

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All set for 2024 duties

Middleton Railway prepares for the forthcoming operating season.



Hunslet 0-6-0ST *Brookes No 1* at Moor Road on November 25. MATT BERRY

THE Middleton Railway is preparing for 2024 by overhauling locomotives, and training crews over the winter period.

Hunslet 0-6-0ST *Brookes No 1*, works number 2387, built in 1942, has been the main locomotive used for several crew training days involving new recruit guards and footplate volunteers.

In the workshops, Hawthorn Leslie 0-4-0ST *Swanscombe No. 6* (3860/1935) was prepared for Santa duties alongside *Brookes No 1*.

The main overhaul project is currently Hudswell Clarke 0-6-0ST *Slough Estates No 3* (1544/1924). Much work has been completed on the chassis and motion, with it due to be lowered back on its wheels shortly. One frame stretcher still requires replacement, with design work currently taking place. Work on the boiler will commence shortly and it is hoped the engine might steam for its centenary in 2024. The Middleton Railway said it is very grateful to the owners, the Slough and Windsor Railway Society, for their continued support of the line with the loan of this locomotive.

Meanwhile, Vintage Carriages Trust-owned Manning Wardle 0-6-0ST *Sir Berkeley* (1210/1891) has had modifications made to the saddle tank in order to make access to the tank filler much easier than present.

New footsteps have been bolted to the tank to allow footplate crews to access the tank filler rather than having to physically climb on top of the tank itself. The steps are bolted to allow for removal if required, in accordance with museum practice, and are similar in design to those used on the MRT's Hunslet 0-6-0ST *Brookes No 1*, and close to what would have been fitted back in 1891.

The locomotive was due to be used on New Year's Day trains.

MSC 31 is under overhaul

A FORMER Manchester Ship Canal Railway locomotive, which has been on display in the Keighley & Worth Valley Railway's (KWVR) Oxenhope exhibition shed for several years, is now being returned to steam.

Hudswell Clarke 0-6-0T MSC 31 *Hamburg* (679/1903), has been sold to another KWVR member and is now being stripped down for overhaul at Haworth. Hauled down to Haworth Yard in November, the loco has had its cab, tanks and boiler removed.

A replacement firebox is to be fitted – the current one being life expired. The locomotive will also be lifted for a full motion and axlebox overhaul. It is intended that the engine will be given MSC black livery at first, with a further repaint into two tone green later.

MSC 31 was one of the first steam locomotives to work on the KWVR and featured in a number of films while in working order. It is one of the earlier 'short tank' versions of this design and suffered the indignity of having its nameplates removed during the First World War when locals complained about its German name. As a result of the objections, one nameplate was placed inside the cab, which the engine carries to this day.

Two of the later 'long tank' versions, MSC 67 and 70, are also preserved – at Middleton and Swindon & Cricklade railways respectively.



MSC 31 at Haworth Yard shortly after arrival on the KWVR in 1967. IAN SMITH COLLECTION



WELL TANK BACK IN ACTION:

Kerr Stuart 0-4-0WT (3063/1918) 'Willy' has returned to steam at the Flour Mill following its overhaul. The locomotive immediately went on hire to the Swindon & Cricklade Railway. 'Willy' is pictured being test steamed at the Flour Mill on November 24. MIKE BEARD/FLOUR MILL

Courageous Christmas effort in Preston



Bagnall 0-6-0ST *Courageous* hauls the 11.45 Santa Special at the Ribble Steam Railway, Preston on December 2, 2023. STEVE SIENKIEWICZ

BAGNALL 0-6-0ST *Courageous* (2680/1942) was rostered to operate all Santa trains at the Ribble Steam Railway. The locomotive is due to come out of service towards the end of 2024 and ran the trains top and tailed with a diesel from the railway's industrial fleet.

Hawthorn Leslie, 0-6-0ST *Linda* (3931/1938) is set to come out of service early in 2024 and was standby for the Santa trains.

Currently in the workshops is Hunslet 'Austerity' 0-6-0ST *Walkden*, works number 3155, built in 1944 as WD No. 75105. The loco is coming to the end of its overhaul and is expected to replace *Courageous* during 2024 if all goes to plan.

Peckett class W6-S 0-4-0ST *Hornet*, works number 1935, built in 1935 for Black Park Colliery, Chirk is also under overhaul, alongside Borrows 0-4-0WT *Windle*, works number 53, built in 1909 which is having an extensive rebuild. Undergoing assessment prior to overhaul is Andrew Barclay 0-6-0ST *Niddrie*, works number 1833 built in 1924.

SINGLE LINES

■ WELSHPOOL & Llanfair Light Railway's permanent way team is looking forward to the provision of a new mess coach.

The life-expired body of the old vehicle has been removed from the chassis and contractors have been invited to provide estimates for a new custom-built 'welfare unit' which will be mounted on the frames.

The unit will incorporate a generator, toilet and crew room. The intention is for the new vehicle to enter service early in 2024.

■ THE replicated Southwold Railway MOY private owner Cleminson six-wheel open wagon being constructed by Halesworth to Southwold Narrow Gauge Railway was tested (pushed by members of the volunteer construction team) in November over the length of curved test track laid at the team's workshop base. In addition to the flexible wheelbase of the vehicle, the floor planks and curved ends of the wagon are in place with the sides still to be added.

■ FOLLOWING the October 29 end of the Isle of Man Steam Railway's main season, a major relaying project at Douglas station was commenced by contractor Auldyn Construction. The track outside the workshops and running shed has been removed, progressing up roads zero, one and two into the platforms. Track has been left in place on the other side of the main platform to allow operation of Christmas trains.

■ THE East Suffolk Light Railway, located at the East Anglia Transport Museum, has secured planning permission to erect an enlarged carriage shed covering two tracks (this replaces earlier planning approval of a single road shed) and relocation of the former Oulton Broad North signal box to the line's Mutford Thorpe station.

The box is being donated to the museum by Network Rail with arrangements for removal of the structure awaiting finalisation.

■ A NEW station for the Lappa Valley Railway's 15in gauge Newlyn Downs Branch line is under construction.

In November the new tarmac platform had been laid, together with a new tarmac path to the main park offering a more accessible surface for those with mobility difficulties and prams. The new station is due to be in operation for the 2024 season.

Return to service is closer for Ffestiniog favourites

Linda steams for Christmas, with *Taliesin* overhaul also progressing.

TWO popular members of the Ffestiniog Railway's loco fleet are on course to return to the roster – while the replica of an historic 'lost' Ffestiniog loco is taking shape in Darlington.

Hopes that Hunslet 2-4-0STT *Linda*, which last ran in March 2021, would return to action by Christmas (*RM*, October) were realised. The extensive overhaul, which included major rebuilding of the tender incorporating a new bunker and water tank, reached its conclusion late in November. In early December the loco was in steam at Harbour station providing footplate rides for Christmas visitors and participating in top-and-tail shuttles to Minffordd with 'sister' Hunslet 2-4-0STT *Blanche*.

The extensive overhaul of Single-Fairlie *Taliesin* at the railway's Boston Lodge works was also making progress. The power bogie is being rebuilt (the first time it has received a major overhaul since *Taliesin* was completed in 1999) and the wheels have been reprofiled.

The boiler has been fitted with a new design of stays, which feature tell-tale holes in the firebox. New tubes and superheater flues are soon to be added followed by a hydraulic test. *Taliesin* has been out of service since 2020.

With these projects taking up the available space at Boston Lodge, England 0-4-0STT *Welsh Pony* has not yet been brought into the works for investigation into the cause of the crank pin problem which sidelined the loco in early September.

Meanwhile, although there is still a long way to go, the replica FR George England 0-4-0T+T *Mountaineer* being constructed for 1863 Mountaineer Locomotive Ltd is starting to look very much like a loco. The boiler was temporarily lifted into the frames at North Bay Railway Engineering Services (NBRES) in November to show supporters of the project the progress being made.



The boiler pictured temporarily in position in the wheeled frames of Mountaineer to show supporters how the project is advancing – and to promote the need for a continued flow of funding. BRYAN SMYTH/1863 MOUNTAINEER LOCOMOTIVE LTD

NBRES is committed to completing two other projects at its Darlington works by the end of 2023, leaving little machine or fabrication time available for *Mountaineer* until January 2024. The next items to be made are the motion parts linking the pistons to the rear axle. NBRES is creating both 3D and traditional workshop drawings to enable 1863 Mountaineer Locomotive Ltd to estimate the financial requirements. It is hoped to have the loco running on compressed air by the summer.

New platform cements local community support

HAVING removed the old sleeper platform from Sittingbourne Viaduct station preparatory to building a longer and higher platform (*RM*, December), the Sittingbourne & Kemsley Light Railway (SKLR) has commenced work on the new structure.

Topping up an existing grant from Swale Borough Council and SKLR members' donations, local building product supplier Ibstock has provided concrete beams for the new beam-and-block concrete platform which sits on top of cast concrete piers. Ibstock has also provided pre-cast concrete platform edging.

The concrete products were delivered, free of charge, by Seymour Transport Ltd to SKLR's Kemsley Down station, then taken to Sittingbourne Viaduct (which does not have road access) by train where the components were unloaded into position by the 2ft 6in gauge line's volunteers.

The new enlarged platform, with a reduced gap between its edge and the train, will enhance access for wheelchairs and pushchairs.



Sittingbourne Viaduct platform under construction, showing the concrete beams being laid on the cast concrete piers ready for insertion of the concrete blocks and screed. P WILLIAMS/SKLR



MAINTENANCE TRAIN IN ACTION:

Romney, Hythe & Dymchurch Railway's (RH&DR) 1949-built 0-4-0PM No. PW2 long nicknamed (and now officially known as) *Scooter* works a demonstration permanent way train past Burmarsh Road on November 5 during the line's Unusual Trains Weekend. The photographer reports that this train was not hanging around, passing Burmarsh Road Halt at what appeared to be full line speed of around 25mph. Fortunately, the floodwaters resulting from Storm Ciaran reported in *The RM*, December, which had affected RH&DR operations between New Romney and Dungeness had receded in time for the event, which also featured tender-first running, top and tailed trains, double and triple-headers and one service including a loco sandwiched in the middle of the train. TONY PAGE

Pier infrastructure upgrade

THE Hythe Pier Heritage Association, with finance from grants and donations, has completed upgrading the first 45 metres of 2ft gauge Hythe Pier Railway track by lifting the old rails, replacing sections of pier decking and laying new rails and sleepers. Designs are now being prepared for provision of a new platform at the shore end of the railway, enabling removal of the current temporary platform.

TALYLLYN TERRAIN: Talyllyn Railway's ex-Corris Hughes 0-4-2ST No. 3 *Sir Haydn* hauling the line's former Corris Railway coach together with more 'modern' Talyllyn stock pictured during a Bob Branch charter on November 10. LUKE RYAN

In tribute to Roy Etherington

ROY Etherington, well known and highly respected in the industrial railway world, died at the beginning of November at the age of 81.

A past chairman and president of the Industrial Railway Society, Roy was probably best known in the wider narrow gauge scene for having constructed a recreation of a Lishman & Young compressed air mines locomotive which became known as (*Hissing*) *Sid*, which is now part of the Statfold collection, and serving as volunteer archivist at Statfold, a role from which he stood down just a week before his death.

The Statfold archivist role is now being undertaken by David H Smith.



Roy Etherington, as always dressed in black clothing and in this instance supplemented by a miner's helmet, demonstrates the compressed air mines locomotive *Hissing Sid* which he constructed at Statfold several years ago. CLIFF THOMAS



ROMNEY'S GUEST: In this picture held over from last month due to space considerations, Siân Project Group's 2-4-2 *Siân* (Guest Engineering 18/1963) was the star visitor to Romney, Hythe & Dymchurch Railway's October 21-22 Autumn Gala, and is pictured leaving Hythe station on October 22. Normally based at Whistlestop Valley (Kirklees Light Railway), *Siân* remained at the Kent line to appear during the November 4-5 Unusual Trains Weekend. NICK WARREN

Barnstaple box set for Blackmoor station

THE signal box which stood at Barnstaple Town station throughout the existence of the original Lynton & Barnstaple Railway (L&BR) has been acquired by the Lynton & Barnstaple Railway Trust.

On closure of the L&BR it was acquired privately but its owner has now decided it should be returned to use.

The trust has dismantled the structure with the intention of re-erecting it at Blackmoor. Some cladding and parts of the sliding windows need to be replaced but the structure is reportedly sound and in remarkably good condition considering it has stood outside for 126 years.

Following restoration, it will be displayed near the water tower at Blackmoor, fitted out with signalling equipment.

When the trackbed is readied for the planned extension to Whistlandpound the box will be placed in the required location and returned to use.

SINGLE LINES

■ AMBERLEY Museum volunteers have been awarded The King's Award for Voluntary Service, recognised as the equivalent of an MBE for volunteer groups. The volunteer workforce at Amberley includes the Rail Group which operates the 2ft gauge railway and narrow gauge museum at the site.

■ WHILE work continues on repairs to the well tank of Bredgar & Wormshill Light Railway's Arn. Jung 3872/1931 0-6-0WT No. 2 *Katie* (*RM*, August), and steel has been purchased to replace the very thin footplate, it has become apparent extensive boiler repairs are required which need to be undertaken by a coded copper welder.

■ THE Fairbourne Railway's winter relaying of part of the main line which runs parallel to the sea wall was boosted in late November by a week-long loan of Ruislip Lido Railway's 'Jupiter XN' tamping machine, claimed to be the smallest tamping machine in the world, and its operator.

■ THE major overhaul of Talyllyn Railway's Fletcher, Jennings 0-4-2ST No. 1 *Talyllyn* was essentially complete in late November.

The boiler will not be officially tested until the new year to avoid wasting several months of new boiler ticket during the winter before *Talyllyn* returns to service for the 2024 season. The loco has been out of service since withdrawal in June 2018.

■ THE boiler for Amberley's Bagnall 2-4-0T *Polar Bear* returned to the museum on October 30 following overhaul by Bennett Boilers.

The cost of transporting the boiler from Highbridge, Somerset, back to the Sussex museum was sponsored by Lamonde Automation Ltd.

■ THE 15in gauge Heatherslaw Light Railway's 2014-built diesel locomotive *Binky* was unveiled in a new BR blue livery as No. 97655 complete with double arrow motif and wasp stripes on November 25. The loco was previously bright yellow.

■ LINCOLNSHIRE'S Crowle Peatland Railway has secured funding from the SSE Keadby Wind Farm Community Fund to enable construction of a proper platform and associated trackwork outside the line's shed building.

■ OVER 150,000 passengers travelled on the Manx Electric Railway's trams during 2023, an increase of more than 20% over 2022 passenger numbers.

Reprieve for Tramway Terrace

Historic Douglas Bay Horse Tramway structure to be repaired rather than demolished.

FOLLOWING reports in October that Tramway Terrace in Douglas, Isle of Man, was in such poor condition it would have to be demolished (*RM*, December) it has since emerged that the building can be saved.

Concerns over the condition of the terrace, which is located in front of the Douglas Bay Horse Tramway stables and incorporates an arch giving access to the stables, was such that the tramway operating season was ended prematurely. A tender exercise to find firms able to undertake demolition of the terrace, built in 1877 as part of the tramway's stable complex and in Manx Government ownership since 2018, then commenced.

However, in view of the registered status of the terrace buildings (registered building consent is required from Manx planning authorities before any demolition or alterations to a protected building can take place) a survey was commissioned by the Isle of Man Government's Department of Environment, Food and Agriculture from an accredited conservation engineer.

The resultant report produced by Mann Williams Consulting Civil and Structural Engineers concluded that while there are some localised areas requiring urgent work, the building was repairable. The tender exercise for demolition has been paused and short-term action to make the building safe is now taking place while options for repairs, particularly to halt water ingress, are considered.



RATTY'S POWERFUL COMBINATION: **The Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway's Krauss 4-6-2 *Whillan Beck* and rebuilt Heywood 0-8-2 *River Irt* arrive at Irton Road on October 27 with the 1025 Ravenglass to Dalegarth service. The 15in gauge line's heaviest trains are double-headed during Cumbrian schools half-term week to assist with adhesion.** SAM DIXON

Estimated £50,000 needed to complete 'Kalahari' restoration

SOME £50,000 still needs to be found to complete the restoration of Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Railway's ex-South African Railways Société Anglo-Franco-Belge (works No. 2684) NG15 'Kalahari' 2-8-2 No. 134.

With the project making good progress (*RM*, November) Cymdeithas Rheilffordd Eryri/Welsh Highland Railway Society has agreed to make a further payment of £44,151 to cover materials and labour costs.

This will raise the total spent on the project so far to £626,614.

More 15in gauge Fairbourne rollingstock enhancements

THE Fairbourne Railway Preservation Society has boosted the collection of 15in gauge stock at the otherwise 12.25in gauge line (which has a dual gauge section at the Fairbourne end of the railway) by purchasing an ex-Fairbourne four-wheel PW wagon from Austin Moss.

The aim is to convert it into an accessible carriage to join the 15in gauge heritage train at Fairbourne. In addition, the 15in gauge ex-Dudley Zoo carriage has been sent off-site for restoration.

Used at Fairbourne from 1960 until the line was regauged to 12.25in in 1986, latterly the carriage, which has glass screen ends, has been stored in the Fairbourne carriage shed. The intention is to return it to 1960s appearance during this year.

'New' carriage set for Bala Lake

STATFOLD Narrow Gauge Museum Trust has donated its four-coach 'Lynton' set of carriages to the Bala Lake Railway.

The small bogie carriages were originally constructed by Alan Keef Ltd for the railway at Thorpe Park.

In the 1990s they were acquired by the Lynton and Barnstaple Railway (L&BR) to provide passenger accommodation until that line's own set of recreated full-size L&BR carriages came into service. This achieved, in 2014 they were sold to the Statfold Barn Railway.

Following Statfold's 2022 acquisition of three ex-South Tynedale Railway coaches, the ex-TP carriages have seen little use, hence the decision to donate them to the Bala line.

Hayling line names latest loco after the late Dave Scales

HAYLING Light Railway's Alan Keef Ltd 4wDH AK11/1984, donated to the line by Thorpe Park Resort (*RM*, April) and subsequently rebuilt by Keef's, was named *Dave Scales* during a ceremony on November 11.

Following retirement, Dave Scales joined the Hayling Light Railway as a volunteer in 2014, becoming a driver and the railway's treasurer. He was instrumental in creating the charitable Hayling Light Railway Trust which purchased the railway in 2019. Dave died in February 2022. Trust members chose to commemorate him by naming the latest addition to the loco fleet after him.



Ross is seen with its first train of its last day in service at Abbeydale on October 29. DAVID BURLEIGH

Inaugural overhaul for 'The Little Engine that can'

POWERFUL Thomas II 0-4-0ST+T *Ross* was withdrawn for its first overhaul on November 5, following over nine years of service.

Carrying Caledonian Railway blue livery and the number 273, the 7¼ in gauge loco is owned by David Burleigh and resides at the Abbeydale Miniature Railway in Sheffield.

No stranger to visiting other miniature lines, *Ross* can often be found touring with 'Tinkerbell' 0-4-2T *Captain Hook* built by David Vere in 2001, which also resides at Abbeydale.

While visiting the Moors Valley Railway in Dorset, it hauled a 12-coach train alone and so gained the nickname 'The Little Engine that can'.

It is estimated that *Ross* will be under overhaul for around four years which will give time to discover any improvements that can be made to further improve the locomotive's performance.

Ross was built for an order placed by Ross Alderman in 2005. However, he sadly passed away the following year and never saw the loco complete, so it is named in his honour.

Ropley gets small scale steam power

Operational steam loco bought by 10¼in gauge line.



Ivor is seen with a test train at Eastleigh Lakeside Steam Railway on November 19. RAY BRISCALL

THE name Ropley is well known in the heritage railway sector as the home of the Mid-Hants Railway's motive power depot – but now smaller scale steam will also be resident on site.

The Ropley Miniature Railway (RMR), a 10¼in gauge line located at the intermediate Watercress Line station, has purchased its inaugural complete steam locomotive for operation.

Quarry Hunslet 0-4-0ST+T *Ivor* has been acquired from the North Cornwall Miniature Railway; a line founded in 2019 by Bob Lanaway. Mr Lanaway bought *Ivor* in 2022 but he decided to offer the loco for sale in August 2023.

Built in 1991 for the Ferry Meadows Miniature Railway, Peterborough, by Mr A Mills and Mr D Jones, the loco was sold 10 years later to the Royal Victoria Miniature Railway, Hampshire, before moving to a private line in Essex.

Since its change of ownership, *Ivor* has received maintenance at the Eastleigh Lakeside Steam Railway. Following a series of successful test runs, the loco worked its first passenger trains in RMR ownership at Eastleigh on November 20.

The locomotive may haul further public trains at Eastleigh prior to a move northeast to Ropley, which is expected to take place in the coming months.

The RMR also owns a part complete 2-4-4 'Tinkerbell' steam locomotive. When it turns a wheel at Ropley, *Ivor* will become the eighth steam loco to operate on the line. Up to now, occasional steam power on the RMR has been provided by visiting locomotives.

MOONRAKER COACH FOR SALE

£25,000













The Moonraker coaches consist of RKB (restaurant kitchen buffet) no. 1569, part of a batch numbered 1547-1569 This coach is a Mark 1 Cravens kitchen car No 1569 and a former Flying Scotsman Kitchen coach of which only three survive.

The inside of this coach is in a very presentable condition although some small jobs required as all Mark 1 coaches need.

This historic coach has a huge potential to be used on a railway for what it was intended to carry out. It has all the ingredients for a preserved railway to optimise its ability to recreate the classic wine and dine! It's potential for weddings, cream teas, anniversaries, parties, or Businesses that can host meetings, sales meetings, and office celebrations the list goes on.

Very rare and historic vehicle should not be allowed to go to the scrap heap. Inspection of the coach is very welcome and can be arranged.

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1 3
2 4

1
JUBILEE IN THE SNOW: LMS 'Jubilee' 4-6-0 No. 45690 *Leander* departs Ramsbottom on the East Lancashire Railway on December 2, 2023 with a Santa Special. ROBERT FALCONER

2
ISLAND DELIGHT: LSWR 'O2' 0-4-4T No. W24 *Calbourne* approaches Ashey on the Isle of Wight Steam Railway during a Timeline Events photo charter on November 20. NICK GILLIAM

3
FREIGHT IN FOCUS: BR '9F' 2-10-0 No. 92214 passes Kinchley Lane with a goods train from Loughborough to Rothley Brook during the Great Central Railway's Last Hurrah gala on November 19, 2023. GEOFF GRIFFITHS

4
STEAMING TO TYSELEY: No. 7029 *Clun Castle* approaches Tyseley station on December 2, with the first return working from Dorridge of Vintage Trains' Polar Express. JOHN TITLOW


3711
92214


7029
20



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2



1
PRAIRIE AT PARKEND: Re-creating a typical Western Region branchline scene of the 1960s, GWR Small Prairie No. 5541 heads into Parkend station during a Mike Tyack organised charter on November 11, 2023.
MARTYN TATTAM

2
WINTRY ON THE MOORS: NER 'P3/J27' No. 2392 was paired with the freight set to give a 'pick up goods' sort of look during a Matt Fisher charter on the North Yorkshire Moors Railway on November 29. This image was captured from inside LMS 20T brake van No. M732170. In the words of the photographer: "It had snowed the night before and there were snow showers over the course of the day, so conditions were tricky and very cold. I was actually stood by the fire in the brake van when I took this shot at Goathland station. The wagons had been left in the up platform while the loco ran round before returning back to Grosmont." LUKE TAYLOR

Handover is completed of Wirral Transport Museum operation

Big Heritage aims to restart tram services as redevelopment takes place, but some vehicles will be relocated.



Lisbon No. 730 is no stranger to Beamish Museum, having visited 11 years ago. It is pictured in operation there on April 3, 2013. PAUL JARMAN

COMMUNITY interest company Big Heritage (BH) has officially taken over the running of Wirral Transport Museum in Birkenhead from Wirral Council and expects to announce further details regarding its reopening this month.

It explained that prior to the handover, Wirral Council spent "considerable time and resources" on addressing health and safety issues relating to the building and the operation of the museum and its half-mile long tramway to Woodside, following an inspection by the Office of Rail & Road.

The museum and tramway have been closed since April last year for remediation work, but BH, which runs several other local historical attractions, hopes a service can resume this year.

As a not-for-profit organisation, any income not required for covering operational costs will be reinvested into the museum and its other Merseyside heritage sites.

Confidence

BH founder and managing director Dean Paton told *The RM* it had "every confidence" in securing investment for the complete transformation of the museum, which will share the social history associated with local public transport, as well as exhibiting vehicles. It is seeking a total of £5-6million for plans which could include doubling its size by extending into the yard area.

BH says Birkenhead's pioneering role in both tram manufacturing and operation will remain central to the story. It has reached tram loan agreements with Wirral Council and National Museums Liverpool and aims to confirm one with Merseyside Tramway Preservation Society. MTPS, whose volunteers have staffed the museum and tramway since 2014, says it hopes for a one-year arrangement to cover its operational trams, Liverpool No. 762, Wallasey No. 78 and Birkenhead No. 20.

Museum space

However, given a need for more visitor space and a lack of local significance, BH has decided that Lisbon No. 730 will move to a new home. Beamish Museum in County Durham has confirmed to *The RM* that following discussions with MTPS it will take on the tram and incorporate it into its own fleet. No. 730 previously operated there in 2013. Two Isle of Man horse trams (Birkenhead-built Douglas Corporation Nos. 11 and 47, which returned to Merseyside in 2021) have been moved to Hooton Park for restoration work to be completed.

BH said that although No. 730 "does not fit within the new museum narrative", asking for its relocation was "not an easy decision to make".

As volunteers return to the museum, new procedures will be in place. Team members old and new will be required to sign-up to a code of conduct and be subject to Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks. Tram and bus drivers will need annual eye tests and health assessments. With support from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, a dedicated co-ordinator has been appointed to support the existing volunteers (the majority of whom are men aged between 60 and 85) and encourage younger people to become involved and keep the museum operating for future generations.

BH intends to make the museum 100% carbon neutral and is exploring whether solar power could be used to meet all of its energy needs, including traction power for the tramway.

'Terror Tram' on loan at East Anglia

BLACKPOOL Brush car No. 634 arrived at East Anglia Transport Museum (EATM) at Carlton Colville, near Lowestoft during November.

Final commissioning of the 1937-built car, which carries the distinctive black and white 'Terror Tram' livery (similar to the 'Terror Train' all over advertisement it carried for Coral Island in the 1990s), had been due to be undertaken by owner Fylde Transport Trust in Blackpool, but suffered setbacks due the Covid-19 pandemic. Restrictions at Blackpool Tramtown, part of Blackpool Transport's wider Rigby Road base which is currently being redeveloped, have also had an impact.

This prompted a decision to loan No. 634 to EATM for the completion of commissioning and testing and subsequent use as part of the museum's operational fleet.

The tram arrived at Carlton Colville on November 14 and an electrical survey, which included checks of the lighting and compressor circuits, was carried out on the same day.

Having had its trolley tower reinstated and overhauled trolley base, pole and head reattached, No. 634 completed a series of test runs on November 19.

■ On the same day as No. 634's arrival at EATM, the refurbished lower saloon of Glasgow No. 488, which had been stored off-site at Lowestoft following reattachment to its overhauled truck in late 2022, was also brought to the museum using the same low loader. The saloon is being stored at the site's West Tram depot.



Brush car No. 634 is seen at East Anglia Transport Museum at Carlton Colville following its arrival from Blackpool on November 14. TIM MAJOR

Compiled by **Jack Boskett and Josh Brinsford**

'Western' groups make progress

Both the WLA and DEPG are working on bringing their Class 52s back to traffic.

THE Western Locomotive Association celebrates its 50th anniversary in January 2024. Its 1974 objective was to ensure the preservation of a Class 52 diesel-hydraulic loco, but today it owns three based at the Severn Valley Railway.

The donation of No. D1048 *Western Lady* in September has given the WLA the opportunity to think about the future of this locomotive, but in the meantime it will prioritise the overhaul of No. D1013 *Western Ranger* and keep No. D1062 *Western Courier* in traffic.

Work will be done to ensure 'Lady' does not deteriorate and a full assessment will be made. No. D1048 has been made fit to be shunted within the yard and station limits at slow speed, which will allow it to be viewed on gala days in 2024. It has already been noted that the major parts at the 'B' end are in better condition than the 'A' end.

■ Meanwhile, the Diesel and Electric Preservation Group at Williton, on the West Somerset Railway, is seeking new volunteers to help to complete the restoration of Class 52 'Western' No. D1010 *Western Campaigner*.

The loco was withdrawn from service during the WSR's diesel gala in 2018 following major problems with the 'B' end transmission. The DEPG then discovered that a full restoration was needed, including removing both the 'A' and 'B' end transmissions, plus full bodywork repairs followed by a repaint into maroon with a yellow buffer beam.

To raise money for the restoration, the group has launched a 'Campaign for Campaigner' appeal, where donors could have their name engraved on the loco's bodywork. The aim is to return No. D1010 to service at some point in late 2024 or early 2025.

SIDELINES

'Bone' starts for the first time at Battlefield Line

CLASS 58 No. 58048 was fired up for the first time in preservation on November 17 after lying idle for nearly 24 years. It was withdrawn by EWS in 2000 and stored at Toton and Crewe Electric depots before moving to Ron Hull scrapyard in Rotherham, from where it was saved for preservation in 2016. Its restoration is being done by Heritage Transport Restoration and Supplies at Shackerstone on the Battlefield Line.

DIARY

January
6-7 Swanage Railway Winter Warmer Mixed Traction Gala

February
10 East Lancashire Railway Winter Diesel Day

March
15-17 Chinnor and Princes Risborough Railway Diesel Gala

April
13-14 Kent and East Sussex Railway Diesel Gala
26-28 Great Central Railway Spring Diesel Gala

May
10-12 Swanage Railway Diesel Gala and Beer Festival

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'SYPHON' ON TEST: Newly-arrived Type 3 No. 37703 was given a test run along the Dartmouth Steam Railway on December 5, with classmate No. 6975 (37275) added to the formation in case of a failure. The test run is seen climbing past Goodrington Sands on its way from Paignton Queens Park to Kingswear. ROBERT SHERWOOD

New home sought for Foxfield Railway 'Pacer' railcar

THE 142055 Group, which formed in 2020, has been asked to leave the Foxfield Railway near Stoke-on-Trent.

The consortium, headed by Simon Thomas, told *The RM*: "We understand that Foxfield is a steam railway and it is no secret that certain members of the line do not want [our DMU] there. We are actively looking for a new home, ideally in the north of England, but we have had enquiries from the Llanelli & Mynydd Mawr Railway and the Epping Ongar Railway.

"We haven't made a decision just yet, but we need to make the right one, not just for the DMU, but for our working members too, who are all located in the area we are currently in."

No. 142055 is in working order but suffered vandalism in 2022 when several window panels were completely destroyed. An appeal was launched by the Foxfield Railway and money was raised to have new panes installed.

It is estimated that costs exceeding £3500 will be needed to move the unit to another railway. Mr Thomas stressed the '142' is not going for scrap, but will end up on another heritage railway.

"It is a great shame, but we need to look forward," he said. "We are very grateful for the support from the Foxfield Railway and we wish them all the best for their future."



No. 142055 at the Foxfield Railway on May 17, 2023, but it now needs a new base to call home. SIMON THOMAS



No. 20087 departs Rolvenden with a test run on November 19, passing Class 14 No. D9504 and Ruston No. 41 (423661). ROBIN COOMBES

'Chopper' boosts K&ESR diesel fleet

TYPE 1 'Chopper' No. 20087 moved to the Kent & East Sussex Railway on November 12, to assist with the line's services throughout the 2024 season. It will work alongside resident Class 14 No. D9504, which has recently returned to service after a period of maintenance.

No. 20087 has been restored by Battlefield Line-based Heritage Transport Restoration and Supplies (HTRS) after being purchased by a private individual from the Harry Needle Railroad Company, which put the loco up for sale in 2022.

K&ESR general manager Robin Coombes said that despite the hire of the '20', the railway will still require an additional diesel loco if there is a return of the hot summers that many UK lines have recently witnessed. He added that the railway will be holding a diesel gala in April, with a possible guest locomotive yet to be confirmed.

The 'Chopper' was first preserved at the East Lancashire Railway following disposal by EWS in 1995. It stayed at the ELR until 2020, when it moved to HNRC's site at Worksop, before going to the Battlefield Line in 2021 for restoration.

'Peak' restoration nears completion at Barrow Hill

THE Pioneer Diesel Locomotive Group-owned Class 45 No. 45105 was started up for the first time in preservation at Barrow Hill on November 17.

The 'Peak' was withdrawn by British Rail in May 1987 following a bogie fire, and was acquired from store at March (Cambridgeshire) by the PDLG in May 1993. It was initially moved to Matlock (Peak Rail), but transferred to Barrow Hill in 1999. Some of the major tasks undertaken include a complete cab rebuild, generator repairs, an internal overhaul, and body work repairs.

The PDLG owns two other Class 45s, Nos. 45060 *Sherwood Forester* (which will be the group's main priority at Barrow Hill when No. 45105 is finished) and No. 45135 *3rd Carabinier* (which is undergoing overhaul at the East Lancashire Railway).



No. 45105 being started up at Barrow Hill on November 17, the first time since its withdrawal in May 1987. TOMMY SALT



GREAT 'PROGRESS' AT RIBBLE: 1968-built industrial Sentinel 0-4-0 *Progress* heads back to Riverside station on the Ribble Steam Railway (RSR) in Preston with the second return run of the 11.45 'Santa Special' on December 2. The shunter arrived at the RSR in 2002 and is normally used for hauling main line bitumen tanks between the Strand Road exchange sidings and their destination on Chain Caul Road. STEVE SIENKIEWICZ

NER MEETS GCR: The award-winning 1903 North Eastern Railway Autocar No. 3170 ventured out on the Great Central Railway at its 'Last Hurrah' gala on November 18/19. It is pictured at Quorn & Woodhouse with a Loughborough-bound service on the second day. CHRIS MILNER



SINGLE LINES

Type 2 progress

THE overhaul of Class 26 No. D5343 (26043) at the Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway continues at pace, with most of the replacement steel work in place around the cabs.

New crib plates have been manufactured by the SRPS at Bo'ness and these have been fitted to the solebar at each end to allow all the steel to be fixed to the chassis. The new steel has had primer applied and the headlight receptacles fashioned. Next up will be the fitting of the discs and lamp brackets.

While the cab fronts have been rebuilt, the cab interiors are having a thorough overhaul and repaint, as has the engine room, which has had new coats of paint applied to the pipework to aid identification.

'03' moves and sales

CLASS 03 No. D2063 (03063) has moved from the North Norfolk Railway (NNR) to the Mid-Norfolk Railway (MNR), arriving at Dereham on November 7. The loco was bestowed to the MNR by its previous owner Paul Mobbs upon his passing in 2021.

Also moving away from the NNR under new ownership is classmate No. D2051, which has relocated to the Telford Steam Railway, whilst the Swindon & Cricklade Railway has purchased resident No. 03022 from its private owner.

No. 03078 returned to the North Tyneside Railway on November 21, following a prolonged visit to the Embsay & Bolton Abbey Railway.

EOR 'Peak' gain

CLASS 45 No. 45132 at the Epping Ongar Railway has benefited from a main generator from recently-scrapped classmate No. 45015 at the Battlefield Line. The generator was said to be one of the only major components to be salvageable, but is in very good condition. The aim is to return No. 45132 to traffic in the coming months.

Eurostar '73' in Kent

THE East Kent Railway (EKR) is now home to former Eurostar Class 73 No. 73130, which is owned by 73130 Ltd. The electro-diesel arrived on the railway on November 10, from the Llanelli & Mynydd Mawr Railway, and it is due to be based at the EKR until at least March 2025.

More push-pull excursion action

Inter-City plans further Scottish Class 47/7 experiences with multiple-day tours.

A NEWLY announced railtour from the Locomotive Services Group's Inter-City offshoot is a weekend tour with the popular push-pull set hauled by a Class 47/7, and provides a rare appearance for the class on Scotland's west coast at both Oban and Wemyss Bay.

Hauled by No. 47712 *Lady Diana Spencer,* the 'West of Scotland Push-Pull' tour starts at Crewe on March 29, and picks up at Preston and Carlisle, before a mid-afternoon arrival in Edinburgh, where passengers are free to spend the rest of the day in the Scottish capital.

Scotland

The next morning, March 30, the push-pull set will work across towards Glasgow before taking the West Highland line towards Crianlarich and Oban for a break of approximately two hours. A return to Edinburgh is planned for mid-evening.

On March 31, the train will run to Glasgow Central via Shotts, before reversing to visit Gourock, Wemyss Bay, Ardrossan Harbour and Largs. It is hoped time for a photo stop at all these locations can be scheduled in, with a longer break in Largs of around an hour.

From Largs, the train will skirt Ayr before running over the Glasgow & South Western line via Dumfries and WCML back to Crewe.

Fares are from £199 standard class or £299 first class, and the train will have a buffet bar for hot and cold beverages, light refreshments, and alcoholic drinks. No hotel accommodation is included, allowing passengers to make their own choices dependent on their budget and requirements.

East Anglia

Prior to the Scottish weekend, the 47/7 and push-pull set will visit East Anglia for another excursion over the weekend of January 27-28.

Starting at Crewe, the 'East Anglian Push-Pull' will pick up at Stafford, Nuneaton, Leicester and Peterborough before visiting King's Lynn, Bury St Edmunds, Stowmarket and Ipswich before an arrival in Norwich at around 16.00.

The next morning, the excursion will return to Ipswich before reversing to visit Felixstowe Town and Beach stations before returning via Peterborough to Crewe.

Fares on this train are from £165 standard class or £265 first class and again, passengers need to book their own hotel accommodation, in either Ipswich or Norwich.

Booking online is open at inter-city.co.uk or call 0800 038 5364.



SALOP IN THE SNOW: There's a wintry look to Shrewsbury as 'Royal Scot' No. 46115 *Scots Guardsman* restarts the Railway Touring Company's 'Capital Christmas Express' on its way from Chester to London Paddington on November 25, passing Abbey Foregate signalbox. ED WEAVER

Hanson & Hall to enter railtour market

INDEPENDENT operator Hanson & Hall has indicated it will enter the railtour market later this year.

On its website – www.hansonhallrail.co.uk – the company says it is "working on the detail for a small number of charters in the warmer months of 2024, featuring Class 50 No. 50008 *Thunderer* and other locos provided by like-minded national operators."

Further details of the tours are expected soon.



'DELTIC' IN ACTION: Back on the main line is LS Group 'Deltic' No. D9000 (55022) *Royal Scots Grey,* which is on the approach to Doncaster station on November 23 with a Steam Dreams excursion from King's Cross to Edinburgh. From York, the train was hauled by 'A4' No. 60007 *Sir Nigel Gresley,* but the Pacific suffered piston damage in Scotland and its duties were carried out by Class 40 No. D213 *Andania,* including the run back to York where D9000 returned the train to London. GEOFF GRIFFITHS

Final special to Cwmbargoed

WITH the final days of Welsh mined coal trains drawing to a close, Pathfinder Tours is planning to run a farewell special to Cwmbargoed on March 9.

This new tour was confirmed in mid-December and runs over one of the longest non-passenger branches on the network. High altitude and remote location makes future rail use unlikely, so if this is a line on your 'to do' list, this is likely to be your last chance.

Starting at Burton-on-Trent, the 'Cwm and Glo' (valley and coal) will pick up at Birmingham New St, Worcestershire Parkway, Cheltenham Spa, Bristol Parkway and Severn Tunnel Junction then running via East Usk Yard Up/Down, Alexandra Dock Jn Up/Down Goods, Pengam Sidings, Cardiff Central, the Down Miskin Loop, Pontyclun, Bridgend and finally Margam Knuckle yard where the train will reverse. Going forward, the route is via the Miskin loop and Ystrad Mynach South Jct to take the freight line towards the now closed Fros-y-Fran opencast as far as the 19 mile 35 chain marker.

Reversing at Cwmbargoed and again at Cardiff West, on the return the train will set down at additionally at Newport and thence stations as per the outward journey.

Traction is expected to be DB Cargo Class 66s in top-and-tail formation.

Fares are £129 (adult standard), £89 junior or £476 for a party of four, with first class fares at £179 adult, £159 junior or £676 for a party of four.

Online booking at www.pathfindertours.co.uk is open or call 01453 834477.

'CASTLE' TO YORK: Vintage Trains' annual special from Birmingham to York for the Christmas Markets operated on November 28 with WR 'Castle' 4-6-0 No. 7029 *Clun Castle*, which is crossing over from the up through road at Doncaster station to take the line towards Rotherham and Sheffield. GEOFF GRIFFITHS

'Edgcumbe' faces Shap test

VINTAGE Trains GWR 'Castle' No. 5043 *Earl of Mount Edgcumbe* will be tackling the tough incline of Shap in Cumbria with the 'Shap Mountaineer' special on March 16.

Starting diesel-hauled at Birmingham New Street, the train picks up at Wolverhampton, Stafford and Crewe where the diesel is replaced by No. 5043. There are further pick-ups at Warrington Bank Quay and Preston before the ascent of Shap Summit on the way to Carlisle.

After time in Carlisle while the steam loco is serviced, No. 5043 will work the train as far as Crewe, stopping at the same outward calling points.

Fares start from £129 tourist class (£99 child); first class in a compartment for up to six people with tea and coffee is £149 per person; while Pullman class with full English Breakfast and four-course evening meal, tea and coffee will cost £299 adult (£269 child) with a £30 per supplement for a guaranteed table for two.

More details and online booking are available at www.vintagetrains.co.uk

■ On March 2, *Earl of Mount Edgcumbe* is due to work a 'Cathedrals Express' throughout from Birmingham Snow Hill to Salisbury via Banbury and Basingstoke. Fares on this train are as noted above.

DB Cargo rejects charter market withdrawal speculation

RUMOURS that DB Cargo is planning to entirely withdraw from providing locomotives for charter trains have been denied by the company.

The company has said that in future it plans to focus on its regular contractual operations, such as the Belmond British Pullman operation, and in doing so will steer away from 'ad hoc' operations undertaken for other tour promoters, which often involve complex itineraries.

DB added it is committed to provide motive power for around six 'ad hoc' tours for 2024 which have already been agreed and contracted. DB said that such tours require a lot more resource than regular operations.



'HOOVERING' TO MANCHESTER: Class 50 No. 50049 *Defiance* passes through Salford Crescent station with UK Railtours return Christmas special from London Euston to Preston via Manchester Victoria on December 9. The train was in top-and-tail mode with No. 50007. TOM MCATEE

STEAM TOURS: JANUARY

Date	Name	Steam Section	Locos	Promoter
27	Winter Cumbrian Mountain	Carnforth-Shap-Carlisle-Settle-Preston	WCRC Pool	RTC

Notes: **WCRC Pool:** Locos from 45596/45680/45699/46115/35018/34067

DIESEL AND ELECTRIC TOURS: JANUARY

Date	Name	Steam Section	Locos	Promoter
6	S&C Circular	Hereford-Crewe-Settle-Carlisle-Shap-Hereford	LSL Cl 47	STATE
13	The Ayr Extension	Crewe-Carlisle-Glasgow Central-Ayr-Glasgow C-Crewe	LSL AC electrics	IC
20	S&C Circular	Chester le Street-Leeds-Settle-Carlisle-Hexham-Chester le St	LSL Cl 47	STATE

All tours listed above may be subject to cancellation due to industrial action – check with tour promoter.

Key: **IC** InterCity 0800 038 5364 **RTC** Railway Touring Company 01553 661500 **SR** Statesman Rail 0345 3102458

Compiled by **Graeme Pickering**

Loco cab simulator delivered

FREIGHTLINER'S Ipswich training academy took delivery of a driving simulator on November 27.

It is the company's first full cab replica simulator in the UK. Another will be situated at its academy in Doncaster.

The simulators are fitted with ETCS (European Train Control System) digital in-cab signalling equipment to prepare drivers for the introduction of the technology on the East Coast Main Line between King's Cross and Stoke Tunnel over the next five years.

They have been designed so they can be dismantled and moved between different locations and will use a single source of connectivity to ensure that all the routes and scenarios will be consistent.

Drivers will also be able to feel motion from their seat in the simulator cab, giving them a realistic impression of acceleration and braking, curves and points.

A thousand bogies overhauled

DERBY-BASED engineering services provider Yellow Rail has carried out the overhaul of its 1000th bogie for VTG Rail UK.

The partnership between the two companies began in September 2018 and has led to Yellow Rail taking on work involving complex bogie designs and a number of different types.

"This is a great performance from Yellow Rail in conjunction with VTG's service delivery team and our wagon maintainers who plan and carry out the exchanges respectively, thus ensuring there's a steady flow of dirty units being returned to Derby for overhaul," said VTG asset manager Mark Pumphrey.

Yellow Rail managing director Andy Kevins said the company was proud to reach the milestone.

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Midlands Connect looks at future freight needs

Transport body aims to build on previous forecasting for updated 'Routemap' for the region.



Although much of the Midlands falls within the area known as the 'golden triangle' – so called because of its significance in terms of national freight movements, as illustrated here, it also sees a healthy variety of traffic aside from intermodal workings. With the village of Kibworth Harcourt on the horizon, GB Railfreight Class 66 No. 66728 *Institution of Railway Operators* heads north towards Leicester on April 13, 2021 with empty aggregate hoppers from Wellingborough to Tunstead quarry for loading with ballast. This section of line is in the process of being electrified. CHRIS MILNER

USING further modelling and analysis, Midlands Connect, the sub-national transport body for the region, is working on a revised 'Freight Routemap', building on the first which it produced in 2022.

Taking into account the changing movement of goods, regional growth and the need for decarbonisation, the document is a long-term plan which will be updated at regular intervals as key information becomes available. It includes the zone known as the 'golden triangle' (incorporating the West Midlands Combined Authority area, Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Warwickshire and parts of Derbyshire and Staffordshire), so-called because it sees a heavy concentration of national freight activity.

'Rising demand'

Midlands Connect chief executive Maria Machancoses said there was an "ever-increasing" demand for the movement of goods in order to maintain global competitiveness, which in turn led to a greater need for reliable connections.

"With this rising demand also comes key environmental challenges placing the freight industry at a cusp of a green technical revolution," she explained. "By working with partners and businesses across the sector, we can better understand and plan alternative fuels provision, and give strategic direction on multi-modal interchanges between road, rail, air, and ports."

Midlands Connect represents the interests of 22 local councils, nine local enterprise partnerships and chambers of commerce, as well as East Midlands and Birmingham Airports, and works in partnership with the Department for Transport, Network Rail, HS2 Ltd and Highways England. It has developed a 25-year transport strategy which it says has the potential to add £5 billion a year to the UK economy. It estimates that trade and investment in the Midlands already has an annual worth of £90 billion.

Challenges

The existing 'Freight Routemap' led to the establishment of a Freight Forum for the Midlands, launched earlier this year to bring together freight businesses, industry bodies and local authorities. It already draws attention to challenges such as bottlenecks for rail freight at Water Orton and Leicester and pinch points on the wider network which affect traffic to and from the Midlands. It also sets out an intention to exploit further opportunities to move traffic from road to rail.

One of the main drawbacks when it was published two years ago was insufficient up-to-date information available to build a clear post-Brexit and post-pandemic picture. There was also a lack of data to translate into regional and national breakdowns regarding freight trends.

Midlands Connect has held a series of online events to highlight some of the results of its latest research which will be reflected in the updated 'Freight Routemap', to be completed during 2024.

Further trials expected

FOLLOWING a successful four-week test of a new system to monitor wheel and brake issues on wagons, GB Railfreight says further trials are being scheduled to evaluate more development work.

The system, which is a collaboration with internet connectivity specialist Icomera and communications firm SENSEi Networks Ltd, utilises battery-powered sensors to relay brake and wheel status details to drivers and operational control centres.

Sent over a closed wireless system, the information can be viewed by the driver on the screen of a tablet device in the cab. As well as giving alerts which allow them to take immediate action, the equipment gives real-time feedback to any measures taken to resolve the problem.

GBRf asset director David Golding said the trial had proven the concept of its application in the rail sector.

"The utilisation of low-power sensors, long range, wireless networking and edge intelligence is enabling long sought ambitions for autonomous monitoring and real-time alerting to be realised in the freight rail sector, fulfilling the potential for significant improvements to operational efficiency, cost and safety," explained SENSEi chief executive Damon Thomas.

Peter Kingsland, senior vice president of Icomera UK added:



An example of the train information collected by the system, using battery-powered wagon sensors. It is then displayed on a tablet device in the driver's cab and relayed to operational control centres. GB RAILFREIGHT

"Connecting drivers and the engineering teams that support them to real-time trainborne sensor data is a natural step towards a safer and more efficient rail network for all users."

Testing underway for new Piccadilly line train fleet

Siemens-built sets undergo dynamic trials in Germany, and climate chamber endurance in Austria.



The first of the completed nine-car Siemens-built trains for the Piccadilly line is pictured undergoing trials on the test track at the company's Test and Validation Centre at Wegberg-Wildenrath in Germany. The units, 94 of which are being built, are due to enter service in 2025. SIEMENS MOBILITY

HAVING rolled-off the production line in Vienna at the end of July, the first of the completed nine-car trains being manufactured by Siemens Mobility for London Underground's Piccadilly line has entered the first phases of dynamic testing.

Acceleration, braking, noise and vibration are the areas of performance which the initial runs on the test track at the Siemens Test and Validation Centre (at Wegberg-Wildenrath in Germany) have focused upon.

"Although we are still in the early stage of testing, we are learning a lot about this test train and its future performance," said Siemens Mobility UK & Ireland joint chief executive Sambit Banerjee.

In Austria, three further vehicles, which will also form part of the 94 sets on order for Transport for London, were placed in a climate chamber to test their weather resilience. They were exposed to ambient temperatures ranging from -15 to 40 degrees celsius, ice, winds of up to 100 kilometres an hour (62 miles per hour) and conditions simulating extreme sunshine. On-board humidity and temperatures were among the information monitored.

Summer 2024 should see the arrival of an initial set in London for further testing and system integration trials. Entry into service is anticipated during 2025.

Goole factory

Part of the Siemens 'Inspiro' family of metro trains, around half will be manufactured at the new Siemens plant in Goole, East Yorkshire, where production is due to start later this year. Normanton-based LPA Lighting Systems (supplying LED interior lights for the trains) is among the firms which will be part of the local supply chain.

The units are of a walk-through design and feature air conditioning and CCTV. Lighter than the existing trains, they will increase capacity by around 10% and are designed to be more accessible than the 86-strong fleet of '1973 Stock' they replace.

Serving Heathrow Airport, London's West End and King's Cross St Pancras, the Piccadilly line accounts for more than 10% of London Underground ridership.

TfL chief capital officer Stuart Harvey said its priority was making the case for long-term capital investment for similar improvements.

"We want to follow the introduction of these new trains on the Piccadilly line by doing the same on the Bakerloo line, replacing the 51-year-old trains that it currently operates, and by continuing to modernise our fleets and signalling to make sure they remain safe and reliable," he added. "However, such vital improvements will not be possible without continued capital investment from the Government from April 2024."

The Goole factory would also build new trains to replace '1972 Stock' on the Bakerloo line if TfL can secure funding.





Three vehicles which will form part of the new fleet have been tested in Austria for their resilience to extreme weather. The climate chamber pictured can re-create the effects of intense sunlight, temperatures ranging from hot to freezing, and gale force winds. Equipment was placed inside to monitor on-board temperature and humidity which passengers would experience during such conditions. SIEMENS MOBILITY

Eastside temporary terminus approved

THE board of West Midlands Combined Authority has approved a scheme to create a temporary terminus alongside Moor Street Queensway in Birmingham for the Eastside extension of the West Midlands Metro.

An increase of £18 million was also authorised to the project's £227 million budget in order to complete the terminus, deemed necessary because of the knock-on effect of delays to HS2 work at Curzon Street station.

The mile-long extension to Digbeth was originally anticipated for completion in 2025, but tram infrastructure construction at Curzon Street cannot begin until the site has been handed over by HS2, which is expected to be in 2026 at the earliest.

The temporary terminus will consist of a stop outside the Clayton Hotel and a crossover, allowing trams to change tracks.

NET 'zero tolerance' to fare evasion

BETWEEN January and November 2023, Nottingham Express Transit (NET) issued 7682 penalty fare notices and made 2580 prosecutions after people received the notices and failed to pay them.

In December, NET launched a 'zero tolerance' campaign against fare evasion. Anyone found to be travelling without a valid ticket or pass was liable to be given a £70 penalty fare notice, which, if unpaid, could result in prosecution and further fine of up to £1000.

Gosforth depot on course for February completion

WORK on the Tyne & Wear Metro's £70 million depot complex at South Gosforth in Newcastle should be completed by next month.

The final eight sidings, situated where the original 1923-built maintenance sheds stood (until demolition as part of the redevelopment project) were completed in November. Installation of overhead lines, signalling, walkways and lighting were the next steps, prior to the wires being energised and sidings brought into operation.

The site has been transformed over the course of the last three years, in preparation for the system's new fleet of five-car 46 Stadler Class 555 units which are due to be phased into service during this year and 2025.

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Compiled by **Chris Milner**

SIDELINES

New facilities mean Port Glasgow fully accessible

NEW lifts and a footbridge at Port Glasgow on the Inverclyde network, was officially opened on December 1.

The £5m project was funded as part of the Department for Transport's Access for All scheme.

Victorian footbridge restored at Blaendulais

A FOOTBRIDGE which crosses the Neath and Brecon freight line at Blaendulais has been restored at a cost of £700,000. The 1863-built Seven Sisters wrought-iron lattice bridge has had its timber deck stairs and supports repaired and strengthened. The deck span has been made from glass reinforced plastic (GRP) resin and will last 60 years.

Leven's Bawbee Bridge opens ahead of schedule

COMPLETION of the construction of new Bawbee Bridge over the River Leven at Levenmouth has been achieved earlier than envisaged. The new bridge, which will handle around 18,000 vehicle movements per day has been built using 16 18m reinforced concrete beams and 18 precast concrete parapets. The project is another milestone in the Levenmouth Rail Link project, due to open this year.

Wales & Borders accessibility upgrades

WORK commenced on October 16 at Cwmbran and Llanelli stations for the installation of new footbridges with lifts. During November and December, similar work was due to begin at Newtown, Flint and Abergavenny stations, while at Ludlow lifts will be added to the existing footbridge.

Lichfield Trent Valley gets platform back

OVER the Christmas holidays, Network Rail reinstated platform 3 at Lichfield Trent Valley station when a 650 tonne crane lifted a new 40 metre bridge deck into place as part of a £5.8m project.

The higher level platform was removed in the summer after a structural defect had forced closure of the platform in December 2022.

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Limited service returns to Ayr

Demolition of part of fire-damaged hotel structure undertaken on safety grounds.

TEN weeks after the fire which damaged the structure of Ayr's Station Hotel, plus the adjacent overhead line equipment, a limited diesel shuttle was introduced on December 4.

Since September 25, Ayr has been isolated from the network because of a safe exclusion zone around the station and hotel.

This half-hourly service covers the three miles to Prestwick Town, with an intermediate call at Newton-on-Ayr.

At Prestwick Town, passengers transfer to ScotRail electric service onwards to Glasgow Central. A bus service is supplementing the rail shuttle to Prestwick, and buses are also serving stations to Stranraer until further notice.

The revised rail operation involves using platform 4 at Ayr for the Prestwick service, then after Prestwick Town the empty unit runs forward to Barassie Jct in order to reverse. Electric units from Glasgow which terminate at Prestwick are reversing at Falkland Yard sidings.

Negotiations

Since the fire, scaffolding has been erected to support the fire-ravaged structure, while negotiations by several organisations led by SAVE Britain's Heritage continue with South Ayrshire Council in a bid to stave off demolition of the hotel with the aim of securing a future for the Grade B listed building.

However, some demolition took place over the weekend of December 2-3, raising wider concerns for the rest of the building.

In a statement, SAVE said: "SAVE is shocked and surprised by the level of demolition carried out over the weekend by South Ayrshire Council and the lack of public information about the plans for the future of Ayr Station Hotel.

"Half of the south gable facing the road appears to have been demolished along with one third of the west elevation of the main building facing the town. We understand that the works currently being undertaken are to make the building safe.

"We have requested the council urgently makes public all the advice and reports relied on to justify the current level of demolition, as well as its plans for the remainder of the south wing, the north wing of the hotel which was largely unaffected by the fire, and the ornate glass and steel station canopy."

Assessments

A South Ayrshire Council spokesman said: "The condition of the southern section is being continually assessed and safety works will continue until the building is no longer a danger to the public or the surrounding infrastructure. Those working on the site are best placed to assess the condition of the building."



Right: Damaged brickwork at the base of the supports of a footbridge over the South Western Main Line near Woking which leads to Woking Golf Club.
NETWORK RAIL

Footbridge over SW Main line demolished

THE failure of the foundations of a footbridge over the South Western Main Line between Woking and Brookwood over the weekend of December 2/3 has led to its demolition.

The same section of line has been subject to a recent landslip.

Prior to the discovery of the footbridge foundation issue, Network Rail said remote condition monitoring detected movement in a 100 metre slope next to the St John's Hill Road overbridge, which is close to the footbridge. The footbridge provides pedestrian access to Woking Golf Club and is the next bridge heading west.

Repairs

Emergency repair work on a 45 metre section has begun, with a 20mph speed restriction imposed. A possession of the down slow line was taken as part of the repair process.

Initially the plan was to remove the footbridge on December 3, but that plan had a risk of impact on the next day's services so was revised to December 6 when strike action meant fewer trains would be running. The cutting repairs involve the installations 170 sheet steel piles, 10 metres long at the base of the slope. Network Rail has identified further sections of the cutting as needing stabilisation and this work will be planned for the future.

Earlier this year network Rail had to repair a substantial landslip at Hook, some 15 miles away and the main line has suffered other landslips at Wallers Ash, between Winchester and Micheldever and also around the Templecombe area.

■ Further problems occurred with the SW line to Exeter on December 4 when remote monitoring equipment detected a landslip above the tunnel mouth of Crewkerne tunnel as well as flooding in the tunnel. Passengers were also affected when the line from Yeovil Jct to Salisbury was closed until December 10 for planned engineering works.

Regional city mayors explore alternative plans for cancelled HS2 sections

THE mayors of the West Midlands and Greater Manchester have joined forces to explore how rail connectivity and capacity can be improved between the Midlands and the North.

The move, confirmed by the West Midlands Combined Authority, comes after the announcement in October by Prime Minister Rishi Sunak that he was cancelling HS2 phases 2A to Crewe and 2B from Crewe to Manchester.

At the time the Prime Minister pledged to work with West Midlands mayor Andy Street to enhance connectivity between Birmingham and Manchester, following the decision to scrap HS2 north of Handsacre.

Private sector work will be led by engineering firm Arup with input from other leading firms and will focus on the section to Manchester Airport.

The work will re-examine the cost, capacity, and economic uplift of changes to the rail route, helping to identify packages of potential interventions and private sector funding models and solutions.

Capacity

The aim is for the first stage of the work to be completed by March, with the final report due with the Government in the summer.

Currently between Birmingham and Manchester, without the need to change trains, the main service is provided by CrossCountry with two trains per hour. However, most of these services comprise of four or five carriages and quickly become full and standing only. There is also a solitary up service from Avanti from Manchester to London via the West Midlands.

New station for Barrhead line

NETWORK Rail has confirmed it has appointed Story Contracting to design a new railway station on the Neilston line in the area south of the East Renfrewshire town of Barrhead.

Situated between Patterton and Neilston stations, the new station will be named Balgray after the nearby reservoir. Initial exploratory work has been taking place, and plans for the site include car parking as well as bus and active travel routes.

While there is no outline opening date, a recently completed a six-week programme of major engineering works has prepared the Barrhead line for electrification by the end of this year.

Ebbw Vale line upgrade finished for new timetable

AN UPGRADE of the line to Ebbw Vale was completed in time for the December 10 timetable change.

Augmenting the current Cardiff workings, a new service was due to start running between Newport and Ebbw Vale Town stations from December 10. However, the start of the Newport service has been delayed owing to Transport for Wales having insufficient rolling stock available.

The upgrade work – which saw a 19 day closure of the route – has included an additional platform at both Newbridge and Llanhilleth stations. A footbridge with lifts has been installed at Llanhilleth making the station fully accessible for the first time.

There have also been further track upgrades between Crosskeys and Crumlin, thereby completing a seven mile passing loop between Crosskeys and Aberbeeg. Included in the project is the replacement of the Crumlin River bridge.

Finally, a new signalling system in the Park Junction area has been stalled to help improve resilience and reliability.

Costing £70million, funding for the project has been provided by Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council through a loan from the Welsh Government, along with the Department for Transport and Network Rail.



The new footbridge and lifts at Billingham station. NETWORK RAIL

Upgrades for Billingham

BILLINGHAM station in Teesside has emerged from its £3.6million programme of upgrades which have been designed to improve passengers' journeys.

A new bridge has been installed connecting the station's two platforms, along with two new lifts which provide step-free access as under the Access for All scheme.

The station's platforms have been rebuilt and a series of car park and access route improvements have also been made. It is the biggest upgrade seen at the station since re-siting and rebuilding by BR's Eastern Region in 1966.

In 2021/2, more than 75,000 passengers used the station.

Skegness station to receive £3.3 million transformation

WORK began in early November on the first stage of a £3.3million investment at Skegness which will completely reconfigure the layout of the station and improve passenger flow.

Also under phase 1, an unused building at the front of the station will be brought back into use after many years with the creation of a new café, new passenger areas and new retail units. Further phases of works will continue throughout 2024, with the Lincolnshire station remaining open to passengers.

Funding for the project is coming from the Government's Town Deal Fund through Connected Coast Town Deal, Network Rail and East Midlands Railway.



Two rail-mounted cranes prepare to make a tandem lift to install the bridge deck for the new passing loop being constructed between Bamford and Hathersage. NETWORK RAIL

Milestones reached in Hope Valley line upgrade to accommodate longer trains

UPGRADING the route between Manchester and Sheffield via the Hope Valley has reached a significant milestone.

At Dore & Totley station, the lift shafts for the newly built accessible footbridge have now been constructed as part of plans to bring a second platform and line into use for the first time since the mid-80s.

At Bamford, a new bridge has been installed as part of the construction of a new passing loop between Bamford and Hathersage.

Over the next six months, the project will enter its concluding stages, which will include track replacement at Grindleford, the installation of a new footbridge at Dore & Totley and signalling upgrades. Platforms are also being extended for longer trains.

In order to complete this work by the spring target date, weekend line closures are planned for January 19-22 and 26-29, February 3-5 and 10-12. However, there is an also an extended closure from March 15 to 25.

Digital signalling goes live on Moorgate route

THE new era of digital signalling has been activated on the Moorgate route.

On November 27, the first trains running under the control of the in-cab ETCS (European Train Control System) using Great Northern Class 717 EMUs began between Finsbury Park and Moorgate.

A dozen round trips were made in passenger service using Level 2 of the digital ETCS.

It is the first of several phases of the East Coast Digital Programme (ECDP) which will see ETCS progressively introduced between King's Cross and Stoke Tunnel, south of Grantham as part of a £1.4bn government-funded project.

Network Rail says introducing digital signalling on this busy commuter line is an important first stage in the ECDP, which will see the first introduction of digital ETCS to an intercity main line in the UK. Progressively, more trains will operate with digital signalling, as more Great Northern drivers are trained to use the technology.

Traditional signals will remain in use in parallel, until all GN's 250 drivers have been trained and the old system can be switched off.

A benefit of ETCS is that the shorter headways along with the cab signalling rather than a driver looking for traditional signals, allows more trains to run, thereby increasing capacity while maintaining safety.

The next section of the East Coast Main Line to be digitally signalled will be between Welwyn Garden City and Hitchin where the first trains under ETCS are expected to run by the end of 2025.

NORTHUMBERLAND LINE BRIDGE PROGRESS: **Installation of a new road bridge to span the soon-to-be-reopened Northumberland Line was completed over the weekend of November 18/19. Work will continue over the next few months to connect the bridge to the existing road network. The new bridge will be over the site of Newsham station but will allow the existing level crossing on the A1061 road to be closed. A new footbridge has been installed close to the level crossing site and there is provision for lifts connected to each platform to be installed, as well as providing local access.**

COURTESY: NORTHUMBERLAND LINE PROJECT



Compiled by **Graeme Pickering**

Cappagh Group agrees purchase of loaned former Fastline 'Grid'

Sale of Class 56 Group's No. 56301 will fund work on No. 56006 at the East Lancashire Railway.



Class 56 No. 56301 passes Whittlesea with a Chaddesden Sidings to Brandon Down Sidings working for DCRail on November 28, 2023. TOM SELL

OWNERSHIP of Class 56 Group locomotive No. 56301, which has been on hire to DCRail since last summer, is due to transfer to the freight operator's parent company Cappagh Group from April 1 after an agreement was reached to purchase it.

Proceeds of the sale will be used to carry out work on the group's other locomotive, Romanian-built No. 56006, the first Class 56 to enter traffic with British Rail in February 1977.

A statement on C56G's website said that the sale of No. 56301 had been anticipated for some time as there were neither the finances nor sufficient working volunteers to preserve two locomotives. Bought by C56G after previous owner Fastline went into receivership in 2010, the locomotive has primarily been regarded as an income generating asset, its main line certification allowing it to be hired to operators by the group's own company, Class 56 Locomotives Ltd.

Considerations

However, in the longer term, the hire market and potential cost of an overhaul were considered to present too much uncertainty. C56G rejected a recent offer to buy No. 56006 down to its significance and the time and effort put into its restoration by members.

The sale of No. 56301 to DCRail includes conditions aimed at promoting C56G and maintaining interest in the locomotive. It will be repainted into a heritage livery appropriate to the class and named after the group. DCRail will provide No. 56301 for use at gala events and Class 56 Locomotives Ltd will have the option to purchase it if the operator later disposes of it as a complete locomotive.

Keith Bulmer, director of Class 56 Locomotives Ltd, described the sale as a "perfect win-win solution for both parties".

David Fletcher, group director of rail for DCRail's parent company Cappagh said that the acquisition fitted in with the expansion of its bulk freight activities and it looked forward to seeing the locomotive attend further heritage events.

■ Fellow former Fastline locomotive No. 56303 (also part of the DCRail fleet when the company was owned by British American Railway Services and branded Devon & Cornwall Railways) moved by road from Willesden 'F' Sidings to EMD at Longport on November 12.

It is understood components from the locomotive will be used in the Class 69 construction programme.

'Full and frank' exchange over new Class 777 reliability

LIVERPOOL City Region Mayor Steve Rotheram has demanded immediate improvements from Stadler regarding the performance of Merseyrail's new Class 777 trains.

As the owner of the fleet, Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA) said it was "exceptionally proud" of the investment made in the 53 four-car units, but that standards on the Kirkby line, which was extended to a new terminus at Headbolt Lane in October last year, had fallen "well below" what passengers "rightly expect".

The non-electrified extension is served by Class 777/1 units (which can run on both third rail and battery energy) running in battery mode. LCRCA said that trains had been "very unreliable" and concerns had "repeatedly been raised" by the Mayor and authority officers. Mr Rotheram sought assurances of an improvement in what it described as "a full and frank exchange of views" with Stadler's chief executive.

LCRCA is holding discussions to identify "appropriate compensation for passengers for the disruption caused".

Stadler said new infrastructure and software were among the challenges with the trains and it was "determined to quickly make them more reliable", working "collaboratively and constructively with stakeholders".

The Class 777 fleet, which is still in the process of being introduced to replace Class 507 and 508 electric multiple units, consists of 46 777/0 EMUs and seven Class 777/1s.



TURNING HEADS: The first of East Midlands Railway's Class 810 'Aurora' units, No. 810001, attracted interest from photographers as it made its way from Melton Rail Innovation & Development Centre (RIDC) in Leicestershire to Derby Etches Park depot for tyre turning on the morning of November 27. It is seen at Derby station. The five-car bi-mode unit is one of a total of 33 being built for EMR by Hitachi. All will be based at Etches Park. It returned to the RIDC the following evening. STEVE DONALD

First Class 730 enters public service

LONDON Northwestern Railway began its introduction of Class 730 Alstom-built 'Aventra' electric multiple units on November 13, with Nos. 730010 and 730007 becoming the first class members to work a revenue-earning service.

They worked the 06.04 departure from Bletchley to London Euston, returning from the capital with the 07.24 to Tring.

Liveried for use by West Midlands Railway (which, like LNR, is part of West Midlands Trains) between Walsall and Wolverhampton and on the Cross City Line through Birmingham, pairs of three-car Class 730/0s are being used on West Coast Main Line workings until five-car Class 730/2s become available later this year. Class 730/2s will take on LNR's longer distance WCML workings with some Class 350s moving to shorter diagrams.

Introduction of the Class 730/0s facilitated the withdrawal of LNR's five remaining Class 319 units. Nos. 319457 and 319433 formed the class's last working with the operator, on November 27, when they were allocated to the 06.56 Bletchley-Euston service.

The pairs of Class 730/0s offer greater capacity than the eight-car Class 319 formations they have replaced. A total of 48 Class 730/0s and 36 Class 730/2 trains will be introduced by WMR and LNR respectively.



On November 13, Class 730 Nos. 730010 and 730007 leave Watford Junction, bound for London Euston with the first revenue-earning working for the class, which originated at Bletchley at 06.04. LNR/MIKE GORST

BACK IN ACTION: **After almost a year without passenger services following the collapse of Vivarail, which was responsible for maintenance of London Northwestern Railway's now-withdrawn trio of Class 230s, November 20 saw the return of peak-time trains to the Marston Vale route between Bedford and Bletchley. No. 150137 (one of three Class 150/1s which have been transferred from Northern to become the dedicated fleet for the line) is seen at Fenny Stratford with the first Bletchley-bound working on that day. Class 150s were previously used on Marston Vale services until the introduction of the Class 230s in 2019.** RICHARD HESLOP



Re-geared 'Sheds' to replace DB Cargo 'Tugs' from April

DB CARGO has told *The RM* it plans to use Class 66 locomotives re-geared to provide greater tractive effort on some of its services previously operated by Class 60s.

The company still has 64 Class 60s in its fleet, but 48 of these were already in storage before it was revealed in November that it would be withdrawing the remainder from use. Eleven were due to be taken out of service by the end of the 2023, but four are to remain in service on a short term basis, with a fifth retained for engineering training.

Ten DB Cargo Class 66s will be converted into HTE (Higher Tractive Effort) locomotives and designated Class 66/6, a subclass already used to denote members of the Freightliner fleet which are also geared to handle heavier freight workings.

"After careful consideration, analysis and in collaboration with our customers, we have established that some of our services currently operated by Class 60s could be more effectively and efficiently served by the Class 66 HTE," said a DB Cargo spokesman. "This will benefit our customers and the company alike."

He added: "These will be phased in from April 2024 onwards and allow us to continue with the phased withdrawal of our Class 60 fleet."



ANNIVERSARY NAMING: **Having opened in 1848, 2023 marked a significant anniversary for Hull Paragon station (more recently named Hull Paragon Interchange). On November 20, former Hull Paragon station managers Pete Myres, Daniel Dreggs and Daniel Fox joined current holder of the role Ben Courtney there for the naming of TransPennine Express Class 185 No. 185113 *Hull Paragon 175 years*.** TPE

SIDELINES

Goole Rail Village expansion

SITE preparation work is underway for a materials warehouse for Siemens Mobility at the Goole Rail Village. The warehouse, along with one at Kettering, will store materials for the adjacent Siemens train manufacturing plant, which will begin production later this year, and its rail maintenance operations across the UK. The 94,481 square feet warehouse is due to open this Summer.

Chairmen recognised

GREAT Western Railway Class 800 Intercity Express Train No. 800028 was jointly named after former British Rail chairman Sir Peter Parker and founding chairman of the Cotswold Line Promotion Group (CLPG) Oliver Lovell in a ceremony at London Paddington station on November 30.

Sir Peter chaired the British Railways Board from 1976-1983 and was a regular user of Charlbury station of the Cotswold line. The CLPG was originally formed to oppose the possible closure of the line and secured improvements and the reopening of Honeybourne station. Mr Lovell sat on its committee from its foundation until his death in 2013.

A wrap for mental health

TRANSPENNINE Express Class 185 No. 185111 has been given a vinyl wrap to promote mental health support organisation Andy's Man Club and raise awareness regarding men's mental health.

The organisation, which has more than 120 free support groups nationwide, aims to combat the stigma surrounding talking about feelings and provide an environment in which men can talk openly about the issues affecting them.

Further partnerships formed with GCRE

FOLLOWING its memorandum of understanding with rail contractor Ricardo Rail, reported last month in *The RM*, the Global Centre of Rail Excellence has announced plans for further partnerships.

Rail engineering and consulting company Xrail, Fraucher Sensor Technology and Swansea University have signed memoranda of understanding regarding collaboration with the research and development facility, currently under construction in South Wales.

Digital dawn on Northern City Line

TWELVE round trips run by Class 717 'Desiro City' EMUs between Finsbury Park and Moorgate were made on November 27 using digital in-cab rather than conventional lineside signalling.

It was the first day that European Train Control System (ETCS) technology was put into use for passenger services on the Northern City Line.

The conventional system will be retained until all drivers know how to use the new technology, but the number of ETCS-signalled services will progressively increase as more of them become trained.

ETCS, which is being rolled out as part of the £1.4billion East Coast Digital programme (which will ultimately see it used to control trains between King's Cross and Stoke Tunnel, near Grantham) is designed to enable more efficient train operation than colour light signalling. A cab display shows a target speed to the driver and is continually updated using information about the location of other trains.

'Much-needed' seating refurbishment underway

East Midlands Railway embarks upon £3million project to replace standard class seat covers and padding on its Class 222 fleet.

PASSENGERS in the East Midlands are set to enjoy a little more comfort thanks to a £3million refurbishment plan.

More than 5,000 seats are being refurbished on East Midlands Railway's Class 222 'Meridian' intercity diesel multiple unit fleet.

The programme will lead to a total of 5,272 standard class and 243 tip-up seats receiving new foam padding and being recovered in grey fabric. The old seat foam will be recycled into material for rubberised safety matting for children's play areas.

Maintenance

Replacement work will be carried out during routine maintenance, avoiding the need to take units out of service.

The current red seat fabric on the Class 222s was fitted as part of a £30million fleet refurbishment over 12 years ago and the worn state of the seats has prompted complaints from passengers, some of whom have posted photographs on social media.

On November 28, Leicester East MP Claudia Webbe wrote on X (formerly Twitter) that "not a single seat" in standard class on the train she was travelling on was in an acceptable condition. She accompanied this with images of worn and stained seat cushions.

Benefit

All 27 of the Class 222s are due to be replaced by EMR. The first of 33 Hitachi-built Class 810 'Aurora' bi-mode sets which will supersede them are expected to enter service later this year, but EMR says passengers will notice the benefit of the improvements in the meantime.

"This much-needed refresh represents a significant investment for the fleet and future-proofs them, enabling them to continue serving UK customers wherever they go after they leave us," said EMR fleet director Ian Hyde.



An example of refurbished Class 222 standard class seating. EMR

Wagon Report

Compiled by **Steven Fredrick Lappage**

LANGWITH Junction near Mansfield is the base for WH Davis, the last active domestic wagon builder. Recent deliveries have been IIA-D (Tafoos) bogie biomass hoppers to Drax Ltd. An additional 30 wagons have been built, Nos. 83 70 0688 226-3 to 255-2. Arrivals at the site for attention have been MLA-A gondola opens Nos. 50 3028/029/049/060/067/068/075/081.

For a short period, Powell Duffryn Standard built wagons at a factory at St Denis in France. This followed the closure of its UK manufacturing sites at Cardiff and Heywood. Domestic orders completed were for 30 JGA 90 tonne covered hoppers for Nacco/Tilcon, Nos. NACO 19170-199 (to design code JG014A), and 21 JHA 102 tonne hoppers for National Power, Nos. NP 19400-420 (design code JH 022C).

Both types entered service in 1994 carrying limestone from quarries at Swinden (North Yorkshire) and Tunstead respectively.

A recent development has seen some of the JGAs reinstated from long-term store at Long Marston. They are now at work in Cornwall carrying china clay for Imerys Minerals, Nos. NACO 19177/188/192/194/196.

Interestingly Birmingham Railway Carriage & Wagon (BRC&W) opened a French factory near La Rochelle after the First World War. Unfortunately, most French wagon needs of the period were met by war reparations. However, the firm did gain several sizeable contracts from the Compagnie International des Wagon Lits organisation for Pullman sleeping dining and parlour cars for use in Europe, Turkey and Egypt.

■ NEW stock for GB Railfreight are FEA-G container flats Nos. 81 70 4663 221-9 to 241-7 from Greenbrier Europe, Poland. Additional JNA-Y gondola conversions for Network Rail from Loram UK are Nos. 81705831172-8 to 181-9.

Further MRA side-tippers sent to Derby RTC for rebuilding have been Nos. 501004/053/064/113/130/131/135/277-279.

■ LONDON Underground wagons at Arlington Fleet Services, Eastleigh for evaluation and overhaul in recent months have included Jubilee Line Extension general purpose wagon No. JLE 7, 40-ton high-deck wagons Nos. HD 875/876, cement mixer wagons Nos. CM 952/953, and cement mixer match wagons Nos. MW 956/959-961.

Other wagons at Eastleigh for overhauls include Groupe Cat IPA car transporters Nos. 43 87 4333 024-5/050-0, Nos. 23 87 4375 001-6/015-6, No. 23 87 008-0, and Nos. 23 87 4385 000-6/001-4/002-2/004-4. Also on-site are IFA twin container flats fitted with vehicle carrying modules Nos. 33 87 4908 075-4/605-8/624-9.

■ DB Cargo UK still rosters a significant number of two-axle wagons for revenue traffic. Still active are box opens of types MEA (168) and SSA (68), mostly engaged in steel scrap traffic in the North East, Yorkshire and South Wales.

Additionally four-wheel VGA/VKA 'Speedlink' sliding wall vans (157) are in use carrying Ministry of Defence Army (MODA) stores, plus there is a weekly service transporting steel from Celsa at Cardiff Tidal yard to Burton-on-Trent, with the vans having replaced open wagons.

■ TEN redundant CDA china clay hoppers have been saved by preservation groups; Nos. 375030/050/061/063/067/090/091/102/113/117. Other surplus stock has been less fortunate. Now scrapped are OBA 'Bass' dropside opens Nos. 110026/182/298/618, OCA opens Nos. 112008/012/035/056/057/074/097/102/106/122/123/133/172/242/262/320/321/377, MFA spoil and ballast open No. 391001, SPA steel plate carriers Nos. 460025/088/129/272/469, YSA 'Salmon' railflat No. DB 996411.



BYA 'Stegosaurus' converted steel coil flat No. 966011 in Bescot Yard on October 24.



VGA 'Speedlink' van No. 210438 seen in Bescot Yard on October 23.

LOCOMOTIVES

Allocations
37025 COTS-RAJV
56103 HQ/DCRS-LR/DCRO
59103 DHLT-DFHG
60040 TO/WCAT-WQ/WQBA
66025 WBRT-WBAT
66088 WBRT-WBAT
66089 WBRT-WBAT
66092 WBRT-WBAT
66097 WBRT-WBAT
66113 WBRT-WBBT
66130 WBRT-WBAT
66144 WBAR-WBAT
66154 WBAE-WBAT
66155 WBRT-WBAT
66192 WBAR-WBRT-WBAT
66205 WBAI-WBAE
66501 LD/DFIM-FD/DHLT
70009 FD/DHLT-LD/DFGI

Liveries
DB Cargo red: 66067
Heidelberg Materials green: 59101

Names removed
37409 *Lord Hinton*
43049 *Neville Hill*
57303 *Pride of Carlisle*

Sold
Andania Engineering: 37402
Europhoenix: 37069, 37218, 37423
Locomotive Services Ltd: 37401

Operational
56103
66205

Stored/stopped locations
Longport: 56303
Loughborough: 73138
Toton: 60040

Disposals
EMR Kingsbury: Arrival date: November 29: 31106

MULTIPLE UNITS

Allocations
150269/70 CF/HLHQ-NL/EDHQ
153358/63 sent for disposal
156416 NH-HT
170206/07 CF/HLQ-DY/EMHQ
196112 HQ-TS
197005/45 HQ-CH
197122 newly delivered HQ/HLHQ
319217/19 sent for disposal
319367/75/78/84 sent for disposal
331001-09 AN-NL
331102-05/08-11 NL-AN
398013 newly delivered HQ/HLHQ
508103/36/39/41 sent for disposal
555013/15 newly delivered GF/PXGG
701523/24/25 newly delivered HQ/HYHQ
720608 HQ-EM
730012/13/14/16/18/19/21 HQ-BY
730045/47 newly delivered HQ/EJHQ
756116/17 newly delivered HQ/HLHQ
777024/26/28/30 HQ-KD
777140 HQ-KD
805008/09 newly delivered HQ/HFHQ

Liveries
Blue and grey: 507001
EMR Purple: 170422
SWR: 444026, 458424

Named
185113 *Hull Paragon 175 years*
197049 *Castell Caeriw Cyflym/ Carew Castle Express*
802210 *Hailes Castle*

Names removed
508136 *Wilfred Owen MC*

Now in passenger traffic
196112
197005/45
321419
720608
730012/13/14/16/18/19/21
777024/26/28/30
777140

Renumbered
458524-458424

Formations
458424: 67624+74024+74124+67724

Sold
Great Central Railway: 153371

To industrial use
Greater Manchester Fire Training Centre: 144010

Stored/stopped locations
Bournemouth: 458424
Canton: 175101/09, 756116/17
Castle Donington: 768001
Central Rivers: 730101
Crewe: 197117/18/20
Crewe Gresty Green: 175006, 175116
Derby: 701002/05
Eastleigh: 701523/24/25
Ilford: 175108
Kirkdale: 777025/27
Landore: 175104
Long Marston: 701517/19
Loughborough: 730103
MoD Bicester: 701507/11/15/16
Northampton: 319214
Old Dalby: 730101
Oxley: 730004/27/45/47, 730206
Walton Old Junc.: 777022
Willesden: 720509

Disposals
Sims Metals, Beeston: Arrival date: December 8: 153358
Sims Metals, Newport: Arrival dates: November 6: 508112/37 (corrected date); November 20: 319375; November 27: 153363; 508139/41; November 29: 319378; December 6: 319217/19; December 11: 508103/36; December 13: 319367/84

HAULED COACHING STOCK

Stored/stopped locations
Carlisle Upperby: 40221, 41063, 41117, 42100, 42220, 44047
Crewe South Yard: TP05/07/08/09/10
Eastleigh Works: 5922/24/59, 6036, 6152
Gascoigne Wood: TP02/06
Longsight: TP03/04/11/12/13
Wolverton: TP01

Disposals
C.F.Booth, Rotherham: Cut date: November 24: 12486



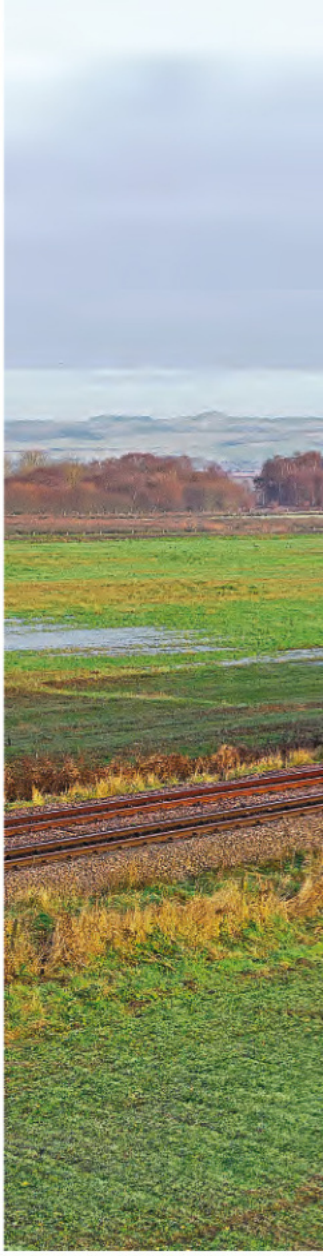
Type 3 No. 37800 *Cassiopeia* drags ex-Northern Class 319 EMUs Nos. 319367+319384 through Cheltenham Lansdown on December 13 having earlier left Allerton depot, Merseyside, for the last time on their one-way journey to Sims' scrapyard at Newport Docks. JACK BOSKETT



Right: First-built Class 507 EMU No. 507001 has been given a retro BR blue and grey livery as the remaining fleet heads into its final months in use on Merseyside, and is seen at Birkenhead Hamilton Square on December 9. When new, this unit and No. 507002 had royal patronage on October 25, 1978 as they carried Queen Elizabeth II from Moorfields to Kirkby to officially open the upgraded Merseyrail network. CHRIS GEE

■ **STOCK CHANGES CORRECT AS OF DECEMBER 16, 2023.**





1 | 3
2

1
Sunset on the '68s' at Scarborough on November 30, as No. 68024 *Centaur* awaits its next duty after a heavy rain storm.

2
'Nova 3' sets were originally introduced on the Scarborough to Liverpool route via Manchester Victoria, No. 68027 *Splendid* seen at the Merseyside terminus on January 28, 2020. HAWTHORNE COLLECTION

3
The end of TPE Class 68 workings left two 'Nova 3' sets at Scarborough – No. 68030 *Black Douglas*+TP06 (which had been used on the final day of services, December 9) and No. 68025 *Superb*+TP02 (which was a failure with a door fault). The sets were scheduled to return to Manchester Longsight depot on December 11 and 12, but both workings were cancelled, resulting in them running together on December 15 as the 5Z68/07.58 Scarborough to Gascoigne Wood sidings for storage – the remarkable 10-car formation seen near Staxton, North Yorkshire, with No. 68025 leading and No. 68030 at the rear. The photographer notes that, besides being the last to leave Scarborough, No. 68030 had been the first TPE liveried '68' to visit there on November 3, 2018. ANDY MASON



FAREWELL TO TPE '68s'









4 5
6 7

4
No. 68028 *Lord President* at Cleethorpes on December 25, 2022. There were a few loco-hauled TPE services here from summer 2022, but the plan was abandoned on July 31, 2023.

5
No. 68028 *Lord President* is pictured on training duties at Saltburn on November 25, 2022, but this plan was later abandoned. TONY WINWARD

6
The scenes at Manchester Piccadilly on the December 9, the final day, as No. 68030 *Black Douglas* has just arrived with the 08.45 from Scarborough. TONY WINWARD

7
No. 68030 *Black Douglas* at York on December 9 ahead of working the very last 'Nova 3' train, the 23.03 to Scarborough. MICHAEL WARRENDER

Compiled by **Ashley Butlin**

The network's notable moves

Railhead Treatment Trains

The RHTT season along the southern section of the Midland Main Line continued during November with DB Class 66 Nos. 66041+66104 being the regular pairing on the 3J91/23.17 Toton TMD to West Hampstead Thameslink and 3J93/12.01 return. However, when seen on November 10 the pairing was Nos. 66041+66099, and on November 13 it was Nos. 66010+66085. The regular pairing of Nos 66041+66104 was back on November 23 and 27.

On Sunday, November 5 RHTT 3W75 from Tonbridge West Yard to Tonbridge West Yard, which had already visited Ashford International and Bromley South, was seen coming to a halt beside platform 7 at London Victoria formed with Class 57 No. 57305 at the front of the train with No. 57306 *Her Majesty's Railway Inspectorate 175* at the rear. The train arrived at Victoria just over 50 minutes late, but a quick turnaround meant it would leave no more than a minute after its booked time.

On November 7 RHTT 3S85 from Effingham Junction CHS to Effingham Junction CHS was seen passing platform 3 at Clapham Junction formed of Multi-Purpose Vehicles Nos. DR98974 and DR98924.

RHTT 3S14 from Grimsby Town to York Thrall Europa was seen standing on one of the through roads at Sheffield station on Wednesday, November 15, top-and-tailed by Class 66 Nos. 66849 and 66847. On the same day, train 3J51 from York Thrall Europa to York Thrall Europa was seen making a 10 minute stop by platform 5 at Bridlington. The train was headed by No. 37425 *Concrete Bob / Sir Robert McAlpine*, in Regional Railways livery, with No. 37407 *Blackpool Tower*, in BR blue with large logo, at the rear of the train and ran via Scarborough, Hull and Brough.

On Monday, November 20 RHTT 3J85 from Stapleford & Sandiacre to Toton TMD was seen passing Swinderby station headed by Class 66 No. 66010 with No. 66085 at the rear, both in DB red beneath the grime. This service runs via Stoke-on-Trent, Crewe, Ilkeston, Worksop, Lincoln Central and Nottingham.

Autumn leaf-fall, delayed on much of the Great Eastern Main Line because of mild weather until later in November when colder weather descended, saw the GBRf operation out of Stowmarket gather pace from mid-month with two overnight and two daylight diagrams on the southern branches.

On-loan from DRS Class 66 No. 66421 was joined by No. 66432 at the beginning of the month and the DRS-pairing worked several of the overnight diagrams (3S10 and 3S30) before being noted at Harwich International during daylight hours on 3S60 on November 14. They departed the area via Whitemoor and Doncaster on November 28. GBRf Class 66/7s have dominated the operation with No. 66753 *EMD Roberts Road* a constant feature with classmate No. 66776 *Joanne*.

Others which have featured are Nos. 66724 *Drax Power Station* and 66728 *Institution of Railway Operators*; 66744 *Crossrail* and 66720 *Wascosa*; and 66761 *Wensleydale Railway Association 25 years 1990-2015* and 66764 *Major Tom Poyntz Engineer and Railwayman* (noted at Ipswich on November 17 with the 3S60/09.00 Stowmarket – Stowmarket diagram). Later in the month, No. 66753 worked with No. 66715 *Valour – In Memory of All Railway Employees Who Gave Their Lives For the Country*.

Class 73 Nos. 73107 *Tracy* and 73136 *Mhairi* visited Littlehampton on the Tonbridge to Tonbridge RHTT on November 29, and later in the evening DR98916+DR98966 also visited on the Horsham to Horsham RHTT before heading towards Brighton.

Avanti West Coast

A visit to Euston station on Friday, November 24 found new IET No. 805006 standing by platform 16. The unit, which was in white livery and still had plastic covers on the seats, was waiting to form test train 5Q72/14.19 from Euston to Crewe.

These test trains operate under GBRf's licence which also provides the crew.

LNER

LNER confirmed on November 9 that CAF is the successful bidder to deliver a fleet of 10 new tri-mode trains able to operate in electric, battery or diesel mode, with Porterbrook the chosen financier of the new fleet.

A visit to King's Cross on Wednesday, November 1 found Class 91 No. 91127 *Neville Hill* alongside platform 1 on the 1D17/14.03 departure to Leeds.

A landslip on Wednesday, November 8, at Aycliffe closed the down line between Darlington and Durham. On Tuesday, November 14, a correspondent took a journey from York to Newcastle on the 1S10/09.30 from King's Cross to Edinburgh formed of Azuma No. 801211. The train left Darlington 19 minutes late and crossed from the down to up line at Darlington North Junction. The landslip was passed at reduced speed before the down line was rejoined at Aycliffe. Arrival at Durham was 25 minutes late.

A visit to Swinderby on Monday, November 20 found the Azuma trains made a sharp contrast with the manually operated level crossing by the station. The 1B83/11.27 from Lincoln Central to King's Cross, formed of No. 800202 was the first seen and then a few minutes later No. 800204 passed in the other direction forming the 1B82/10.06 from King's Cross to Lincoln Central.

Great Western Railway

It is reported that former VivaRail Class 230 No. 230001 will transfer to Reading Train Care Depot in the New Year, following test runs on the North Cotswolds line.

Scotrail

The new East Linton station was opened on December 13, with services beginning that day linking the East Lothian town with Edinburgh, Dunbar and Newcastle. Network Rail has now finished construction of the fully accessible £15m station, following a significant investment by the Scottish Government. The station has two platforms, a footbridge with lifts and stairs, and a car park with spaces for 114 cars – this includes a number of spaces dedicated to blue badge holders, and 18 charge points for electric vehicles.

Northern Rail

Overunning weekend engineering works between Carlisle and Workington on Monday, November 13 meant that service 2C48 bound for Lancaster started from Workington (dep 11.08) rather than Carlisle. This service was worked into Lancaster by Northern's Class156s Nos. 156479+156487. Later No. 156479 ran to Morecambe (2C89) and No. 156487 departed at 16.01 bound for Carlisle on a 120 mile journey back along the Cumbrian Coast line.

Northern's three-car Class 150 Nos. 150001-06 are now in use working services in South and West Yorkshire.

On Tuesday, November 14, No. 150003 was seen at Sheffield forming the 2N29/19.15 from Sheffield to Leeds via Bolton-on-Dearne. A journey was then made from Sheffield to Wombwell on the 2B68/19.35 from Sheffield to Huddersfield formed of No. 150002. The following day, Wednesday, November 15, another journey was made from Sheffield to Wombwell, this time on the 2B64/17.34 from Sheffield to Huddersfield formed of No. 150006.

On Thursday, November 16, a journey from Meadowhall to Wombwell produced No. 150006 again, this time on the 2B66/18.34 from Sheffield to Huddersfield. Then on Friday, November 17, a journey was made as far as Wombwell on the



Heaton Chapel station, one stop north of Stockport in Great Manchester, was opened by the LNWR in 1852 as Heaton Chapel & Heaton Moor, this replica running in board is seen on November 22 as Mk.4 DVT No. 82200 passes at the head of the 1W55/08.49 Cardiff Central to Manchester Piccadilly, which was propelled by No. 67020. ALEX AYRE



LNER No. 800107 skirts along the beach overlooking the Firth of Forth at Burntisland, Fife, on December 6 as it heads north with the 1W02/07.08 Leeds to Aberdeen. PAUL BIGGS

2B31/18.10 from Huddersfield to Sheffield, again formed of No. 150006.

The Class 319 units, that mainly work the Liverpool to Blackpool service, were all due to be removed from traffic in advance of the December timetable changes. The first unit sent for scrap to Sims Metals, Newport was No. 319375 behind Class 37 No. 37800 on November 20, followed by No. 319378 on November 29, also hauled south to Newport by No. 37800.

A swap of three- and four-car units between Allerton and Neville Hill is underway with the following moving from Skipton to Allerton: November 20: No. 331104; November 23: No. 331102; November 28: No. 311109; November 30: No. 331110; December 1: No. 331103; December 6: No. 331111; December 7: No. 331105. In the opposite direction the following have been reported: November 21: 331002; November 27: No. 331001; November 28: No. 331008; November 30: No. 331009; December 1: No. 331006; December 4: No. 331004; December 7: No. 331003.

Transpennine Express

With the withdrawal of the Transpennine Express Class 68 locomotives and Mk.5 coaches planned by December 2023, many enthusiasts have taken every opportunity to travel with them. In September when checking Transpennine Express services around Manchester, the use of Class 68 locomotives seemed somewhat random. However, on four successive days in November, Class 68s were found working 1U39/09.35 Manchester Piccadilly to Scarborough.

On Tuesday, November 14 a journey was made from Leeds to York using 1U39. Although booked to use platform 15 at Leeds, 1U39 arrived 19 minutes late and stopped by platform 11. Arrival at York was 15 minutes late, where platform 4 was used instead of the booked platform 5. The train was headed by driving trailer No. 12807 with Class 68 No. 68028 *Lord President* propelling at the rear.

The following day, a plan to travel to Scarborough was thwarted by late running, which meant that to maintain the connection to Bridlington it was only possible to travel from Leeds as far as Seamer. On this occasion, 1U39 was propelled by No. 68021 Tireless, with No. 12810 at the front of the train.

On November 16, 1U39 was used again for a journey from Leeds to York. The train, which was five minutes late at Leeds, was headed by No. 68029 *Courageous*. Some time was made up on route and arrival at York was only one minute late.

Using 1U39 for one last time on Friday, November 17 for a journey from Leeds to York, arrival of the service at Leeds was nine minutes late, but some of this was made up by York where the arrival was now five minutes late. The locomotive was again No. 68021 on the set understood to be TP10.

Mersey Rail

Further new Class 777 units Nos. 777022+777032+777034 were delivered on November 15, being moved from Dollands Moor to Wembley yard by Class 66 No. 66084 to await movement north.

As the new units arrive, so the old order is leaving for scrap with Nos. 508141+508139 being towed from Birkenhead to Sims Newport by Class 37 No. 37800 on November 27.

Transport for Wales

On October 30, Transport for Wales and Balfour Beatty announced the completion of the 25 kV 50 Hz electrification on the routes from Pontypridd to Aberdare and from Abercynon to Merthyr Tydfil.

Movements reported for the new Class 197 units included No. 197116 from Wolverton to Crewe behind Class 66 No. 66951 on November 9, followed by No. 197118 on the same diagram hauled by No. 66567 on November 14. A further move on November 28 found No. 197120 moved from Donnington RFT to Crewe by No. 66566

Two further new Class 756 units Nos. 756114+756115 were taken from Ripple Lane to Canton by Class 66 No. 66002 on November 14.

East Midlands Trains

An embankment slip at Braybrooke, just south of Market Harborough, on November 2 saw the inevitable disruption to services. While some trains still ran through the affected area wrong line, others were diverted, but from November 3 the line was closed with all EMR trains diverted to run via Corby and Oakham with Market Harborough served by buses. However, freight, test and RHTT trains were still allowed through. The line reopened to all traffic on November 9.

West Midlands Railway

Movements of the new Class 730 units reported included No. 730103 from Old Dalby to Oxley on November 16 hauled by Class 37 No. 37510. The following day No. 730046 was taken from Derby to Oxley by No. 37611.

Limited train services on the Marston Vale Line were restored from Monday, November 20 when Class 150 No. 150137 was noted in service. Members of the local rail community partnership travelled on the train and handed out timetables and pens.

The new Class 730 were first used on London Northwestern Railway services in and out of Euston on Monday, November 13, when Nos. 730010+730007 formed 2B02/06.04 from Bletchley to Euston.

On Monday, November 27 Nos. 730007+730018 were seen arriving by platform 12 at Euston as empty stock train 5T49 from Camden Carriage Sidings and then formed the 2T49/15.54 to Tring, on which a journey was made by a correspondent as far as Harrow & Wealdstone. Initial impressions were the Class 730 are smart and clean but look and feel very different from their Alstom (formerly Bombardier) Aventra cousins, such as the Class 720 on c2c and Greater Anglia and the Class 345 on the Elizabeth Line. With 2+2 seating the interiors seem very spacious and the seats, although firm, are not the hard ironing boards used elsewhere.

The Class 730 carry West Midlands branding and London Northwestern Railway and West Midlands route maps alternate over the doors. The Class 730/0 sub-class, currently in use



A view of the through island platform at Manchester Piccadilly on December 13 as Northern DMUs Nos. 195112+195122 call with the 1C70/08.29 Manchester Airport to Windermere. The main terminus part of the station can be seen behind. HASSARD STACPOOLE

out of Euston are intended for routes in the West Midlands having been introduced on London Northwestern Railway services as a temporary measure until five-carriage Class 730/2s are brought into service next year.

The introduction of new Class 730 units has seen the withdrawal of the old Class 319 units, their last working is reported to have been early morning on Monday, November 27.

Two of the Class, Nos. 319217+319219, left Northampton for the last time on December 6, being hauled away by Class 37 No.37800 en route to Sims Metals, Newport.

Elizabeth Line

There was no service on the Elizabeth line between Paddington and Abbey Wood/Stratford on Saturday, November 25. A journey from Hanwell on the 2Y57/12.59 from Maidenhead formed of Class 345 No. 345064, terminated by platform 11 at Paddington HL.

London Overground

Class 710 No. 710270 was top-and-tailed from Ilford to Willesden on December 6, by Class 47 Nos. 47727+47749.

Southern Railways

Delays and diversions on the East Coastway route occurred on November 11, due to a freight train from Newhaven failing north of Lewes. The 16.33 Eastbourne to Victoria with Nos. 377108+377214, the 16.22 Ore to Victoria formed of Nos. 377110+377456, the 17.33 Eastbourne to Victoria with Nos. 377122+377407, and the 17.22 Ore to Victoria with Nos. 377206+377421 were all diverted via Brighton and arrival at Haywards Heath were some 25 minutes behind schedule.



DB Cargo was due to withdraw its Class 60s at the end of 2023 (see December issue), but those in use with GBRf and DCR are set to continue. On November 23, 'Tug' No. 60087 approaches Settle Junction from the north with the 6E69/12.54 Ribblehead Quarry to Hunslet Yard (Leeds). CHRIS GEE

Class 387 No. 387224 failed at Eastbourne prior to working the 06.33 to Brighton on November 27, with No. 377434 being used as a replacement for the whole day.

South Western Railway

A further 'refurbished and reformed' Class 458 No. 458428 was brought south from Widnes to Bournemouth on November 7, top-and-tailed by Class 47 No. 47739 and Class 56 No. 56081.

Movements of as yet unused Class 701 units saw Nos. 701507+701511 moved by Class 47 No. 47739 from Eastleigh to Wembley and then through to MoD Bicester on November 17. This was followed by No. 701523 being moved from Derby to Eastleigh by No. 47749 on November 21.

The following day, the Class 47 moved Nos. 701515+701516 from Eastleigh to MoD Bicester. The Class 47 was back to Eastleigh again on November 29 to move Nos. 701517+701519 to Long Marston.

On November 23, No. 47727 was used to take No. 701002 from Eastleigh back to Derby. On December 1 the Class 47 took No. 701525 south to Eastleigh. Finally, in the time under review No. 47749 moved No. 701003 from Derby to Wembley on December 5.



DRS Kingmoor-based independent snow ploughs Nos. ADB965242 and ADB965203 were given a test run to Appleby and back on December 1, sandwiching Nos. 66434+66091, the 7Z37 working seen waiting to start the return leg in suitably wintry conditions. PAUL J BERRY

Charter Trains

The 'Capital Christmas Express' (Railway Touring Company) Charter train 1Z65/06.42 from Chester to London Paddington, was seen approaching Hanwell station on Saturday, November 25, hauled by 'Royal Scot' 4-6-0 No. 46115 *Scots Guardsman* with Class 47 No. 47804 at the rear.

DB Cargo

Scrap metal trains reported included on November 9 Class 66 No. 66023 on the regular Cardiff Tidal to Sunderland and return. The same diagram on November 16 was powered by No. 66156. A change on November 20 found No. 66168 on a Cardiff Tidal to Saltley and return, the first by DB Cargo for many months.

Three days later, No. 66020 was on the Tidal – Sunderland diagram, returning south to Tees Yard where No. 66009 took over for the run back to Cardiff. On November 28 No. 66057 worked the full Cardiff-Sunderland-Cardiff diagram with No. 66105 doing the same on November 30. It was back to the Cardiff-Sunderland-Tees Yard diagram on December 5, with No. 66020 taking the loaded wagons back to Cardiff.

The binliner train 6M16 from Wilton Energy Waste Terminal to Knowsley Freight Terminal was seen passing through York station behind Class 66 No. 66019, in DB red on Thursday, November 16.

Freightliner

The 4L99 from Lawley Street Freightliner Terminal to Felixstowe North Freightliner Terminal was seen passing Harrow & Wealdstone station on Tuesday, November 7, hauled by Class 66 No. 66549. On the same day No. 66532 *P&O Nedlloyd Atlas* was also seen at Harrow & Wealdstone on the 4R98 from New Bilton to Willesden Euroterminal.

Class 66 No. 66617 was at Runcorn working 6H35 Folly Lane to Northenden RTS on November 9, with Nos. 66590+66517 working the 0F34 Folly Lane to Crewe Basford Hall.

FL's orange and black Class 90 No. 90007 ran light on Wednesday, November 15, as 0C52/07.48 from Crewe to Carlisle and back on a footplate training exercise. On the following two days the same loco ran on the same diagram.

FL retro green liveried Class 47 No. D1645 (aka 47830) ran light on Friday, November 24, as 0C52/07.41 from Crewe to Carlisle and back.

On Saturday, November 25, the 4O50 from London Gateway to Southampton Maritime Container Terminal was seen passing Ealing Broadway station behind Class 66 No. 66951.

DRS

On Tuesday, November 7, Class 66 No. 66126, in DRS dark blue, was seen passing Harrow & Wealdstone station on the 4M07 from Tilbury Container



Type 3s Nos. 97302+37405+97304 are seen at Shrewsbury on the morning of December 9, reversing an empty Chirk log train out to Coton Hill sidings. The loaded train had originated at Baglan Bay (South Wales) on December 7, behind a Class 56 that failed soon into its journey near Pyle. Nos. 97304+37405 were sent to take the train forward to Chirk via Wellington, Crewe and Chester, but a further loco problem at Crewe saw No. 97302 *Rheilffyrdd Ffestiniog ac Eryri / Ffestiniog and Welsh Highland Railways* added to the front. ED WEAVER

Terminal to Daventry (Tesco).

Due to storm disruption on November 14, a Kingmoor to Sellafield 0Z00 light engine move was routed via the West Coast Main Line and the Furness line and consisted of Class 68 Nos. 68034 *Rail Riders 2020*+68006 *Pride of the North* and Class 88 No. 88002 *Prometheus*. The 6C46 Sellafield to Kingmoor was routed via the Furness and WCMLs reversing at Carnforth with Class 68 No. 68020 *Reliance* and Class 88 No. 88010 *Aurora* top-and-tailing FNA-D Flask wagons.

The following day, Class 68 Nos. 68034+68006 top-and-tailed one FNA-D flask wagon from Sellafield to Barrow marine terminal as 6C23 to tie in with a visit by HRH the Princess Royal to Barrow Docks, returning later as 6C73.

Observed on November 16 was Class 66 No. 66427 dragging 37218 from Carlisle Kingmoor to Crewe Gresty Bridge.

The afternoon Shap Quarry to Crewe (6K06) train of yellow liveried mineral wagons is usually a DRS Class 66 working. However, on Thursday, November 16, this working was pulled by TransPennine liveried Class 68 No. 68019 *Brutus*.

On Friday, November 24, TransPennine liveried Class 68 No.68019 *Brutus*+68020 *Reliance* double-headed the same diagram.

DRS Class 68 No. 68002 *Intrepid* and Chiltern Railways' liveried 'Greener Future' Class 68 No. 68014 ran together as a light engine duo on a 0Z68/10.32 from Crewe to Carlisle on Tuesday, November 21.

Class 68 No. 68007 Valiant and Class 88 No. 88007 *Electra* pulled, on Saturday, November 25, three white FNA flasks from Sellafield (6K73/08.25) via Ulverston to Crewe.

GBRF

On Monday, November 1 Class 69 No. 69008 was seen making a brief stop by platform 3 at Clapham Junction whilst working light engine as the 0Y43 from Eastleigh East Yard to Hoo Junction Up Yard. Class 69 No. 69009, still in green undercoat with yellow warning panels, in the company of Class 66 No. 66791, in scruffy Beacon Rail blue, were seen passing platform 3 at Clapham Junction on Tuesday, November 7, when forming the 0Y48 from Eastleigh East Yard to Hoo Junction Up Yard.

Weekend stopover intermodals into Harwich Parkeston Quay yard began on November 4, with Class 66 No. 66778 *Cambois Depot 25 Years* on 4L42 (Doncaster i-Port) joined later that evening by No. 66746 bringing 4A03 over from Felixstowe. On Monday, November 6, No. 66778 worked 4Y66 to Felixstowe Port at 09.30 while No. 66746 took 4M22 bound for Trafford Park at 11.20ish.

On November 11 No. 66738 *Huddersfield Town* worked 4A28 over from Felixstowe in the evening, departing with 4M22 two days later. With weekend engineering works closing the GEML around Chelmsford and work also on the Haughley Junction north of Stowmarket, no Doncaster or Tinsley intermodals arrived on November 18-25, just 4A28 over from Felixstowe with No. 66746 on November 18 and No. 66767 *Kings Cross PSB 1971-2021* on November 25, both departing on the following Monday hauling 4M22 to Trafford Park.

Class 60 No. 60047 and Class 69 No. 69002 worked 6M51/12.03 Doncaster Down Decoy GBRf to Liverpool GBRf Biomass Terminal on November 5. The Class 69 was then noted at Tuebrook sidings for several days and thought that it was covering for Class 56 No. 56098 which had disappeared after a lengthy stay. About 12 days later, No. 56098 reappeared, and the Class 69 had left.

For the month of November the Harwich Refinery – North Walsham (6P41) and return (6A32) diagrams were worked by Class 66 No. 66778 *Cambois Depot 25 Years* on November 8 and 9, after coming over from Felixstowe, while the following week on November 15 No. 66779 *Evening Star* was seconded from the RHTT operation at Stowmarket, arrived in Harwich Parkeston Quay yard around two hours later than normal only for the diagram to be cancelled, but then proceeded to handle it on the following day, leaving the tanks at North Walsham over the weekend.

It was November 20 before No. 66765 *Julie Garn* was dispatched from Peterborough MPD via Stowmarket to North Walsham to handle 6A32 that same day for the loaded tanks, departing back light engine to Peterborough that evening. It was November 27 before No. 66710 *Phil Packer BRIT* came over from Ipswich under 0P41 to handle a double run in the week (November 27/28 and 29-30) departing to Felixstowe on the latter date.

Scrap metal traffic reported, all powered by Class 66 locos, included No. 66797 on the regular Liverpool-Swindon-Liverpool diagram on November 11. On November 15 No. 66799 *Modern Railways Diamond Jubilee* worked a Small Heath Yard to Swindon and back to Liverpool diagram with the same loco on the Liverpool to Swindon and back circuit on November 17. The service was next reported at Small Heath on November 22 with No. 66712 *Peterborough Power Signalbox* heading for Swindon and Liverpool. The same Class 66 was on the same working on December 4.

MoD traffic reported includes the following services: on November 13 Class 66 No. 66730 *Whitemoor* worked a Marchwood to Kineton and then through to Donnington, before going through to London Gateway the next day. It was next reported on November 16 on a Kineton to Marchwood and Eastleigh diagram. Two days later, it worked an Eastleigh-Marchwood-Eastleigh diagram.

A change of power on November 21 found No. 66303 on a Bicester to Longtown move, returning to Kineton the next day. A further change on November 28 found No. 66783 *The Flying Dustman* on a Marchwood-Southampton Docks move. Two days later, No. 66719 *Metro-land* powered a Tees Docks to Eastleigh Yard.

Booked engineering work on Sunday, November 12 saw Class 66 Nos. 66722 *Sir Edward Watkin* and 66799 *Modern Railways Diamond Jubilee* at a work

site at Great Bowden, north of Market Harborough. The pair top-and-tailed the previous night's 6G38/22.19 Toton North Yard to Market Harborough. Also, in the area on engineering duties was No. 66742 *ABP Port of Immingham Centenary 1912-2012* which had arrived on the 6G35/19.19 Toton North Yard to Market Harborough.

Observed on November 16 was Class 66 No. 66729 *Derby County* working the 6D51/11.49 Hunslet Tilcon to Rylstone Tilcon through Leeds.

Class 66 No. 66713 *Forest City* worked 6G59 Copy Pit to Bescot Up Engineer's Sidings materials train through Newton-le-Willows on November 19.

Class 66 No. 66713 was at Tuebrook on a Biomass train on November 28, probably leading it down to the terminal as Class 60 No. 60087 was on the other end of the consist.

Container loadings on the daytime Hams Hall (Birmingham) to Mossend service (4S57) continue to be light. On Tuesday, November 28 service 4S57 pulled by Class 66 No. 66782 had seven containers. On the following day the service, pulled by the same Class 66 loco, mustered 14 containers.

Class 66 No. 66770 was seen passing St Margarets station on train 4Y19 from Mountfield Sidings to Southampton Western Docks on Wednesday, November 29.



GBRf 'Bluebirds' Nos. 66748 *West Burton 50* and 66732 *GBRf The First Decade 1999-2009 John Smith – MD* top-and-tailed an overnight Westbury to Falmouth Autoballaster set on December 12/13, the return eastbound working seen pre-dawn at Par during a crew change. CRAIG MUNDAY

Colas Rail

Colas Rail Tamper No, DR73909 Saturn was moved on Tuesday, November 7 on a 6J72/10.58 from Maryport via Shap to Blackburn.

Weekend engineering work at Eastbourne on November 25/26 proved costly when Class 66 No. 66846 derailed in the possession on the Saturday. Luckily enough there were another two class 66s GBRf Nos. 66723 *Chinook* and 66740 *Sarah* in the block to assist. This is the second Class 66/8 to derail in Sussex when another 66/8 had run through a pair of points at Arundel Junction after a possession at Littlehampton in March 2022. Services serving Eastbourne were restricted due to the damaged points the following day.

Colas Rail Class 70 No. 70817 pulled a set of high-sided mineral wagons on Monday, November 27 from Carlisle (6K30) to Longport. When seen passing through Lancaster at 15.04 the train was running 130 minutes early.

DC Rail

Class 56 No. 56301 was noted on a train of blue bogie hoppers in the yard at Wembley on Tuesday, November 7, when it was viewed from a Southern East Croydon to Watford Junction service.

West Coast Railway Co.

WCR Class 47 No. 47804 pulled an ECS (Empty Coaching Stock) rake of maroon Mk.1 coaches on Thursday, November 9, on a 5M43/10.29 from Southall to Carnforth.

On Monday, November 13, WCR's 'Black Five' 4-6-0 No. 44932 plus a Mk.1 support coach ran from Carnforth (5Z71/12.03) to Southall.

Class 57 Nos. 57313+57601 top-and-tailed an ECS set of Northern Belle coaches on Friday, November 24, on a 5Z47/13.05 from Carnforth to Burton Wetmore Sidings.

In preparation for the following day's railtour, WCR's 'Royal Scot' Class 4-6-0 No. 46115 *Scots Guardsman* pulled an ECS set of maroon Mk.1 and Pullman livered coaches from Carnforth (5Z64/11.47) to Chester on Friday, November 24, with non-operating Class 47 No. 47804 on the rear.

Although WCR's Northern Belle coaching stock top-and-tailed by Class 57 Nos. 57313+57601 left Carnforth 126 mins late (5Z44) on Friday, December 1, this train arrived at Wakefield Westgate only 25 minutes behind scheduled arrival time. From there the Northern Belle departed at 12.49 (1Z44) on a 113 mile journey to Sunderland via Stockton.

With only a few minutes spent in Sunderland, the Northern Belle (1Z45) departed at 15.32 returning to Wakefield via Durham. On arrival at



December 11 was the start of a rerouted aggregates working from Merehead and Westbury Tarmac to Crawley Foster Yeoman via the Coastway West route. This is the first regular revenue-earning freight service east of Chichester and west of Hove in more than 30 years since the Westbury to Ardingly (West Sussex) aggregates train ended on February 1, 1991 and the Ripple Lane to Portfield (Chichester) oil tanks on March 17, 1993. The new 6O68/09.11 Westbury Tarmac to Crawley Foster Yeoman is seen on December 11 passing Worthing powered by No. 59102 *Village of Chantry* – which is thought to be the first ever visit of a Class 59/1 to the route. JOHN VAUGHAN



Work-stained Colas 'Grid' No. 56113 looks like it has been used on railhead treatment trains, but on December 13 it is seen passing Tupton (south of Chesterfield) with the 6Z76/05.10 Redcar to Longport stone train. ROBERT FALCONER

Wakefield on time (18.25) this train then ran to York to arrive three minutes early at 19.52.

Locomotive Services

LSL's Blue Pullman set with Class 43 Nos. 43046+43055 ran ECS on Monday, November 6, from Crewe (5Z51/08.00) to Falklands Down Goods Loop in Ayrshire.

The following day, the set ran from Newton-on-Ayr (1Z53/05.57) via Dumfries and Durham to Whitby and back. On Wednesday, November 8 this formation returned ECS to Crewe (5Z26) to arrive at 17.01.

Having arrived at Watford Junction from Eastleigh (5Z43/03.57) on Thursday, November 23, LSL's Blue Pullman Class 43 Nos. 43055+43059 set off at 06.06 (1Z43) on a 385 mile journey to Edinburgh. This formation later returned south from Edinburgh (1Z44/15.52) to arrive back at Watford at 23.42. From there the Midland Pullman ran ECS (5Z45) north to Crewe.

LSL's Large logo blue Class 37 No.37409 + green liveried D6817 (37521) pulled an ECS rake of off-white unbranded Mk.3 coaches Nos. 40221+ 41063+41117+42100+ 42220+44047 on Thursday, November 30 on a 5Z84/09.09 from Crewe to Carlisle Upperby.

Arlington Fleet Services, Eastleigh

Mk.2 TSO Nos. 5919, 6046 and 6173 have arrived from Great Yarmouth for work to prepare them for seasonal trains. Mk.3 RFM No. 10212 has also arrived for overhaul. Mk. 3 TRFB 40902 departed for Great Yarmouth and export, hauled by Class 37 No. 37667 on November 13.

Class 313 No. 313201 is now formally preserved by the 400 Series Preservation Group and is currently operational on the Works' third rail system.

EMR King George V Dock, Glasgow

After a number of months of speculation, *The RM* was able to reveal exclusively in the Stock Update in the December issue that two vehicles from set No. 321402, Nos. 71950 and 77944 used in a NR exercise were sold to the above scrap yard on the south side of the River Clyde for disposal, arriving at the yard on October 2 by road from Millerhill.

Great Yarmouth

Further stock has arrived at Great Yarmouth pending export. On November 8 Rail Adventure Class 43 Nos. 43468+43480 top-and-tailed Nos. 40750+42585+41087 from Ely.

On November 11 Class 37 No. 37611 brought a rake of CrossCountry Mk.3 coaches through from Barrow Hill, followed two days later by the second rake from Barrow Hill. Also arriving at Great Yarmouth on November 11 were power cars Nos. 43306+43320+ 43316+43307 from the Severn Valley Railway (SVR). However, their stay was short as they returned to the SVR on November 21 for further attention prior to leaving the country.

Loram

On Monday, November 1 GBRf Class 73 No. 73962 *Dick Mabbutt* was seen bringing test train 1Q60, from Woking Up Yard Reception to St Albans Abbey, to a halt beside platform 18 at Waterloo. Behind No. 73962 were Radio survey coach No. 9481, Radio survey test vehicle No. 977997, Brake force runner No. 72639, Laboratory coach No. 977974 and at the rear GBRf Class 73 No. 73961 *Alison*.

A little later in the day at Victoria station, Class 37 No. 37612, in blue livery, was seen hauling test train 3Q22, from Hither Green Pre Assembly Depot and back to Hither Green P.A.D., via Haywards Heath, which came to a stand by platform 7. Behind the Class 37 were Brake runner (former Motorail van) No. 96604, Generator No. 6260, former Caledonian Sleeper coach No. 9810, in blue livery, Ultrasonic test coach No. 999606, and Remote driving car No. 9703.

Colas Rail Class 43 Nos.43251+43290 top-and-tailed a rake of yellow liveried NR Track Measurement rolling stock on Tuesday, November 7 on a 1Q26/06.10 from Derby to Edinburgh via Shap. On the following day it returned south to Crewe from Edinburgh (1Q26/06.38).

Class 73s Nos. 73962 *Dick Mabbutt* and 73965 *Des O'Brien* visited Littlehampton twice on November 13 working Tonbridge to Tonbridge via the Sussex West Coastway and the Brighton Main Line. The stock was formed of Nos. 977974+72639+977997+9481.

Class 43 HST power cars Nos. 43251+43274 operated a 0Z50/11.11 Derby RTC to Derby RTC test run via Wellingborough, Oakham, London St Pancras and Oakham again on November 23. The service was around an hour late passing Market Harborough both ways.

This was the first time our correspondent had seen a pair of power cars running light at this location.

Having spent the night at Barnham, Sprinter No. 153385 was noted at Littlehampton on November 28 before going to Horsham, Bognor Regis, Three Bridges and Brighton. On the same day Mobile Maintenance unit Nos. DR97508+DR97608+DR97808 visited Littlehampton.

Our thanks

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May, 9	Railway Ramble - Vouga
May, 23	Rotterdam and the Dordt Steam Festival
May, 24	Little Trains of the Dolomites
June, 1	Gorgeous Georgia (with Armenia add-on)
June, 6	Southern France and the Pyrenees
June, 6	Vintage Central Portugal
June, 13	Douro - Rail, River and Wine
June, 23	Classic Bulgaria and the Cherry Festival
June, 23	Norway - Rails and Fjords
July, 3	By Rail to the Midnight Sun
Aug, 8	Vintage Baltics
Sept, 6	Hidden Slovenia
Sept, 7	Mountain Railways of Trentino
Sept, 12	Harz Mountains
Sept, 12	Vintage Port
Sept, 15	Vintage Slovenia
Sept, 26	Magical Minho
Sept, 26	Rail Wonders of Sardinia, Corsica and Pisa
Sept, 27	Little Trains of the Dolomites
Oct, 6	Classic Montenegro
Oct, 10	The Railways Around Bilbao
Nov, 20	Naples and Amalfi Coast
	Worldwide Rail and Culture Tours
March, 14	Icons of Australia (4 pages)
May, 2	The Canadian
June, 4	Rail & Natural Wonders of Alaska
Oct, 5	USA Western States (4 pages)
Oct, TBC	The Railways of Mexico
	UK Tours
May, 9	Springtime in Scotland
May, 30	Portmeirion and the Railways of Snowdonia
June, 7	Central Wales - Trains, Ales and Gardens
	Railway Enthusiast Tours
March,	25th Anniversary Special
May	ALSA Barcelona tour
TBC	Bigboy steaming special to US
Sep	The Great Peruvian Adventure (Summary)
Dec	Enthusiast Tour - possibly Romania
April, 5	Vietnam
Oct, 10	The Eger Counter

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No public funding for flood damage repairs

Local authority turns down Downpatrick group request for money to help fix storm damage.

DOWNPATRICK and County Down Railway (DCDR) will not receive grant aid support from its local authority Newry, Mourne and Down District Council from the Business Flood grant scheme – despite flooding causing extensive damage to the railway at the end of October during Storm Ciaran (*RM* December 2023).

DCDR chairman Robert Gardiner told *The RM*: "We find the decision by the local council not to provide any financial support disappointing, just because we have insurance. While the grant of £7500 would be helpful, it's a long way off the actual cost of the damage the flooding has caused. We estimate that damage to tools and equipment alone is more than £500,000."

He added: "We have not finalised the cost of the damage to our rolling stock, which needs to be assessed by a specialist rail industry assessor, and that is not due to take place until mid-December. However, a potential insurance claim will not cover all the cost of the flood damage.

"We don't know if there has been any damage to the station building and the carriage gallery which are council owned. We know that, for example, we must rebuild the platform at Inch Abbey before we can operate trains there as flood water caused subsidence and we need to ensure our bridges are safe."

DCDR has started work to dry out the traction motors on its locos and railcars. It is proving to be a slow process, made even more complex by the lack of heavy lifting gear on the railway. Class 450 No. 458 and ex-CIE Deutz loco No. G617 are now operable. Efforts are being concentrated on returning GM No. 146 to traffic – which is key to future operations, and allow No. 458 with Mk.2 DSBO to be rescued in the event of failure.

Work continues on Class 80 power car No. 80+749, with the vehicles being moved carefully up and down by G class loco No. G617, with axles being inspected and excess water removed. No. 90 has suffered from considerable (and rapid) corrosion that has developed on the batteries because of the flooding. Work has also started on drying out and assessing power car No. 69.

MERLIN BOWS OUT:



Railway Preservation Society of Ireland's GNR 4-4-0 No. 85 *Merlin* was rostered to work its last trip for the foreseeable future on December 17 – its boiler certificate being due to expire December 31. The 4-4-0 has been in traffic since 2014 and has been the mainstay of main line steam out of Dublin. It is expected to follow NCC 'Jeep' WT Class 2-6-4T No. 4, which is the next loco due to be overhauled by the RPSI once GNR S Class 4-4-0 No. 171 *Slieve Gullion* returns to service later in 2024. No. 85 is seen climbing out of Drumcondra station for Maynooth with the second Santa train on December 2. GERRY MOONEY

TRACK MACHINE ON TRIAL:

The new Geismar Track Recording Vehicle No. 701 started trials on Iarnród Éireann (IÉ) in early November. The model VMB 2014TM-US is a modern self-propelled two-bogie bi-directional vehicle and is operated by Rhomberg Sersa on behalf of IÉ. Equipped to measure and inspect the track, the vehicle includes a remote diagnostic and data recorder system which allows the machine's location to be pinpointed via GPS. The system reads and records the vehicle's operating data using sensors. This data is stored for backup as well as for diagnostics of possible faults. No. 701 visited the Nenagh Branch on November 14/15 as part of its trials. It is seen arriving at Nenagh on November 15 working the 0935 Limerick-Portlaoise. NEIL DINNEN





NEW TIMETABLE GOES LIVE:

Following approval by the National Transport Authority, Iarnród Éireann's new timetable went live on December 10. Additional services introduced include an early morning service from Limerick connecting into the new 0600 Heuston Cork at Limerick Junction. A major obstacle to growing services has been the lack of drivers. In October, IÉ started the recruitment of 100 extra drivers to allow services to expand over the next two years. On October 24, four-car ICR No. 22045 passes Woodfarm Bridge between Dromkeen and Killonan on the last leg of the 0915 Heuston Limerick driver training special. HASSARD STACPOOLE

SIDELINES

Contracts awarded for station projects

IARNRÓD Éireann (IÉ) let the contract for the reconstruction of Galway Ceannt station to BAM Ireland in early December.

Work is due to begin later this month on the €69.5 million project which will see the realignment of track and signalling to support the increase in the number of platforms from two to five and a new southern entrance to the station. It is expected work will be substantially complete by the summer of 2026 and deliver better integration of the existing bus and rail services.

At the end of November, IÉ let the contract for the construction of the new Woodbrook station located between Bray and Shankill on the DART. It will consist of two 174m-long platforms with associated passenger shelters, seating, lighting, CCTV, passenger information, bicycle parking and ticketing facilities. The station is expected to open in summer 2025.

Report backs Armagh rail link reopening

REINSTATING the former GNR rail line between Portadown and Armagh would deliver shorter journey times between Armagh and Belfast and aid a 10% modal shift generating at least 670,000 journeys each year.

The in-depth technical study by AECOM consultants, funded by Armagh Banbridge Craigavon Council and the Department for Infrastructure, looked at the potential for reopening the line, which closed in September 1957. It has determined that it is operationally feasible, technically deliverable and would promote sustainable transport across the borough and wider region.

The Draft All Island Rail Review recommends the reopening of the route to Armagh and across the border to Cavan and Mullingar.

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Derailment to result in closure of Old Patagonia Express line?

Charter train incident may lead to long-distance narrow gauge line's partial abandonment.



The whole train on its side shortly after it had derailed on November 11. IAIN SCOTCHMAN

THE derailment of a steam charter train on the famous 750mm gauge La Trochita (which literally translates as 'the little gauge'), better known as 'The Old Patagonia Express' route in Southern Argentina on November 11, may mark the end of operations on part of the 423km (263 mile) route which was built in stages from 1923 to 1945.

The train derailed on the last day of a multi-day charter on the route run by USA-based Trains & Travel International (T&TI) with 45 participants from the USA, UK, Canada, Australia, and Europe. Of these, 22 passengers were from UK-based PTG Tours. Several people were injured with a few needing hospital treatment.

The derailment happened in a remote area around 8km southwest of Cerro Mesa station near km post 135 in the central section of the line from Ingeniero Jacobacci to Esquel where work to repair previous washout damage had been specially undertaken in advance of the charter, funded by T&TI.

The loco derailed on the inside of a right-hand curve, where erosion by wind and rain had removed part of the trackbed, and turned on its side down the embankment, unfortunately taking the whole train of five vehicles, including the three passenger coaches, with it.

Sensing the derailment, the engine crew reacted quickly, applying the brakes, shutting off the oil supply to the firebox and opening a steam valve before jumping off the left-hand side of the already overturning loco. Two of the three carriages survived relatively undamaged but one broke up due to the impact. The significant risk of the wooden vehicles catching fire, as they all have wood stoves, was removed by quick-thinking train crew who used fire extinguishers carried on board.

The trip had been advertised as the 'last chance' to travel on 'almost' the whole 423km route – excluding a 24km (15 mile) section blockaded to all trains by the local Mapuche tribe – and sadly this may now be true. Following the accident, it has been announced that the line beyond Cerro Mesa to Norquinco will not be reopened, with rumours also that the wrecked train may not be recovered. The Argentine government has also ordered all regular tourist trains, on the sections of the line that have them in summer, to be suspended pending the accident investigation.

Our thanks to Iain Scotchman for much of the information in this report.



The distortion of the track, probably in part at least caused by the derailment, can be seen along with the train on its side. IAIN SCOTCHMAN



The charter train awaits departure from Cerro Mesa on November 11. IAIN SCOTCHMAN

Hitachi wins Italian high speed order

ITALIAN national operator Trenitalia has ordered another 30 ETR1000 high speed trains from Hitachi, in a contract worth €861 million. The trains will be delivered in 2026-2029 from Hitachi's Pistoia and Naples factories and are designed for use all over Europe. An option worth €287 million for 10 more trains has also been agreed. Trenitalia has already got 58 ETR1000s with six more due for delivery in 2024.

Diesel use to decline in Slovakia due to electrification

FROM the December timetable change, Czech private operator Leo Express (which is 50% owned by Spanish national operator RENFE) took over operation of regional services on the 97km line between Bratislava and Komárno.

The nine-year contract is being operated with a fleet of 21 refurbished ex-German Alstom LINT DMUs leased from Alpha Trains. The new Leo Express service has replaced an unusual joint operation by Slovak national operator ZSSK along with its Austrian equivalent ÖBB, which had resulted in Austrian Class 2016 diesel locos working domestic Slovak services alongside ZSSK locos and DMUs.

The Austrian Class 2016 locos are currently diagrammed to work all Vienna-Bratislava services using the currently non-electrified Marchegg-Devínska Nová Ves route and this was how the Austrian locos and push-pull sets got to Slovakia for the Komárno service.

The Marchegg-Devínska Nová Ves cross-border section of the Vienna-Bratislava route will be shut during 2024, to allow for the bridge over the river at the border to be rebuilt, and for electrification on the Slovak side at 25kV AC. Electric trains will replace the Class 2016 diesels once electrification is complete.



ÖBB diesel loco No. 2016 001 which carries a special livery for the first block freight train from China to Vienna – but only on one side of the loco – at Komárno, having arrived with a service formed of both Slovak and Austrian stock from Bratislava on July 26, 2023. KEITH FENDER

First of many battery unit fleets in service

THE first fleet of Battery Electric Multiple Units (BEMUs) entered service in the northern German State of Schleswig-Holstein on October 1, from Kiel, on the short non-electrified branch to Kiel Oppendorf.

Three weeks later, more of the trains began operating the longer Kiel-Lübeck-Lüneburg regional route.

The 55 new BEMUs have been bought by Schleswig Holstein transport authority NAH.SH; each of the two-car Class 526 Stadler 'Flirt Akku' trains (Akku is German for battery) has 123 seats; the batteries are carried in roof-mounted sections or under the floor so they do not reduce capacity inside the train.

Stadler has a contract to maintain the fleet for 30 years at a purpose-built depot, currently being built in Rendsburg. It should open in early 2024.

Transport authority NAH.SH will lease the trains to the operators it has selected to run services on the non-electrified secondary routes that connect both coasts of the state. The three contracts cover the majority of non-electrified rail routes in the state.

Once fully BEMU-operated they will help Schleswig-Holstein achieve 68% electric operation for its regional services, despite most lines lacking overhead electrification, with around 10.4 million train kms of diesel operation removed annually, saving an estimated 10 million litres of diesel fuel.

The trains are designed to operate for up to 150km between recharges but timetable planning assumes 80km between charges. To enable the BEMUs to operate away from overhead catenary, three 'electrification islands' – which are electrified station platforms on otherwise non-electrified lines, have been built at key junction or reversal stations where the BEMUs can recharge from the standard 15kV AC overhead when stabled between services or when changing direction.

Several more BEMU fleets are being introduced in Germany in the next two years, from several manufacturers; Eleven Alstom-built Coradia Continental BEMUs are scheduled to start operating services on the part non-electrified Leipzig to Chemnitz route from early 2024; 20 Siemens 'Mireo+B' Class 563 BEMUs will enter service on regional routes from Offenburg serving the Black Forest in December, and another 31 are on order for services in Brandenburg east of Berlin from late 2024.



Brand new BEMU No. 826008+526008 at Kiel Hauptbahnhof on November 14, 2023 with a train for Kiel Oppendorf. On the right is a Class 648 DMU also operated by Erixx Holstein arriving from Lübeck which will be replaced by BEMUs in early 2024. KEITH FENDER

From 2025 there will be more BEMUs as CAF is building a fleet of 73 'Civity' BEMUs for transport authorities in the Ruhr region and Stadler has also won further orders for its 'Flirt Akku' with two fleets on order for operation in western and eastern Germany by DB Regio from 2025/26. BEMUs are also on order for use in several other EU countries from the mid-2020s.

Roaring Camp celebrates 50th year as a heritage line

CALIFORNIAN heritage railway the Roaring Camp and Big Trees Narrow Gauge Railroad celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2023.

The 3ft (914mm) gauge line was built in the early 1960s in Felton, south of San Francisco, opening in 1963 specifically to re-create early American logging railroads, and to provide a base for a growing collection of locos which includes examples of Shay, Heisler and Climax gear driven steam locos, all of which utilise two axle power bogies.

The line climbs very steeply to a summit at Bear Mountain. It has undergone some changes since it was first built through an area in one of the last remaining Redwood forests on the Californian Pacific coast, as part of the original route on wooden trestles through the trees was destroyed in a fire in 1976.



The oldest loco at the Roaring Camp and Big Trees is Heisler design 'Tuolumne' which dates from 1899 (Stearns Manufacturing Co, Erie, Works No. 1041) which worked at the West Side Lumber Company in Tuolumne California from 1899 when new until 1968 when it was sold to the heritage line. The loco is seen leaving Felton with a train on August 20, 2023. KEITH FENDER



F Class 0-6-0ST No. F13 'Peveril' seen at Ferrymead with a demonstration freight train on October 21, 2023 as part of the 150th birthday celebration. Two more Victorian era steam locos; D Class 2-4-0Ts No. D 16 (Neilson & Co, Glasgow 1878) from the Pleasant Point Railway near Timaru and Ferrymead based No. D 140 (Scott Brothers, Christchurch 1887) were also in steam at the event and are out of sight on the rear of the train. ROBERT SWEET

Scottish built loco marks 150th birthday in NZ

THE Ferrymead Railway in Christchurch celebrated the 150th anniversary for ex-New Zealand Railways 0-6-0ST No. F13 'Peveril' on October 21.

No. F 13 was built by Neilson & Co in Glasgow in 1872 and entered service in New Zealand in December 1873. The F Class was the first to be used widely across New Zealand and eventually 88 were built, by multiple British manufacturers, although some examples were for industrial use.

Most of the Class were withdrawn and scrapped in the 1940s and 50s, but a few survived into the late 1960s with one (No. F163) retained for main line steam special train operation after the rest were stored in 1968. No. F13, one of the first to be introduced, was one of the last to be withdrawn in 1968.

Nine of the F class have been preserved and currently the only other operational F Class loco is No. F 180 (Dubs & Co 1880) at the Museum of Transport & Technology (MOTAT) in Auckland.

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Railways Remembered: North East England



By Martin Jenkins and Charles Roberts

THIS book, the first Railways Remembered title in what will be a series covering specific regions and collections of photographs, certainly sets a high standard.

All of the images (around 200 in total) are in colour, many of them from the Online Transport Archive (a UK charity to which the authors, both trustees of the organisation, have donated their fees). Others come from fellow charity the Restoration & Archiving Trust, from custodians of other collections, or from individual photographers. That they cover an era from the 1950s to 1970s, when black and white was still the most common medium for capturing railway images, and that many have not appeared in print before, makes this publication even more noteworthy.

Well-balanced and captioned with particular thought, it flows seamlessly, starting in Northumberland, close to the border with Scotland and working its way gradually southwards to areas that were once in the North Riding of Yorkshire.

The North East is an area where, even into the latter half of the 20th century, colliery and other industrial networks were as much a part of the railway fabric as main and branch line operations. Although most, if not all, have been fairly extensively covered before, the real standout for me was the prevalence of shots that are likely to offer even the most well-read enthusiast something new to look at.

I can honestly say I found each page equally engaging, and if this is representative of the rest of the series, I think readers will be in for a real treat. GP

Published by Crécy Publishing
www.crecy.co.uk
160 pages, hardback. £22.50

From scrap line to main line – The Deltic story 1982 to 2022

By Guy Middleton



THE six surviving 'Deltics' have now spent roughly twice as long in preservation as they did in BR service, so there is much scope for a book covering their 'second life', and this is delivered very well here.

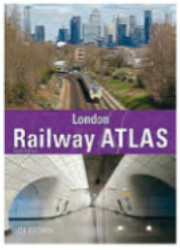
This 256-page book is divided into 41 chapters, one for each year since 1982. The chapters cover what each locomotive did that year, plus any fleet details such as overhauls, repairs, relocations, sales, and contracts.

Every significant moment in the post-BR history is covered, backed up by a great selection of images of the locos at work and on shed – including rarely seen shots of repairs and restoration work – making this a recommended buy for all 'Deltic' fans. **PB**

Published by Eastfield Media
www.eastfieldmedia.com
256 pages, hardback. £35.00

London Rail Atlas

By Joe Brown



THIS is now the sixth edition of this outstandingly popular map book covering all the lines in and around London. A number of significant additions have occurred since 2018's fifth edition, most notably the completion of the Elizabeth Line; the Northern line branch to Battersea Power Station; and the extension of the electrification of the overground to Barking.

The maps are drawn to a high degree of accuracy and include not only the overground and underground lines but also industrial railways. Coverage ranges beyond the central areas to also include Tilbury, Gravesend, Windsor, and Redhill.

For those who have not encountered this publication before, it should be noted that it is more than just a map book. Almost half of it is taken up with a comprehensive index that details opening and, where appropriate, closing dates of lines, stations, yards and junctions, along with information of original operating companies, and again, where appropriate, renaming of stations.

If there are criticisms, it is that the need to include so much information within a limited space has resulted in the publisher using a very small typeface in various places, making reading quite a challenge. A second slight issue is that some of the large scale insert maps are often scattered throughout the book where suitable 'gaps' in the maps can be filled, making referring to the index essential. And finally, any former lines are printed in a pale pink colour that is far from easy to see, and a change to a different colour might be useful in future editions.

But despite the few constructive criticisms listed above, this is a highly recommended publication for anyone interested in maps and/or the railways in and around England's capital city. **AB**

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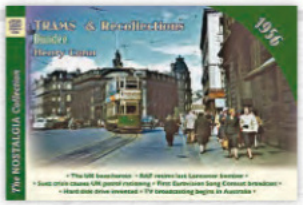
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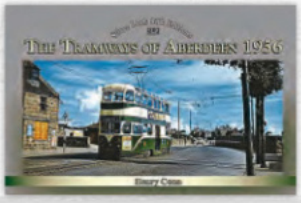
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All set for Model Rail Scotland

MODEL Rail Scotland, one of the UK's most popular exhibitions, will return to the Scottish Event Campus, Glasgow over the weekend of Friday to Sunday February 23-25.

Model Rail Scotland is supported by Accurascale, Bachmann Europe, Hornby Hobbies and Peco. The exhibition will be open between 10.30am and 6pm on Friday and Saturday and between 10.30am and 5pm on Sunday. Tickets will be £15 for adults, £5 for children and £35 for families (2+2).

Mountsorrel fair

THE Ivanhoe Model Railway Society's next event is a diecast, toy and train fair on Sunday, January 14.

The event takes place between 10am and 3pm at the Mountsorrel Memorial Centre, 105 Leicester Road, Mountsorrel, LE12 7DB. It is described as a medium sized event with mainly local traders which has a friendly atmosphere.

Attractions will include a vintage model railway display. Refreshments are available, it is wheelchair friendly and has free parking available for all visitors. Please see advert on the page opposite for more details.

It's time to go digital in Lincoln

BUILDING on last year's success, Lincoln-based model specialist Digitrains is holding another digital open day on January 20.

Bachmann is confirmed as a guest this year, alongside the Witham OO Gauge Layout from Martin Reynolds. Other guests are to be confirmed. As well as the special layouts, Digitrains' own layouts will also be in action. The event is free to enter and the shop will be open from 10am to 5pm. For details, visit www.digitrains.co.uk call 01522 527731 or email enquiries@digitrains.co.uk

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An official LNER image of the loco as No. 2395 when it took part in the S&DR cavalcade in 1925. LNER/NRM

Gearing up for Garratt release

Heljan's standard gauge Beyer-Garratt on course to be available in time for 2025 celebrations.

HELJAN expects to have working samples for review of its new standard gauge Beyer-Garratt loco model in the coming weeks with the first releases planned for early 2025.

The LNER's unique 'U1' 2-8-0+0-8-2T Beyer-Garratt was the largest and most powerful steam locomotive ever to run on British rails. No. 2395 (BR No. 69999) was deployed on arduous banking duties on the infamous inclines at Worsbrough near Barnsley, and the Lickey Incline near Birmingham.

The OO gauge model is the result of in-depth research supported by the National Railway Museum, the Manchester Museum of Science and Industry's Beyer Peacock Archive and the Gresley Society.

Heljan is working with Rails of Sheffield and Locomotion Models to produce an exclusive edition for the Railway Icons collection.

Celebrating the centenary of the 'U1' and 200th anniversary of the Stockton & Darlington Railway (S&DR) opening in 1825, the model will depict No. 2395 in works grey, as it appeared at the LNER's S&DR centenary cavalcade shortly after completion in 1925.

This special collectors' edition will feature bespoke packaging plus DCC Ready and factory-fitted DCC Sound options and production will be strictly limited.

Early ordering is strongly recommended to avoid disappointment. See www.locomotionmodels.com/railway-icons and railsofsheffield.com for more information.

Other variants of the loco will cover the loco throughout its 30-year life working life.

Using original works drawings and photographs Heljan has created a collection of museum-quality models covering the entire career of the locomotive and the various modifications it underwent. These include changes to the smokebox, water tank breather pipes, coal bunker, handrails, cab and additional vacuum tanks. Also included is a model depicting the locomotive after conversion to oil firing, which saw modifications to the former coal bunker, the addition of a turbo generator for the electric headlight and associated pipework/cable runs.

Features delivered as standard include: Twin motor/flywheel drive; working LED lamps; sprung buffers; removable cab roof; NEM couplings; and separate pipework and cable runs.



BACK IN THE O GAUGE GAME: Accurascale has rejoined the O-gauge market after a four-year absence – during which time it has focused on OO gauge. Its first model back will be a Ruston & Hornsby 88DS diesel mechanical shunter – a model initially started and planned before the Covid-19 pandemic. A total of eight locomotives will make up the initial production run featuring various liveries. With an RRP of £229.95 for the DC/DCC-ready locomotive or £319.99 for sound-fitted versions, modellers will have to wait until early 2025 before delivery is made.

China Clay to be in Accurascale range

ACCURASCALE is to fill one of the missing prototypes from the first run of its MGR collection with the release of a CDA china clay hopper in original ECC International (ECCI) livery with a blue hopper cradle.

A total of 124 purpose-built CDA wagons were introduced in 1988 followed by conversions from MGR wagons. The classic ECC International livery was applied from new, and it managed to survive into the early 1990s when the ECCI logos started to be removed.

The wagons are closely associated with St Blazey allocated Class 37/4s in the 376XX number sequence which will make them popular models for the late BR Railfreight era.

They will share the same specification as previously released models including a cast metal underframe, provision for 26mm long axles and a wealth of small details and fittings, bespoke to the CDA design, including the converted MGR wagons.

In addition to the hood and the opening mechanism, the CDA model will be correctly detailed with brake equipment mounted on the end of the underframe and the correct pattern of buffers.



The detailed finish on Accurascale model is clearly evident.

A late summer or autumn 2024 delivery is anticipated for the models. Prices start at £79.95 for packs of three individually numbered wagons with discounts for purchases of two packs or more. Eight packs are available with and without the ECC International branding. Visit www.accurascale.com for details.

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I have **NOT** sold Scale Link Ltd., who will continue to sell Scale Link wheels, Hanazono & Tenshodo motor-bogies, Imon (Shinohara) trackwork, selected Markits, Hornby Dublo, Dinky Toys and all of the products of W&T, our sister company.

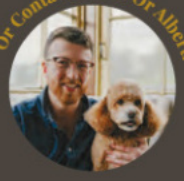
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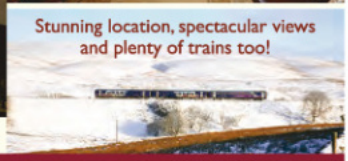
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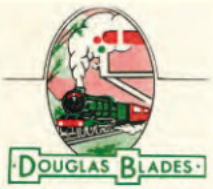
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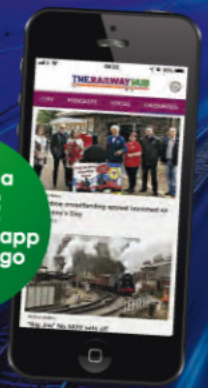
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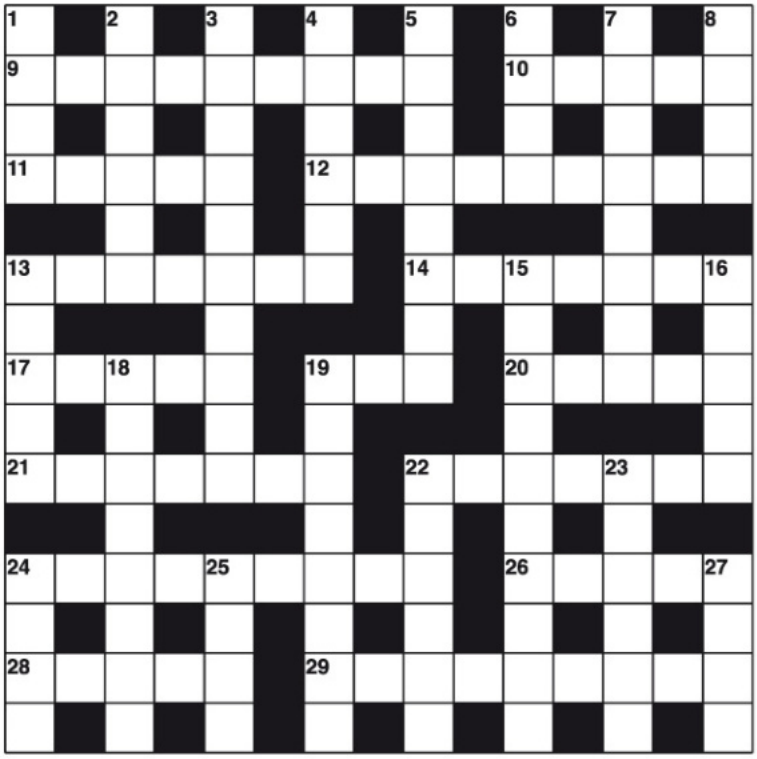
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Across

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10 Station between Oxford and Bicester (5)
11 ___ Bridge, last station before Fort William (5)
12 Somerset & Dorset tunnel south of 24 down (5,4)
13 Former BR express parcels service (3,4)
14 The 'S' of former BR Sector RES (7)
17 *County of* ___, GWR No. 1026 (5)
19 Yeovil ___ Mill station (3)
20 Initials of the pre-Grouping 'Brighton Line' company (5)
21 Town that had West and East stations, the latter on the Eden Valley line (7)
22 ___ *Hall*, GWR No. 5987 (7)
24 Surrey cemetery that was served by the Necropolis station at Waterloo (9)
26 ___ and Claribel, Thomas the Tank Engine's carriages (5)
28 Common name for a BR station name sign in regional colours (5)
29 Electrification method in use on former Southern Region lines (5,4)



Down

1 ___ Yard, former marshalling yard near Middlesbrough (4)
2 Part of the connecting rod attached to the crank axle (3,3)
3 Lynton & ___ Railway (10)
4 Town on the 1 down Valley Line with Central and East stations (6)
5 Edward ___, LNER CME, 1941-46 (8)
6 See 9 across
7 Nickname for LNWR 2-2-2s of 1854-61 (8)
8 Non-compartment coach (4)
13 ___ & Pontymister station on the Ebbw Valley Line (5)
15 Town with a Warrior Square station (2,8)
16 '___ & Winkle', nickname for the Andover-Redbridge line (5)
18 Station between Tyseley and Hatton (8)
19 City that had North Road and Friary stations (8)
22 ___ & Wenford Railway (6)
23 Station on the Windermere branch (6)
24 City that had a Green Park station (4)
25 ___ Town, terminus of a short 20 across branch at Brighton (4)
27 Willerby & Kirk ___, former Hull & Barnsley station (4)

January crossword entry form

Name

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Send completed form (photocopies are accepted) to: January 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 March 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 November issue

Across: 1 Rotterdam 6 Lloyd 9 Liner 10 McConnell 11 Hero 12 Venus 13 Ince 16 Riddles 17 Freight 19 Cheviot 21 Belgian 22 East 24 Track 25 LSWR 29 Terminate 30 Ewell 31 Roman 32 Owen Tudor

Down: 1 Ralph 2 Tunbridge 3 Eire 4 Dampers 5 Macduff 6 Link 7 Ocean 8 Dulverton 14 Ellis 15 Wells 16 Rochester 18 Grinstead 20 Tornado 21 Buckeye 23 Sarum 26 Ruler 27 Lion 28 West

November winner: A Kebble, Brackley.

Runners-up: C Dingley, Chorley; G J Clarke, Preston.

The closing date for this month's crossword is Friday, February 9, 2024.

The editor's decision is final and no correspondence can be entered into. No employee (including the immediate families) of Mortons Media Ltd or any subsidiary company, and The Nostalgia Collection or any subsidiary company, or any company associated with the production of *The Railway Magazine*, may enter this competition. No purchase necessary. No cash alternatives are offered and prizes are not transferable. Responsibility cannot be accepted for delayed, lost or damaged entry forms.

Coming up next month...

FOLLOWING in the footsteps of the Victorian-era publication 'Murray's Hand-Book to Scotland', Dr Joseph Brennan takes a trip along the highly scenic West Highland Line from Glasgow to Fort William and Mallaig, describing the route through its many outstanding viaducts that stand as a testament to the railway engineers that built them, which include those at the Horseshoe Curve, Rannoch, and – now the most famous of all thanks to Harry Potter – Glenfinnan.



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Many of our *Driver's eye views* go inside the relevant signal boxes, for example in our 4cities, no less than 9 signal boxes are included. (We've even put together the *Signal Box Archive* which looks inside over 70 signal boxes that we've filmed over the years, everything from the earliest mechanical 'boxes to the latest *Rail Operating Centres*).

Our most recent *Driver's eye view* is over the *North Downs Line* from Gatwick Airport to Reading, on board a GWR class 165 Turbo. We also released a fascinating look inside the standard gauge garden railway of the late Sir William McAlpine at *Fawley Hill* with both diesel and steam action to boot.

We've just completed the first ever *Driver's eye view* of the iconic *Darjeeling Himalayan Railway*, filmed in two parts using the latest camera technology that made such a film possible.

If you really don't fancy a *Driver's eye view* or one of our feature productions, why not try one of our full range of archive productions? The late John Huntley, famous in railway circles for his public film shows, narrated our 35mm film series which include the very best quality moving pictures of steam, diesel and electric trains from the 1930s to the 1970s that were ever filmed (using the professional cinema film format of 35mm), they never shot anything better. Add to that the original sounds as well…

You can also *download* any of our productions to watch either on your computer or even on your normal TV. They're that little bit cheaper too and of course our quantity discounts apply to both downloads and discs, starting at 10% for 2 and going right up to 25%!

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