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■ **COVER:** Preserved 4-VEP No. 3417 returned to Waterloo station for the first time in more than 18 years on January 27. See page 8 for the full story. CHRIS MILNER

The RAILWAY Magazine

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SUBSCRIPTIONS

Full subscription rates (but see page 44 for offer): (12 months, 12 issues, including post and packing) £63 for the UK. Export rates are also available, see page 44 for more details. UK subscriptions are zero-rated for the purposes of Value Added Tax.

Enquiries: subscriptions@mortons.co.uk

CUSTOMER SERVICES

General Queries & Back Issues

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PRINT AND DISTRIBUTION

Printed by: William Gibbons & Sons Ltd.

Magazine & Catalogue Printer, 26 Planetary Road, Willenhall, West Midlands, WV13 3XB

Distribution by: Seymour Distribution Ltd, 2 Poultry Avenue, London, EC1A 9PU

Enquiries Line: 0207 429 4000

EDITORIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Accepted photographs and articles will be paid for upon publication. Items we cannot use will be returned if accompanied by a stamped addressed envelope, and recorded delivery must clearly state so and enclose sufficient postage. In common with practice on other rail periodicals, all material is sent or returned at the contributor's own risk and neither The Railway Magazine, the editor, the staff nor Mortons Media Ltd can be held responsible for loss or damage, howsoever caused. The opinions expressed in The RM are not necessarily those of the editor or staff. This periodical must not, without the written consent of the publishers first being given, be lent, sold, hired out or otherwise disposed of in a mutilated condition or, in any unauthorised cover by way of trade or annexed to or as part of any publication or advertising, literary or pictorial matter whatsoever.

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CDs or memory sticks can also be accepted by post.

This issue was published on February 7, 2024.

The next issue will be on sale on March 6, 2024.

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Averting a crisis

As Chris Milner so aptly puts it in his feature on page 20 this month: "What beggars belief is how virtually new rolling stock can be cast aside so quickly." And what makes it a double whammy is that, while virtually new trains are stuck in sidings, services on some routes are crying out for more capacity.

One of the most high-profile examples in recent months was the withdrawal of HSTs from the CrossCountry network, the operator effectively being told to do so by the Department for Transport. While HSTs were introduced in the 1970s, upgrades and refurbishments over the years have meant there is still life left in them yet – as witnessed by the export of some sets for further use in Mexico and Nigeria (see page 8). Without them, CrossCountry has had to stretch its fleet of 'Voyagers' to cope – and once you have had to stand from, say, Leeds to Birmingham, then the average traveller may well think twice about using rail again.

Similarly at TransPennine Express, where its loco-powered Mk.5 sets were stood down in December. Without them, TPE has had to reduce services across the Pennines so that its mid-life Class 185 DMU and Class 802 bi-mode fleets could be stretched to cover the work.

There are many other similar examples, including all the new stock in store that is

yet to enter traffic, and all this against a background of a hole in railway finances because overall passenger numbers are not yet back to pre-pandemic levels.

But the operators have no incentive to try and boost these numbers because, since the pandemic, they are now simply paid a fee to run services and the Government takes all the revenue risk. Its current approach to balancing the books is to save costs by running fewer or shorter trains, rather than to tempt more passengers back with a better service and a good chance of a seat. Let us hope the next general election brings about a change of mindset.

Crossword cross words

My apologies to fans of our popular crossword competition who like to submit their entries by email. The dedicated address mysteriously stopped working towards the end of last year, resulting in some head scratching within our IT department. Suffice to say, however, that the problem is resolved and the address rmcomp@mortons.co.uk is now working as normal.



Please see page 106 for this month's puzzle and the chance to win £50 of books from the Nostalgia Collection.

Paul Bickerdyke,
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Rail Holidays of the World



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

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- ❖ Dresden Steam Engine Festival, including evening photographic session at Roundhouse 1
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The RAILWAY Magazine

VICTORIAN POWER: Aspinal 0-6-0 No. 52322 was a star attraction at the Great Central Railway's three-day Winter Steam Gala on January 26-28. The locomotive was built at Horwich Works in 1895 for the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway, surviving in service until 1960 and entering preservation shortly after. It is now owned by Andy Booth at the East Lancashire Railway, but is seen on the GCR gala's middle day making a storming exit from Loughborough Central with the 09.00 to Leicester North. Also taking part in the gala were BR Standard '4MT' No. 75069 from the Severn Valley Railway, six home fleet locos (Nos. 6990, 48305, 73156, 78018, 78019, 92214), the NER 1903 Autocar and Derby Lightweight diesel unit *Iris*. HAYDEN SHEPPARD

'Slam-door' VEP relaunched at London Waterloo

£50,000 needed to complete third-rail EMU's mainline return.

By Chris Milner

THE sole surviving complete 4-VEP EMU No. 3417 *Gordon Pettitt* was launched back into traffic at London Waterloo on January 27.

Once the backbone of commuter services on third-rail lines south of the Thames, the last time a VEP was seen at Waterloo was in 2005.

It was the culmination of almost 10 years of work by the Southern Electric Traction Group (SETG), members of which have worked tirelessly on the restoration of the slam-door unit named after British Rail's former Southern Region general manager Gordon Pettitt.

The 88-year-old Mr Pettit was present at the event, hence the number

'88' displayed on the unit's headcode panel.

Because the restoration has taken place at Strawberry Hill depot, off-limits to the public, the group used the opportunity to showcase the work to date, and provide a platform for its bid to raise £50,000 needed to fit No. 3417 with the safety equipment for mainline running.



VEP No. 3417 was transported to Waterloo and back top-and-tailed by GBRF 'electro-diesels' Nos. 73109 *Battle of Britain 80th Anniversary* and 73119 *Paul Taylor* – the formation seen arriving in the capital as 5Z73, the 10.39 from Strawberry Hill via Richmond. CHRIS MILNER



Railway royalty at Waterloo for the 4-VEP event on January 27, with (standing from left) Network Rail chairman Baron Peter Hendy, former Network SouthEast boss Chris Green, SWR managing director Claire Mann and GBRF chief executive John Smith, all behind ex-Southern Region manager Gordon Pettitt. CHRIS MILNER

Bought for £1

The unit was sold by South West Trains to the Bluebell Railway in January 2009 for £1, and since 2012 it has been in the care of the SETG – a group founded by South West Trains staff members based at Wimbledon Park depot.

The unit was kept at several locations, including Clapham Junction and Bombardier Ilford, before moving to its current home at Strawberry Hill in December 2015. SETG is providing the specialist operational and technical knowledge to return the unit to mainline operation, which could be done by the end of this year.

The SETG is one of the UK's smaller preservation groups, but what has been achieved so far is nothing short of remarkable. It acknowledges that preservation of third-rail

vehicles remains a niche, but has the support in-depth to overcome any hurdles placed in its path. To that end, there are hopes the VEP will appear at some mainline-connected heritage railways this year, and the SETG's Steve Upton said the group is open to offers for other such visits.

The remaining work includes completing the restoration of both cabs, adding data recorders (OTMR) and GSM-R cab radio, and fitting central door locking – a potentially expensive project given the number of doors. There are also plans to fit anti-override components to the buckeye couplers and controlled emission toilets.

For further information visit www.setg.org.uk, or to make a donation go to www.setg.org.uk/donate.

More HSTs for export

By Ashley Butlin

THE export of the next batch of HST stock from Great Yarmouth to Mexico is underway.

Seven power cars – Nos. 43007, 43295, 43306/07/16/20/78 – have been moved by road the short distance from Eastern Rail Services' carriage sidings to the docks to await the arrival of the cargo ship *Louise Auerbach*.

These will be followed by 18 Mk. 3 vehicles: TFKB No. 40750; TFB No. 40902; TF Nos. 41026, 41193; TS Nos. 42036/52/53, 42366/73/78/80, 42408, 42585; TGS Nos. 44017/52/72 and TCK Nos. 45002/05. Nos. 42036 and 44017 are non-operational for spare parts.

The export of HST train sets to both Mexico and Nigeria has

been arranged by UK-based specialist Romic Consulting, working with partners such as Eastern Rail Services, Peel Ports, and Allelys.

HSTs have travelled millions of miles in Britain, but an initial feasibility study by Romic found they could still provide new operators overseas with a reliable and cost-effective passenger train for many years to come.

At the time of going to press a total of 14 power cars and 22 trailers have been shipped to Mexico; with a further 11 power cars and 11 trailers shipped to Nigeria. The project is expected to continue for a further two to three years, with further shipments to both countries in the planning stages.



HSTs ENTER SERVICE IN MEXICO: HST sets shipped to Mexico have entered service on the Ferrocarril del Istmo de Tehuantepec (FIT) line from Coatzacoalcos to Salina Cruz, which was formally reopened by Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador on December 22, writes Keith Fender. The HSTs have been given new liveries and fitted with standard North American buckeye couplers enabling rescue by locomotives in the event of failure. Currently one daily train each way uses a HST set, but it is planned to introduce a second later this year. FIT No. 3007 (the former GWR No. 43170 *Chepstow Castle*) is seen at Salina Cruz on January 4. STEVE COSSEY



Open access operator WSMR could return to once again connect Wrexham with London, only this time using Class 221 or 222 DMUs and use Euston rather than Marylebone. A month after WSMR's original launch, No. 67012 is seen shunting at Wrexham on May 30, 2008 with a typical formation of just three Mk.3 coaches.

Rise in open access applications

FirstGroup seeks to serve Sheffield, while Wrexham and Shropshire could return.

By 'Industry Update'

FIRSTGROUP has applied to the Office of Rail and Road to run trains between King's Cross and Sheffield via Retford.

The new service would be an extension of its Hull Trains operation and offer a faster journey to the South Yorkshire city than those routed via the Midland Main Line.

Two daily return trips are initially planned with calling points at Worksop and Woodhouse.

The application reflects past use of the East Coast Main Line to reach Sheffield, such as the 'Master Cutler' Pullman that ran via Retford until 1966, as well as the low market share held by rail for journeys between Sheffield and London, three quarters of which are made using private cars and a further 9% by coach.

That market share was the basis of FirstGroup's application to run the Lumo open access service between Edinburgh and King's Cross, which offered reduced fares to compete with airline travel and has attracted more than two million passengers since the service began in October 2021.

Lumo runs five daily return services calling at Morpeth and Newcastle using a fleet of five-car Class 803 EMUs which

are configured as Standard Class-only.

All successful open access operations so far are on the East Coast Main Line, which in part reflects work done to increase capacity – including Hitchin flyover, the closure of Barkston Junction north of Grantham, and Werrington dive-under north of Peterborough.

GWML enhancements

On the Great Western Main Line, Grand Union Trains has received approval to operate between Carmarthen and London, with intermediate calls that include Cardiff.

The ORR's decision letter of December 1, 2022 provides a useful insight into the forecast revenue for the services by indicating that 44% would be new business. An attraction will be non-stop running between Bristol Parkway and Paddington. However, it is understood the start date has been put back beyond the intended December 2024 timetable change.

The response by Great Western Railway to GUT has been to increase services to Carmarthen, which has the potential to weaken the revenue of the new open access operator, although the Competition and Markets Authority has powers to

intervene if any action is seen as being an abuse of monopoly power.

Elsewhere, GWR is seeking to reflect the post-Covid growth of demand in the leisure market, with the reinstatement of direct services between Bristol and Oxford. These were withdrawn in 2003 because of congestion at Didcot West Curve, which was heavily used at the time by MGR coal trains serving the now-closed power station.

Grand Union Trains has also broken new ground by applying to operate cross-country services from Cardiff to Edinburgh via Birmingham. All previous open access applications have concentrated on providing improved links with London, which dominates the rail market for travel between the largest conurbations, and attracts business travel with passengers paying higher fares than journeys made for leisure.

Wrexham revival

The West Coast Main Line has not seen any open access services to date.

One factor was an agreement with previous franchised operator Virgin Trains to acquire 'Pendolinos' included protection from competition for 15 years. This became significant when

open access operator Wrexham, Shropshire and Marylebone Railway (WSMR) was denied access to carry passengers between Wolverhampton and London.

Although WSMR operated between 2008 and 2011, it was not viable. A new application to run services between Wrexham and London has now been made to the ORR, with WSMR now retitled as the Wrexham, Shropshire and Midlands Railway seeking access rights to Euston.

The end of restrictions at Wolverhampton, and the likely use of Class 221/222 DMUs released by either Avanti or East Midlands Railway, will enable faster journeys and a better chance of success. Paths to provide five weekday return services (four on Sundays) have been confirmed based on December's timetable. Calling points are Gobowen, Shrewsbury, Telford, Wolverhampton, Darlaston (new), Walsall, Coleshill Parkway, Nuneaton, and Milton Keynes.

The ORR had previously approved open access services on the WCML for Euston to Blackpool services, but the pandemic disrupted the start-up, and backer Arriva withdrew financial support given the likely scale of initial losses.

All year DalesRail

PLANS by Northern for a new year-round Saturday DalesRail service are understood to have been put forward for approval by the Department for Transport and the Rail North Partnership (which works on behalf of the DfT and Transport for the North).

Providing popular connections for walkers over the course of the last 50 years, DalesRail has traditionally run on summer Sundays, but following cancellations in recent years due to a lack of train crew, Northern took the decision not to run any DalesRail services at all in 2023, prioritising providing a reliable service on routes which operated seven days a week.

Discussions following last year's suspension indicated that Saturday diagrams would prove easier to staff. If given the go-ahead, details of the new DalesRail service are expected to be published in time for launch on June 8.



Space for hire

THE rail research and development facility in Dudley, West Midlands at the Very Light Rail National Innovation Centre is being offered for hire for overhaul, maintenance and development work for heavy and light rail fleets.

Facilities include a 1200 square metre engineering hall and a 48 metre maintenance track and pit. A through-track leads directly onto a 2.2 km (1.3 mile), 100mph standard gauge test track, which includes a 870m (0.5 mile) brick arch tunnel.

See bcimo.co.uk for details.

A welcome postscript

POSTSCRIPT Books (psbooks.co.uk) has donated copies of its many railway titles to the Railway Collection at the Passmore Edwards Newton Abbot library.

Welcoming the new partnership, library manager Lynn West said: "The gift will broaden our already wide collection, especially on modern traction subjects."

The Railway Collection is tended by volunteers who acquire, organise and categorise an extensive collection of reference documents, periodicals, books and 92,000 illustrations, which is available to researchers.

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Drivers' strike action stalemate

Negotiations remain deadlocked 18 months after strikes began, but train operators opt not to use the new 'Minimum Service Levels' legislation.

By 'Industry Update'

THE call for further strike action by train drivers' union ASLEF has so far seen a reluctance by operators to make use of new legislation that gives them the power to insist that a minimum level of service is provided on strike days.

ASLEF gave the required 14 days' notice of action for a series of one-day strikes to begin as this issue went to press, taking place at 16 individual operating companies between January 30 and February 5, plus an overtime ban between January 29 and February 6.

Train operators now have legal powers, which came into force in December 2023, to issue a 'work notice' to staff to operate services on a strike day. If the notice is ignored, it can remove their normal immunity from disciplinary procedures for being absent without leave. Work notices to individual staff have to be issued at least seven days in advance, and so had to be delivered by January 23.

Only LNER advised ASLEF it would be implementing a Minimum Service Level (MSL) for the proposed strike day on February 2. The response from the trade union was that if this plan was to go ahead, then it would extend the strike for a further period from February 5-9.

LNER subsequently took the view it was not worth pursuing the MSL proposal, which resulted in ASLEF withdrawing the threat of strike



LNER considered using new Government legislation to implement a Minimum Service Level during a strike planned for February 2 by drivers' union ASLEF, but later changed its mind. LNER 'Azuma' No. 801220 is pictured at Leeds on September 27, 2023. PAUL BICKERDYKE

action over a longer period.

Although other operators had preliminary meetings with the aim of issuing work notices to maintain a basic timetable, these came to nothing as it was judged that such action would inflame rather than create an atmosphere for negotiations to resolve the dispute.

No freedom

In reality, resolving the dispute is not something the train operators (whether either directly run by the Government or holding Department for Transport contracts) have any freedom of action over.

The 4% ceiling for a pay offer set when negotiations started last year, is a figure imposed by the DfT at the insistence of the Treasury as part of its policy to reduce inflation.

In a wider context, pay restraint has been successful as there has been a substantial fall in inflation to 3.9% at the end

of 2023. But what has not been accounted for is the economic cost of the disruption to rail services as a result of people not being able to work, and the effect of reduced spending in the retail, hospitality, and leisure sectors. The Centre

"A settlement with ASLEF could follow if pay was decoupled from negotiations about working practices"

for Economics and Business Research estimated that all this cost at least £500 million for the six-month period to January 2023.

Pay restraint is not the only element of restrictions that DfT-sponsored train operators face in negotiating settlements, and reform of rostering practices

is also seen as a requirement to bring an end to the dispute. This is not unreasonable given the current practice of voluntary working on Sundays, and the need for change was illustrated by the situation that occurred on Christmas Eve 2023 – which fell on a Sunday – where widespread unplanned timetable cancellations took place.

It is worth remembering that agreements have been reached where contracts are not the responsibility of the DfT but of devolved administrations such as Transport for London, the Scottish and Welsh Parliaments, and the Liverpool City Region – as well as the independent passenger and freight open access operators.

Pay and practice

There is a growing acceptance that pay increases to reflect historically high levels of inflation (which began with the

disruption to energy supplies following the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022) should be separated from the more contentious matter of reform of working conditions, which will require agreement with the individual train operators.

But the Government shows little sign of allowing the two issues to be separated, or of seeking mediation to resolve the ongoing dispute with ASLEF members.

The original objective of pay restraint to reduce inflation has been achieved, but industrial action on the railways continues to hurt other sectors of the economy that depend on public transport for workers or customers.

Resolution of the RMT dispute about pay was resolved and a settlement with ASLEF could follow if pay was decoupled from negotiations about working practices.

Simplified fares trial could make some journeys more expensive

OFF-PEAK and Super Off-Peak fares were due to be withdrawn on selected LNER journeys from February 5, as part of a two-year trial to simplify the range of ticket options available.

The move means that journeys will be priced more closely to demand on trips from King's Cross to Newcastle,

Berwick-upon-Tweed and Edinburgh.

Only three types of ticket will be available on these routes: Advance, Anytime, and a new '70min Flex' that offers passengers the ability to travel on other LNER services up to 70 minutes either side of their originally booked departure.

LNER said Off-Peak and

Super Off-Peak fares only represented 11% of journeys made on its services, while train operators' body the Rail Delivery Group found 35% of potential rail passengers are put off because they find it difficult to find the right fare.

However, critics argue the move is just a back door way of charging passengers more,

because once the Advance and 70min Flex tickets sell out, the only option left will be the most expensive Anytime ticket. 'Turn up and go' passengers may also be faced with buying the Anytime fare when they might previously have had the two cheaper Off-Peak options.

Because the trial only applies to journeys between

the three named stations and London, Off-Peak tickets are still available to other destinations. This means, for example, that buying an Off-Peak ticket to the next stop at Haymarket (and making a valid break of journey at Waverley) could be cheaper than one of the available LNER options to Waverley.

SIDELINES

Eurostar 'back to pre-Covid levels'

PASSENGER numbers on Eurostar are back in line with pre-Covid levels. In 2023 the operator carried 18.6 million passengers, an increase of 22% on 2022. The London to Paris service carried almost 8 million passengers (up 25%); the London to Brussels route carried 2.2 million (up +33%); and the London to Amsterdam service was used by 1.1 million passengers (a rise of 38%).

From June 14, Eurostar's cross-Channel terminal at Amsterdam Centraal will be closed for six months for renovation works. During this time, Eurostar will operate three direct daily services from London to Rotterdam and Amsterdam. In the return direction, there will be a connecting service at Brussels-Midi providing a 48-minute to one hour connection between the Amsterdam-Rotterdam-Brussels train and the Brussels-London train.



Online auction

EXAMPLES of signage from London terminals will be offered for sale together when they come under the hammer at Railwayana UK Ltd's March 1-3 online auction.

Rare, mint examples from King's Cross (York Road) and Paddington feature alongside Broad Street and Charing Cross totems, with a SR Waterloo target also being offered (see photo above).

They are among a catalogue of more than 70 BR totems from across the regions – along with a host of components and accessories from Bulleid Pacifics.

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Two heritage line half-centuries to be celebrated

East Somerset, and Kent & East Sussex railways to mark milestones this year.

A DIESEL gala is to kick off a series of events this year to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Kent & East Sussex Railway (K&ESR) as a heritage line.

Returning after a 14-year absence, the classic traction event is due to be held on April 12-14 and is set to feature Class 33/2 No. 33202 and Class 14 No. D9504, as well as several special guest arrivals – details of which will be announced shortly.

A steam gala is planned to be held on June 1/2, which is expected to include a visiting loco, the identity of which remains to be confirmed. There will also be opportunities to go behind the scenes, among other attractions.

Sunday, February 3 marked the actual anniversary of when passenger services restarted

on the heritage line, beginning at Tenterden and finishing one mile the other side of Rolvenden – the first section of line to be reopened at that stage. The official reopening ceremony was conducted at Tenterden Town Station on June 1 by the Rt Hon William Deedes, the then MP for Ashford who subsequently became Lord Deedes.

The first passenger service that day in 1974 was worked by GWR diesel railcar No. W20W, currently in the final stages of its major restoration. A date for the iconic railcar to re-create that journey will be announced in due course.

Meanwhile, the East Somerset Railway's (ESR) March 16/17 50th Anniversary Gala is set to pay homage to the line's



Kent & East Sussex Railway 'Terrier' 0-6-0T No. 10 Sutton waits to depart Tenterden Town on February 3, 1974 – the day passenger trains began operating on the heritage line.

DAVID HEPBURN-SCOTT/RAIL ARCHIVE STEPHENSON

roots in the David Shepherd era, by welcoming a high-profile steam loco.

No. 6880 *Betton Grange*, the latest steam loco to enter traffic in Britain is expected to star

in the event. No. 6880 is set to operate alongside the ESR's home fleet of GWR 'Large Prairie' No. 4110, BR Ivatt '2MT' 2-6-0 No. 46447 and Andrew Barclay 0-4-0ST No. 1719 *Lady Nan*.

Summer opening after all for Northumberland Line

By Graeme Pickering

A MONTH after its leader warned of a likely delay to the launch of passenger services on the 'Northumberland Line' between Newcastle and Ashington, Northumberland County Council has confirmed that trains will run from summer 2024 after all, but the stations are to be opened in phases.

The authority said this was to allow services to start "at the earliest possible opportunity" on the 15 mile route, running north-easterly from Benton

North Junction, where freight has been the only regular traffic since local passenger trains ceased in 1964.

Ashington, Newsham and Seaton Delaval will be open from day one, but exact dates are still to be finalised for the other three – Northumberland Park, Bedlington and Blyth Beside. Confirmation that station completion would be staggered, following months of speculation, was described as a "kick in the teeth" for Bedlington by county councillor Malcolm Robinson. His Blyth-based

counterpart Jeff Reid raised doubts that residents would cross town to use Newsham station while waiting for Beside to be finished.

The delayed completion of Northumberland Park will mean any passengers intending to continue their journey by Metro will have to travel to Newcastle to make their connection.

Council leader Glen Sanderson, who suggested at the end of last year that passenger operations could be delayed until late 2024, said: "We understand there may

be some disappointment by adopting this phased approach and thank people for their patience while this critical work continues."

Ground conditions, including presence of old mine workings, continue to be one of the biggest challenges for station construction. The council has admitted that there is still "a great deal of work" to be completed on the £236 million scheme. Good progress between now and the spring is said to be "critical" to restoring passenger services on target.



HISTORIC ICON SHOWCASED IN ABERYSTWYTH:

Britain's oldest narrow gauge loco, 1848-built *Fire Queen*, its tender and the Director's Coach, became the first exhibits to enter the new museum at the Vale of Rheidol Railway, on the evening of January 19, 2024. Further exhibits will follow in the coming weeks. The museum in Aberystwyth is due to open to the public in late March, when the railway opens again for the new season. See separate story on Narrow Gauge News page 67. PHIL BUDD



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- ★ Travel across the stunning Brüning Pass by train to Brienz
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- ★ Middleton Railway, the world's oldest continuously working railway
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- ★ Steam along the turquoise waters of Lake Brienz on the Brüning Steam Railway
- ★ Discover impressive glacier waterfalls at Trummelbach Falls
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Teen army tackles charity 'Tubeathon'

A 17-year-old is set to take on a new London Underground-related challenge raising funds for charity, writes Rhys Evitts.

Eitan Okrent has devised the 'Tubeathon' walking event in aid of the Lives Not Knives campaign, which raises money to prevent knife crime and violence amongst disadvantaged young people across London.

The challenge will see teams of walkers cover all 11 lines and 272 London Underground stations on foot within 24 hours. All the routes combined account for almost 250 miles and 85 hours of walking. It is set to take place on Sunday, February 25 with a celebration event after to mark the achievement.

"A couple of months ago I started to advertise it to all my friends and every young person I know, and now I have 120 people signed up," said Eitan.

"They've formed 27 different teams who are all going to walk different routes. Once I had all these people signed up, I began to plan out all the routes. I had to make sure that each one could be done in one day and that the routes covered all of the stations at least once."

The initial target is £3,000 and but to find out more or make a donation visit www.justgiving.com/page/tubeathon

Final call for entries in the RCTS photo competition

Free-to-enter contest has a fabulous range of prizes up for grabs.

ASPIRING photographers have just a few weeks left to get entries in for a chance to scoop some great prizes, as the joint RCTS/Mortons Media railway photographic competition closes at the end of March.

You can submit up to two entries in any or all of the four categories using photographs taken since January 2022.

The **Overall Competition** winner will enjoy a money-cannot-buy mainline cab ride courtesy of DB Cargo, with this most likely being somewhere in the north of England.

The winner of the **Modern Traction** section will join GBRF for a session on one of its locomotive driver simulators, while the **Heritage Railway** winner will be entertained at the Nene Valley Railway with the visit including a tour of the sheds at Wansford and a cab ride.

For the **People and Railways** winner, your destination will be the East Lancashire Railway for a cab ride with a choice



Top prize is a money-cannot-buy cab ride in a Class 66 courtesy of DB Cargo.

of steam or diesel traction, while the **Railways and the Environment** prize winner will visit the Severn Valley Railway for a look behind the scenes at Kidderminster diesel depot and a diesel cab ride.

In addition, each of the winners will receive a RCTS book and a one-year subscription to a Mortons

magazine of their choice.

The second prize winner in each category will receive a RCTS book and Mortons subscription of their choice, while the third-placed entry will have the choice of either a RCTS book or a Mortons subscription.

A **Judges' Special Commendation** prize of two

first class tickets and tea for two at the Tallylyn Railway will also be awarded to a further stand-out image deemed worthy of recognition.

For more information and to submit your entries, please visit the RCTS's website at <https://rcts.org.uk/> and follow the link to the competition.

Good luck!

Railways in Parliament Compiled by Jon Longman

IET fleet hitches

LORD Bradshaw asked what steps the Government is taking to address inadequate accommodation on services between Cardiff and London, and whether that shortage is the responsibility of the train operator or the rolling stock provider.

Transport Minister and fellow life peer Lord Davies of Gower answered: "The majority of GWR services are operated by its Hitachi Intercity Express Train (IET) fleet. Under the terms of its National Rail Contract, GWR must use its rolling stock to deliver a consistent, efficient service. GWR reviews loading and capacity data to try to ensure appropriate formations.

"Recently however, GWR has experienced challenges with both the reliability of its network infrastructure and fleet availability. A number of IETs have been out of use due to significant damage,

including long-term crack repairs, engine issues and water ingress.

"The Department for Transport (DfT) is engaged with GWR and Network Rail to seek improvements and secure a level of service which passengers deserve."

Combating strikes

THE Bishop of St Albans wanted to know what steps the Government is taking to minimise disruption from strikes by drivers.

Lord Davies said: "The ASLEF union has mandates for industrial action ending between February and April for all 14 train operating companies.

"Parliament has approved regulations to implement minimum service levels... designed to reduce disproportionate disruption caused by strikes. The regulations came into force on December 8.

"Whilst it is hoped that these regulations need not be used, and strike action can be avoided, they provide employers with an additional tool to support passengers by enabling a minimum level of service to be delivered during any strike action."

Class 730 depots

EASINGTON'S Labour MP Grahame Morris asked how much funding the Department for Transport plans to provide through the West Midlands Trains (WMT) National Rail Contract for depot and stabling facilities for the Class 730 fleet.

Transport Minister Huw Merriman said: "The DfT continues to work closely with WMT on new and additional depot and stabling facilities for the Class 730 fleet.

"As these projects are live and the size of the final programme is still being determined, the costs are not yet known."

Revealing restorations

NORTH Durham Labour MP Kevan James asked if the DfT will publish the latest round of successful bids to the Restoring Your Railway Fund (RYR).

Mr Merriman said: "Under the Network North announcement, the DfT confirmed that a further 11 RYR-originated schemes will progress to delivery, subject to successful business cases.

"We are in the early stages of planning next steps, including timelines, for these schemes and are working closely with Network Rail and other partners to develop and deliver on these Government priorities."

Castle Line upgrade

LORD Bradshaw asked what discussions the DfT is having with East Midlands Railways (EMR) about restoring the pre-pandemic levels of service between Nottingham and Lincoln.

Lord Davies replied: "The DfT is working closely with EMR to reintroduce services which were removed in June 2021. Last May, six weekday services and eight Saturday services between Leicester and Lincoln via Nottingham were reinstated."

XC fleet expanding

LORD Bradshaw then asked what discussions the DfT is having with operator CrossCountry to address the shortage of accommodation on services between the Thames Valley and the north, making more of the stock currently in store available.

Lord Davies added: "Officials meet regularly with train operators. Under the new National Rail Contract which commenced in October, extra carriages are due to be added to the CrossCountry fleet in the next few years, as they become available in the rolling stock market."

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SIDELINES

Delta Junction viaduct starts to take shape

THE initial 920 tonne deck span on the River Tame West viaduct in North Warwickshire was completed before Christmas. It is the first of six precast segmental viaducts which form part of HS2's Delta Junction to take shape. The first span consists of 16 concrete segments which were moved into place over a 22 day period using a truss structure. All three of its initial spans are expected to be completed by the spring.

Segments on the move

DELIVERIES by rail of segments for HS2's London tunnels began from STRABAG's factory in Hartlepool during December.

A former oil rig fabrication site at the town's docks was redeveloped into a precast concrete manufacturing operation to meet the combined construction needs of Northolt East and Euston tunnels for a total of 83,000 segments.

Freightliner is operating the trains to HS2's London Logistics Hub near Willesden Junction, which will each carry up to 20 rings of segments. Having been disused for around 15 years, the railhead alongside the factory has been extended to facilitate the new traffic.

Public views sought for design options

PUBLIC events were held during January to gather opinions on design options for Balsall Common Viaduct, north-west of Kenilworth.

Work has already started on the 16 piers of the 425 metre (465 yard) long structure, but feedback from the sessions will be used to determine whether, when finished, it should incorporate a plain concrete parapet, or one which is red, green or highly polished (to reflect its surroundings).

There are also options to incorporate various patterns on the parapet, reflecting local history.

Year-long viaduct deck operation gets underway

Pioneering composite structure reaches critical stage at Buckinghamshire bridge.

A THIRD of a mile of bridge deck will be gradually moved into position for Wendover Dean viaduct in Buckinghamshire during the course of this year.

Instead of using solid pre-stressed concrete, the 492-yard viaduct will consist of 'double composite' spans.

In this method, two steel beams are sandwiched between two layers of reinforced concrete, creating a hollow, lightweight yet strong structure which is designed to maximise the combined strength from both materials.

HS2 Ltd says it is the first major railway bridge in the UK to be built using this kind

of composite approach. By adopting this rather than a more traditional method, the carbon footprint of the structure is estimated to have been more than halved. Once construction is complete, the field boundaries and hedgerows will be recreated to provide uninterrupted access for farmers and local residents.

Three stages

The viaduct deck will be assembled in three stages, using sections ranging from 90-180m (98-197 yards) in length.

In what HS2 Ltd has described as a "critical" and "delicate" stage of construction, each section



The bridge deck push at Wendover Dean Viaduct is seen in its initial stages last month. HS2

of the deck will be pushed out from its north abutment and the next attached behind it.

This process means that the weight of the deck will gradually increase during the year, from an initial 590 tonnes to 3,700.

This is the longest deck slide

on the HS2 project to date, and a winch will be used to move the deck forward onto the viaduct's nine piers, which are up to 14 metres (46 feet) high. As this part of the railway is on a slight gradient, the finishing point is 1.8 metres higher than the start.

10-mile Chiltern tunnel drive nears completion

AFTER a two-and-a-half year drive under the Chiltern hills, tunnelling machines *Florence* and *Cecilia* had reached the Chesham Road intervention shaft by mid-December.

Heading north from London (the direction from which the twin bores are being excavated), it is the fifth and final shaft along the 10-mile route of the tunnel. In reaching this point, the two machines have completed 90% of their work, already excavating around 2.8 million cubic metres of chalk and flint.

Hidden behind trees, the top of the 42 metre (138 feet) deep shaft near Great Missenden, for emergency access, will have a 'headhouse' above it, designed to resemble local farm buildings.

Excavation of the four

other shafts for ventilation and emergency use (near Chalfont St Peter, Chalfont St Giles, Amersham and Little Missenden) has been completed, with attention turning to building their internal structures and 'headhouses'.

Ninety engineers were involved in the operation to assemble the 1,600 tonne boring machine which will complete the second bore of the 3.5 mile-long Bromford tunnel, between Water Orton in North Warwickshire and Washwood Heath in Birmingham.

Most of it previously formed part of *Dorothy*, the TBM used in the excavation of Long Itchington Wood tunnel. It is due to launch in spring from



The work site at the 42 metre (138 feet) deep shaft at Chesham Road near Great Missenden, one of five which will provide emergency access to the Chiltern tunnel. The tunnel boring operation below had reached this point by mid-December. HS2

Water Orton, where sister TBM *Mary Ann* began its work on the first bore last August. *Mary Ann* is set to break through at

Washwood Heath at the end of this year, with the as-yet-unnamed second TBM due to complete its bore in mid-2025.



WASHWOOD EARTHWORKS:

Over one million cubic metres of earth had been excavated by mid-December from the site at Washwood Heath in Birmingham where HS2's Network Integrated Control Centre will be built. As seen in this computer-generated image, the site will also accommodate a stabling yard and train maintenance building, as well as facilities for drivers and maintenance staff. Overall, it will support a workforce of around 550 people. After a century and a half of railway use, initially as a marshalling yard and later as sidings, tasks have included cleaning-up contaminated land. Wash brook, which ran through the site, has been diverted, with the aim of creating local wildlife habitats. The HS2 route emerges from Bromford tunnel to the right of the stabling area, running between the site and the Derby to Birmingham line. HS2

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West Coast loses legal battle – then door exemption revoked

Popular 'Jacobite' service set to go ahead with central door locking fitted.

By Chris Milner

EFFORTS by West Coast Railway (WCR) to have a judicial review of the Office of Rail and Road's (ORR) refusal to grant a further exemption from central door locking requirements have been dismissed.

The decision in December means that the heritage train company cannot operate hinged-door carriages on the main line unless Central Door Locking (CDL) is in place.

The failure to find in favour of WCR was swiftly followed by a revocation of an existing exemption that allowed it to use hinged-door Mk.1 carriages, a decision that impacts the

Carnforth-based company's charter operations.

The move follows on from the ORR's decision in March 2023 not to award any future exemptions to WCR for Mk.1 stock on main line operations unless it was fitted with CDL.

The regulator wanted all operators of heritage stock to meet improved minimum safety standards.

Long time coming

As far back as 2018, the ORR told heritage operators that from 2023, exemptions from Regulation 5 of the Railway Safety Regulations 1999 would only be issued in exceptional circumstances.

WCR's exemption for Regulation 5 was granted in 2012 for a 10 year period, but this exemption expired on March 31, 2023. The operator has been working with temporary extensions since then and, with the expiry date looming, was given permission to pursue a Judicial Review to challenge the ORR's decision.

There were five grounds to WCR's request:

1. The ORR misinterpreted the Railway Safety Regulations
2. The ORR unlawfully fettered its decision
3. The ORR failed to take relevant considerations into account
4. The ORR's decision was a disproportionate interference on the Claimant's right to the protection of property

5. The ORR's decision was irrational at common law given its disproportionate and draconian effect.

Supporting evidence

Evidence was heard at the Royal Courts of Justice on November 21/22 before Mrs Justice Thornton.

More than 1000 pages of supporting witness evidence was produced by WCR, which claimed the cost of fitting more than 130 vehicles would cost the company around £3 million (September 2021 figures).

This figure had been revised by November 2022 to £7m, and was based on direct costs and lost revenue, but the judge

noted WCR did not provide any supporting evidence for this. WCR also claimed fitting CDL was "disproportionate in the context of a vanishingly small risk to safety".

At the hearing, the ORR said it had calculated the cost of fitting CDL to be around £26,250 per vehicle, amounting to £348,440 for a 12-carriage train. The ORR added that the maximum number of trains per day for a single heritage operator was a four, meaning a potential outlay of £1,393,960 for four rakes of stock. Having carried 101,429 passengers on the 'Jacobite' in 2023, it was suggested that a £10 rise in fares would generate more than £1 million with no additional overheads. Profit for WCR from 'The Jacobite' was said to be £1 million based on turnover of £5.7 million.

Other operators

Mrs Justice Thornton heard that other smaller heritage train operators had invested in CDL and passed the costs onto customers through a modest increase in ticket prices. Because WCR had refused to fit central locking, it had been able to operate at a lower cost base, putting it at a significant competitive advantage. In addition, other operators had done the CDL work out of season in January and February, when fewer tours run, thus reducing the impact on revenue.

On June 9, 2023 the ORR conducted an unannounced and anonymous inspection of 'The Jacobite' train in Scotland following a report by a whistleblower about the operation of train doors. The inspection identified issues that were in breach of the conditions of the Regulation 5 exemption.

The ORR was concerned that an unsupervised door could be opened with the train in motion or not completely in a platform, as well as the risk of injury from a branch or lineside object from passengers leaning out of the droplight windows.

A prohibition notice was served on June 14, but services commenced the next day following WCR's acceptable response.

A second unannounced

LMS 'Black Five' 4-6-0 No. 45212 hauls 2Y68 12.50 'The Jacobite' service from Fort William to Mallaig by Borrodale on Thursday, September 28, 2023. IAN DIXON



inspection was made on July 14 which resulted in the service being suspended the next day due to similar concerns noted during the June inspection. This led to the withdrawal of the exemption certificate on July 19 and suspension of 'The Jacobite' for several weeks at the height of the season.

Following recruitment of additional stewards to patrol the vestibules, extra labelling by doors and other measures, services were allowed to recommence.

The court judgment also refers to an incident in June 2022 where a passenger attempting to open the door of a moving train overpowered a steward and had to be restrained by platform staff.

During the period while waiting for the review to be heard, WCR was able to continue operations using non-CDL Mk.1s after the ORR granted a further short-term exemption until February 29, 2024, which allowed Christmas charters to operate.

Operators of similar stock – Scottish Railway Preservation Society, Vintage Trains and Hastings Diesels – also have ongoing exemptions in place, but have been in regular dialogue with the ORR regarding fitting CDL and are working to an agreed a phased timescale to achieve this.

The Judicial Review decision had been expected towards the end of January this year but in fact it was delivered on December 22 – the day after the January issue of *The RM* had gone to press.

In handing down the decision, Mrs Justice Thornton noted a "deep-seated and wide ranging" disagreement between the ORR and West Coast Railway, but nevertheless found in favour of the ORR on all five counts of the challenge.

Revoked exemption

Then, on January 11, the ORR took the unexpected decision to revoke WCR's Regulation 5 certificate to operate hinged door stock without central door locking, effectively grounding West Coast's Mk.1s. Whether this decision arose as a result of a lack of interim discussions between the ORR and WCR over a timescale for fitting CDL is not clear.

An ORR spokesman told *The RM*: "The ORR decided in early 2023 not to grant West Coast Railway Company Limited with an exemption from Regulation 5 of the Railway

Safety Regulations 1999. WCR was granted permission to judicially review that decision. While its claim for judicial review was determined, ORR granted WCR with a series of short-term exemptions from the regulations. The latest of these exemptions was valid from December 1, 2023. It was made clear to WCR that this was subject to immediate revocation in the event that its judicial review claim failed."

West Coast response

WCR's commercial manager James Shuttleworth said: "We are disappointed by the High Court's judgment. We have decades of experience of operating on the main line and safety has always been, and remains, our top priority.

"We will now reflect and consider options to enable us to continue running safe services. We are committed to working with the ORR to find a long-term solution which safeguards the future of heritage services on the main line."

The type of CDL fitted to Mk.2s (and Mk.3s) operates on air, which means a train will need to be hauled by an air-braked loco.

At present, not every steam loco is air-brake fitted. And because Mk.1s are vacuum braked, a different type of locking system will need to be installed with an independent power and/or air supply.

■ As regards other operators, Vintage Trains aims to phase in fitting of CDL by November; the Great Scottish & Western Railway (operator of the Royal Scotsman) will complete fitting by February 2025, as will VSOE for the Belmond Pullman. Both Locomotive Services Group and Riviera Trains carriage sets have CDL already fitted.

The RM understands WCR has, or is about to, embark on fitting Mk.1 carriages with a form of central door locking, focusing work on vehicles which will be used on 'The Jacobite'. Advance bookings for this year's Fort William to Mallaig service are at healthy levels. The seasonal service starts on March 28 with a morning-only trip and, as this issue closed for press, there were no Standard Class seats available until June 19. Similarly, seats on the afternoon train from May 6 were sold out until June 14.

On January 27, WCR operated its first charter of 2024 on behalf of the Railway Touring Company and used CDL fitted Mk.2s.



No. 60103 *Flying Scotsman* arrives at Locomotion, Shildon on December 14, the final stop of its 2023 centenary tour. The venue attracted 37,500 visitors to see *Scotsman* in light steam over Christmas.

CHARLOTTE GRAHAM/NRM

Flying Scotsman to be static – but main line return on the cards for the autumn

FLYING Scotsman will spend the first part of 2024 on static display at the National Railway Museum (NRM) in York before resuming railtours later in the year.

The 'A3' Pacific went on public display at York on January 26, where it is due to remain until the summer, when it will head back to Locomotion in Shildon, again for public display.

Visitors will be able to see the 4-6-2 free of charge and they will be able to access the footplate via an accessible ramp.

In 2018, the NRM signed

a six-year contract with engineering firm Riley & Son (E) Ltd to operate and maintain No. 60103.

A competitive tender to appoint the next custodian for *Flying Scotsman* to operate and maintain the loco is due to be launched, with an invitation to tender published online at <https://in-tendhost.co.uk/sciencemuseumgroup> in the coming weeks. The tender is expected to be awarded in late spring 2024.

Once the custodian is appointed, the NRM said

Scotsman will resume a programme of railtours in the autumn. It is expected that the loco will visit heritage railways and will remain main line operational.

Flying Scotsman's visits to the NRM in York and Locomotion in Shildon during 2023 proved popular. In York 51,751 people visited during October half term and more than 37,500 came to see *Scotsman* in light steam at Locomotion over Christmas.

The 4-6-2 departed Shildon for York under its own steam on January 18.



VISUAL AIDS:

Markings are being applied to ScotRail vehicles denoting which facilities are available in each coach, such as a green strip for bicycles and light blue for wheelchair spaces – as seen on DMU No. 158701 at Inverness on January 20. GORDON KIRKBY

Tees Valley 'keen to lead' on greener trains

FIVE years after initial plans were set out by Arriva Rail North (ARN) for the introduction of 10 hydrogen multiple units on the Tees Valley Line (connecting Saltburn, Middlesbrough, Darlington and Bishop Auckland), the Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA) has told *The RM* that it is still interested in pursuing such an option in the future.

If the original proposals from ARN, supported by TVCA, had come to fruition, they would have led to the first fleet

deployment of hydrogen-powered trains in the UK. ARN, whose franchise to operate Northern was terminated by the Department for Transport in 2020, had made planning applications for fuelling and maintenance facilities, the preferred option being to repurpose a shed formerly used by locomotives on the internal railway system at Lackenby steelworks.

Although the scheme did not receive Government funding, TVCA says it continues to work

with ministers and rail operators to deliver decarbonisation solutions. Hydrogen-powered road vehicles are already being trialled in the area as part of a 'Hydrogen Transport Hub'.

A TVCA spokesman added: "We are keen to lead the way in the cleaner, safer and healthier transport of the future – including hydrogen rail – and are proactively working with businesses to explore all options, and would welcome additional Government support in this innovative sector."





CrossCountry withdrew its HST fleet in September 2023 but has not replaced the lost seating capacity. On August 30, 2023, power car No. 43357 leads 1V50, the 06.06 Edinburgh-Plymouth train past Parson Street, Bristol, with No. 43303 at the rear. ALL PICTURES BY CHRIS MILNER UNLESS STATED

Are we heading for a
**rolling stock
crisis?**

Despite the rapid return to almost pre-Covid passenger numbers, 2023 saw several fleets of trains withdrawn and placed in store. Chris Milner casts an eye over the current rolling stock situation.

WHEN the country went into lockdown in March 2020, rail ridership plummeted as a result of the pandemic and the national work from home advice.

Train operators reduced the number of services as well as the number of carriages used on those services to cut the gap between costs and revenue. Then in September 2020, franchised operations were ended with all but the open access operators moved to directly awarded management contracts by the Department for Transport; deals which give the DfT a massive say in what an operator can spend money on, how many trains they run, and how many carriages can be used.

The pandemic also meant driver training was suspended because of social distancing rules, affecting several new fleets of trains that were in the process of being introduced and resulting in units being stored in sidings around the country. The impact of that hiatus in training still has not been fully overcome.

In the week commencing December 18, 2023, the Office of Rail and Road published the latest quarterly passenger figures, which confirmed what many regular travellers knew – rail ridership was still climbing and was at 79% of pre-Covid levels overall. The ORR said that in the third quarter of 2023, 397 million journeys were made by rail, which was a 14% increase on the same period in the previous year. Just one operator, West Midlands Trains, saw a decline of 1% in passenger numbers. The biggest increase was on the Elizabeth Line (up 58%) followed by ScotRail (26%) and Avanti West Coast (25%).

The news that rail use has sprung back since the pandemic, albeit with less business travel and more leisure travel, is great but comes with a sting in the tail. While it is clear many workers have returned to their offices and resumed their commute – although on fewer days per week – fare-paying passengers are becoming angrier because many services are still being run with a minimal number of carriages, resulting in chronic overcrowding at times.

Anecdotal evidence on social media suggests that passengers are being left behind because trains are arriving at intermediate stations full and standing, with platform announcements

“What really beggars belief is how virtually new rolling stock that still has a substantial amount of life left can be cast aside so quickly”

advising passengers to catch the next train. Not helpful when you have a business or medical appointment, or you are on your way to a sporting or other event.

The overcrowding situation is exacerbated by a higher-than-normal number of train cancellations due to staff shortages, holidays and sickness; weather-related issues; ongoing industrial disputes; a greater number of trains needing repairs; and short-formed trains. Meanwhile train manufacturers are facing a crisis with a shortage of orders.

There seems to be a lack of understanding by Government departments of the rolling stock market in general. The construction lead times for new trains is years not months, and there don't seem to be any tangible attempts to work with train operators on how to deal with rising passenger numbers or how rolling stock cascades, refurbishments or retirements can be efficiently handled in a way that benefits the passenger. Whatever happens seems to disadvantage the fare paying passenger.

CrossCountry shortages

Still fresh in the minds of many readers will be the enforced withdrawal last September – apparently on cost grounds – of the CrossCountry HST sets. Nothing replaced them, so in reality the overall capacity has reduced.

In an ideal world, the HST sets ought to have remained in traffic to provide capacity until the first seven Avanti West Coast (AWC) Class 221 sets had been successfully cascaded to CrossCountry – a move that in turn hinges on when the new Hitachi-built Class 805/807 sets will enter traffic with AWC. Although two ex-AWC four-car '221s' have gone to Grand Central, what happens to the remaining 11 Avanti units isn't yet clear.

Readers will be aware the North East/North West to South and South West arteries

of the CrossCountry network are some of the heaviest used outside of London, connecting many key cities as well as universities – yet often the operator can only muster a four-car Class 220 or five-car Class 221 for an Edinburgh-Plymouth working.

Put another way, that's 174 Standard Class and 26 First Class seats for a journey of just over 530 miles passing through Newcastle, York, Leeds, Sheffield, Derby, Birmingham, Bristol and Exeter. On a Class 221, there are 26 First Class and 220 Standard places, but it is simply not enough passenger capacity for the numbers that want to travel.

In reality, the number of seats on CrossCountry has changed little since the days of Virgin CrossCountry and 'Operation Princess' in the early 2000s, yet CrossCountry passenger numbers have soared from 29.7 million passenger journeys in 2009/10 to 40.1 million in 2017/18, according to the ORR.

What makes the situation somewhat worse is that the XC HSTs, with their seven carriages, could carry more passengers and had greater luggage space, but pressure on running costs from the DfT was just one of a number of factors that led to their withdrawal.

Safety concerns over the crashworthiness of HST cabs intensified following the Stonehaven tragedy in August 2020, which led to the loss of three lives including the driver and another crew member. Subsequently XC and GWR HST power cars and trailers have been sold to Mexico, and some of the power cars have been sold to Nigeria.

There is a desperate lack of seating capacity between Birmingham and Manchester. England's second and third largest cities are connected by just two direct trains per hour, most of which are four- or five-car 'Voyagers'. There are just two Avanti trains from Manchester Piccadilly to Euston via the West



Approaching Stansted Airport station on March 17, 2011 is Class 379 EMU No. 379007 with a Stansted Express working. The Bombardier-built units had a little over 10 years of service before being replaced by Swiss-built Class 745 units as part of a new regime by franchisee Greater Anglia. The 30 '379' sets are stored but make occasional appearances on the network, with them being kept in warm storage.



Converted from Class 319s by the fitting of two 520hp diesel engines, the re-classified Class 769s did not fulfil their promise in South Wales. Arriving at Tir-Phil on May 17, 2023 – just two days before the entire fleet of nine sets was withdrawn by Transport for Wales – is No. 769421 with the 16.03 Penarth-Rhymney train.



Waiting at Liverpool Lime Street to depart with a press special to Manchester Victoria on May 22, 2015 is Class 319 No. 319364 with its 'Northern Electrics' branding, during the Serco-Abellio tenure of the franchise. Next to it on a Blackpool North service is second generation DMU No. 150150, part of a class approaching 40 years old but still the backbone of many rural services.

Midlands and no other operator is competing. Neither is it a particularly fast journey, the 71 miles taking an average of 89 minutes. Ironically, the now-cancelled HS2 project would have solved the capacity issue and cut journey time to just 45 minutes.

Passenger capacity is also a problem on the Coventry-Birmingham-Wolverhampton corridor, where XC trains can often be full and standing (and there's discouragement to use XC services), but at least there are alternative direct services.

TransPennine locos

From the December 2023 timetable change, TransPennine Express withdrew the remainder of the Class 68-hauled Mk.5a carriage sets and replaced them with Class 185s or bi-mode Class 802s, which now appear at Scarborough. The fact that 13 five-car train sets are no longer available means the number of seats and train sets available are spread more thinly and overcrowding is inevitable.

When TPE ordered the Mk.5a carriages, the plan was for 13 five-car sets (including a driving trailer) to be powered by Class 68s leased from DRS. These loco-hauled sets (called 'Nova 3' by TPE) were planned to work between Liverpool and Scarborough, as well as Manchester Airport to Saltburn. In the end, they only worked the former route... and quite often just the relatively short York-Scarborough section.

Unfortunately, use of the 'Nova 3' sets drew many complaints from Scarborough residents over the locomotives' engine noise and fumes when at the TPE depot, and a proposed switch for them to work between Manchester and Cleethorpes never panned out as expected. A further factor was that Covid impacted driver training on these sets, so only small numbers of drivers were passed on them. Ultimately, they were never utilised to their full potential (see also Practice & Performance this month).

After just five years' use, withdrawing the 'Nova 3' fleet will save TPE £37 million a year

in running costs. With a question mark over the future of the Mk.5a sets – which could be reformed into fewer sets with more carriages, for example – there is an uncertain future over the Class 68s, of which 14 (Nos. 68019-032) were assigned especially for the TPE operation.

There have been suggestions the Mk.5a sets may go to Chiltern to replace the tired Mk.3s, but there have also been major concerns at Marylebone over the use of '68s'. Westminster Council has raised concerns over the pollution from the locos on tickover when using pure diesel fuel, but a way forward may be the growing trend to use HVO fuel (hydro-treated vegetable oil), a synthetic fuel made from vegetable oils or animal fats which burns 'cleaner' and with reduced emissions.

Not life expired

What really beggars belief, however, is how virtually new rolling stock that still has a substantial amount of life left can be cast aside so quickly.

For example, when Abellio took over the Greater Anglia franchise in October 2016, it quickly announced a rolling stock order for 1043 carriages. Within this order were 120 vehicles from Stadler to be formed as 10 12-car trains to work the Stansted Express service.

At the time, the existing Class 379 'Stansted Express' EMUs had only been in service just over five years (the press launch was March 17, 2011), and it was expected they would be cascaded to another operator. In fact, their apparent high leasing costs made them unattractive, and GA had withdrawn the entire fleet by February 2022.

For close on two years, the 120 vehicles (30 four-car sets built by Bombardier), have been in store at Worksop, but make occasional trips to Doncaster where they are placed under the OHL and powered up to keep them in 'warm store'. With no other potential suitors, and only a third of the way through their expected 30-year service life, it is a terrible waste of resources.

Another fleet to fall on hard times is the

Alstom-built Class 175. Entering service in June 2000 with First NorthWestern, the 11 two-car and 16 three-car 100mph capable DMUs were transferred to Arriva Trains Wales and later to Transport for Wales. Unfortunately, there have been numerous fires on the sets, six reported between 2004 and 2019, but the first two months of 2023 saw three further fires, all caused by an accumulation of debris and leaf litter in the underfloor engine bays.

This was a known issue for which a rectification programme was underway. However, at the start of March 2023, TfW temporarily withdrew all Class 175 units from service that had not been through the cleaning programme, and then withdrew the whole fleet as new Class 197s began to enter service. Currently 26 units are stored in various locations, along with the surviving car from fire damaged set No. 175008. Some sets have recently visited Ilford depot for unspecified work.

Seven year wait

Probably the most perverse situation is with South Western Railway's 'Arterio' Class 701s.

In 2017, when FirstGroup/MTR was revealed as the new franchisee, it announced in June 2017 an order for 90 new 'Aventra' EMUs worth around £1 billion. The 60 10-car and 30 five-car units would be built in Derby by Bombardier (later Alstom after a company merger) and, even though deliveries began in June 2020, the first unit only entered service in January this year. The reason for this is the lack of an operating agreement with the rail unions. ASLEF told *The RM* the problem is with the software, which it claimed was not fit for purpose.

There were ominous signs that construction of the last of the 90 sets might be concluded before mass operations begin. There was a similar situation in the early 1980s when rail unions blocked all the new Class 317s built for St Pancras-Bedford services over the use of driver only operation. These units were thus



Due for withdrawal by London Northwestern Railway during 2024, the Class 350/2 EMUs will be replaced by five-car Class 730 EMUs. On August 4, 2022, set No. 350265 and a 350/1 approach Nortoft Lane near the Daventry intermodal terminal at Rugby with the 13.49 London Euston to Birmingham New St train.



Making an impact as part of an £800 million investment in rolling stock in Wales are the Stadler Class 231 DMUs. Here No. 231008 restarts the 14.25 Bargoed to Penarth from Caerphilly on May 17, 2023.

initially stored at Nottingham and Cricklewood. However, on January 9, 2024, one Class 701 unit entered service between Waterloo and Windsor & Eton Riverside.

Since 2020, many of the '701s' have been placed in store at great cost. Some are at the new Feltham depot, others are at Clapham Junction, MoD Marchwood and MoD Bicester, while some are at private sites such as Long Marston and Worksop. Until the '701s' are introduced in numbers, the reliable 1980s-built Class 455 units will soldier on. It is also worth pointing out that Feltham depot, which cost £60 million to build and was completed in 2021, will not be fully functional until the '701s' begin squadron service.

New train hiatus

A bigger concern for the wider rail industry is the future of the Alstom site at Litchurch Lane, Derby which has been building trains and carriages for almost 150 years.

Even though Alstom has won a £2 billion order with Hitachi to build 54 trains for HS2, cancellation of Phases 2a and 2b north of Birmingham has left the revised train order uncertain, and the Government is yet to indicate the size of the smaller fleet needed.

In any event, this work at Derby is not due

to begin until 2026, and with the Class 701 production due to end in February this year, it leaves a big gap with no work – not even refurbishments. Despite considerable lobbying by local MPs for new orders, and with the situation being raised in Parliament, Alstom says 550 permanent and 780 temporary roles at Alstom could be lost when the production line rolls out the last 701.

At Hitachi in County Durham, although the situation is not quite as bleak because the site is fulfilling orders for 23 Avanti West Coast Class 805 and 807 units and 33 East Midlands 'Aurora' five-car Class 810s, there may be a shorter gap before the HS2 bodyshell build begins.

Nearly 18 months ago, Hitachi Rail CEO Andrew Barr was warning of the situation facing his company's factory, adding that the Government needed to make decisions. In actuality, nothing has yet happened.

Despite the need for more trains to provide much-needed additional passenger capacity, there are no new orders in the pipeline for Alstom or Hitachi. Only CAF – which recently won an order from LNER for 10 10-car tri-mode units that will be assembled at its factory in Newport, South Wales – has secured a future in the short-term at least.

Shadow Rail Minister Stephen Morgan has

called on the Government to stop "burying its head in the sand" and "find solutions" to protect rail manufacturing jobs across the country. He added: "Three years ago, the Government hailed the deal to manufacture HS2 trains in Britain as putting the country 'firmly at the forefront of the high-speed rail revolution'.

"Today, the jobs of the skilled people who will build those trains, as well as their suppliers, are at risk due to delays and shocking planning from the government."

Upgrades and cascades

There have also been situations where engineering modifications to update units have resulted in technological disappointment and the units being withdrawn and stored. The Class 769 fleet is one such example.

The theory was that the former Thameslink Class 319 EMUs (introduced from 1987, but made redundant by the introduction of Siemens Class 700 units) would be retro-fitted with a 520hp diesel unit and alternator under each driving trailer that would drive the existing traction equipment, thereby creating a bi-mode unit. A variation was a tri-mode unit whereby the former dual-voltage EMUs would regain their third-rail pickup shoes plus the diesel engines.

The plan was for bi-modes to be operated by



Using bodyshells sent from Spain, the Class 196 DMUs are being fitted out by CAF at Newport, South Wales and a total of 26 units (12 two-car and 14 four-car) have been built for West Midlands Trains, with a further 77 two- and three-car units ordered for Transport for Wales as Class 197s. Four-car West Midlands set No. 196102 passes Wilmcote on July 26, 2021 during a driver training exercise.



Proving successful are the 'Aventra' Class 720 EMUs built for Greater Anglia and C2C, plus the Class 710 versions for London Overground. C2C unit Nos. 720604/608 pause at Rugeley Trent Valley on February 9, 2023 with working 5Q91, the 10.18 DB Cargo Fan A and B sidings (Wembley) to Crewe mileage accumulation working.

Northern (eight units) and Transport for Wales (five units), with GWR operating 19 tri-mode units (Class 769/9) between Oxford, Reading and Gatwick Airport.

The first GWR tri-mode No. 769943 was delivered to Reading depot in August 2020, with the expectation of entering in early 2021, but technical and other issues delayed their introduction and the date was first pushed back to between June and December 2021, then into 2022. However, GWR subsequently decided the tri-mode plan would be abandoned, with the 19 units handed back to the leasing company by April 2023. Most are in store at Long Marston, but two are believed to be at Brodie Engineering in Kilmarnock for further assessment.

The Transport for Wales units also suffered a number of niggly problems and the operator withdrew its last unit on May 19, 2023. However, Northern's '769s' soldier on for the time being and can usually be found on services between Southport, Manchester Victoria and Stalybridge.

As has been reported in *The RM*, West Midlands Class 323s will be cascaded to Northern to replace the Class 319s. Several withdrawn '319s' have already been sent to Sims Newport straight after being taken out of traffic and a slow cascade of 323s to Northern has begun.

While not wishing to be too despondent, there have been a number of notable successes with recent rolling stock introductions. The Class 700 Thameslink units are proving to be great workhorses, and once initial software issues on the 'Aventra' Class 710 (London Overground) and 720 units (Greater Anglia) was resolved, they have proved dependable and reliable in traffic. The same can be said of the CAF Class 196 and 197 DMUs in traffic with West Midlands Trains and Transport for Wales respectively.

Additionally, the all-electric Stadler 'Flirt' Class 745 plus the bi-mode Class 755 have settled down well with Greater Anglia, while over in Wales the same can be said for the diesel-only Class 231 units working on some of the Valley lines.

More to come

With the Class 379s stored, most '769s' and the TPE Mk.5a stock recently removed from service, the next fleet slated for withdrawal in its entirety is the Class 350/2s used by London NorthWestern. This sub-fleet is a batch of 37 four-car 110mph units first introduced in 2008, and are to be replaced by a fleet of new Class 730 'Aventra' units built by Bombardier/Alstom.

While the reliability of the Siemens product has never been in question, the '350/2s' do have the unpopular 3+2 seating, while the other three sub-classes of '350s' have 2+2 seating. The '350/2s' also lack the dual voltage capability of the 350/1s.

Like the Class 379s, the Class 350/2 is roughly halfway through its service life and owner Porterbrook has indicated to *The RM* it is exploring several opportunities for them, adding that it has not ruled out traction modification options to make the units more versatile.

Porterbrook also told *The RM* it is confident the Class 769s "will play a key role in supporting the transition towards a more efficient and sustainable railway in the future" and confirmed that two of the units are being converted into express freight vehicles.

The Elizabeth Line has proven extremely popular, and between October 15 and



First North Western introduced the 27-strong Class 175 fleet by from June 2000, eventually being transferred to Arriva Trains Wales and then Transport for Wales. Although found on West Wales-Manchester and Cardiff-Holyhead workings, some units suffered underbody fires due to debris accumulation, and the units were withdrawn in the spring of 2023 and replaced by Class 197s. Accelerating away from Craven Arms on May 16, 2023 is set No. 175001 with the 11.00 Carmarthen to Manchester Piccadilly.

"It is the bleakest, most depressing and frustrating situation the railways have faced in the 30-plus years I have been writing for *The RM*"

November 11 last year carried 17.8 million passengers, creating a new record – the figure up from the previous month's 17.3 million, which itself was a record. More trains are needed, but the question is whether that order will come before Alstom Derby starts laying workers off.

In Scotland, there is concern over continued use of the 'InterCity' HSTs on services from Glasgow and Edinburgh to Inverness and Aberdeen. The drivers' union ASLEF continues to raise concerns surrounding the crashworthiness of the cabs, and this concern intensified following the tragic crash at Carmont in August 2020.

The union's fears will not have been helped when power car No. 43129 collided with a tree near Broughty Ferry, Fife at the end of December 2023 – wrecking the cab, but with the driver fortunately escaping serious injury. Their likely replacements are the Class 222s from East Midlands Railway, which are said to be a minimum of 12 months away from being cascaded.

Although CrossCountry's 'Voyagers' are now more than 20 years old, these hard-working diesel units are still being run 'under the wires' between Glasgow/Edinburgh to Doncaster, when in reality bi-modes are the way forward. That said, an upgrade of the power supply is needed between Newcastle and Edinburgh, as currently TPE Class 802 bi-modes run this section on diesel power. When a procurement process for new CrossCountry units might begin is unknown, but it is looking increasingly likely to be after the next general election.

Also on the cards for replacement are the Class 150 'Sprinters', as these second generation DMUs are now approaching 40 years old. Not much younger are the Class 153/156 variants, so there is a big procurement programme required across several operators.

It is easy to form the conclusion that the rolling stock programme has become rather disjointed and uncoordinated, for which a large proportion of blame for the situation can be laid at the door of the Government, which has been controlling DfT spending very tightly and questioning almost every decision.

There seems to be little effort by the Government or Treasury in pursuing greener options for rail to trigger a modal shift from road, such as in-fill electrification schemes or even fare reforms.

It has also emerged that in May, a further £1 billion is expected to be cut from the rail budget, and this could include a combination of service reductions and fewer carriages that will further exacerbate overcrowding and passenger frustration.

Decline accusations

Even though the Government is taking all the fare revenue in exchange for a relatively small management fee given to operators, very little money is being fed back into rail projects or investment in new carriages. Not surprisingly the situation has led to accusations of 'managed decline' of the railway network at a time when other countries – such as Germany, with its €49 monthly ticket for all local transport modes – are investing and promoting public transport.

In contrast, the current Government appears to be completely against any schemes that will help with decarbonisation projects or any form of promotion for rail tickets, even though this would almost certainly result in more money flowing into the Treasury's coffers.

It is without doubt, the bleakest, most depressing and frustrating situation the railways have faced in the 30-plus years I have been writing for *The RM*. ■



GBRF's re-engineered No. 69010 (the former No. 56060) in undercoat drags brand new SWR Class 701 EMU No. 701527 from Derby to Eastleigh on January 1, seen passing beneath the footbridge at Barrow upon Soar in Leicestershire. PAUL BIGGS

2023

A year of change

Ashley Butlin looks back over the major stock changes that took place in the last 12 months.

LOOKING back over 2023 shows that changes to the rolling stock on our railways are taking place, but extremely slowly.

Little change has taken place to the locomotive stock, the most significant changes being the export of Freightliner Class 86s to Bulgaria and HST power cars to Mexico and Nigeria. In addition, the large number of Class 58s stored in France has now been cut.

While many new units have been delivered from various manufacturers, only a small number of these actually entered traffic during the year, with the majority of them stored at various locations awaiting entry to service.

New DMUs are limited to Class 197s, with 24 new units delivered. Of these, just seven (29%) entered traffic during 2023. Many more EMUs (141 units) were delivered, but of these only 34 (24%) from Classes 720 and 777 entered service last year.

Some stock delivered in previous years is

now finally entering traffic, with an additional 60 DMUs and 50 EMUs. This contrasts with deliveries in the past, when new units arrived at a depot and were in use within days.

These delays to entering service are causing numerous problems for passengers, with overcrowding on existing stock being the prime effect. Interestingly, while some classes removed from traffic are stored – such as the Class 175s for potential further use – older stock (including Classes 319, 507 and 508) are being rapidly removed from the network, mostly to Sims Metals at Newport in South Wales.

Hauled stock

Regarding hauled coaching stock, the majority of disposals took place at Carnforth as West Coast Railways got rid of vehicles no longer required or fit for purpose. Interestingly, the majority were still registered with the Rolling Stock Library, hence their inclusion here.

On a more positive note, as the use of HSTs continues to decline, vehicles are finding new lives overseas in Mexico and Nigeria, with more to follow. The other significant change of hauled stock involves TransPennine Express removing its fleet of Mk.5 coaches from service at the end of the year. The future for these almost new vehicles is unclear, but further use either here or overseas must be a certainty.

So what will happen in 2024? With many of the current new-build contracts nearing completion, the delivery of new trains looks set to reduce. From the operating and passenger points of view, getting the available stock into traffic is essential.

Without its large fleet of Class 701 units in traffic, SWR could be in serious trouble, as its ageing fleet of units will reach the end of its use without major overhaul. The use of Class 319s ended in January, while Merseyrail will see the end of its Classes 507 and 508 as all the new Class 777s come on line. ■

2023 IN SUMMARY

Locomotives

Imported and renumbered

66307-12

Rebuilt and renumbered

69008-10

Exported

43008-10/16/22/40
43158/70/72/84/92
43239
43304/66
66526
86604/05/07-10/12-14/22/27/28/
32/37-39

Preserved

08706
20066/87
20110/66
37703
43023/25
43165
91131

Disposed for scrap

08602
08802
31106
37165
37605
43005/41/43/52/64/78
43171/80/92
47194
47368/78
47492
47769
57004
58001/04-07/09-11/13/18/21/32-36/38-
40/42/46/49
86251
91112/15/16/18/21/25

Diesel Multiple Units

Newly delivered

197022/27/29-33/36/42/44/45/47-51
197111-13/15-17/21/23

Newly in traffic

196001-12
196101/02/04/07-10/12
197001/02/05/07-09/12/14/16-21/42-
47/49/51
197101/04-06/08/10-12/15/22
230007-10
231001-11

Preserved

153374

Sold for further use

153371

Disposed for scrap

153316/24/30/32/58/59/63
52763 (158763)
58703 (159102)

Electric Multiple Units

Newly delivered

398005-15
555003-05/13/15
701002/51-57
701513-26
710374/75
720103/17/19-37
720612
730022/26-47
730205/06
756002-07
756101-17
777011/17/19-28/30-32/34
777140/42/44/46/48/50/52
805002/04-09
807002
810001

Newly in traffic

710375/79
720103/17/19-36
720508/09/18/41/44/83
720601-12
730006/07/10-14/16/18/19/21
777001-20/23/24/26/28/30/31/36/49
777140/42/44/46/48/50/52

Preserved

313121
313201
315856

Sold for further use

319220
321402

Disposed for scrap

315837/57
317337-41/43/44
317502/04/06-08/10-12
317881-86
319012
319215/17/19
319362/64/66/67/75/78/83/84
321331/33/35/36/40/43
321402 (two vehicles)/06/09/21/23/
24/26/27/30-33/ 36/39/41/44
455722
507005/08/09/12/19/24/25-27
508103/11/12/15/17/20/22-28/30/31/
36-39/41
799001

Hauled Coaching Stock

Preserved

5027/35
10598
40204
40904
42353/55/57
94302/06/23/26
94527

Sent for further use

1213

Exported

41091
41100
42026
42179
42401/02/05
44034/61/63/94

48101/03/13/15/25/31/32/33
49101/07/11

Disposed for scrap

1258
1644/50/52/55/63/70
2108/10/27
4860
4932/97
5453/63/91
5569
5737/40/56
5910/43
6006/50
6141/75
10245
10307
11028
12202/29
12305
12480/86
13323
17080
17168
34525
41195
42173/95
42217
42310/74
48116/34/35
49113
80212
82111/24/29/45
82206/15
92159
92908
94332
94406/08/28/98
94512/25/26/42
95300
96110/35/65/82/92

Departmental Disposed for scrap

975875
977087/95



Above: Type 3 No. 37611 *Denise* hauls a rake of former CrossCountry HST stock from Barrow Hill to Great Yarmouth on November 13 ahead of being exported for further use in Mexico. The 5L48 working is seen passing Manea, Cambridgeshire. PETER R FOSTER

Left: Now gone for scrap as the new Class 777s take over, Merseyrail Class 508 EMU No. 508120 is pictured at Liverpool Lime Street with a service for New Brighton on December 6, 2023. PHIL WALLIS

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ROYAL OAK

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BOURNE END

DIDCOT

SWINDON

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Viaducts of the West Highland Line

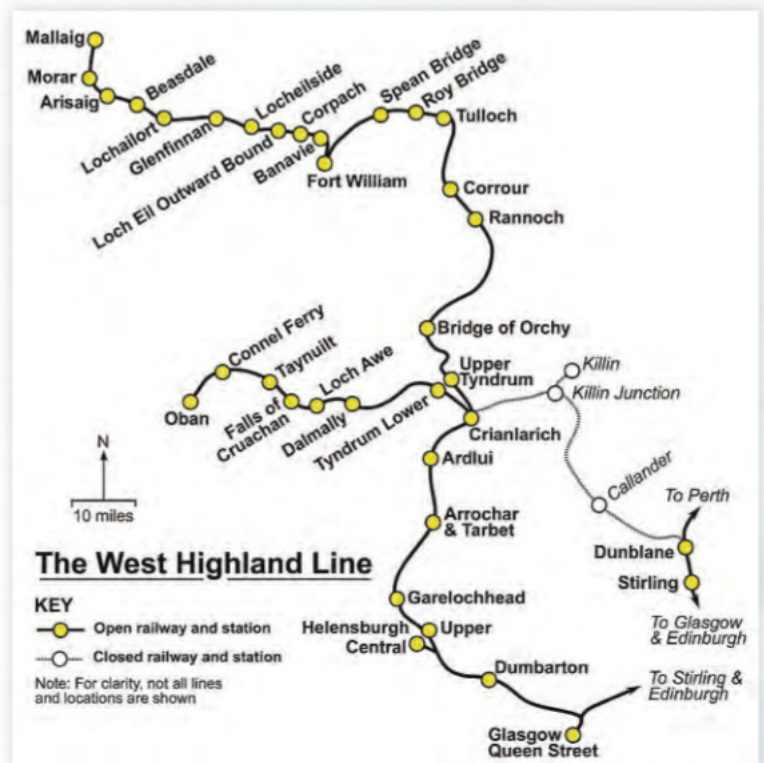
Armed with a copy of the 1894 *Murray's Handbook for Scotland*, Dr Joseph Brennan takes a trip along the West Highland Line to highlight some of the key structures along the way.

PUBLISHED in the same year that the line opened, the 1894 *Murray's Handbook for Scotland* describes the 100-mile West Highland Line from Craighendran, near Helensburgh, to Fort William as "itself an object of interest. Its construction, through some of the most desolate and uninhabited parts of Scotland, was no light undertaking; and its deep and difficult cuttings, its numerous lofty viaducts, its artificial foundations over miles of bog, and its innumerable culverts across mountain torrent-beds, all triumphs of engineering skill".

Below: The remoteness of the West Highland Line terrain is captured here as No. 66104 heads south across Rannoch viaduct towards the station with Pathfinder Tours' 'Easter Highlander' on April 13, 2009. Note that loose stones have been scattered around the pier bases to provide a firm footing in the highly-saturated ground.

RICHARD SZWEJKOWSKI
(CC BY-SA 2.0)

Work commenced in 1889 and was a financially precarious undertaking, with the crossing of the waterlogged Rannoch Moor proving a major drain on resources. In fact, the line's eventual completion was only assured by a director of the railway, J H Renton, pledging part of his private fortune – a contribution immortalised by a sculpture of his head created by navvies that stands at Rannoch station. But this did not diminish possibilities for expansion, and in 1897 work commenced on the line's near 41-mile extension to Mallaig, which was completed in 1901.



Right: Powering their way up Glen Falloch from Ardlui, 'Black Fives' Nos. 45407+44871 cross one of the more minor bridges on the route as they take an empty rake of 'Jacobite' Mk.1s to Fort William on March 30, 2023. PETER AINSWORTH



Consistently ranked as one of the world's most scenic railway journeys, the WHL was built in the twilight of Queen Victoria's reign and in this article, armed with the 1894 *Murray's* guide, I will examine a selection of "its numerous lofty viaducts" – viaducts that came to number around 350 in all to carry trains from Glasgow up the mountainous West Coast of the Scottish Highlands.

The 21-arch Glenfinnan viaduct on the Mallaig extension is, of course, the most famous of the line, and arguably of the world too thanks to featuring in the Harry Potter films. Therefore I will also venture beyond my *Murray's* to admire a selection of

structures from the extension as well. With their diversified construction type, these latter structures widened the appeal of the line enormously, and hold in their mass concrete core a key component of the line's preservation in the current century.

Craig-an-arden

The *Murray's* guide has us setting out from Glasgow Queen Street, after which the first viaduct it picks out is the eight-arch Craig-an-arden, "almost opposite Inversnaid and its waterfall". It is a description that, simply stated, makes clear the highly scenic prospect on offer.

Also known as Creag-an-arnain

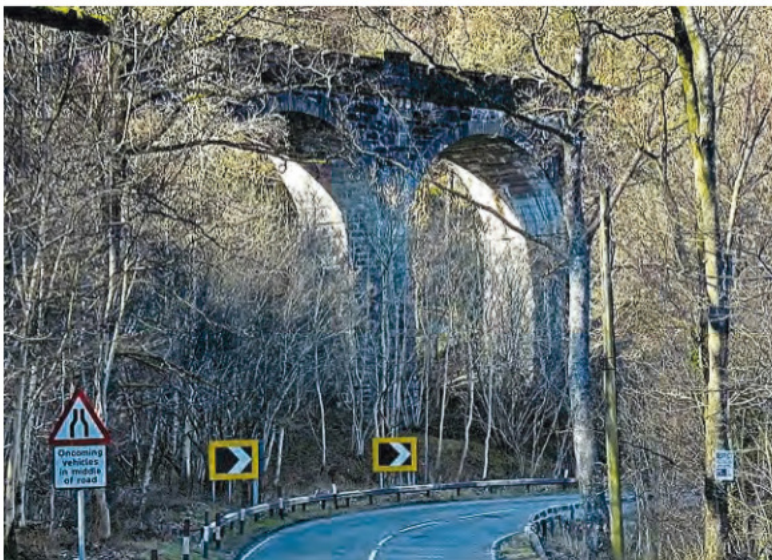
viaduct, this Category B-listed structure dates from 1891, features round-headed arches on a gently curved plan, and is believed to have perhaps been the work of architect James Miller.

Interestingly, this stone viaduct – which many of us would consider as typical for the period – is, in fact, unique along the line. Its construction style was specially chosen to avoid criticism should a standard lattice girder bridge have been erected on the site instead. At around 104 metres (341ft) in length, with its eight arches being of 11 metre (36ft) span and built of whinstone, it is a 'solid', scenic start that carries us over two unnamed burns above the west shore of Loch Lomond. It can be found north of Arrochar & Tarbet station, which is also worth a visit.

Glen Falloch

After traversing one of the most difficult cuttings along the line (with high retaining walls on the side of Loch Lomond), our next marvel is one of the loftiest – another eight-span viaduct that crosses the dell of the Dubh Eas. This viaduct is notable for its height of 43.9 metres (144ft), which is only 3.7 metres (12ft) less than the rail height of the Forth Bridge.

There is a contrasting style on this one, being of a lattice girder type built on concrete piers founded on rock. The viaduct comprises one span of 36 metres (118ft) and six of 14 metres (46ft). It is 129.9 metres (426ft) long and was built with the aid of a temporary 'service' bridge with the steel brought in by water. ▶



The difficult to photograph Craig-an-Arden viaduct, north of Arrochar & Tarbet, pictured from the adjacent road on March 24, 2014. DAVID DIXON (CC BY-SA 2.0)



Laying historic interest onto the site is the remains of Glen Falloch Halt, with the area having intriguing connections to a Second World War prisoner camp. It can be found between Ardlui and Crianlarich stations.

Two other viaducts soon follow of the lattice girder type, Glenbruar viaduct and Fillan viaduct, both at Crianlarich and so also known as Crianlarich No. 1 and 2 respectively.

Horseshoe curves

Before reaching Bridge of Orchy, “the train makes a horseshoe sweep round the foot of Ben Odhar [Beinn Odhar] and Ben-a-Chaisteil [Beinn a’ Chaisteil] crossing two glens”, my *Murray’s* guide reads. Known as the Horseshoe Curve, it is in this part of the journey where two viaducts impress upon us during a train-travel meander: The first (known as Horseshoe Curve South or Gleann viaduct) across the Allt Coralan, the second (Horseshoe Curve North or Auch viaduct) across the Allt Kinglass. Both are lattice girder types.

The south viaduct has five spans of 18.3 metres (60ft) with an overall length of 97 metres (318ft). Built on a curve of 15 chains (301 metres) radius, its construction involved extending the girders on booms over the piers. But north viaduct is the more dramatic horseshoe proposition here, with its nine spans of 18.3 metres (60ft) each bringing in an overall length of 175.6 metres (576ft). Construction involved hoisting the girders into position with cantilever lifting tackle, and it has benefited from a refurbishment programme.



Rannoch

Our next viaduct to marvel is in the Moor of Rannoch, which my *Murray’s* deems “the largest and dreariest moor in Scotland”.

The 1894 guide gives the following account of both the engineering efforts required to cross this watery terrain and the bleak beauty of the place: “Across this moor huge bundles of faggots [bundles of wooden sticks] had to be used in making a foundation for the line. Wild, bleak and dreadfully exposed in bad weather, on a clear day this part of the route is exceedingly interesting, the panorama of mountains, especially to the west, being very fine.”

Accounts like this certainly capture something of the magic of the West Highland Line in all weather, with Rannoch being the line’s indisputable engineering triumph up to the line’s summit at Corrour, some 410 metres (1,345ft) above sea level.

Our “handsome” viaduct is found just beyond Rannoch station. True to the opinion of *Murray’s*, author and former newspaper editor Simon Jenkins picks out the spot as among Britain’s most special stops: “Desolate, savage, brooding, rain-swept Rannoch Moor,” Jenkins wrote in *The Guardian* in 2017. “Rannoch is chiefly a base for exceptionally hardy hill walkers.”

And setting out for a moor ramble is the ideal way to appreciate this nine-span statement of a structure, defiantly exposed in the moors. Its 209 metre (684ft) length and lattice girder type that is built partly on a curve of 12 chains (241 metres) radius makes it a sight to behold, and it is a popular subject among photographers. Its nine spans are of 21.5 metres (70ft 6in) each, while its piers of locally quarried granite are founded on boulder clay.

Above: Glen Falloch viaduct, between Ardlui and Crianlarich, is a curved, single-track lattice girder structure over the Dubh Eas. Photo taken on September 19, 2020.

ALAN O'DOWD (CC BY-SA 2.0)

Below: Both of the Horseshoe viaducts, north of Upper Tyndrum, are visible in this shot taken on July 26, 2012 as an unidentified Class 67 hauls the overnight sleeper train from Euston towards Fort William.

GARETH JAMES (CC BY-SA 2.0)





While Rannoch viaduct is located not far north of the station, there is another viaduct around a mile south of the station, where the line crosses the Garbh Ghaoir. Known as Gaur viaduct, it is a more modest – yet still scenic – structure.

Loch Treig 150

Leaving an area such as this – where “in the deep cuttings beyond, boulders of all sizes were found resting on the granite,” according to *Murray’s* eloquent phrasing – is made easier with the thrill of crossing a great many of the line’s bridging structures in the environs of Loch Treig. It is along this straight and almost treeless loch with steep grassy sides that a “most interesting” travelling experience is to be had. As my *Murray’s* describes it: “So many mountain streams fall into [Loch Treig] that the train has to cross more than 150 large and small bridges.”

The excitement continues at the loch’s north end, where: “There are fine rapids just before it joins the Spean, which we cross by a three-span viaduct” ahead of reaching Tulloch (which was known for its first five months, and so in my *Murray’s* guide, as Inverlair). And it is not too far away along the Spean that the on-foot visitor can also enjoy what remains of an Invergarry & Fort Augustus Railway (closed 1946) viaduct that once passed over it.

Viaducts of the extension

My *Murray’s* guide ends at Fort William but, of course, that is by no means the end of the line today.



Built in support of the fish trade, the almost 41-mile extension from Fort William to Mallaig opened in 1901, bringing trains westwards through mountainous topography cut with winding sea inlets. Taming such a landscape required curves down to 12 chains (241 metres) radius and severe gradients.

The WHL was the first in this part of Scotland, with the exception only of the Callander & Oban section of the Caledonian Railway, and in keeping with the present tour’s affection for drawing sources that are contemporary with the structures under appreciation, the following account from a 1902 edition of *The Locomotive Magazine* offers insight into the wonder that is the WHL’s Mallaig extension and the added value it brings to the line as a whole.

“Until a little more than seven years ago, the large tract of country on the west of Scotland, comprising almost the whole of Argyleshire, and

the greater part of Invernesshire, was... practically devoid of railway communication, but on August 7, 1894, that remarkable piece of line known as the West Highland Railway was opened from Craigendoran Junction to Fort William... and a large district was thus opened out which had hitherto been almost inaccessible. With the opening on April 1, 1901 of the Mallaig extension of the West Highland Railway, a still more remote part has been brought into touch with the railway system of the country, and an alternative route created to the Isle of Skye and the Outer Hebrides.”

The Locomotive Magazine goes on to write: “The locomotives employed on this section are of course the 5ft 7in four-coupled bogie engines specially designed by Mr [Matthew] Holmes for working the passenger service on the West Highland Railway... and with Mr Holmes’ kind permission we were enabled to make a trip over the new line on the footplate of this engine. ▶

Above: Gaur viaduct, south of Rannoch, is of the lattice girder type typical of the West Highland Line. The viaduct is seen on March 18, 2012 with the Garbh Ghaoir flowing underneath.

LESLIE BARRIE (CC BY-SA 2.0)

Top: More usually seen from above, this ground level shot of Glenfinnan viaduct emphasises the scale of this impressive curved structure as Class 156 DMU No. 156450 crosses with the 08.21 Glasgow Queen Street to Mallaig on March 14, 2023. PAUL BIGGS



The gradients are very severe, in places reaching 1-in-45 to 50, and the country traversed remarkable for its great variety and attractiveness, possessing, if possible, even greater interest for the stranger than the very striking features for which the older portion of the West Highland Railway is so deservedly noted.

Consequences of its landscape challenges include: Drastic limits on train speeds, much of the line being on embankment, and ample cuttings and tunnels – the latter of which number 11 yet, as a 1902 source notes, “are so short” that their combined lengths barely make “three-quarters of a mile”. As for the stations, there were nine of these erected for the extension.

But it is its viaducts that are most memorable. Originally, these were to be constructed in stone, but the local ‘mica schist’ rock proved difficult to work. Cue concrete as the affordable solution, worked with a

design ambition rarely before seen to produce bold structures that have gained an assured place in Britain’s railway story.

Glenfinnan

Most famous of all is Glenfinnan viaduct over the River Finnan, with its 21 arches built on a curve that stretches 380 metres (1246ft). It enjoys Category-A Listed protection as the longest concrete viaduct in Scotland and, due to its innovative use of mass concrete to stylish effect, has become – quite simply – an icon of British spirit.

Instantly recognisable as ‘that bridge from Harry Potter’, it has also played more real-world roles – such as in 2020, when it joined other landmarks across Britain ‘turning blue’ in support of NHS staff treating coronavirus patients.

Structures such as Glenfinnan are myth-inspiring creations, and no Scottish Highlands journey would

be truly complete without engaging with a little folklore around the largest structures, such as the search for a horse and cart, said to be buried at Glenfinnan.

But after decades of searching, the fabled horse and cart was at last discovered by Roland Paxton in 2001 thanks to radar imaging in the much more plausibly-sized centre pier of a different viaduct along the extension entirely, the spectacular Loch nan Uamh.

Around Arnabol

Between Lochailort and Beasdale stations are the six-arch Arnabol viaduct (over Arnabol Burn), and the eight-arch Loch nan Uamh (over the Mama Burn), both listed with Category-B protection. Loch nan Uamh has a wide centre concrete pylon and has a short tunnel (No. 116) at its north end.

Larichmore viaduct can be found between Beasdale and Arisaig stations, crossing Brunery Burn with three spans comprising a wide centre arch and a tall narrow arch at each flank.

Borrodale

Larichmore is followed by the standout of the Mallaig extension’s other viaducts, Borrodale, which is the only viaduct mentioned in *The Locomotive Magazine’s* review of the Mallaig Extension and is now a Category-A Listed structure over the Borrodale Burn. As *The LM* writes, “after skirting the sea at the head of Lochs Ailort and nan Uamh, the line reaches Arisaig, crossing on the way the Borrodale viaduct, remarkable as possessing in its principal span of 127ft 6in the longest concrete arch in Great Britain”.

Above: ‘Black Five’ No. 44871 crosses Arnabol Viaduct on September 28, 2021 with the 16.55 return ‘Jacobite’ service from Mallaig to Fort William. IAN DIXON

Left: Larichmore viaduct, pictured on May 16, 2013 is one of Sir Robert McAlpine’s concrete structures on the Mallaig extension, crossing a minor road and Brunery Burn near Arisaig. M J RICHARDSON (CC BY-SA 2.0)

Right: Type 3 No. 37406 *The Saltire* returns heads the return leg of the ‘West Highlander’ landcruise from St Pancras out of Tunnel No. 116 and across Loch nan Uamh viaduct on September 10, 1989. The viaduct’s wide central pier is a tomb for a horse and cart used during its construction. HAWTHORNE COLLECTION





Borrodale viaduct was the longest unreinforced concrete span in the world when opened in 1901 and is now a Category-A Listed structure and is pictured on October 16, 2005.

JIM BAIN (CC BY-SA 2.0)

Contemporary accounts such as this one are vitally important to rail historians and enthusiasts alike, capturing something of the at-the-time excitement, and a pulse for a general consensus among the railway community and British society at large around what is and would be important.

This viaduct's top-tier protection was the result of a listing authority upgrade in 1989, with photographic surveys of the site following in the 1990s helping to enhance and augment national records – something that is especially important for sites like this that may not capture the public's imagination in quite the same way as other monuments, yet are vital to protect no less.

The design at Borrodale had been governed by the desires of Arisaig House's owner, with its centre span being flanked by 6.1 metre (20ft) spans, and Borrodale tunnel nearby.

Lasting Appeal

Beloved across Britain and the world, the WHL (and its extension especially) today is a major tourist attraction, with its history kept alive with steam specials in symbiotic tandem with regular services. As with other now-cherished lines, it fought off threats of closure in the 1960s during the Beeching cuts, then again in the 1990s due to revenue disappointments.

But the line has prevailed, and among its recent preservation accolades can be counted a Scottish Government decision not to clutter the splendour of the line with overhead power lines, safeguarding its unique selling point as a line that takes its passengers, to quote from a 1901 assessment in *The Railway Magazine*, to "the wildest mountain scenery".

The *Murray's* guide adds: "The traveller, who has breakfasted amid the smoke of Glasgow, may take the interesting West Highland Railway

A DIVERSION TO KILLIN

THE star structure of the Crianlarich area belongs to a former branch line off the closed section of the Callander & Oban Railway (C&OR) between Crianlarich and Dunblane.

Category A-Listed Killin viaduct, about 10 miles east of Crianlarich, is the second oldest mass-concrete railway viaduct in Britain. It is comprised of five skew arches and is described by listing authority Historic Environment Scotland as "a prominent landscape landmark". It was part of the short branch line from the C&OR line at Killin Junction to Killin, which was built to support local tourism. Being "spectacularly sited" to have once provided train passengers with views of the Falls of Dochart and the Clan Macnab Burial Ground, it is certainly worth the detour if possible.



route to Fort William, lunch there, and view the sunset from the summit of Ben Nevis."

In addition to its scenic pull, experts have also observed that an argument could be plausibly made that the WHL is the last considerable piece of railway building in Britain. Its single track is a marvellous, end-of-Victorian-era iron road 'North-West Passage' that snakes some 140 miles from Craigendoran on the Clyde to the fishing port of Mallaig, and made possible in the grandest way by the many viaducts along the way. ■

Above: The five-arch former railway viaduct over the River Dochart near Killin, taken on July 10, 2008.

IAIN LEES (CC BY-SA 2.0)





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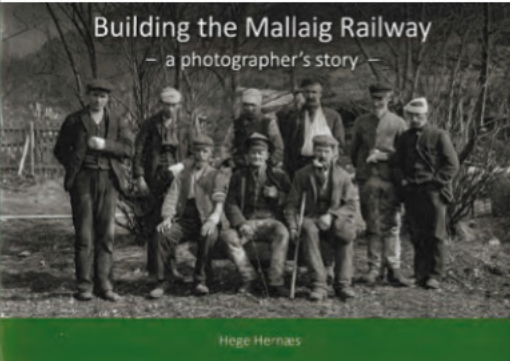
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July 2024



Photo: Bernd Sailer

Departure from Slabberts at sunrise ... Connoisseurs know what I mean. We try it again: three big locos on the lines
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South Africa: The Big Five: Kruger National Park Jul 27th – Aug 2nd
 Kimberley – Bloemfontein, Bloemfontein – Marseilles – Modderport and Bethlehem – Ficksburg, the latter two lines are scenically outstanding, the first one dedicated for glint shots. More than 30 already booked their seat.



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Waiting for the Tube

A snapshot from the very early British Railways era in West London shows the local passenger service at Northolt about to give way to an extension of the Underground's Central Line.

THE fascinating photograph at the bottom of the page shows construction of Northolt Underground station in West London some 76 years ago on February 2, 1948 – just over a month after Nationalisation and the creation of British Railways.

The view is looking north-west along what would become the station's island platform, and is taken at the bottom of the steps down from the future ticket office on Mandeville Road. Note the very rough and ready narrow gauge contractor's railway running through the mud.

The GWR's New North Main Line (NNML) from Old Oak Common to South Ruislip can be seen on the right, part of the shorter route from Paddington to Birmingham Snow Hill via Bicester and Banbury (rather than Reading and Oxford), while on the right in the loop is a pannier tank and an autococh, which were working the West Ealing to Northolt Halt shuttle. The cabside number is just beyond being readable. Can any reader help identify the o-6-oPT?

Northolt Halt, which was on the opposite side of Mandeville Road (behind the camera), opened four years after the NNML in 1907, but closed in November 1948 with the opening of the 'New Works Programme' extension of the Underground's Central Line from North Acton to West Ruislip (originally planned to reach Denham, but cut back after the Second World War). The shuttle from West Ealing



Above The contractor's narrow gauge railway alongside the main line Northolt Halt on February 2, 1948. The bridge carries Mandeville Road over the railway and the new Underground station was being built on the other side.

Left: A view looking north-west along the platform at Northolt Underground station on July 10, 2009.

SUNIL060902 (CC BY-SA 3.0)

still runs today using DMUs, but only as far as Greenford to connect with the Central Line.

The NNML lost its importance in the late 1960s following electrification of the West Coast Main Line between Euston and Birmingham, but was retained for freight and passenger diversions. It was largely singled in the 1990s and then severed between Park Royal and Old Oak Common at the end of 2018 to allow for HS2 construction work to begin. HS2 will run in a tunnel under the NNML between Old Oak Common and West Ruislip, although once that work has been completed, it is not yet certain whether the NNML will be relaid for future use. ■

Below: The site of Northolt Underground station on February 2, 1948 – nine months before it was opened as part of an extension of the Central Line from North Acton to West Ruislip.





In search of variety

John Heaton FCILT uses a two-day, multi-leg journey from Devon to Oxford via York, Warrington, Carlisle and Birmingham to gauge how our current railway service is performing.

CLASS 68s are certainly noisy and No. 68024 *Centaur* announced its approach to York by growling across the Ouse bridge from the Scarborough line, the engine noise then reverberating from the hallowed roof of the city's splendid station as it pulled down to the south end of platform 5 – or platform 9, to those of us who remain rooted in the now ancient former numbering.

Some observers had, a few years back, reluctantly queried the logic of introducing locomotive and CAF Mk.5 coaches into the TransPennine Express (TPE) land of multiple units. The nightmare of dealing with a failure on the climb to Marsden during the intensive pre-Covid timetable – with nothing but Class 185s and IETs behind it – was sobering and perhaps a flawed concept even before encountering a series of faults, training complications and the current nosedive in revenue.

Nevertheless, it was disappointing to hear of their impending withdrawal with effect from TPE's December 2023 timetable before I had made time to sample their work extensively. So in early autumn last year, I decided it was time to track down a Class 68 on their remaining diagrams

Above: A shot that is already history, as TransPennine Express's short-lived experiment with loco-hauled 'Nova 3' trains ended in December after just four years. With a month to go, No. 68024 *Centaur* poses under the magnificent train shed roof at York with 1U63, the 16.00 Manchester Victoria to Scarborough on November 13, 2023. CHRIS GEE

while also forming a judgment about the state of the railway during the recent strike period. I had a booking on the Chester 'Dalesman' charter from Warrington to Carlisle and had earmarked the whole of the preceding day to travel from Devon for that. The 14.48 Scarborough-Manchester Piccadilly promised the required Class 68/Mk.5 formation, but how best to get to York to catch it?

My original plan had been to catch another threatened species, a Great Western Railway 2+4 HST, to Newport then a Class 67+Mk.4 'dining car' train to Crewe. But every day is a Sunday now, in terms of engineering works, so the itinerary would have meant a bus from Weston-super-Mare to Bristol Temple Meads and another from Hereford to Shrewsbury. Good job I was not going to the Ffestiniog otherwise it would have been another road journey from Machynlleth.

It is understandable to move engineering work away from weekends now that leisure travel dominates the market, but the greatest scope for rail's recovery lies in regaining missing midweek business, and anyone continually finding their travel plans frustrated by replacement coaches might soon give up considering rail altogether.

So my trip began routinely on board a Plymouth-



TABLE 1: TAUNTON TO CASTLE CARY

Power Cars/Unit	43126/43xxx	800016					
Load*	2+8/274/290/431	5/251/266					
Train	11.06 Paignton-Padd	08.40 Plymouth-Padd					
Date	September 25, 2013	September 18, 2023					
Recorder/Position	J. Heaton 3rd of 10	J. Heaton 2nd of 5					
Miles	Timing Point	Sch	M S	MPH	Sch	M S	MPH
0.00	TAUNTON d	0	0 00	½L -/101	0	0 00	T -/94
4.76	Cogload Jct	4½	4 17	93/90/103	4½	4 15	92/90
7.92	Athelney	6½	6 14	102/103	7	6 14	100
13.05	Langport E	9 15	100/99/103		9 19	100	
16.77	Somerton GF	12	11 29	102/97/104	12½	11 33	100
22.71	Keinton Mand		15 00	103		15 06	100
27.57	CASTLE CARY a	19½	18 43		19½	18 38	

*=Vehicles/tare/gross tonnes/ind HST Power cars in first run.

Above: Two generations of GWR diesel power pass on the approach to Whiteball Summit (south-west of Taunton) on November 14, 2022 as a 'Castle Class' HST with power cars Nos. 43192 Trematon Castle and 43016 Powderham Castle form 2U10, the 05.40 Penzance to Cardiff Central and Hitachi bi-mode No. 800317 works 1C70, the 07.04 Paddington to Paignton. STEPHEN GINN

Paddington IET with a five-car set vice the diagrammed nine, resulting in no seat reservations being possible. After a driver change at Exeter, the running suddenly became sharper, running right on the limits to Taunton in 21 min 13 sec for the 31 miles and averaging 99.6mph for the 19½ miles from Hele & Bradninch to Victory half-barriers. As ever, the IET could not maintain 100mph to the summit at Whiteball, passed at 94½mph, but the Taunton-Castle Cary run then took the Railway Performance Society (RPS) IET record with a time of 18min 38sec for 27.57 miles (88.8mph), by only 2sec and became my fastest by 4sec, indicating the standard being achieved on a regular basis. See Table 1 for a comparison with my fastest HST over this section.

Similar fastest times were achieved to Westbury and from Pewsey to Newbury, where 17min 23sec was a full half minute better than the previous record, the difference being chiefly the use of brakes into the turnout to the platform line instead of idling towards it. After leaving Reading a minute late, the all-too-predictable delays from Ealing into Paddington were encountered, resulting in a 4min late arrival. I had determined to say 'thank-you' to the driver on arrival, so it was a pleasant surprise to find he was one of my former Exeter colleagues, his response to the praise being: "I haven't lost the touch then?"

East Coast disruption

I was aiming for King's Cross via the Elizabeth Line and Thameslink to St Pancras International, recording two admittedly brief runs with electric multiple units, a Class 345, ½min late to Farringdon and a punctual 12-coach Class 700 on the 11.26 Three Bridges-Bedford.

For the second consecutive time, my arrival at King's Cross discovered the East Coast Main Line in disarray following 'a person hit by a train', this time at Tollerton (9½ miles north of York). The 13.00 to Edinburgh was showing cancelled, the inbound set not having yet reached

TABLE 2: KING'S CROSS TO YORK

Loco	180106			
Load	5/253/265			
Train	12.56 King's Cross-Sunderland			
Date	September 18, 2023			
Recorder/Position	J Heaton 2nd of 5			
Miles	Timing Point	Sch	M S	M.P.H
0.00	KING'S CROSS d	0	0 00	Pfm 1 ½L
0.65	Belle Isle	2	1 36	42/66/rbt/58
2.41	Finsbury Park	4	3 32	61/58
4.88	Alexandra Palace	5½	5 35	82
9.05	New Barnet		8 24	96
12.65	Potters Bar	10	10 36	99
14.39	Brookmans Park		11 36	109/117
17.60	Hatfield		13 17	114
20.21	Welwyn Garden City	14	14 41	108
21.90	Welwyn North		15 35	115
23.69	Woolmer Green Jct	16	16 33	110
24.94	Knebworth	<1>	17 13	116/123
27.50	Stevenage	19	18 29	122/126
31.85	HITCHIN	21	20 35	124
35.53	Three Counties		22 24	120
36.94	Arlesey		23 06	122/126
41.06	Biggleswade		25 05	125/121
44.03	Sandy	27	26 32	122/sigs 94
46.28	Everton		27 53	100
51.60	St. Neots		30 48	116/122
55.80	Offord		32 54	120/118
58.70	Huntingdon	34	34 22	122
61.90	MP 62	[1]	35 58	119
63.35	Abbots Ripton		36 41	123/125
69.23	Holme	40 (1)	39 37	105/sigs 30
76.26	PETERBOROUGH	45½	45 39	75
81.80	Helpston	(2)	49 10	109
84.70	Tallington	5½	50 44	115/118
88.60	Essendine	(3)	52 44	117/119
92.11	Little Bytham		54 31	118/115
96.99	Corby Glen		57 04	116
			sig stop	
			61.03-61.33	
100.04	Stoke	61½	63 18	40
105.35	GRANTHAM	64½	67 41	89
115.24	Claypole	69½	73 19	120
120.03	NEWARK	[1] 73	75 46	104
120.69	Newark Crossing	73½	76 10	97/94
122.88	Bathley Lane		77 28	108
126.21	Carlton		79 15	118/121
134.40	Askham TNP		83 24	115
138.51	RETFORD	82½	85 35	109
143.89	Ranskill	[1]	88 20	126
147.61	Bawtry		90 17	109
151.26	Rossington	89½	92 13	119
155.89	DONCASTER	92	94 43	97
157.93	Arksey		95 57	107/111
160.19	Shaftholme Jct	94½	97 16	95
169.10	Temple Hirst Jct	99	102 03	123/125
174.90	Hambleton North Jct	102	104 51	122/116
182.90	Colton Jct	[1] 107	108 56	117/sigs
186.44	Chaloner's Whin Jct	(2)	112 45	-/2 x sig stops
188.40	YORK a	113	122 36	Pfm 11

Doncaster, where it was to terminate 145 min late.

The next departure for the north was Grand Central's 12.56 to Sunderland, first stop York, with a Class 180, another type with an uncertain future. I have had a few runs with Class 180s nonstop to Doncaster, my best being 86min 11sec (108.6mph) to the north end of platform 3 on the up island. ▶

"After all this horsing around, Centaur half-stroke/half cantered into Manchester Piccadilly 8½ min late"

PRACTICE AND PERFORMANCE

Today's York schedule allowed 13min with 4min recovery time, 1min performance allowance, and no fewer than 8min pathing. Although the interest might well lie in just how the extra time would be wiled away, the net 100min schedule almost matched the 99½min fastest ever.

In that context I was hoping for my best time to pass Potter's Bar, benefiting from the new, higher-speed layout of the London terminus. A top speed of 61mph at Finsbury Park was therefore a disappointment, also only 99mph through Potter's Bar at the top of the 1-in-200 climb. Yes, as so often

Below: LNER 'Azuma' No. 801202 heads south through Arlesey (Bedfordshire) on September 14, 2022 with 1E16, the 13.00 Edinburgh to King's Cross as a Grand Central Class 180 passes with 1D22, the 16.33 King's Cross to Bradford.

PAUL BIGGS

TABLE 3: HUDDERSFIELD TO STALYBRIDGE

Unit		68024				
Load		5/-/-				
Train		14.48 Scarborough-Manchester P				
Date		September 18, 2023				
Rec/Position		J Heaton 2nd of 6				
Miles	Timing Point	WTT	M	S	MPH*	Ave
0.00	HUDDERSFIELD d	0	0	0	8L	
0.53	Springwood Jct		1	19	40	23.9
1.75	Longwood & M		2	38	67	55.8
3.00	Golcar		3	44	70	68.2
4.53	Slaithwaite a	5	6	6		38.7
0.00	d	6½	7	9		
1.24			1	45	55	42.4
1.56			2	3	70	64.0
2.58	Marsden a	3	4	4		30.2
0.00	d	4	5	2		
0.49	Standedge TEP	1	1	13	45/75	24.0
3.53	Standedge TWP		4	12	55	61.1
3.93	Diggle Jct	4	4	39	51	53.3
4.83	Saddleworth		5	38	57/59	54.9
5.98	Greenfield a	6½	7	42		33.4
0.00	d	8	8	43		
1.09	Overbridge		1	31	45	43.2
1.61	Roughtown Road		2	3	65	59.4
2.20	Mossley a	3	3	26		25.3
	d	4	4	13		
0.39	Scout TEP		0	53	55	26.3
1.16	Springbank Rd		1	38	65	61.5
1.98	Stalybridge TEP		2	35	45	51.9
2.60	Stalybridge a	3½	4	19		21.6

*Speeds estimated from averages in most cases owing to gps signal loss

is the case (and one sometimes wonders 'deliberately?') one engine was not working. The good news was it was the one under my coach. Nevertheless, 14min 41sec through Welwyn Garden City was within the normal 15min allowance for Class 91s.

For some reason, I prefer the old First Great Western Class 180 'Adelantes' to 'Voyagers' – in fact, I quite like their relative solidity. Four engines instead of five did not prevent reaching 125mph, but we were losing a few seconds, offset by a 1min performance allowance. A signal check to 95mph, apparently for the late lowering of Everton crossing barriers, cost ½min rectified by 1min recovery time.

Six minutes of pathing allowance had been inserted between Holme and Stoke summit to allow 1R72, the 11.56 Norwich to Liverpool Lime Street, to precede. Understandable, perhaps, to secure a path for the Class 158 assuming it was on time. However, it was 8min late and we actually left it in our wake as it made its stately progress through Corby Glen. As we eased from our four-engine 116mph, however, it was evident the '158' was to be given preference at Stoke Junction and we eventually stood at the controlling signal to watch it pass. The regulating decision was puzzling. Surely we could almost have run clear of it by the time No. 158780 reached Stoke? There was nothing behind us except the 13.03 King's Cross to Leeds in Peterborough station, but we incurred a 4min delay, still 3min late through Doncaster despite 2min recovery time (see Table 2).

Perhaps the regulating decision at Stoke was made in the knowledge that the congestion in York station, caused by many trains being terminated short of their destination, would prevent an on-time arrival. Having passed Colton Junction 2½min late, with a 2min pathing allowance to come, we crawled along from one signal stop to another, arriving 10min late to await No. 68024's arrival.

Across the Pennines

The first surprise after the departure of our Manchester Piccadilly loco-hauled train was running via the up Normanton line to Church Fenton parallel to a Class 185. To train timers brought up on Newcastle-Liverpool trains in the 1970s, the Class 68 was an eye-opener, passing Chaloner's Whin in 2min 19sec at 69mph and Copmanthorpe former level crossing at 101mph.

A 70mph crossover has been installed from the





Above: Soon after entering traffic, Transport for Wales DMU No. 197002 calls at Manchester Oxford Road on January 14, 2023 with a service from Manchester Airport to Llandudno. PHIL WALLIS

Normanton line towards Leeds, but it was disappointing to reduce speed to 58mph before taking it and enter the crossover at 63½mph, although the 9min schedule from York had been kept. After accelerating to 89mph up the 1-in-133 of Micklefield bank, the fireworks came to an end as we followed another train into Leeds at 75mph, arriving in 23min 32sec, 2½min late.

I was looking forward to a cracking run over my native territory to Manchester, but I was to be severely disappointed. Soon after departure, we had a dead stand for signals before Whitehall Junction costing about 1min 40sec. The 15.03 Hull-Liverpool (a Class 185 today not a Farnley Junction 'Jubilee!') was not far ahead, resulting in a check to 47mph before we passed Cottingley station, which opened in 1988 and is scheduled to close soon following construction of a nearby station serving the White Rose shopping centre.

Morley station has been moved eastwards to allow an increase in permissible speed from 45 to 70mph. Had Cottingley survived the White Rose opening, that would have been three stations in 1.61 miles. Meanwhile, 2¼min had been lost, then more approaching Dewsbury, where adverse signals were encountered from the preceding Class 185. With station overtime, and another check waiting for the platform to be cleared at Huddersfield, *Centaur's* deficit had grown to 8min.

There was a time when the absolute block section was from Huddersfield's last controlled signal near Gledholt Junction to Marsden some seven miles away, but nowadays track circuit block meant there was every chance the '185' would run clear. The loco and coaches had to be carefully placed for the short platforms at Slaithwaite and Marsden, and so the whole unwieldy combination lost 2min 'to the engine' approaching these two (see Table 3).

Acceleration through Standedge Tunnel produced some memorable diesel loco-hauled moments, which might soon become as much a memory as main line pre-preservation steam, but it could not prevent further time losses of 2½ min running before Stalybridge.

Despite 1½min being regained at the four small station stops since Huddersfield, punctuality had deteriorated to 11½min late. Even without time loss, scheduling these four stops costs 'through passengers' 10min. The stopping pattern saves running the traditional stopping trains, various combinations of which have been tried during the privatisation years, but is it really the best way of developing the core business and competing with the M62?

After all this horsing around, *Centaur* half-strode/half cantered into Manchester Piccadilly 8½min late before setting off back to Scarborough some 11min later. The loss of these trains since December seems a disappointing waste of assets in a railway community crying out for high quality trains capable of delivering InterCity standards of comfort and speed. If the rumour that Chiltern will snaffle them for the benefit of its London passengers then 'Plus ça change', as we say in Yorkshire.

My destination was still overnight at Warrington, with a choice of a 17.37 East Midlands Class 158 to Central or the

TABLE 4: MANCHESTER OXFORD ROAD TO WARRINGTON BANK QUAY

Units	197018 + 197016			
Vehicles/tare/gross tonnes	4/176/190			
Train	17.25 Manchester P-Holyhead			
Date	September 18, 2023			
Recorder/Posiiton	J Heaton 1/4			
Miles	Location	Sch	MS	MPH
0.00	MAN. OXFORD RD d	0	0 00	7L
0.49	Castlefield Jct	1	1 59	25
1.00	Ordsall Lane Jct	2½	2 56	27
3.91	Eccles		5 56	76
4.89	Patricroft		6 42	76
8.78	Astley	10½	9 44	78
12.70	Kenyon Jct		12 30	90
14.73	Parkside Jct	15	14 28	46/sigs31
15.71	Newton-le-Willows	16	16 02	41/sigs 12
16.59	Earlestown	17½	18 16	19/63
18.09	Winwick Jct	[1]20½	20 17	49/48/52
19.26	Winwick Quay		21 43	50/59
21.49	WARRINGTON BQ a	25	25 13	

[1]=1min recovery

17.44 Transport for Wales 2xClass 197 DMUs to Bank Quay, unusually nonstop from Manchester Oxford Road as we were (un)informed by the public address. Are emergency announcements made in Welsh first? If not, why 'next station' information? If so, safety is not being served. Alternatively, if we are giving priority to Welsh, Oxford Road should be Rhydychen Ffordd, unless my language skills have rusted.

There was plenty of time to compose a rant as we blocked the Piccadilly-Oxford Road bottleneck 'waiting platform' for 8min. The units rode and accelerated well, touching 90mph at the former Kenyon Junction and easing slowly round the Earlestown curve towards Winwick Junction, then passing the site of the famous Vulcan Foundry, now an anonymous housing estate and spare ground (see Table 4).

Our journey from Manchester Oxford Road to Warrington had taken 25min 13sec on a 25min schedule with 1min recovery time, 7min late. Punctuality for the day's six trains – one on time, the remaining five totalling 30 min delay, one of which missed its 'within 10min' Public Performance Measure.

S&C steam

The following day I was bound for an overnight stay in Oxford before a medical appointment, but started the journey with the 'Dalesman', which turned up with Class 37 No. 37685 on the front and No. 37676 on the rear, running mainly at 80 mph to Preston.

The person allocated to sit across from me described these as 'ordinary diesels', so I had to bore for Britain putting him right. The locos date from 1964 and 1963 respectively, and are probably the most reliable British Rail diesels, although Class 33s in their prime would challenge that compliment. My fellow-traveller responded with information about his preservation efforts with the Vulcan bomber. Ordinary death machines?

After reversal in the Lancashire city, the 682 tonne cavalcade took the East Lancashire line, necessarily subdued to 60mph, but had to wait outside Hellifield so arriving 18min late for the handover to steam. Those of us who prefer not to know which steam loco has been rostered until we see it were surprised to see nothing more powerful than 6P5F 4-6-0 'Jubilee' No. 45699 *Galatea*. 'Normal' passengers were left to dispute whether it was No. 45562 *Alberta* or No. 45627 *Sierra Leone*, or even Black 5 No. 44932 perhaps, which had its number stencilled on the twin headlamps. ▶

“The person allocated to sit across from me described these as ‘ordinary diesels’, so I had to bore for Britain putting him right”



TABLE 5: HELLIFIELD TO BLEA MOOR (PASS), CARLISLE TO SHAP SUMMIT (PASS)

Loco/s	Jubilee 4-6-0 No. 45699*			Jubilee 4-6-0 45699* + diesel No. 37685 (rear)			
Vehicles/tare/gross tonnes	12/438/465			12/438/465			
Train	07.34 Chester-Carlisle			07.34 Chester-Carlisle			
Date	July 5, 2023			September 19, 2023			
Weather	Cloudy			Heavy rain, westerly gale			
Position to/from Carlisle	12th of 13 / 4th of 13			4th of 14 / 4th of 14**			
Recorder	W E Long			J Heaton			
Miles	Timing Point	Sch	M S	MPH	Sch	M S	MPH
0.00	Hellifield Dn Gds	0	0 00	5L	0	0 00	15L
	Loop d.						
1.23	Long Preston		3 50	37½		4 16	34
3.23	Settle Jct	7	6 20	55½	9	6 59	53½
5.21	Settle		8 52	41½		9 27	44
6.98	Stainforth		11 59	27½		11 58	42
8.73	MP 240		16 43	17		14 29	41
9.98	MP 240¼		20 18	27½		16 13	47
11.26	Horton in R.	16	23 39	20	16½	17 54	45
12.48	MP 243¾		27 01	24½		19 32	44
13.53	Selside		29 50	20		21 00	41
14.73	MP 246		33 34	18		22 50	37½
15.98	Ribblehead	23	37 33	22½	23	25 07	28/24
17.23	Blea Moor SB	25	41 28	17	25½	27 58	27
18.04	Blea Moor TSP pass		44 32	13		29 34	35
0.00	CARLISLE d.	0	0 00	1L	0	0 00	T
0.81	Upperby Jct		3 14	26		3 20	23
1.35	Upperby Bridge Jct		4 26	27		4 22	33
4.10	MP 65		10 28	29/27½		8 23	46
4.91	Wreay		12 11	28½		9 25	48
6.60	MP 62½ (level)		15 21	37		11 26	54
7.35	Southwaite		16 33	39/41		12 15	55½
9.60	MP 59½ (top 1-in-228)		19 54	40		14 38	57
10.66	Calthwaite		21 34	38		15 46	56
11.60	MP 57½ (1-in-164)		23 06	35		16 46	57
13.10	Plumpton MP		25 20	48		18 16	62
13.85	MP 55¼ (end of level)		26 14	51½		18 59	63½
15.60	MP 53½ (top 1-in-186)		28 20	48½		20 42	60
17.85	PENRITH	25	30 48	59	25	22 46	66½
18.94	Eamont		31 52	61½		23 44	69/70
20.11	MP 49 (top 1-in-193)		33 03	59		24 45	67/68
21.16	Eden Valley Jct	29	34 09	56	29	25 41	66
22.11	Clifton		35 11	50½		26 37	60
24.11	MP 45		37 52	39½		28 40	55
26.11	Thrimby Grange		41 18	32½		30 54	52
27.45	Harrison's Sidings		43 56	29½		32 27	51/50½
29.39	Shap Station		47 45	34½/36½		34 42	55
30.86	MP 38¼ (top of climb)		50 30	29½		36 22	50½
31.50	Shap Summit Sign	43	51 40	36	43	37 06	53½

Note one chain extra exists at 50m 40c compared to posted mileage

* Running simultaneously under 45562 and 45627 identities

**Whole train turned at Carlisle

Above: Racing down from Shap Summit at Shap Beck (Cumbria) on July 15, 2023, 'Jubilee' No. 45699 *Galatea* (carrying the numbers of scrapped classmates Nos. 45627 on the smokebox door and 45562 on the cabside) heads north with the RTC's 'Cumbrian Mountain Express' from Liverpool to Carlisle.

PAUL J BERRY

Such identity swaps are controversial within the railway community, but I tend to accept it as a fact of modern life. In fact, if the exchange was with Farnley Junction's No. 45581 *Bihar and Orissa*, I might even have been tempted to approve.

Meanwhile, the weather had deteriorated further into a winter storm (heavy rain and a gale-force westerly cross-wind) for our 87-year-old loco to handle, now with its own support coach added to the load, 12 bogies, some 438 tons tare, 465 tons gross. The London Midland and Scottish Railway's 'full load' timings westbound over the Ais Gill route were based on 400 tons for an unassisted 'Jubilee', so today's task would have been beyond expectations even in *Galatea's* prime.

Railway Performance Society stalwart Bill Long was on the train when No. 45699 had this load in better July weather, speed coming down to 17mph near Stainforth and, after rallying, 13mph into Blea Moor tunnel. It was scarcely surprising, therefore, when it was decided that this was a hurdle too far today.

Particularly disappointing as this decision was to a train timer, it was welcome to a retired railway operator. Back in the day, a request would have been made for Hellifield shed to turn out a pilot to assist, but there was one nearer to hand today as it was announced that No. 37685 would remain attached to the rear.

As we discussed in the 'Castle Centenarian' Practice and Performance (*RM* August 2023), diesel assistance is anathema to most steam enthusiasts, but it was at least 'quite interesting' even in 1967 if a 'Peak' was given a steam loco to produce heat. One of my more memorable runs was a Standard Class 5 from Manchester to Huddersfield assisting a 'Peak' in such a situation. But it is not why the steam brigade travel long distances.

A helping hand

It remained to be seen how much work the Class 37 would do. Judging by the speed of 53mph at the bottom of the 1-in-181 downhill run from Long Preston to Settle Junction, it was not much. This proved optimistic, because speed was then held unexpectedly high at around 42-45 mph on the 1-in-100 uphill sections. This is pure speculation as resistance figures are unreliable, the effect of the cross-wind disputable and the power setting of the Class 37 is unknown, but 41mph for the now 700 ton train, if conventionally hauled from the front in these conditions, would have been around 2,300 equivalent draw bar horsepower. If the Class 37 was set a little short of full power, perhaps 1,000 for the diesel and a good output of 1,300hp for the 'Jubilee'. If, on the other hand the 'Jubilee' had exerted 1,300hp with no supporting diesel, the balancing speed would have been about 32mph even without the gale. Alternative views are welcome.

Table 5 shows two excerpts from Mr Long's unassisted *Galatea* trip against the figures with No. 37685 'helping', both from Hellifield to Blea Moor and from Carlisle to Shap. Because of having a loco on each end, the whole train was turned on the Carlisle triangle, meaning those fortunate to be near the loco from Hellifield remained so from Carlisle.

It is believed an adverse weather restriction of 50mph was in force from perhaps Harrison's Sidings (41 miles 53 chains) to Oxenholme, so the onward climb to Grayrigg has been omitted as taking one step too far into artificiality. On the way up to Shap, 70mph on the 1-in-193 gradient sounded almost fictional, but it was interesting to see the Penrith speed with No. 37685 at the back was 66½mph compared to No. 45699's flying solo effort of 63½mph. The timing in the current path of 43min to Shap is considered unrealistically tight, but the 'Dalesman' sliced 5½min

“Disappointing as this decision was to a train timer, it was welcome to a retired railway operator”



Above: Two Avanti 'Pendolinos' pass at Crewe on August 8, 2022 with southbound No. 390107 on the right and northbound No. 390050 on the left. TOM MCATEE

with its mixed propulsion run and squeezed home into its Carnforth Goods Lines 3 min early.

The West Coast Main Line was in chaos, with wires down in the Trent Valley owing to a fallen tree. Cancellations and diversions via Coventry were commonplace, but my hoped for 'minus' connection into a Glasgow-Euston train booked via Birmingham looked doomed as the 'Pendolino' flashed past on time. With the steam loco having been detached and with No 37676 again leading, No. 37685 still on the back, the combination ran quickly to recover the extra time spent in Carnforth sidings until a 13min wait outside a congested Preston meant an 11min late arrival. But what was that 'Pendolino' in Platform 3, normally used for down trains? It was my 'missed non-connection' 9M86, the 14.52 Glasgow Central to Euston via Birmingham and a booked connection into the 18.25 Manchester Piccadilly to Bournemouth from Birmingham to Oxford.

It transpired that 9M86 was awaiting a train manager on a down train delayed by the overhead electrical equipment damage. Fortunately, he took charge quickly after his arrival, explaining and apologising, as the 'Pendolino' started 40min late. All to no effect though as 1F02, the 17.06 Blackpool North-Liverpool Lime Street (starting from Preston because the relatively newly-erected 'wires' on the Blackpool line had also blown down) was following 1Z53, the 'Dalesman' with its two Class 37s to Wigan, where the 2xClass 331 local peeled away at Springs Branch for Merseyside.

Two good sections then followed to Warrington and then Crewe, the latter being shown in Table 6. The first took only 9min 19sec for the 11.73 miles, compared with the RPS archive's fastest known 8min 56sec. Entering the industrial setting of Bank Quay, the burbling of English Electric engines, even when idling, indicated the railtour was waiting to depart punctually for Chester. The second section then achieved a time of 14min 58sec for the 24.11 miles to Crewe (RPS record 14min 23sec in 2006), but still 42½min late.

The remainder of my improvised trip deteriorated further, being held to follow the late 18.03 Manchester Piccadilly to Bristol Temple Meads from Stafford and then to stutter into New Street behind a queue of trains – including 2A53, the 19.18 Wolverhampton-Walsall, which was allowed to push in ahead of the Euston express, as the local's forward working was threatened.

By now, my 18.25 from Manchester Piccadilly connection was occupying the signal section to our rear. No matter, it was shown as following 9M86 through Platform 1. I was ready for the usual New Street late platform changes, but had not guessed that the CrossCountry departure would drop off all information screens.

Barrier staff told me to go to 4A, where the Bournemouth 'Voyager' was waiting. 'Normals' would have had to wait an hour. No. 221125 hung around before departing 12min late for Oxford, where I missed the bus connection to my hotel.

The overall impression during this two-day, 900 mile, trip had been of a railway system limping from crisis to calamity yet still managing to cling on to vestiges of service delivery.

Many of the disruptions had been beyond the control of the responsible company in the still fragmented organisation – trespass and weather being the main two disruptions. Other factors, such as defective diesels and wires susceptible to bad weather, but well within the predictable spectrum, were different issues. The need for diversions and speed restrictions for a simple storm makes one hanker for more reliable technology than our current overhead wiring when renewal becomes necessary. ■

TABLE 6: WARRINGTON BANK QUAY TO CREWE

Unit	390049			
Vehicles/tare/gross tonnes	9/470/495			
Train	14.52 Glasgow C-Euston			
Date	September 19, 2023			
Recorder/Position	J Heaton 1st of 9			
Miles	Timing Point	Sch	M S	MPH
0.00	WARRINGTON B Q d	0	0 00	46½L
1.96	Acton Grange Jct	2½	2 12	86
6.04	Preston Brook N	[1]	4 23	123
7.61	Weaver Jct	5½	5 09	124/125
9.61	Acton Bridge	(½)	6 07	123
12.28	Hartford	9 (½)	7 24	125
16.65	Winsford	12	9 32	123
19.20	Minshull Vernon	[1]	10 47	122
20.94	Coppenhall Jct		11 39	120
23.28	Coal Yard	16½	13 10	59
24.11	CREWE a	19	14 58	

(½)= ½min pathing. [1]=1min recovery

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PAUL BICKERDYKE, EDITOR



No. 70808 passes Milford, Derbyshire, with the diverted 6M57/06.48 Lindsey-Kingsbury oil train on September 5, 2023. CHRIS MILNER

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1	3
2	4

1 SOLO 'GRID': Cutting a lonely figure in the Cumbrian Fells as it climbs the top of Shap on January 7 is GBRf 'Grid' No. 56098, which had just gone on short-term hire to Colas for log train duties between Carlisle and Chirk (see also Operations News). PAUL J BERRY

2 NEXT GENERATION: Ivatt Class 4 Mogul No. 43106 gets an admiring look from a young rail fan as it passes Safari Curve, Severn Valley Railway, on January 6 at the head of a Kidderminster-bound service. ROBERT FALCONER

3 COLOURFUL CREWE: A very colourful view of Locomotive Services Ltd's depot at Crewe on January 8, with examples of Classes 08, 20, 37, 43, 47, 57 and 142 on shed. This view is looking north, with Crewe station in the background. TOM MCATEE

4 REFINED VIEW: A view from a public road down the siding to Harwich Refinery on January 15 as GBRf's No. 66787 emerges with nine empty condensate tanks. The wagons are added to a further nine in the nearby Harwich Parkeston Quay Field Sidings. MIKE COOPER





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1	3
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1 POT OF GOLD: Framed by a rainbow, 'Peak' No. 182 (46045) departs at Highley with a service for Kidderminster during the Severn Valley Railway's Winter Diesel Day on December 29. Evidence that its steam heating boiler is in working order is clear! SIMON TAYLOR

2 STANDARD SUNRISE: A fabulous sunrise at Falling Sands Viaduct, Kidderminster, silhouettes BR Standard '4MT' No. 75069 on January 6 as it works light engine towards Kidderminster over the River Stour and Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal. RALPH WARD

3 BLEA(K) MOOR: Ribblehead (or Batty Moss) Viaduct seen from Park Fell, on the climb to Ingleborough, on January 6 as Type 4s Nos. 47810 and 47593 top-and-tail a Statesman Rail charter from Hereford to Appleby. The isolated signalbox and cottage at Blea Moor can be seen in the distance. CHRIS GEE

4 FIELDS OF FROZEN FLOODS: LNER Class 91 No. 91119 passes Great Heck, North Yorkshire, on January 16 as it propels the 1N81/09.06 King's Cross-York through the wintry surroundings. ZAC HINCHCLIFFE



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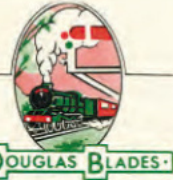
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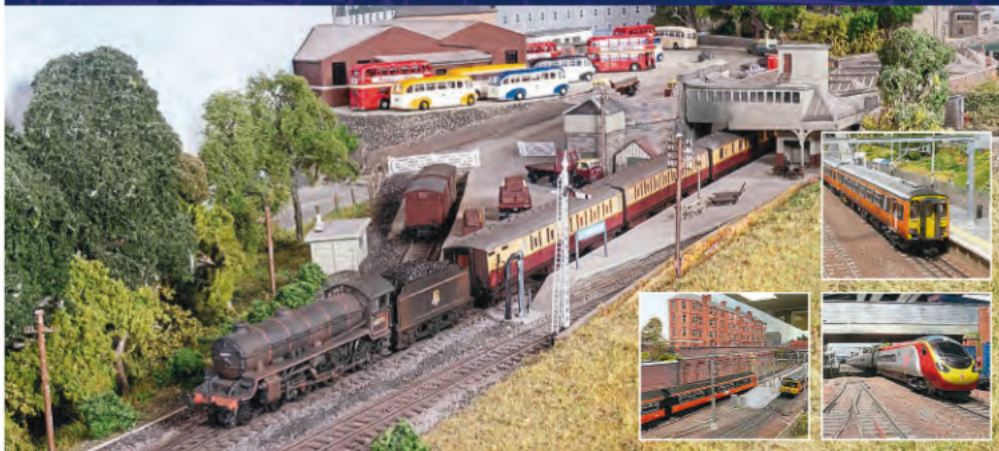
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A high-speed Elizabeth Line?

FOLLOWING Kirk Martin's letter (January issue) about HS2's missed opportunities, I wondered if anybody had ever considered using the Crossrail tunnel to connect HS1 with HS2?

It may sound crazy, but the Elizabeth Line runs from Old Oak Common to Stratford, and it just so happens that

both HS2 and HS1 also do.

Crossrail was built to full main line standards with 25kV overhead power and the journey time from one end to the other (including stops) is just 21 minutes. Surely, one path per hour could be found for a through HS train from Birmingham to Paris, even going at the same speed as

the EL trains? It could even stop at Paddington and Liverpool Street for onward connections.

Compared to the cost of HS2 itself, or making the route through to Euston, a short connection at either end would be comparatively inexpensive.

Peter Middleton, Ascot

HS2 is a 'WCML bypass'

REGARDING the letter by Tim Stevens (December 2023 issue) about HS2, he states that "the HS2 line as being built should be redesigned to what it should have been – a bypass of the southern half of the WCML."

As an avid supporter of the HS2 project, and living near HS2 in Birmingham, I can categorically say that the HS2 line being built is already a bypass of the southern half of the WCML.

The HS2 route now being built will leave the existing WCML at Handsacre in

Staffordshire and travel south through Birmingham Interchange Station, where the spur from Birmingham Curzon Street will join it, then carry on to London Old Oak Common and eventually Euston.

HS2 trains will be used on the HS2 line to Birmingham then via Handacre to Crewe, Manchester, Liverpool and the North West. HS2 trains would not be able to get into Birmingham New Street station due to it being gridlocked, as well as being far too long to fit into New

Street – hence the new HS2 terminus at Curzon Street.

What I do not understand is that people keep saying these non-tilting trains will be limited to 110mph on the WCML, as the line to Crewe is fairly straight (all the twists and turns the 'Pendolinos' were introduced for are south of Nuneaton and north of Crewe). HSTs have been doing 125mph for 50 years on normal track not so different to the WCML from Handsacre to Crewe.

Peter Allen, Birmingham

A changed railway

READING the historical features in *The RM* from time to time, I find it absolutely fascinating how railwaymen (and women) managed an incredibly complex operation (much more so than now) without modern technology and, in the yards, relying on hand signals and oil lamps. There were accidents, of course, but there is so much from the past that was good that we have failed to bring with us into the future, and that is to our great cost.

The railway genuinely did seek to serve the public back then; full cancellations were rare, and the kind of delays caused by trains being stranded for hours almost unknown. Am I alone among *The RM's* readers in beginning to despair of the modern railway? It is this absolute refusal in the average boardroom to 'plan for failure' which has led to us being landed with over-engineered and complicated

trains, non-universal couplings, weak signalling systems, poor and irregular maintenance, and a lack of spare traincrew cover plus insufficient route knowledge.

Meanwhile there is insufficient capacity on many routes. It is therefore no wonder that we have incidents like the stranding of trains outside Paddington before Christmas. The incident itself was bad enough, but the way it was dealt with and the time it took to put things right was unforgivable. Sorry Mr Haines [Network Rail's managing director], but I was so glad you witnessed it all first hand!

I am genuinely amazed by the number of people still travelling on the trains in spite of all this, but of course it is mainly for leisure. Many people who formerly relied on trains for work etc have long since given up. I worry a lot about the danger that the Government and the public will eventually lose patience with the railways, and start to see them as a luxury we can no longer afford. All the excuses are wearing very thin.

Martin Stoolman, Exeter

Barrhead and Balgray

THE recent electrification of the Barrhead line has nothing to do with the opening date of Balgray station (Network News, January). Balgray is just south of

Barrhead but, as you say, on the Glasgow to Neilston line, which was electrified in 1962.

There's a story to be told about how Barrhead had four stations, two of which never opened due to tram competition. Three lines linked Barrhead with Paisley, only the G&SW carrying passenger trains and that just from 1902 to 1913.

Let's hope the new station (being built in association with affordable housing) is a lot more successful!

John Yellowlees, by email

■ Thanks also to Callum MacLeod for pointing this out, and apologies for the geographical error – Ed.

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EDITOR'S NOTE

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



CLASS 40 RENAMINGS: It was an excellent article on the renaming of the Class 40s in your January edition. I managed to see No. 40015 *Aquitania* when it reached Scotland in 1981. It hauled a freight from Mossend through to Bathgate. In my snap you can make out the red 'nameplate'. JOHN DAVIDSON, ARMADALE

'T3' memories

THE recent good news about LSWR 'T3' No. 563 returning to steam has stirred up some memories. No. 563 was one of the favourite engines which, with my brother as young teenagers, we visited its footplate over three consecutive years in the mid-1950s at Eastleigh Works August open days.

Because our great grandfather, a Mr Tuck, was a principal driver based at Salisbury in the 1890s, going frequently to London (maybe Nine Elms then), we are interested to know whether any *Railway Magazine* readers have more information on the following.

Mr Tuck's earnings were sufficient to enable him to take on a small hotel property in Fisherton Street, very close to the station. Notably in

the 1906 Salisbury mail train disaster, sheets from the hotel were used to staunch the flow of blood. Other information known was that our great aunt Edith Tuck (born 1877) with our aunt Irene Hoare (born 1900) worked the hotel through the First World War, and the business was then sold soon after.

John Hoare, by email

CDAs by road

IT is an interesting comment on the modern railway that eight CDAs have to travel by road the 10 or so miles from St Blazey to Bodmin, there to be returned to rail (January issue).

No doubt there is a reason for this, whether it makes sense will be a matter of opinion. Thanks for an informative magazine.

Andrew Harris, Whitby, Ontario



Where is it? Our pictorial quiz, for fun only

THE photo of the Camelford station nameboard last month (right) was, of course, not taken at the North Cornwall town's railway station (closed 1966) but some 200 miles further north at the Severn Valley Railway's Kidderminster station in October last year. Note the railway cat guarding the luggage.

This month's mystery



photo by Brian Willcocks should be a breeze for fans of castles (the non-railway kind!), but where can this railway crane be found long after the yard it served has gone?

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 7

Sutton Coldfield Railway Society. St James' Church Centre, Sutton Coldfield B75 5BW. 19.30. Test track evening.
Talking of Trains. Library Hall, Ewell Road, Surbiton KT6 6AG. 19.00. 'Great Western Preserved': Dick Crane.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 8

Continental Railway Circle. St Paul's Church Centre, Marylebone NW1 6NJ. 18.30. 'Indonesia 1977': John Hunt.
LCGB. St Bartholomew's Church, St Albans AL1 2PE. 19.30. 'The Buckinghamshire Railway Centre': TBA.
RCTS. Library Leatherhead, Station Approach, Leatherhead. 11.00-16.00. Open day.
RCTS. Bassil Shipham Centre, Tozer Way, Chichester, West Sussex PO19 7LG. Meeting on Zoom. 19.15. '108 Years of Southern Electric': Stuart Hicks.
Shropshire Railway Society. Gateway Education and Arts Centre, Shrewsbury SY1 1NB. 19.00. 'Severn Valley Railway – its ups and downs': Peter Darkin.
South East Essex Railway Society. Friends' Meeting House, Leigh-on-Sea SS9 1NB. 19.30.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 9

SLS. Conference Room, 1st floor (access via Black Swan Courtyard), Newcastle Arts Centre NE1 1SG. 19.00. Annual meeting and members' evening.
SWRS. The Manor, Slough station. 19.30. Railwayana auction.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 10

RCTS. Friends Meeting House, Edinburgh EH1 2JL. 14.30. 'Museum of Scottish Railways: Past, present and future': Dr Becky Peacock, SRPS museum director.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 12

Lincoln Railway Society. St Hugh's Church, North Hykeham, Lincoln LN6 8JG. 19.30. 'BR steam from 1969': Roger Jones.
Oxfordshire Railway Society. Kidlington Baptist Church OX5 2DS. 19.00. Annual meeting, photo competition and members' talks.
RCTS. Greenfinch Church Hall, Ipswich, IP2 0SQ. 14.15. 'Colchester in the Age of Steam': Dave Goodyear.
Southern Electric Group. Deall Room, Southwick Community Centre BN42 4TE. 19.30. Sussex branch Zoom meeting.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 13

Great Western Society. Room 4, BAWA, Filton, Bristol BS34 7RF. 19.30. Bristol group annual meeting and 'A Didcot upgrade': Richard Antliff.
LCGB. Parish Room, St Michael's

Church, Wood Green, London N22 8HE. 19.30. 'The H Clements and the Bryan Cross collection Part 3':

RCTS. The Swifts, Haggis Gap, Cambridge CB21 5HD. 19.30. 'That Was The Year That Was – 1971': Geoff Plumb.
RCTS. Croydon & South London Zoom meeting. 19.30. 'Railways in 1950 and 1951 – from the Sutton Coldfield's Moseley Collection': Robin Mathams.
RCTS. The New Mechanics, 3 North Sherwood Street, Nottingham NG1 4EZ. 14.00. 'Midland Metals': Steve Armitage.
RCTS. Tilehouse Street Baptist Church, Hitchin SG5 2EE. 19.30. 'Edward Thompson, wartime CME': Simon Martin.

Pewsey Vale Railway Society. Woodborough Social Club SN9 5PL. 14.45. 'Steam Trains Today': Andrew Martin.
The 8E Railway Association. The Gladstone Club, Station Road, Northwich CW9 5RB. 19.30. 'Steam in the Peak District': Martin Welch. www.8erailwayassociation.org.uk
Wells Railway Fraternity. Town Hall, Wells, Somerset. 19.30. 'The Widow's Frontier Railways': Richard Pelham.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 14

LCGB. Friends Meeting House, Butter Hill, Dorking RH4 2LE. 19.30. 'British Rail to Great British Railways': Alex Green.
NYMR. St Lawrence's Church Hall, York YO10 3WP. 12.00. 'T E Harrison, Father of the North Eastern Railway': John Addiman, preceded by a buffet.
RCTS. Library Leatherhead, Station Approach, Leatherhead. 11.00-16.00. Open day.
RCTS. Old Church Rooms, Park Road, Radyr CF15 8DF. 19.00. '25 years of Derek Cross's diesels 1959 to 1984: David Cross.
Sutton Coldfield Railway Society. St James' Church Centre, Sutton Coldfield, B75 5BW. 'Slides from the David Palmer collection': Ken Taylor.
Talking of Trains. Library Hall, Ewell Road, Surbiton KT6 6AG. 19.00. 'The Croydon Tramlink: A story of success': Mike Steward.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 15

Aln Valley Railway. Barter Books, Alnwick Station. 19.30. 'The Last Months of Indian Steam': Ian Hastie.
Lutterworth Railway Society. Lutterworth Bowls Club LE15 4RB. 19.30. 'Settle & Carlisle Railway': Colin Ellis.
Marlow & District Railway Society. Bourne End Community Centre SL8 5SX or on Zoom. 19.30. Members free, non-members £3. 'That was the year that was – 1971': Geoff Plumb.

Visit www.mdrs.org.uk
Monmouthshire Railway Society. Lysaght Institute, Newport NP19 0RA. 19.00. Video evening.
Norfolk Railway Society. United Reformed Church Hall, Norwich NR4 6QR. 19.30. Zoom meeting: 'The GWR Fast Battery Charge Trial Train': Dave Horton.
Nuneaton Railway Circle. Chilvers Coton Conservative Club, Nuneaton CV11 5UD. 19.45. 'Renaissance at Crewe': Peter Greenwood.
RCTS. Victory Club, Cheltenham GL50 2SY. 19.00. 'Biscuit Tin Discoveries': Mike Dodd.
RCTS. Saltaire Methodist Chapel, Shipley BD18 3HJ. 19.30. 'Looking Back II': Bill Jagger.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 16

Great Western Society. Village Hall, Stoke St Mary, Taunton TA3 5DE. 19.30. Taunton Group Annual Meeting and 'Didcot Update' by Richard Antliff.
LCGB. Keen House, 4 Calshot Street, London NW1 9DA. 18.30. TBA.
SWRS. The Manor, Slough station. 19.30. 'Titanic Boat Train Heritage Trust': Ian Giles.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 17

SLS. Friends' Meeting House, Manchester M2 5NS. 14.00. 'Around the UK in Classic Railway Posters': Jane Ellis.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 19

RCTS. South Essex branch Zoom meeting. 19.30. 'Railways Remembered: North East England': Charles Roberts.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 20

Leicester Railway Society. Braunstone Civic Centre, Leicester LE3 2PP. 19.30. Society report followed by 'TBA': Michael Chapman.
RCTS. Library Leatherhead, Station Approach, Leatherhead. 11.00-16.00. Open day.
RCTS. Highway Public House, Hull HU5 5LH. 19.30. 'As I See It': Dan Longbottom.
RCTS. Didcot Civic Hall OX11 7JN. 14.00. 'Western Enterprise': Colin Brading.
SLS. Langdon Square Community Centre, Coulby Newham TS8 0TF. 14.00. 'One man's view of the East Coast Main Line in 1961': Malcolm Paul.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 21

Grimsby & Cleethorpes Railway Group. The No.1, Station Approach, Cleethorpes DN35 8AX. 19.30. 'Where would you like to go?': Anthony Hicks.
Pennine Railway Society. Doncaster Town Fields Sports Club DN2 6AA. 19.30. 'Spinning Around 2': Steve Philpott.
RCTS. Eastleigh Railway Institute SO50 9FE. 18.30. 'Leatherhead

Station and Stationmaster's House': Andy Davies.
Sutton Coldfield Railway Society. St James' Church Centre, Sutton Coldfield, B75 5BW. 19.30. 'DVDs from our library': Mike Newport.
Talking of Trains. Library Hall, Ewell Road Surbiton KT6 6AG. 19.00. 'Birds of a Feather': Dick Crane.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 22

Gravesend Railway Enthusiasts' Society. Emmanuel Baptist Church, Gravesend DA12 1BB. 19.30. 'Fareham to Gosport: Ray Puddy.
Shropshire Railway Society. Gateway Education and Arts Centre, Shrewsbury SY1 1NB. 19.00. 'Shrewsbury's Railways – A Vintage Story: 1950s to the present day': Dave Giddins.
South East Essex Railway Society. Friends' Meeting House, Leigh-on-Sea SS9 1NB. 19.30. TBA.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 23

Railway Club of the New Forest. Village Hall, Brockenhurst. 19.30. 'Shillingstone Station': Geoff Baker.
SWRS. The Manor, Slough station. 19.30. 'Archive films': Frank Banfield.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 27

RCTS. The New Mechanics, Nottingham NG1 4EZ. 19.30. 'An historic account of electric railway traction': Dave Saunders.
SLS/Newcomen Society. Engine House, Charlton Mill, Manchester M1 5BY. 18.30. 'Going Underground: Tunnelling on the Liverpool to Manchester Railway': Anthony Dawson and Eric Shenton.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 28

Giggleswick Railway Circle. Settle Victoria Hall BD24 9DZ. 19.30. TBA.
RCTS. Bassil Shipham Centre, Chichester, West Sussex PO19 7LG. Meeting on Zoom. 19.15. 'That was the year that was - 1962': Geoff Plumb.
Sutton Coldfield Railway Society. St James' Church Centre, Sutton Coldfield, B75 5BW. 19.30. 'Railway History told by Posters': Mike Wilmot.
Talking of Trains. Library Hall, Ewell Road, Surbiton KT6 6AG. 19.00. 'Tunnel Vision: The History of the Metropolitan Railway': Colin Brading.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 29

Nuneaton Railway Circle. Chilvers Coton Conservative Club, Nuneaton CV11 5UD. 19.45. 'The Moseley Collection Part 1': Robin Mathams.
SLS. Community Arts Centre, Roaring Meg Retail Park, Stevenage. 19.30. 'Mallard and the A4s': David McIntosh.

FRIDAY, MARCH 1

Kettering & District Locomotive Society. Corn Market Hall, Kettering NN15 7QA. 19.45. 'Slides from the late Derek Cross Collection': David Cross.
RCTS. St Teresa's Church Hall, North Filton, BS34 7PL. 19.30. 'My early years – B&W in the 1950s': Arthur Turner.
SLS. Newport Community Hub (formerly The Settlement Centre), St Paul's Road (off Union Street), Middlesbrough TS1 5NQ. 19.30. 'The Cramlington Train Wrecker' – Ed Waugh followed by branch annual meeting.
SWRS. The Manor, Slough station. 19.30. TBA.

SATURDAY, MARCH 2

RCTS. Library Leatherhead, Station Approach, Leatherhead. 11.00-16.00. Open day.
RCTS. Friends Meeting House, Edinburgh EH1 2JL. 14.30. 'Transforming the West Highland Line': Callum MacLeod.

MONDAY, MARCH 4

Peak Rail Association. Farm Road Sports & Social Club, Sheffield S2 2TP. 19.30. 'Irish Surprises': Colin Boocock.

TUESDAY, MARCH 5

Enfield Transport Circle. Enfield Drill Hall Sports Club EN2 6PJ. 20.00. 'The Malcolm Alderman Tribute presentation': Kenneth Crane.
Gravesend Railway Enthusiasts' Society. Emmanuel Baptist Church, Gravesend DA12 1BB. 19.30. 'Solent Railway – part 1': Tony Riley.
LCGB. St John's Church Hall, Bedford MK42 0DL. 19.30. 'An 11th Colour-Rail Journey': Paul Chancellor.
LCGB. Red Lion Hotel, 9 Ash Brow, Newburgh, Wigan WN8 7NF. 19.30. TBA.
Southern Electric Group & Light Rail Transit Association. Eastleigh Railway Institute, Romsey Road, Eastleigh. 19.30. 'Tram and urban train cine films': John Laker.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 6

Pennine Railway Society. Doncaster Town Fields Sports Club DN2 6AA. 19.30. 'An 11th Colour-Rail Journey': Paul Chancellor.
RCTS. Royal Station Hotel, Carnforth. 19.30. 'Steam Curiosities': Clive Holden.
Sutton Coldfield Railway Society. St James' Church Centre, Sutton Coldfield B75 5BW. 19.30. Test track evening.
Talking of Trains. Library Hall, Ewell Road, Surbiton KT6 6AG. 19.00. 'Carmarthenshire's Railways Revisited': Dick Crane.

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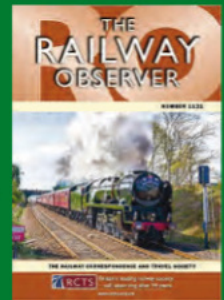
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POST-WAR BOOM AND BUST ON THE NORTH TRANS PENNINE CHRIS ROWLEY

The North Pennine range that separates the industrial North East and County Durham from Lakeland and the North West is a remote and beautiful wilderness of moorland and high Pennine fells. It was here that the Stockton & Darlington, the birthplace of public railways, struck out west in the most dramatic of all the Pennine crossings. A main line that rose to 1370 feet – England's highest. Built to link the blast furnaces of Teesside and County Durham with Cumberland Ore, and the furnaces of Cumberland with Durham coke, the railway was at its heart from first day almost to the last, a working railway built to serve the mining and steel industry of the North. For just over a century the moors around Bowes, the now quiet gills and beck of Smardale and Belah and the lonely source of the Greta River in Westmorland echoed night and day to the sound of steam battling the gradients of this remarkable railway. As the memory of the railway and the vast industries it served begins to pass from living memory, this book examines both origins and history of the railway and the 1950s revival of the Stainmore Line. Equipped with the most modern steam fleet in the country, with post-war industrial outpulsing and inter-regional leisure passenger traffic strong, the route seemed set for a bright future. The speed with which this bustling railway and strategic East-West link passed from peak operation to complete closure was unprecedented at the time, a casualty of a unique combination of circumstances which this book explores.

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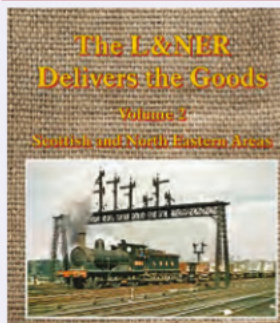
The L&NER Delivers the Goods

Volume 2: Scottish and North Eastern Areas Peter Tatlow

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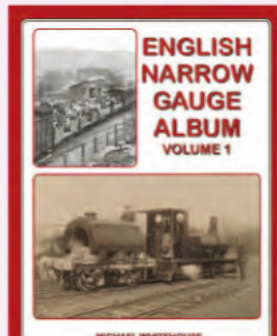
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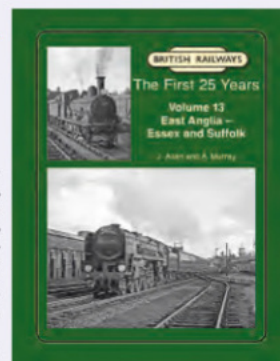
Dave Southern and Paul Lawton

Written by two authors with extensive knowledge of slate quarries and the Blaenau Ffestiniog area, this book surveys the network of railways and tramways that were built to extract the slate and then to transport it onwards to its markets, where it 'roofed the world'. Slate created Blaenau Ffestiniog, turning it into one of the most important towns in North Wales and though the industry has largely gone, its legacy lives on, not only in the slate tips that dominate the skyline but also in the surviving railways that add to the town's prosperity today. The book goes beyond the geographical confines of Blaenau Ffestiniog, allowing the authors to devote separate sections to each of the major quarries that had a significant tramway system. The tramways, and what remained of them in later years, together with the three major railways that slate attracted to the town are fully illustrated, with pictures that for the most part are previously unpublished.

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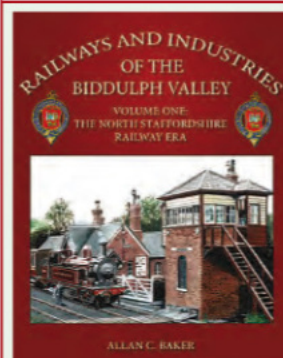
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Volume 13: East Anglia – Essex and Suffolk

This volume covers the former GER lines in the southern half of East Anglia, concentrating on Essex and Suffolk, with short incursions over the border into Norfolk and Cambridgeshire to complete the routes. Starting out from Romford, places visited include Shenfield, Southend, Colchester, Witham, Maldon, Braintree, Kelvedon, Tollesbury, Clacton-on-Sea, Walton-on-the-Naze, Brightlingsea, Manningtree, Parkstone Quay, Harwich, Ipswich (including the shed and docks), Felixstowe, Beccles, Lowestoft, Yarmouth, Saxmundham, Leiston, Aldeburgh, Cambridge, Stowmarket, Bury St. Edmunds, Newmarket, Marks Tey, Haverhill, Bardlow, Saffron Walden, Audley End and Mildenhall branch back into Suffolk. Pre-nationalisation motive power continued into the early 1950s with ex-GER and L&NER designs predominating, although a few intruders appeared in the shape of the NER 'GS' 0-4-4Ts and GNR 'C12' 4-4-2Ts. However, the 'E4' 2-4-0s, the 'F4', 'F5' and 'F6' 2-4-2Ts and the 'J15' 0-6-0s were predominant on the secondary and branch lines until the mid-1950s and 'B12', 'D16' and 'B1' 4-6-0s were the main support for the 'Britannia's on the main lines. Railbuses and Lightweight DMUs were introduced in a pre-Beeching attempt to reduce costs and, by the mid-1960s, Brush Type 2', English Electric Type '3' diesel-electrics and later Class '47's would become common.

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ALLAN C. BAKER

RAILWAYS AND INDUSTRIES OF THE BIDDULPH VALLEY VOL. ONE: THE NORTH STAFFORDSHIRE ERA

ALLAN C. BAKER

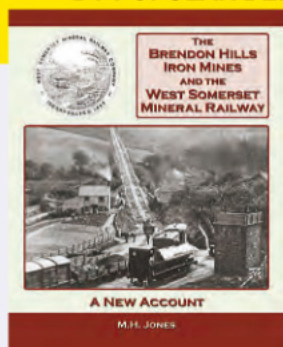
This book, the first of a trilogy, forms a detailed study of one of the N's first branch lines, along the Biddulph Valley from Stoke to the Cheshire town of Congleton, dating from 1860. It also covers the branch from Milton to the Staffordshire Moorland market town of Leek, which opened in 1867, along with the fascinating 4-mile Longton, Adderley Green & Bucknall line of 1875, originally independent but absorbed by the NSR in 1895. A wealth of illustrations, maps and plans document earlier railway and canal schemes planned to serve the area, many of which were aborted. This volume takes the reader on a journey from inception to the end of the NSR's existence with the 1923 Grouping of the railways. Subsequent volumes will cover the history of the lines in LMSR, and later BR days, detailing the numerous industries the railways served which were, by and large, their raison d'être. Profusely illustrated with photographs, old documents, timetables, maps and plans and gradient profiles.

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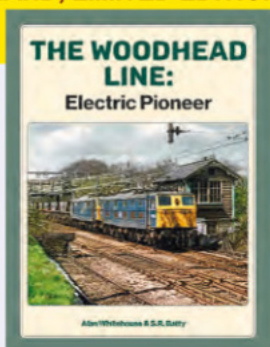


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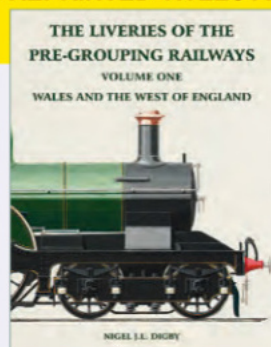
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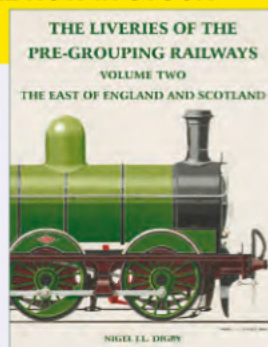


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100 YEARS AGO FEBRUARY 1924

Big railway contracts

LARGE contracts have been, or are being placed, by the various railway companies for rolling stock, locomotives, engineering material etc.

In the case of the London Midland and Scottish Railway, these contracts include 127,000 tons of steel rails, 150 locomotive boilers, 5000 wagons and together represent an amount exceeding £2,000,000.

The London & North Eastern programme will include the construction of over 700 vehicles, involving an expenditure of close upon £1,700,000. The outstanding feature is the provision of four complete dining-car trains for the up and down day trains between London (King's Cross) and Edinburgh (Waverley). The food on these trains will be cooked entirely by electricity, in view of the successful results which have followed the electric kitchen installations in use on London to Leeds trains.

An amended locomotive programme for the L&NER will cost £1,270,000 and provides for the construction of 273 locomotives as follows: 104 engines to be built in the company's workshops, with a further 44 engines to be built by contract, namely 20 4-6-2 express passenger engines to be built by the North British Locomotive Company; 12 4-4-0 express passenger engines

to be built by Kitson & Co in Leeds and a dozen 4-4-0 express passenger engines to be built by Armstrong, Whitworth in Newcastle.

Additionally, 125 large mineral engines of the Great Central type have been purchased from the Government.

50 YEARS AGO FEBRUARY 1974

Industrial disruption

SERIOUS disruption was caused in December, principally to Southern and Eastern Region commuter services to and from London, by an industrial dispute over pay between the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers & Firemen (ASLEF) and British Railways Board. ASLEF imposed a ban on overtime and rest day working, including Sundays, together with a 'work to rule' from December 12.

Drivers refused to take out trains which were not fitted with speedometers, which effectively 'grounded' almost the entire Southern Region '4-SUB' fleet and many older Eastern Region EMUs. Main line services on all regions were affected, and there were no Sunday passenger trains at all on BR. Extra trains, originally scheduled for the Christmas and New Year holidays, were cancelled.

The Government alleges that the ASLEF action, combined with bans on overtime working by the National Union of Mineworkers and the Electrical

Power Engineers Association, had limited the flow of coal and fuel oil to electricity generating stations that it imposed an embargo on the use of electricity throughout British industry for three days in every week from January 2.

Threat to Brighton Station

LISTED building consent for demolition of Brighton station has been applied for by British Railways, which wishes to redevelop the site to include a conference centre. Proposals are said to include a 14-storey block over the new station. These proposals are vigorously opposed by the Brighton Society.

20 YEARS AGO FEBRUARY 2004

'Privatisation was a mistake'

FOR the first time officially, the Conservative Party has admitted that the method used to sell off Britain's railways was wrong. Almost a decade after the first parts of British Rail were sold off, the party's policy chief, David Willetts, conceded in December that the John Major Government's decision to separate the track and trains had been ideologically driven and was a mistake.

"I would not defend the way we carried out the Privatisation," Mr Willetts told a national newspaper. "If we think we made a mistake, then we should be open and grown up about it. Rail Privatisation was a classic example of

taking a model that had worked for one industry and wrongly applying it to different circumstances," he said.

Creating a new system for the railways is now a priority for the Conservative policy review committee, which is preparing the party's manifesto for the next general election.

Reintegration of the trains with the track has not been ruled out – nor has re-nationalisation, which would fly in the face of everything the Conservatives have traditionally stood for.

Clampdown on short-distance Intercity commuting

GNER and Virgin are to review the calling patterns of trains that stop at Peterborough or Milton Keynes.

Both companies are facing problems with large volumes of peak-hour commuters who use long-distance trains from the capital but only go as far as Peterborough or Milton Keynes, often forcing long-distance commuters to stand for the first part of their journeys, but then leaving the trains less than half-full for the remainder of the journey.

Both TOCs have received negative feedback about the situation and now believe the effect is deterring their core market long-distance passengers.

The past few years has witnessed a tremendous growth in so-called 'super-commuting', and in GNER's case this has been extended to Grantham and Newark, where car parks have had to be expanded to cater for demand.

RCTS Britain's leading Railway Society

The RCTS: Then and now

SINCE their introduction in 1989, the Class 91s have made regular appearances in the pages of both *The Railway Observer* and *The Railway Magazine*.

The '91s' were a key component of the long-delayed electrification of the East Coast Main Line. In the 1950s, this project had been viewed as being equally important as the electrification of the West Coast Main Line, but for various reasons (including political ones) the WCML electrification took precedence.

The contract for building the Class 91s was awarded to GEC in 1986, and construction was sub-contracted to British Rail Engineering Limited at Crewe Works. The contract allowed for 31 locomotives for the ECML, with an option of 25 further locomotives for the WCML. The ECML Class 91-hauled services became known as the InterCity 225, which was a reference to the Class 91's ability to run at 225kph (140mph). Unfortunately, this capability was never used in revenue-earning service – although No. 91012 did reach 161.7mph down Stoke Bank during a

test run on September 17, 1989.

The first Class 91-hauled passenger service was the 17.36 King's Cross to Peterborough on March 3, 1989. A few days later, the locomotives began working services from King's Cross to Grantham, while March 11, 1989 saw them commencing service from King's Cross to Leeds, where they can still be found to this day. As the ECML electrification progressed, Class 91s reached Newcastle-upon-Tyne for the first time on June 10, 1991 and Edinburgh on June 12, 1991.

After Britain's railways were privatised in the mid-1990s, the '91s' were overhauled and refitted between 2000 and 2003 in order to improve their reliability. They continued to exclusively work services on the ECML, firstly for Great North Eastern Railway (GNER) from 1996 until 2007, then National Express East Coast from 2007 until 2009, East Coast from 2009 until 2015, Virgin Trains East Coast from 2015 until 2018, and then London North Eastern Railway (LNER) from 2018 to the present day.

With the introduction of the Hitachi-built 'Azumas' to frontline



No. 91127 *Neville Hill* on arrival at King's Cross after working the 13.15 from Leeds on December 21, 2023. The train arrived 88 minutes late due to adverse weather conditions. MARK KELLEY/RCTS

ECML services in 2019, Class 91 activity has been restricted to the King's Cross to Leeds/York routes. A number of the locomotives have been scrapped, but some have also been preserved, including No. 91131 at the Museum of Scottish Railways at the Bo'ness and Kinneil Railway.

Despite this, the class does appear to have an operational future. Nos. 91117 and 91120 have been purchased by Europhoenix for use on

freight operations in Europe and Rail Operations Group has purchased a pair of locomotives for testing on the electrified Midland Main Line while also expressing an interest in using the locomotives on high-speed logistics workings.

It would appear these locomotives will be gracing the national rail network for some time yet.

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

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- 2 Which model shows are Absolute Aspects listing on its Facebook page as attending in 2024? Please note one. <https://www.facebook.com/AbsoluteAspects>
- 3 How much per hour are DCC Supplies' bespoke consultations? www.dccsupplies.com
- 4 On what day of the itinerary is there a trip on the Redwood Forest Steam Train? www.ffestiniogtravel.com/escorted-tours/worldwide-connoisseur-tours/west-coast-usa
- 5 How many categories are books divided into on the Dereks Transport Books home page? www.secondhand-books.co.uk
- 6 Which location in the 1950s does the main model railway at Famous Trains represent? www.famoustrains.org.uk
- 7 Who loaned the pattern for the bogie assembly cannonboxes to the B17 Steam Locomotive Trust? www.b17steamloco.co.uk
- 8 In July 2019 how many sleepers arrived at the site The Lincolnshire Wolds Railway is in the process of extending? www.lincolnshirewoldsrailway.co.uk
- 9 How much is the Locomotive Magazine 1896 -1923 DVD available for in the shop? www.gersociety.org.uk
- 10 Which is the first railway beginning with T in the railway listings? railydays.org.uk
- 11 When did Model Rail Baseboards start to manufacture baseboards? www.modelrailbaseboards.com
- 12 When is Puffer Steamboat Holidays' first Glasgow Day Trip of 2024? savethepuffer.co.uk
- 13 When is Statfold's Spectacle of Steam event? www.statfold.com
- 14 Which 'Western' passes Shell Cove in Tom Connell's superb print Out of the Storm? www.tomconnellstudio.com
- 15 Who created Pendon Museum's Madder Valley layout? www.pendonmuseum.com/therailwaymagazine
- 16 In common with many homes of the time, originally built without glazing in the windows. In which year is it thought glazed casement bedroom windows were first fitted in the cottage? www.wyreforestcottage.com
- 17 Which junction of the M3 can AC Models be found close to? www.acmodelseastleigh.co.uk
- 18 How many rail magazines are under The Railway Hub umbrella? www.therailwayhub.co.uk
- 19 Which workshop is being held at DCC Supplies on April 18? www.dccsupplies.com
- 20 How many properties does River Steam Holidays have? www.riversteamholidays.co.uk
- 21 On which long distance footpath does Manor Holding stand? www.wyreforestcottage.com
- 22 You can contact James or who else to volunteer at Statfold? www.statfold.com
- 23 What service beginning with 'p' does MRB offer? www.modelrailbaseboards.com
- 24 What size is an authentic Signal Box Lever Cloth? www.heritage-ops.org.uk/shop

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TRACKRECORD

The Railway Magazine news digest



MAKING THE GRADE:
SECR '01' No. 65 battles Storm Henk on Tuesday, January 2, as it heads up Freshfield Bank on the Bluebell Railway with a mixed train during a Jon Bowers photographic charter. The 0-6-0 is due to star in the Swanage Railway's March 22-24 Victorian Weekend. STUART CHAPMAN

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SIDELINES

Cylinder ordered for 'Q6'

A REPLACEMENT cylinder has been ordered for 'Q6' 0-8-0 No. 63395 by the loco's owning group, the North Eastern Locomotive Preservation Group. It is hoped Boro Foundry will supply the new component by late spring, with machining and refitting the cylinder to the loco to follow. It is hoped to return the loco to traffic this year. As reported in *RM* June 2023, No. 63395'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. Visit <https://nelpg.org/> for details of how you can make a donation.

Spa Standards

TWO BR Standards will star in Spa Valley Railway's February 9-11 Winter Steam Gala.

BR '2MT' 2-6-0 No. 78019, which is visiting from the Great Central Railway, will join BR '4MT' 2-6-4T No. 80078. Others on the roster include SR No. 34072 *257 Squadron*, Caledonian Railway 0-6-0 No. 828 and Andrew Barclay No. 2315 *Lady Ingrid*.

The following weekend, Nos. 78019 and 80078 are due to perform in the British Railways Standard Steam Weekend.

Royal Scot on the Moors

NO. 46100 *Royal Scot* is due to work two return trips on the North Yorkshire Moors Railway daily from February 10-18.

The 4-6-0 is due to haul the 11.00 and 14.00 trips from Pickering to Grosmont and return. Alongside seat-allocated tickets, families can take part in a range of activities including an interactive fairytale-themed show for two- to seven-year-olds, with Story Craft Theatre on February 13 in the classroom at Pickering station. *Royal Scot* is normally seen on the main line, but this is a rare opportunity to enjoy it on the Moorsline.

Peckett visit

TWO anniversaries will be marked at Whitwell And Reepham station on February 24-25 and March 2-3.

Celebrating 15 years since the Norfolk station reopened and the 65th anniversary of the closure of the Midland & Great Northern Joint Railway, Peckett 0-4-0ST No. 1370 *May* will visit from the Buckinghamshire Railway Centre. *May* will join resident RSH 0-4-0ST *Agecroft* No. 3 in hauling passenger and goods trains.

SVR beats January blues

Severn Valley delight as revenue and passenger numbers are ahead of forecast for its Winter Steam Gala.

THE Severn Valley Railway (SVR) has declared its inaugural Winter Steam Gala "a winner" after it attracted higher-than-expected visitor numbers.

The January 6/7 event saw more than 2,500 passengers and generated twice the hoped-for revenue.

"Yet again, we have shown the SVR is second-to-none when it comes to enthusiast events," said managing director Gus Dunster. "We had never done an event of this sort at this time of year before, but our instincts were that it would be a winner, and we were absolutely spot on."

"I was genuinely overwhelmed by the sheer numbers of visitors and volunteers who thanked me personally for putting this event on in what is traditionally a quiet period for enthusiasts. We definitely got the formula correct – nothing too complicated – and people supported it in their thousands."

Attractions

A draw for enthusiasts was that the weekend included the last hours of operation for No. 43106 'The Flying Pig' for the foreseeable future owing to the expiry of the 2-6-0's boiler ticket. The last trip for the Ivatt '4MT' was a special train on the Sunday, which departed Kidderminster at 1730. As this issue went to press, plans for the loco's future remained to be confirmed – but it was stabled at Bridgnorth.

Also withdrawn after the gala was 'West Country' No. 21C127



Taw Valley – for an intermediate overhaul. Thanks to the amount of refurbishment it received during its last heavy general overhaul and the wide firebox design of the loco, the boiler is not expected to require removal from the frames. It does however, require an extensive 'bottom end' overhaul of axle boxes and motion – and all of the steam fittings require attention. It is hoped the Bulleid Pacific will return to traffic during 2025.

Another attraction was the recently overhauled Stanier Mogul No. 2968.

The 2-6-0 is now to be ensconced in the Bridgnorth paint shop for the winter, to reappear as No. 13268, in its original 'as-built' guise.

The planned gala guest locomotive USATC 'S160' 2-8-0 No. 2253 *Omaha* was failed in the final week of December with a leaky boiler plug. Despite valiant efforts, repairs could not be completed in time for the gala. Fortunately, BR '4MT'

No. 75069 stepped in to cover *Omaha*. Other performers include GWR 0-6-0-PT No. 7714 and No. 4930 *Hagley Hall*.

Gratitude

Meanwhile, as Mr Dunster approaches the end of his first year in the role of MD, he said: "I very much wanted to thank everyone who's played a part in keeping the SVR magic alive throughout 2023, in the most challenging of circumstances."

Turing to the year ahead, he said the railway was working hard to deliver a range of events designed to appeal to all sectors of the market.

"Enthusiast events were our strength in 2023, and we'll ensure these are equally attractive in 2024. We're also putting together events which appeal to a family market, such as character events and our ever-popular 1940s weekends."

He added: "This year also sees two important anniversaries for the railway; in May we'll celebrate 50 years since the line

extended to Bewdley, and in July we'll mark 40 years since the opening of Kidderminster Town station.

"As we embark on this brand-new year, we can be confident that we are in a stronger position than we were a year ago. I am very proud to be part of the SVR team."

Regular passenger services resume during February for the half-term holiday on 10/11, 13-15 and 17/18.

The next steam enthusiast event at the SVR is the April 18-21 Spring Steam Gala, for which two visiting locomotives have already been announced – Lambton No. 29 from the North Yorkshire Moors Railway and LBSCR 'Terrier' 0-6-0T No. 72 *Fenchurch* from the Bluebell Railway – with a third guest announcement promised soon. A range of rover tickets are available – including those covering one, two, three and four days.

Visit svr.co.uk or call 01562 757900 for details.

GWR 'King' locomotive preservation group dissolved

THE 6024 Preservation Society, the organisation which once cared for GWR 'King' 4-6-0 No. 6024 *King Edward I*, has been dissolved.

Financial Conduct Authority records show at a general meeting of the society, duly convened and held by conference call on December 4 last year, a resolution was passed "that the society be wound up voluntarily". An ordinary resolution was also passed

"that Sam Talby and Rob Coad of Undebt.co.uk Orchard St Business Centre, 13-14 Orchard Street, Bristol, BS1 5EH, United Kingdom (office holder no 9404 and 11010) be and are hereby appointed Joint Liquidators for the purpose of such winding up".

Companies House records show the group's subsidiary, 6024 Sales Ltd, was dissolved on August 29, 2023.

The loco itself remains in the ownership of the Royal Scot

Locomotive & General Trust at Crewe, where it has resided since it moved from the West Somerset Railway at Minehead on February 23 last year.

A statement issued then by the 6024 Preservation Society and the Royal Scot Locomotive and General Trust about the loco's future said: "Over the past 11 years, the 6024 Preservation Society has carried out the overhaul of No. 6024 at Minehead on behalf of the owner, the Royal Scot

Locomotive and General Trust (RSL>). As engineering and technical requirements for operation... have changed over the past 11 years, the RSL>... wishes to assure itself of the condition of the locomotive prior to the completion of the overhaul.

"Therefore, the locomotive is being transported to Crewe for an engineering audit by various industry stakeholders and authorised bodies as part of the assurance process."



PACIFIC PULLING POWER: Newly-overhauled SR 'Battle of Britain' No. 34059 *Sir Archibald Sinclair* proved to be a popular draw during the Bluebell Railway's New Year's Day Steam-Up when it operated its first public trains since it returned to action. Paul Churchman, chairman of both the Bluebell Railway plc and the Bluebell Railway Preservation Society, said the gala "beat everyone's expectations". No. 34059 is seen on Freshfield Bank on January 1. CHRIS LIVING

Pendennis prepared for centenary celebrations

GWR 'Castle' No. 4079 *Pendennis Castle* is to celebrate its 100th anniversary in style by starring at events around England this year.

The seventh of 171 'Castles' built, No. 4079 was completed at Swindon in February 1924.

The celebrations kick-off on March 2/3 at Didcot Railway Centre, the loco's home, where a birthday party weekend is planned. Among the attractions is an attempt to have 100 'Castles' present – whether that be nameplates, numberplates, photographs, posters, memorabilia or models. The Great Western Society collection has 10 'Castle' nameplates to start with.

Spring action

The 4-6-0 is then set to take part in the Keighley & Worth Valley Railway's March 21-24 Spring Steam Gala, where it is due to star alongside another Western Region visitor – Great Central Railway-based 'Modified Hall' No. 6990 *Witherslack Hall*.

Other locos on the roster include KWVR residents No. 45596 *Bahamas*, BR '2MT' 2-6-2T No. 41241, LNWR 'Coal Tank' No. 1054, BR '4MT' No. 75078, LYR 'Ironclad' 0-6-0 No. 52044, Taff Vale 0-6-2T No. 85 and BR '2MT' 2-6-0 No. 78022.

Attractions range from special double-headed trains to brake van rides in SR Queen Mary No. 56287, Haworth shed tours and a demonstration goods train.

After crossing the Pennines, *Pendennis* is due to operate on the East Lancashire Railway where it is rostered for April 10-14, 20/21 and 27/28.

No. 4079 is then booked to appear at the Churnet Valley Railway's (CVR) May 4-6 gala which the line said "will be a rather special gala weekend to celebrate the locomotive's 100th birthday".

Churnet duties

A second guest loco on Cheddleton's roster is Dartmouth Steam Railway's BR '4MT' No. 75014 *Braveheart*, which is due to be in action alongside all operational locos from the home fleet.

Having arrived in Staffordshire on January 17, No. 75014 is due to remain at the CVR until the steam gala. In BR days, the 4-6-0 was allocated to Stoke shed between September 1963 and 1964 – and it is believed the loco worked the Churnet Valley line.

Nene set for Danish tank and *Tornado*!

DANISH 0-6-0T No. 656 has entered public service at the Nene Valley Railway (NVR) following its overhaul.

On January 19, No. 656 passed its loaded test runs hauling four Continental carriages and it is due to operate trains on February 10-11 with the air-braked stock.

The train includes the first-class Belgian carriages which featured in the Poirot episode *Murder on the Orient Express*.

Meanwhile, 'A1' No. 60163 *Tornado* is booked to visit the NVR in a celebration of the locomotive's return to steam from March 28 to April 2.

While at the Nene Valley, *Tornado* will operate driver experience courses on March 28/29, 'The Fenman' evening fish and chip train on March 30/31 and dedicated *Tornado* passenger services on April 1-2.

The 4-6-2 will also star in the NVR Wagon Group's East Coast Freight Storm photographic charter on April 2.

Hudswell Clarke 0-6-0T No. 1800 *Thomas* has returned to traffic. It was used on station pilot duties at Wansford for the Santa trains. *Thomas* also hauled Wansford to Yarwell shuttle trains on December 30/31 and January 6/7 – when 'Pacer' No. 143602 operated Wansford to Peterborough services.

Aveling & Porter Works 2-2-0WT *Blue Circle* (9449/1926) has been dismantled for overhaul. With Wansford workshop expected to run at capacity this year, the loco, owned by an NVR volunteer, was due to move offsite as this issue went to press.

A milestone in the overhaul of No. 73050 *City of Peterborough* was reached on January 11 when the BR '5MT' was rewheeled at Wansford.

The boiler was dispatched to Riley & Son (E) Ltd for overhaul on May 15, 2023 (RM July 2023). While work on the loco is carried out, the tender



Danish 0-6-0T No. 656 is pictured while undergoing its loaded test runs on January 19. PAUL ROE/NVR

has been loaned to the North Yorkshire Moors Railway where it runs behind the BR '9F' 2-10-0 No. 92134.

The estimated cost to complete the overhaul is in excess of £500,000 – about half of which is in place.

In January, NVR launched three 'clubs' to help raise funds

for the line's flagship loco. Well-wishers are invited to join the City of Peterborough (COP) Supporters Club for £20 a month, COP Crusaders for £50 per month and the COP Champions for those who wish to donate larger amounts.

Visit nvr.org.uk or call 01780 784444 for details.

Big numbers and perfect running for Telford's 'Polar'

A TOTAL of 23,000 people were carried on the Polar Express trains at the Telford Steam Railway in the run up to Christmas.

Between November 24 and December 23, the railway was open for 25 days, running 95 trains. All services were worked by resident GWR 0-6-2T No. 5619 top-and-tailed with either BR Class 08 diesel

No. 08757 *Eagle* or BR Class 09 diesel No. 09107 – the latter being on loan from the Severn Valley Railway.

The railway said all locomotives performed faultlessly. The 09 has since returned to the SVR.

Peckett 0-4-0ST *Rocket*, which worked its last trains on June 4 following the expiry of its boiler certificate, was used

during the Polar Express as a water carrier. After Christmas, dismantling commenced as part of the loco's overhaul. Also receiving attention in the shed is the '56XX' which is undergoing winter maintenance.

Meanwhile, Andrew Barclay 0-4-0F 'Fireless' No. 1944 has been sold and left the railway on November 23. Built

in 1927, the loco worked at Colman's Mustard and also at Croda Synthetic Chemical Works. It had remained on static display since its arrival at Telford in 1994. While the new owner is unknown, it is understood plans are afoot to return the locomotive to operational condition.

Public services resume at the railway on March 31.

SIDELINES

GCR overnight trains

GREAT Central Railway is planning to operate an overnight gala of passenger and goods trains for the first time on June 1.

Steam-hauled trains are also due to return to the Mountsorrel branch on May 29–June 1 as part of a family half-term event. The events will fill the slot of the line's 1940s weekend, which is being rested for this year.

A number of the people who have been an important part of the success of previous re-enactments will be at events in Normandy to mark 80 years since D-Day, while a field adjacent to Quorn and Woodhouse station, which hosts displays, is also unavailable this year.

GM appointed

EAST Lancashire Railway (ELR) has appointed Lee Kenny as general manager on a permanent basis.

Mr Kenny stepped into the role in May 2023 as acting GM following the departure of Tracy Parkinson. Previously deputy GM, he has been involved with the ELR for more than three decades, having joined as a volunteer aged 12.

The former diesel traction engineering fitter became head of the traction and rolling stock department 12 years ago.

"Like many other heritage railways, we face challenges in sustainability, fundraising, improving safety, embracing equality, diversity and inclusion into our organisation and continue to grow our community and business partnerships," said Mr Kenny.

"These will be our focus in the short to medium term."

Bluebell's youngest driver

BEN Gray, 21, has become the youngest person to be passed out as a steam driver in the Bluebell Railway's 64-year history.

Having joined the line's youth group aged nine, he joined the locomotive department as a cleaner aged 16. In late 2020, he became a passed fireman – and in early 2023 was recommended to be added to the line's driver training programme.

The first part of the driver assessment involved an exam on shunting duties and handling smaller locos – which he passed in October using SECR 'O1' No. 65. The second part of the exam involved working on a larger loco – No. 6989 *Wightwick Hall* on December 30, his 21st birthday.

Redundancies at Great Central as costs are cut

Heritage line aiming to balance the books, but stresses there is no financial crisis.

A PLAN to reduce costs at one of Britain's biggest heritage railways will mean voluntary redundancies and the possibility of compulsory job losses, although managers at the Great Central Railway insist they are far from being "at crisis point".

Having seen losses of around £500,000 for the 2023 financial year, the GCR said it was working hard to get to a position where it can balance its books.

While much of the line is run by volunteers, a number of positions are filled by paid staff.

"As we enter a new financial year, staff are being offered the chance to apply for redundancy with a view to saving £250,000," said GCR general manager Malcolm Holmes.

"We are not alone in the heritage sector, or indeed the whole leisure industry, in having seen our costs increase hugely over the last four years.

"In particular, the cost of heating and lighting – which

quadrupled during 2022 – is a substantial unavoidable burden. While these costs have at least stabilised, we are forced to pay an extraordinary price for coal for our locomotives, which has soared. In the meantime, families have less disposable income to enjoy days out.

"We continue to grow, fundraise and diversify our business so we are far more of a visitor attraction than just a train ride, but the time has come where cost cutting can't be avoided."

Approach

He added: "Our outgoings are still exceeding our income, a position which is clearly not sustainable in the long term.

"We no longer have the benefit of a rich benefactor who can be called upon to offer support, so we must be able to stand on our own two feet."

Mr Holmes said compulsory redundancies may be necessary if there are not

enough expressions of interest in voluntary redundancy.

Another action taken by GCR plc is the sale of its 50% share in LMS '8F' locomotive No. 48305 to the David Clarke Railway Trust, the official supporting charity of the GCR. Other assets may be disposed of in the coming weeks.

Mr Holmes stressed: "This is absolutely not a crisis situation but a recognition we are not immune to turbulent financial times – and we have to plan accordingly. The railway has ambitious plans to grow in the future."

Meanwhile, GCR has adopted its 2023–28 business plan, which sets out its ambition and strategies in what has been described in the document as "ambitious but attainable goals".

Visit www.gcrailway.co.uk to read the document.

Mr Holmes said top priorities for him this year include:

- Delivering high quality and consistent customer service and enhancing the visitor experience – including the creation of volunteer visitor welcome hosts in line with

common practice at other visitor attractions

- Increasing revenue from on-train dining, cafes, professional services (testing and filming) and family visitors
- Maximising revenue from special events
- Interpretation and telling the stories the railway has to tell to further enhance the visitor experience.

Improvements

Meanwhile, it is hoped this year to repair and repaint Quorn signal box – plus improve staff accommodation and facilities at Loughborough loco shed.

A planning application for the next stages of physical works for the reunification project is expected to be submitted this summer – funding for which is ringfenced. Furthermore, a five-year plan for the railway's carriages began in January

which, as well as ensuring that the vehicles remain in good mechanical condition, will also, as funds permit, result in improvements to the external condition of the fleet.

Erlestoke Manor to go out on tour

GWR 'Manor' No. 7812 *Erlestoke Manor* will again spend the summer season away from its Severn Valley base.

It will go on hire to the West Somerset Railway as part of a mutual agreement with the Severn Valley Railway (SVR) and the loco's owning group, the Erlestoke Manor Fund (EMF).

Having returned to the SVR roster over the 2023 festive period, No. 7812 will be hired to the Somerset fleet from May to the end of October. Before its summer stay in the South West No. 7812 will visit the Bluebell Railway for its May 10–12 Branch Line Gala Weekend.

Progress

Meanwhile, the return of No. 7802 *Bradley Manor* to steam reached a milestone before Christmas at Tyseley Locomotive Works when the boiler was recertified by the SVR's boiler insurance inspector.

This followed an agreed programme of repairs and testing preparation through the autumn culminating with



In the last of the light of the day, No. 7812 *Erlestoke Manor* drifts into Hampton Loade station during the Severn Valley Railway's Winter Steam Gala on January 6.
JAMES KINDRED

the cold hydraulic test on November 21 being passed to the satisfaction of the inspector, and the boiler recertified from that date. On December 18, the first fire was lit in No. 7802's boiler since 2019 in readiness for its steam test the following

day, when the 4–6–0's safety valves lifted at 225psi to the satisfaction of all concerned.

On December 20, a team of volunteers began cleaning and painting the boiler with heatproof paint while it was still warm.

EMF said the boiler repairs and cylinder block replacement work is now heading towards completion – the focus now moving towards reassembly of the locomotive.

It is hoped No. 7802 will rejoin the SVR roster later this year.



A POWERFUL COMBINATION: Bagnall 'Austerity' 0-6-0ST *The Duke* (2746/1944) leads Class 31 No. 31601 *Devon Diesel Society* while BR '4MT' 2-6-4T No. 80080 pushes at the rear during the Ecclesbourne Valley Railway's Winter Steam in the Valley gala on January 1. *The Duke* was making its EVR debut following the completion of its overhaul. Also on the roster was BR '2MT' No. 78018, visiting from the Great Central Railway for the festive period. ALAN WEAVER

Rother Valley trackbed secured under TWAO powers

THE entire route of the Rother Valley Railway (RVR) from the Kent & East Sussex Railway boundary to Station Road, Robertsbridge is now under the railway's control.

Before Christmas, RVR exercised its TWAO (Transport & Works Act Order) powers and took possession of the trackbed between Austens Bridge and Northbridge Street – part of the 'missing link' central section of the line.

Much of the route has now been marked out by surveyors and engagement with the landowners is ongoing.

As previously reported, the current focus is to continue to meet the compliance and statutory obligations with the required surveys and reporting – including those relating to flora and fauna.

One of the surveys – ground sampling using bore holes – has now been completed and the report is with the railway.

Mike Hart, RVR Ltd chairman and the project construction director, has assembled a team of highly qualified volunteer professionals to design and build the railway. Many

members of them have already been involved in getting the RVR to this stage – which has included creating a connection to the network main line, a platform and toilet block and a mile-and-a-half of track ready for trains.

Team philosophy

"Our construction philosophy is that civil engineering contractors will build much of the structures – buildings, embankments, bridges etc – but volunteers will lay all the track. There is still about two and a half miles to lay,"

explained Mr Hart.

"To make all that happen we've got a number of professional consultants on board, but we also have a wonderful team of civil engineers with many years of experience.

"We have a bridge engineer, a railway track engineer and various others all working on the project as volunteers designing things, organising things – and they will oversee all the work done by our contractors. It's not me – it's the team that's going to make this happen!"

Performance of LSWR 'T3' transformed with tweaks

THE haulage capability of LSWR 'T3' 4-4-0 No. 563 has been enhanced following the implementation of several tweaks since the loco returned to service at the Swanage Railway last autumn after a 75-year absence.

No. 563 was initially limited to three carriages, but it hauled five coaches during the railway's January 6-7 Winter Warm Up when it performed alongside SR Bulleid Pacific No. 34028 *Eddystone* and Class 33 diesels Nos. 33111 and D6515 (33012) *Lt Jenny Lewis RN*.

A new baffle plate for the firebox has been fabricated to better direct airflow in the firebox under the brick arch – and the blower has also been improved by reducing the size

of the holes in the blower ring, enabling this to draw the fire better.

The blast pipe cap was also suspected to be an issue, as during the first period of operation the draught on the fire was generally poor. The blast pipe assembly fitted is a Drummond one.

References to the size of the blast pipe annularity were found in historical archive material, confirming that for some reason the cap fitted had a massively over-size orifice, by some two and half inches, or nearly 50% larger than it should be.

The Swanage Railway has a drawing on file and a pattern for a Drummond blast pipe cap, as this is the same one also fitted



LSWR 'T3' 4-4-0 No. 563 hauls its first freight train in preservation as it passes Corfe Castle on the Swanage Railway on Saturday, January 6. ANDREW P M WRIGHT / SR

to 'M7' No. 30053. A new blank was ordered up from Bridport Foundry and bored out to a suitable size.

In early November a test run was conducted with No. 563 hauling two 'dead' Class

33s, which in terms of rolling resistance and weight is equivalent to about six BR Mk1 carriages. No. 563's performance has improved quite dramatically, with the fire going white hot for the first time.

FEBRUARY

Feb 9-11 Spa Valley Railway: Winter Steam Gala

Feb 10-11, 13-14, 17-18 Bo'ness & Kinneil Railway: Kids For A Quid

Feb 10-11, 13-15, 17-18 Kent & East Sussex Railway: Kids For A Quid

Feb 10-11, 13-15, 17-18 Severn Valley Railway: Half Term Services

Feb 10-18 North Yorkshire Moors Railway: 46100 *Royal Scot* services

Feb 10-18 South Devon Railway: Half-term trains
Feb 11, 13-15, 18 Bodmin & Wenford Railway: Kids travel half-price with teddy

Feb 13-14, 20-21 Churnet Valley Railway: Half-term midweek trains

Feb 14 Bodmin & Wenford Railway: Valentine's Murder Mystery Train

Feb 14-15 North Yorks Moors Railway: Pickering Station Signalbox Demonstrations
Feb 14-15, 17-18, 21-22, 24-25 Epping Ongar Railway: Kids For A Quid

Feb 14 Ribblesdale Railway: Half-term Wednesday
Feb 15-18 Embay & Bolton Abbey Steam Railway: Dino Week

Feb 17-18 Spa Valley Railway: BR Standard Weekend
Feb 23 Severn Valley Railway: Nos. 7714 and 7812 Bewdley Station evening photoshoot

Feb 25 Epping Ongar: Winter Country Buses
Feb 29-Mar 2 East Anglian Railway Museum: Winter Beer Festival

MARCH
Mar 2 Mid-Norfolk Railway: Model Railway Exhibition
Mar 2-3 Didcot: *Pendennis Castle* Centenary
Mar 3 Great Central Railway: Railwayana Swapmeet
Mar 10 Bodmin & Wenford Railway: Mothers' Day special tickets

Mar 15-16 Bo'ness & Kinneil Railway: A Taste of Faulty Towers!

Mar 15-17 East Lancashire Railway: Legends of Steam
Mar 16-17 East Somerset Railway: Steam Gala and Driver for a Tenner

Mar 16-17 Severn Valley Railway: Gin Trains
Mar 16-18 Great Central Railway: GCR 125 anniversary weekend

Mar 21-24 Keighley & Worth Valley Railway: Steam Gala
Mar 26 Gloucestershire Warwickshire Steam Railway: GWSR Behind Closed Doors

Mar 27-28 Great Central Railway: Ruffle the Rail Dog Family Adventures

Fitted freight plan moves forward

Nene Valley Railway's Wagon Group progresses its express goods train plan.

VOLUNTEERS and supporters at the Nene Valley Railway Wagon Group have brought their aim of recreating an express BR 'fitted' goods train a major step closer.

With recent weather being unsuitable for progressing woodwork and painting, it was decided the reinstatement of the automatic braking system would be an ideal project over the winter.

Vehicles which have had the vacuum braking restored and refitted will become the nucleus of the Foxwell Freighter, the Nene Valley's fully fitted express goods train named in memory of Paul Foxwell, one of the group's founders who died in 2016.

Vacuum braking will assist in making the operation of the goods trains safer and smoother. It will also be more authentic at the NVR as fitted goods trains could operate at higher speeds in BR days and as a result were also hauled by glamorous

passenger locos such as Bulleid, Gresley and Stanier Pacifics – as well as 'Castles'.

In turn, it will aid operation of the wagons at the NVR by both resident and visiting large locos – not forgetting smaller locos which have also proved popular during the group's freight driver experience courses and photo charters, which raise valuable funds for the group and railway.

The brake work has involved restoring components which have remained untouched for many years, sourcing missing parts and making new fittings. It has taken a considerable effort, with brake rigging and handles having to be removed to gain sufficient access to the cylinders.

A milestone was reached on December 30 when the first two vans, Nos. B771300 and B785122, were tested individually using Rolls-Royce 0-6-0DH No. DL83. As these were the first vehicles the group vacuum fitted there were a



Conflat A No. B707261 has recently joined the operational goods train rake following restoration and is now equipped with a container. It is seen at Wansford on January 13. GARETH EVANS



Box van No. B768248 has received attention by the NVR's engineering department to its W Irons, which essentially the axles slot into. Following the restoration of its vacuum braking capability, the van is due to return to traffic. GARETH EVANS

few nerves to see if they would actually work. Both vans passed with flying colours and held full vacuum for at least 45 minutes before they had to be moved.

Inside the workshop at Wansford, the railway's engineering department had built up weld on the horn guides of van No. B768248. With the work complete, Wagon Group volunteers refitted the tie bars between the horns on January 13. An overhauled

brake cylinder was also prepared ready for fitting, along with associated pipework and accessories ready for fitting at a future working session.

It is hoped to have up to eight wagons fitted by the spring in time for the running season.

The first freight driver experience course is due to run on February 23 using ex-London Transport No. DL83. Courses are also planned using *Thomas* and No. 34081 92 *Squadron*.

A highlight for the year ahead will be the visit of 'A1' Pacific No. 60163 *Tornado* to the Nene Valley – and a photo charter organised by the Wagon Group is due to be held on April 2.

The full day event is expected to feature run pasts at key locations on the line. It is also planned to stage cameos at Wansford involving loading/unloading and the opportunity for shots on shed in the yard. Visit nvr.org.uk for details.

Steam on 5 Romanian Narrow Gauge Lines



Bosnia-Herz.: 'Kriegsloks' in Mine & Line Service	Feb 10 th – Feb 17 th
Romania: Narrow Gauge Steam on five lines	Apr 13 th – Apr 21 st
South Africa: Big Steam and Sandstone's Garratts	Jul 17 th – Jul 28 th
South Africa: The Big Five: Kruger National Park	Jul 27 th – Aug 2 nd
Pakistan: Broad Gauge Steam over the Indus	Nov 27 th – Dec 8 th
Pakistan: Bolan Pass Diesel	Dec 7 th – Dec 12 th

When the first green appears in the valleys and the fruit trees are in blossom, there is often still snow on the top of the mountains, especially in the Făgăraș mountain range. It will probably still be cool in the morning hours, so we will see a nice steam trail. In spring, we are able to visit lines that which are difficult to keep serviceable during winter months. We therefore have five different lines in our program.

We have planned visits to two forestry railways, an industrial railway and two former state railway lines: Vișeu de Sus, Moldovița, Brad, Cornățel and Abrud.



Photos: Bernd Seiler

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New future in store for England's oldest Peckett

Sittingbourne donates standard gauge steam locomotive to Quinton.

A STEAM loco which has spent more than half a century on static display in Kent is set to be returned to action in Buckinghamshire.

Following the decision by the Sittingbourne & Kemsley Light Railway (SKLR) to find a new home for Peckett W4 0-4-0ST *Bear* (614/1896), on December 12 the loco was formally handed over to the Quinton Railway Society, which runs the Buckinghamshire Railway Centre. The locomotive is expected to relocate before Easter.

Bear is the oldest surviving Peckett locomotive in England and has been on static display at SKLR's Kemsley Down station since 1971. Quinton Road is already home to numerous industrial locomotives, including four other Peckett locos. One of

these, 0-4-0ST No. 1370 which used to work at the Yates Duxbury & Sons papermill at Heap Bridge near Bury, is currently used to provide rides at the railway centre hauling a couple of Mk1 coaches, a role for which *Bear* would also be well suited.

It is anticipated that *Bear* will receive an initial cosmetic restoration, followed by an overhaul to operating condition in due course.

During the process of relocating *Bear*, it is intended to move SKLR's standard gauge loco, Andrew Barclay 0-4-0 fireless locomotive No. 1, works No. 1876, built in 1925, to the prime position at Kemsley Down station currently occupied by *Bear*.

This will enable the space currently occupied by No. 1 to be prepared to display *Unique*,



Bear has been on display at Kemsley Down since 1971. Behind is Barclay 0-4-0F No. 1. SKLR

a 2ft 6in gauge 2-4-0 fireless W G Bagnall works number 2216 built in 1924, with the aim to cosmetically improve both to

create a side-by-side comparison of standard and narrow gauge fireless locomotives. *Unique* was built for operation in the

(then new) Kemsley paper mill opened in 1924, thus reaching 100 years old, having spent its entire life on the Kemsley site.



SNOW AND STEAM: Early December snowfalls covered the Tanfield Railway, offering many photographic opportunities. 'Austerity' 0-6-0ST No. 49, Robert Stephenson & Hawthorn works number 7098, built in 1943 is seen among the trees hauling a 'Santa Express' service on December 3. DAVE HEWITT



PECKETT RELOCATES TO RIBBLE:

Peckett 0-4-0ST works number 2103, built in 1948, has been sold by its private owner to another private owner and was moved from Middleton Railway to its new home at Ribble Steam Railway on January 11. It is one of three identical locos built for Croydon Power Station, all of which have been preserved. An interesting fact is that the locomotives were built in 1948 and then despatched, but the power station was not ready and thus they had to be returned to the manufacturer. When they were finally sent to the completed power station two years later, the works plates were amended to state they were built in 1950. IAN SMITH

Beamish catching up after Covid-19

BEAMISH Museum is tackling a backlog of maintenance following the Covid pandemic.

While efforts are being concentrated on bus and tram overhauls, as they are essential to moving visitors around the still expanding site, the railways are not being neglected by any means.

At present, the working industrial fleet is reduced to one locomotive, 0-4-0VBT *Coffee Pot No. 1*, built in 1871 by Head Wrightson, which will be supplemented by hired-in visitors as required. Sister Head Wrightson 0-4-0VBT, works number 33, built in 1873 is being considered for restoration in the future. The working steam locos will be concentrated on the colliery area as the NER station area is being revamped and likely to reopen in 2025, all being well.

The Pockley Waggonway will be operated by the replica *Puffing Billy*, built by Alan Jeffrey in 2006 as works number 71, with others on display. In the workshops is replica *Steam Elephant*, built in 2001, which

is about to commence a major overhaul. The locomotive was retubed in 2019, but due to the pandemic all work was stopped. It is intended to start work on the chassis during the coming summer and return the engine to service.

Lewin 0-4-0ST No. 18, works number 683, built in 1877, is stored in the running shed alongside other non-working locos, but in around three years the museum will try and fit in a boiler and mechanical overhaul.

A locomotive not seen for many years is Sharp Stewart 0-4-4T *Dunrobin*, works number 4085, built in 1895 and currently undergoing major overhaul on the Severn Valley Railway at Bridgnorth. It is slightly unusual in that it was never a main line locomotive but was built for the Duke of Sutherland's private railway.

The overhaul of *Dunrobin* could be completed later this year. Following a testing and commissioning, the loco is expected to move to Beamish for use on the revived NER branch line.

Astbury railway shuts

End of the line for popular Cheshire family attraction.

THE last passenger train ran on the 10¼in gauge Astbury Light Railway at Glebe Farm near Congleton, Cheshire on January 21.

The railway had proved to be a popular attraction at the venue, which is home to a small farm and farm shop with cafe. Indeed, the line's Santa trains in December 2023 sold out.

A 'last hurrah' operated on January 20/21 – and the final

public train was scheduled to depart at 15.30 on the Sunday.

A mixed traction roster was in operation on the final weekend. Steam was provided by 2-6-0 *Norfolk Pioneer* and 2-4-2T *Pendragon*. Diesel power came from Bo-Bo *Sir Humphry Davy*, which joined the fleet last autumn. Built in 1960 by famed miniature loco builder Trevor Guest, for Sir Thomas Salt's Shillingstone Railway, the diesel

was originally named *Cyclops*.

As previously reported (*RM*, Miniature, November 2022), the line has faced issues with the planning committee of Cheshire East Council. In September 2022, the authority described the development of the railway as 'not acceptable for green belt land'.

A statement from the ALR read: "We have loved our time at Glebe Farm, and cannot thank Farmer Rob and the rest of the Glebe Farm family enough, for allowing us to do our dream and for always making us feel welcome! This decision has not come easily and it is because of many factors – including planning costs, running costs and time.

"It really was great to see so many people come for one final ride. We had some people travel from as far north as Scotland and as far south as Cornwall."

The future of the assets, including rolling stock and track remained to be confirmed as this issue closed for press.



Built in 2017 by P Horner from a Phoenix Locos kit, *Tug* is powered by two 1hp electric motors. BR '2MT' No. 46447 is seen in the background on August 31, 2020. JOSH BRINSFORD



Sir Humphry Davy is seen at Astbury on December 15. ADAM JEFFERY

Cranmore gears up for growth

THE 7¼in miniature railway based at Cranmore station on the East Somerset Railway is planning some significant developments in the coming months.

Currently half-a-mile long, plans are afoot to double the railway's length. This is set to incorporate a brand-new station, a cutting, a tunnel, a new engine shed, two more run round loops and an extra turntable at the

West end of the line, which will join the newly built turntable at Cranmore station.

Originally opened in 2009, the line operates on Wednesdays (weather permitting) and is seeking volunteers to enable trains to run at the weekends.

To join the team, email the East Somerset Railway office on info@eastsomersetrailway.com or call 01749 880417.

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PHOTO: TONY STOREY

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Plus, several other special events throughout the year, and Steaming Days on Sundays from Easter to Halloween.

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Buckinghamshire Railway Centre

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Fire Queen to be displayed at VoR

Britain's oldest surviving narrow gauge loco leaves Penrhyn Castle after more than half-a-century.

AN historically significant steam locomotive has relocated from a Welsh castle to a former BR steam shed.

1848-built 4ft gauge Horlock 0-4-0 *Fire Queen* has been moved from Penrhyn Castle, where it has been displayed since 1969, to Vale of Rheidol Railway's (VoR) new display building at Aberystwyth.

Two years ago (*RM*, March 2022) it emerged that a new home for *Fire Queen*, probably

the oldest surviving narrow gauge locomotive in Britain, was being sought. This followed a decision by The National Trust Cymru, to which *Fire Queen* had been on loan, that since the locomotive was not directly connected to Penrhyn Castle or the Penrhyn story it was not appropriate to retain it.

Ownership of *Fire Queen* was transferred to HM Treasury under a scheme which enables the transfer of important works

of art and heritage into public ownership in lieu of paying Inheritance Tax. The locomotive originally ran on the Padarn Railway linking the Dinorwic slate quarry complex opposite Llanberis with Y Felinheli (Port Dinorwic) and its long-term home will be in its original shed at Gilfach Ddu. This building will be restored by Cyngor Gwynedd, using UK government Levelling Up funding.

Pending such a relocation the

locomotive would have been put into storage. However, the VoR has provided a location where it can be placed on public view. The 'Directors Coach' has also been moved from Penrhyn Castle to Aberystwyth where it will be displayed this season before relocation to the Bala Lake Railway.

Although some locos (including 1908-built Arn Jung 0-6-2WTT *Graf Schwerin-Lowitz* which VoR purchased from

the Brecon Mountain Railway a couple of years ago) were briefly moved into the new display building in November to provide a preview of what was coming, these were all moved out again while work on the building was completed.

The target is to have the building and exhibits open to the public when VoR restarts operating on March 23 with a full official opening ceremony planned for May.



As reported last month, FR's Hunslet 2-4-0STT *Linda* which had been withdrawn from full service in 2019 and last steamed in March 2021 returned to action in December following an overhaul, funded by Ffestiniog Railway Society members, which cost over £80,000. *Linda* is pictured (left) working a Porthmadog-Minffordd shuttle train top-and-tail with sister loco *Blanche* (right) back to Harbour station on December 1. CHRIS PARRY/FF&WHR

Prince to return in 2025 following overhaul

THE Ffestiniog Railway (FR) has announced that England 0-4-0STT *Prince*, which last ran in September 2022, will enter Boston Lodge works for overhaul during 2024. The intention is for it to return to service in 2025,

the year which marks the 70th anniversary of the revival of steam trains over the FR, of which *Prince* was the crucial element.

Having been abandoned mid-overhaul by the 'old' FR company in 1946, *Prince* was the

first steam loco to be restored by the new FR ownership which took over control of the FR in 1954. The first steam hauled train under the preservation-era regime was hauled by *Prince* on August 2, 1955.

Ex-Darjeeling Himalayan loco could return to steam this summer

DARJEELING Tank Locomotive Trust (DDLTT) has concluded formal arrangements with the Statfold Narrow Gauge Museum Trust concerning the future of 1889-built Darjeeling Himalayan Railway Sharp Stewart B-Class 0-4-0ST (3518/1888) No. 19B,

purchased by the trust last year following the death of Adrian Shooter.

The signed agreement will see Statfold commence overhauling the loco imminently and covers operation of No. 19B at Statfold for the next 10 years around a

core of ex-Beeches Light Railway volunteers. The agreement also accommodates the DDLTT's plans to tour to other railways. If all goes well and the overhaul does not reveal any unwelcome surprises the loco could return to steam this summer.

Golden Valley launches carriage shed appeal

WITH planning permission secured (in the form of a Lawful Development Certificate issued by Amber Valley Borough Council), the Golden Valley Light Railway (GVL) has launched an appeal to fund its planned new carriage shed.

The three-road building will be 36 metres long and eight metres wide. This will house all GVL's carriages (which include restored Ashover Light Railway coach No. 4, ex-Ffestiniog Railway coaches Nos. 118 and

119 and its adapted Manrider vehicles) and several small diesel locos.

Construction is costed at £120,000 and with over 60% of the required funding already in place the appeal aims to close this gap and enable construction to be undertaken this year.

Donations and Gift Aid declarations should be sent to: The GVL Carriage Shed Appeal, GVL Treasurer, 22 Guide Post, Nether Heage, Derbyshire, DE56 2AQ.

Big new shed for small FR locos at Boston Lodge

FFESTINIOG Railway's (FR) new 'Small Locomotive Shed', an element in the major regeneration of FR's Boston Lodge Works site, has entered the final stages before commissioning. With the structure completed by contractors last September and the site handed back to the FR for fitting out, the three roads

of track have been laid on the concrete slab foundations.

Employing 113lb former standard gauge rails, these produce roads of 14.2, 18.2 and 20.3 metres, a total of 52.7 metres (172ft) of covered storage. The name of the building reflects its purpose of housing small locomotives rather than its physical size!



The inside of the new 'Small Locomotive Shed' at Boston Lodge pictured on January 10 following fitting of lighting and electrical installations by Volunteer Electrical Group teams and the laying of three roads of track. The next tasks are to lay the finished floor inside the building and installation of the external track and associated turnouts. CHRIS PARRY/FF&WHR

SINGLE LINES

■ THE Talylyn Railway plans to launch perhaps its largest ever appeal on March 22. 'The 75 Appeal' will aim to raise at least £500,000 over a five-year period towards its 'Preserving our Past, Building Our Future' project which aims to redevelop the railway's Tywyn Wharf station and Tywyn Pendre sites.

■ THE boiler from Hollycombe's Andrew Barclay 0-4-0WT 1995/1931 *Caledonia* returned to the museum immediately prior to Christmas following reconstruction at the Severn Valley Railway's boiler works.

■ THE new boiler constructed for James Evans' ex-Dinorwic Hunslet 0-4-0ST *Velinheli* passed a hydraulic test on January 4 at Ffestiniog Railway's Boston Lodge works.

■ TALYLLYN Railway's Kerr, Stuart 'Tattoo' class 0-4-2ST 4047/1921 No. 4 *Edward Thomas*, currently undergoing 10-year overhaul at the Vale of Rheidol Railway's Aberystwyth works, will return to service in a Kerr, Stuart lined grey livery.

■ THE Sittingbourne & Kemsley Light Railway is planning a 100th birthday party for its Kerr, Stuart Brazil class 0-4-2ST *Melior* (4219/1924) for May 12, shortly before its boiler ticket expires.

More stock developments at Welshpool

W&LLR evaluates *Countess*, receives upgraded carriage and sends *Dougal* to Sittingbourne on loan.

THE Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway's (W&LLR) Andrew Barclay 0-4-0T 2207/1946 *Dougal* is to go to the Sittingbourne & Kemsley Light Railway (SKLR) under a four-year loan agreement.

Dougal last ran on the mid Welsh line in 2013 after being withdrawn in need of significant boiler work. It has subsequently been a static exhibit at Welshpool Raven Square, other than a six-month visit to Taiwan in the winter of 2018-2019 during which it was steamed at reduced pressure.

The loan agreement, described as 'initial', envisages SKLR undertaking the required boiler work and other repairs at its Kemsley Down workshops during the first two years, followed by two years of operation at the Kent line with occasional visits back to W&LLR to participate in special events.

Dougal was originally built for the extensive Provan Gasworks system in Glasgow, its design enabling it to work under the restricted confines of the retort houses. It arrived on the W&LLR in 1969 and following restoration first steamed in 1975. The name derives from a character in the children's TV series *Magic Roundabout*.

W&LLR and SKLR share the same 2ft 6in gauge and have naturally cooperated over the years with SKLR locomotives periodically visiting W&LLR gala events.

Meanwhile, the W&LLR's Beyer Peacock 0-6-0T No. 823 *Countess* entered the works at Llanfair over the weekend December 9-10 to undergo a condition assessment. This included removal of the cab, tanks and boiler from the chassis to allow detailed inspection as a first step towards determining



Although out of ticket when this picture was taken during W&LLR's September 2015 steam gala, Andrew Barclay 0-4-0T 2207/1946 *Dougal* continued to form an attraction, in this instance pictured at Castle Caereinion station aboard a trailer hauled by a steam traction engine. CLIFF THOMAS

the likely extent of work, cost and time required to return the loco to operation.

A detailed plan for overhaul will be presented to the W&LLR board for consideration. *Countess* has been in storage since withdrawal during the winter of 2020/21.

On the carriage front, ex-Sierra Leone Railway third class coach No. 1066, sent to Statfold Engineering for refurbishment and conversion into a second-class vehicle in 2022, returned to W&LLR on December 15.

Originally an open coach with wooden benches on either side, the carriage now has a dining area with custom-made seating and removable oak tables. A new electrical system has been installed in the original toilet compartment, later the 'brake room', which has been rebuilt to become a servery with refrigerators and a storage cabinet. The carriage has also been repainted and lettered to accurately represent its appearance when operated in Sierra Leone.

DIARY

FEBRUARY

12 Lappa Valley New Loco Naming Day
12-16 Statfold Loco Learning Week
18 Statfold STATBUS At Night

MARCH

2 Bala Lake St David's Day
10 Leighton Buzzard Mother's Day
10 Romney, Hythe & Dymchurch Mother's Day
16-17 Statfold Spectacle of Steam
29-APR 1 Bala Lake Easter Egg Hunt
29-APR 1 Statfold Easter Eggspress
30 Apedale East Egg Hunt
30-APR 1 Llanberis Lake Easter Egg Hunt
31 West Lancs Easter Egg Hunt
31-APR 1 Groudle Glen Easter Bunny Trains

APRIL

6 Apedale New Member's Day
10-14 Isle of Man Steam Railway Dino Express
13-14 Statfold Model Railway Show
14 Amberley Spring industrial trains
19-20 Ffestiniog and Welsh Highland Railways 'Snowdonian'



COSMETICALLY COMPLETE:

Former Woolwich Arsenal Avonside 0-4-0T *Woolwich* (1748/1916) pictured on display in the museum at Statfold late last year following completion of its cosmetic restoration by Statfold Narrow Gauge Museum Trust (SNGMT). Ownership of *Woolwich* was transferred from Waltham Abbey Royal Gunpowder Mills to SNGMT in 2020 with the components being moved to Statfold in August that year from Crossness Pumping station where the loco had been dismantled for a restoration project which stalled (RM, Feb and Oct 2020). SNGMT

Recent arrivals at Steeple Grange

A LOCOMOTIVE and four wagons from the Leeds Industrial Museum at Armley Mills were relocated to the 18in gauge Steeple Grange Light Railway (SGLR) in the latter part of 2023.

The locomotive is Greenbat battery-electric 1326/1933 known as Ladywash Mine Loco No. 4.

Built for New Consolidated Gold Fields Ltd, it worked underground at the Millclose lead mine near Darley Bridge, about five miles from Steeple Grange, before going to work at Ladywash Mine, north of Eyam. This lead mine closed in 1979 and the loco, with Ladywash No. 5, went to Armley Mills at the end of February 1985.

Ladywash No. 4 has been in outside storage at Armley Mills, which has included a period

underwater when the River Aire burst its banks in late 2015. It will consequently require extensive work.

Initial development of the SGLR in the 1980s employed track and rolling stock from Ladywash Mine, including Ladywash No. 6 (built in 1953 and larger than No. 4) which has received attention over the years but remains unfinished. Ladywash No. 5 remains at Armley Mills.

The wagons comprised an open colliery manrider, a flat wagon chassis and two tipper wagon chassis. The manrider will be converted from 2ft 2in gauge to SGLR's 18in gauge. The flat wagon is 2ft 6in gauge and the tipper chassis' turned out to be 1ft 9in and 2ft gauge. It is unclear whether these wagons will be regauged or moved on.

Winter repaints for two Ff/WHR diesel locomotives

FFESTINIOG & Welsh Highland Railway (Ff&WHR) Hunslet 4wDH 9248/1985 *Bill*, normally allocated as Dinas (WHR) works shunter, was repainted in December and will be employed on winter works at

Blaenau Ffestiniog station. The livery is essentially as previously; dark green bodywork, black frames and black/yellow wasp stripe buffer beams.

Ex-Beeches Light Railway Hunslet 4w

Diesel 9349/1994, purchased by Ff&WHR in June last year and now named *Moel-yr-Hydd*, was also in the paint shop in December. The bodywork remains blue, but the bright red frames have been refinished in black.

Standard gauge wagon and narrow gauge van form early Christmas delivery to Tallylyn Railway

THE standard gauge open wagon acquired by the Tallylyn Railway (TR) last year (RM, February 2022) was delivered to Wharf station on December 5 having been restored by Stanegate Restorations and Replicas in Haltwhistle.

The wagon, sourced from the Bristol Harbour Railway, was an ex-LMS 5-plank wagon numbered 66045, although this might have been a Port of Bristol number.

The restoration has completed the vehicle as a Cambrian Railways wagon. The intention

is for it to be displayed on a short length of standard gauge track below the wharf edge at Tywyn Wharf station to form a display of how slate used to be transferred from the 2ft 3in gauge TR wagons into standard gauge wagons for onward transportation.

The same transport from Haltwhistle, Northumberland, also returned TR's ex-Corris Railway van No. 6 to Tywyn.

Although restoration of the van was commenced in Tywyn, it was subsequently sent to Stanegate Restorations and Replicas to be completed.

SINGLE LINES

■ TALLYLYN Railway's Barclay 0-4-0WT No. 6 *Douglas* is now withdrawn from service on expiry of its boiler certificate. *Douglas* will be out of traffic for at least two years, the first year of which will be spent in dry storage in order to help resolve a conflict of 10-year boiler examinations which currently exists across the railway's steam loco fleet.

■ THE chassis of Llanberis Lake Railway's Hunslet 0-4-0ST *Elidir* arrived at Vale of Rheidol Railway's works on January 12 for a complete overhaul.

■ THE Tallylyn Railway has appointed Graeme Wigglesworth as its new engineering manager. He replaces Chris Smith who, after five years in the post, left last September to take up a job at the standard gauge Churnet Valley Railway.

Carriages boost for Mountsorrel quarry line

FOLLOWING its donation of the four 'Lynton' carriages to the Bala Lake Railway reported last month, the Statfold Barn Railway has donated two further surplus carriages to the 2ft gauge Quarry Bottom Railway at Mountsorrel and Rothley Community Heritage Centre.

The donated vehicles comprise the small fully-open and semi-open bogie carriages which were employed on the Garden Railway, which circles the lake in the garden of Statfold founder Graham Lee's house.

This line was closed in early 2023 for security reasons after a break-in at the Statfold site and theft of a caravan belonging to one of Statfold's volunteers (RM, May 2023).

Mountsorrel's short line at the quarry opened to passengers in July 2023 using three newly constructed four-wheel vehicles styled in the form of Penrhyn Quarry Railway workmen's



The two carriages donated to the Mountsorrel Quarry Bottom Railway pictured on March 20, 2022 being pulled around the 'Garden Railway' at Statfold by Kerr Stuart 'Wren' 3128/1918 *Roger*. This line was effectively closed in early 2023. CLIFF THOMAS

carriages. The two additional carriages will add resilience to the line's passenger fleet and covered accommodation

for the first time. They require some work to prepare them for use at what has proved to be a popular addition to the Heritage

Centre, including fitting brakes and adapting the couplings to make them compatible with the existing stock.

TR mourns Dave Scotson

DAVE Scotson, long associated with the Tallylyn Railway, died on December 31 at the age of 70. Having been an East Lancashire Railway volunteer, Dave initially volunteered at the Tallylyn around 1981 and joined the staff at Pendre works in 1985.

In 1994 he became engineering manager, subsequently filling various roles including chief executive (2010-2014), operating manager and operating & facilities manager, while also volunteering in the locomotive department, becoming a driver in 1989.

Cylinders and springs ordered for new Gowrie

THE patterns for the cylinders of new-build Hunslet 0-6-4T Single-Fairlie *Gowrie*, being constructed by The Gowrie Locomotive Trust, have been completed and delivered to the foundry in order for the cylinders to be cast.

Components recently delivered to 'Workshop X' where

Gowrie is being built include the leaf springs for the power bogie.

With the trailing bogie springs completed and an order now placed for the volute springs needed for the couplings the construction team will have all required springs for the locomotive in hand.

Mr Hallworth steams into action at Perrygrove

PERRYGROVE Railway's new 0-6-0ST *Mr Hallworth* was delivered to the 15in gauge line on December 12 following completion at North Bay Railway Engineering Services in Darlington.

It passed its official boiler exam on December 20 and will enter service for the new season.

The new loco had previously been unveiled at Perrygrove in late April 2023 (RM, June 2023) but at that stage was incomplete and returned to Darlington to be finished following its ceremonial naming and display during Perrygrove's April 29-May 1 steam gala.

Hayling line is rocked by late December theft

HAYLING Light Railway's Eastcote station suffered a break-in during the night of December 29-30 when a number of items were stolen.

The railway is not revealing exactly what was taken but some items were large and heavy, requiring a van or truck to transport them.

The fear is that the stolen items may be sold for their scrap value. Police have issued a crime reference and any information concerning items identifiable as relating to a 2ft gauge railway offered for disposal would be welcomed.



A TASTE OF THINGS TO COME:

Southwold Railway Trust's replica 3ft gauge Southwold Railway Sharp, Stewart 2-4-0T No. 3 *Blyth* was delivered to the trust's Steamworks site in April 2022 but has rarely been seen outside the loco shed. Among the reasons *Blyth* has not been demonstrated in steam is the need to upgrade the lightweight rails which had been laid prior to the loco arriving. Trust volunteers offered to pull the loco out of the shed to be photographed with a replica Southwold wagon on December 2. There are hopes it will be possible to demonstrate *Blyth* to the public in steam during 2024. Under the wagon is the inspection pit (with covers in position) constructed last year to facilitate maintenance of *Blyth* (RM, October). JAMES WAITE



1	3
2	4

1
THE LOW DOWN: BR Standard Class '9F' No. 92214 disguised as scrapped classmate No. 92000 during a TimeLine Events charter on the Great Central Railway on January 4. MIKE SPENCER

2
TUNNEL EMERGENCE: GWR 2-8-0 No. 2807 worked post-Christmas services at the Gloucestershire Warwickshire Steam Railway. The '28XX' is seen emerging from Greet Tunnel on December 29. JOHN TITLOW

3
'5XP' ACTION: Carrying 'The Rossendale Valley Limited' headboard, LMS 'Jubilee' 4-6-0 No. 45690 *Leander* passes Springside Farm on New Year's Day with the 13.00 Bury to Rawtenstall service on the East Lancashire Railway. KALLUM BUCKLEY

4
PRAIRIE ON THE PROWL: Waterman Railway Heritage Trust-owned GWR Small Prairie No. 5553 visited the South Devon Railway to take part in the December 29-31 Winter Steam Gala alongside No. 7820 *Dinmore Manor* and 0-6-0PT No. 6412. On January 7, the 2-6-2T starred in a TimeLine Events photo charter – No. 5553 is seen passing along Caddaford straight early that morning. DON BISHOP



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Celebrations to mark the 130th Anniversary of Manx Electric Railway services to Laxey

Celebrations to mark the 125th Anniversary of Manx Electric Railway services to Ramsey

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'Rapid progress' made on Chester tram restoration

Attention turns to upper deck of city's last surviving electric tram car as renovation continues at a pace.

THE group restoring Chester's last surviving electric tramcar, in premises at the former airfield at Hooton Park near Ellesmere Port, says that the project has evolved at an "astounding" rate in recent months.

No. 4, a 3ft 6in gauge double-deck tram, was built by George F Milnes & Company at Handley Works in Shropshire in 1930. Withdrawn from service in 1930, the body of the lower saloon was acquired for use as a garden shed. Its remains were rescued for preservation in 1987 and Chester Tramway Society and Merseyside Tramway Preservation Society became its owners in 2004.

In 2020, it was moved to its current home, where what is described as "rapid progress" is being made on the lower saloon and platforms, giving scope for tasks to begin on the upper deck, including further construction work on the stairs, completion of the flooring and canvas cover.

Challenges

Putting the trolley mast in place presented challenges given the camber of the surface and the post being offset from the centre line of the roof. Three attempts were needed to produce a wooden lintel which could be positioned in the exact location required.

Smaller, but no less important items have also been added to the tram, including door rollers and bell pulls at either end of the car. Brake handles have been fettled and fitted.

Plywood templates were made to ensure glazing ordered for the windows was a precise fit, as although they are of roughly the same size, the exact dimensions of the frames vary from window to window and have very limited tolerances. Curtain pole fittings, which are almost identical to the originals, have been sourced and attached to the window pillars in the lower saloon.

Photographic records

Photographs have played a key part in replicating some of No. 4's original features, aiding the task of sizing and spacing of the slats in the lower saloon floor and the creation of the template to produce the intricate perforated design on the wooden lower saloon seat backs. The restoration team settled on a shade of green called 'ultra deep' after carefully sanding the original steel panels to reveal the previous layers of paint applied. They expect a number of coats will be required in order to reproduce the original finish.

Some of the costly and larger



The lower deck of Chester No. 4 is seen taking shape at Hooton Park in December last year. ROB JONES

elements still to finish include the lifeguard mechanism, woodwork and trays and machining internal parts of the trolley mast and repairs to its

swivel function. Anyone who can help in sourcing a pair of DB1 controllers for No. 4 can email the group at: Chester4@hootonparktrust.co.uk

Temporary heritage base at modern Starr Gate depot

HOME to Blackpool Transport's fleet of Bombardier 'Flexity 2' trams which operate regular timetable services, Starr Gate depot, on the town's seafront, will be the base for heritage tram operations this year.

The Blackpool Tramtown shed on the Rigby Road site remains closed to visitors and volunteers pending the outcome of a condition survey on the shed roof, although the fitting shop

has been reopened for limited use by Blackpool Transport staff to prepare heritage vehicles for the 2024 operating season.

Plans are being worked on for the redevelopment of

the wider Rigby Road site to accommodate electric buses, and tram movements there have been limited since late last year when cars for use on illuminations tours were also based at Starr Gate.



Prior to being moved to Sandtoft in December, Blackpool 'Balloon' tram No. 708 had been in storage since 2008 in the Rigby Road tram shed in Blackpool, where it was pictured on September 6, 2022. GRAEME PICKERING

Blackpool No. 708 arrives at Sandtoft

BLACKPOOL 'Balloon' No. 708 is to become the centrepiece of a new children's area at the Trolleybus Museum at Sandtoft in North Lincolnshire.

It arrived on December 28 and was unloaded the following day onto a plinth including tram rail which had been donated by East Anglia Transport Museum.

Previously owned by Manchester Transport Museum Society (and stored at Rigby Road in Blackpool since 2008), No. 708 was exchanged for a quantity of spares to be used for Blackpool Nos. 619,

623 and 702, which are in its collection at Heaton Park Tramway. MTMS says the deal helped to secure the future of these cars, as well as a new home for No. 708, which was originally intended to be the source of parts.

Sister vehicle No. 710, which featured in the Coronation Street scene in which character Alan Bradley was hit and killed while trying to cross Blackpool tramway, had been earmarked for the role at Sandtoft, but following fundraising, was secured for cosmetic restoration and future display at Blackpool Tramtown.

SIDELINES

Grid issues with No. 634
FYLDE Transport Trust (FTT) has explained that recent testing has shown there are some "significant issues" with one of Blackpool No. 634's resistance grids.

A temporary repair was effected at East Anglia Transport Museum (EATM), where the tram is on a five-year loan, after it failed during December testing. This will allow it to run at the museum, but both grids will need to be removed and fully refurbished before it can run again on the tramway in Blackpool. The estimated cost is £2000-£3000.

FTT says EATM's enclosed system made it more practical to carry out testing there than in Blackpool. It is assessing options for financing the work.

New home for Twin Cars

BLACKPOOL Twin Car Nos. 673 and 683 have been moved around eight miles by road from Wyre Dock at Fleetwood to a new home at Brickhouse Farm Cottages at Hambleton.

The new owners of the cars plan to restore them and create a "unique and eclectic space" at the holiday venue.

Jurassic Centre takeover

SEATON Tramway completed its purchase of the former Seaton Jurassic Centre on January 5.

A cafe and soft play area at the centre, adjacent to the tramway, is expected to be ready in the spring, with the venue planned to fully reopen with a dinosaur display featuring animatronic exhibits by the summer.

Darlington livery revival?

BEAMISH Museum says Lisbon No. 730, which has moved from Wirral Transport Museum, is likely to be ultimately given a livery to reflect the North East's tramway history. THE blue and cream livery of Darlington Corporation Light Railways, which operated 3ft 6in gauge electric trams between 1904 and 1926, is proposed.

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SIDELINES

Fundraiser for '313'

AN appeal has been launched to help repair Class 313 EMU No. 313121 at the Fife Heritage Railway, after it was vandalised in November 2023. Twelve windows were smashed in the incident. The estimated target to complete the repairs is £12,000, see www.fifeheritagerailway.co.uk for more details.

GWSR diesel round-up

CLASS 20 No. 20228 has been dismantled for overhaul at the Gloucestershire Warwickshire Steam Railway. Meanwhile, Class 47 No. 47376 *Freightliner 1995* has received attention to its engine governor to allow a repair to a leaking joint. The governor was cleaned and repainted before being refitted. The relevant exams are due to be carried out across the fleet ahead of the 2024 season at the railway.

Santa 125 specials

125 Preservation ran its inaugural 'Ho Ho Ho Speed Train 125 Santa Specials' at the Nene Valley Railway in December, using the former East Midlands Railway HST power cars Nos. 43045 *The Grammar School Doncaster A.D. 1350* and 43060 *County of Leicestershire*.

The service ran on December 7/8 and 14/15 with several hundred passengers said to be carried over the four days.

'Western' to stay blue

THE Western Locomotive Association's Class 52 No. D1013 *Western Ranger*, based at the Severn Valley Railway, is set to remain in BR Blue livery with full yellow ends for the time being, as restoration continues in the diesel depot at Kidderminster. The original plan had been for the loco to be repainted into the earlier BR Maroon with a small yellow warning panel.

DIARY

FEBRUARY

10 East Lancashire Railway Winter Diesel Day

MARCH

15-17 Chinnor and Princes Risborough Railway Diesel Gala

APRIL

12-14 Kent and East Sussex Railway Diesel Gala
26-28 Great Central Railway Spring Diesel Gala

'Wizzo' main line test

DTG's No. D1015 passed its first step to hauling railtours again with flying colours.

THE only main line-certified 'Western', No. D1015 *Western Champion*, successfully passed its loaded test run on January 10.

The Diesel Traction Group's (DTG) locomotive worked light engine from Kidderminster SVR to Avonmouth Dock to work the return 6M42 cement train to Penyffordd Cement Works (north of Wrexham) as far as Gloucester, topping the train's booked loco No. 66714.

A points failure at Bristol Parkway meant the working was delayed for over an hour, but then No. D1015's two newly-fitted MTU 12V538 engines were given a good run at 65mph along the former Bristol-Birmingham Midland main line.

However, pathing restrictions saw the loco detached five miles south of Gloucester at Haresfield loop, and it ran light engine from

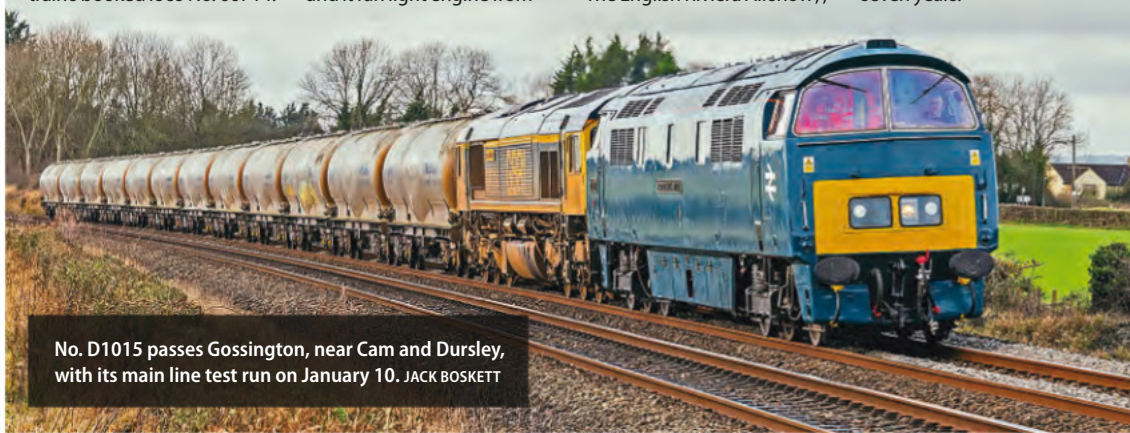
there back to Kidderminster.

DTG engineers deemed this to be a successful test run with only minor snagging issues to address. Another loaded test run is being organised, this time with a rake of Riviera Train's Mk.2 coaches based at Burton-upon-Trent.

■ Before Christmas, Pathfinder Railtours announced an excursion to Paignton on June 1, entitled 'The English Riviera Airshow',

at the time of writing, a loco had yet to be allocated. The promoter's website stated this excursion is to be hauled by a 'heritage locomotive'.

The RM understands that Pathfinder Railtours is putting together a programme of excursions for No. D1015 in readiness for the completion of the necessary main line test audit, thus resulting in the first 'Western'-hailed railtour in seven years.



No. D1015 passes Gossington, near Cam and Dursley, with its main line test run on January 10. JACK BOSKETT

GLORIOUS SET FOR RETURN:

Maintenance work on Class 50 No. 50033 *Glorious* is still underway at the Severn Valley Railway's Kidderminster diesel depot (pictured in July 2023). Total refurbishment of both cab interiors continues by volunteers, with surfaces stripped back to metal in preparation for repainting. No. 50033 is aiming to be back in traffic for the SVR's Spring Diesel Festival in May. JACK BOSKETT



'GOYLE' TO THE RESCUE:

As part of the Ecclesbourne Valley Railway's Winter Steam in the Valley gala, there was a planned diesel turn by Class 14 No. D9537. Having failed on the morning of the first day, December 31, Class 31 No. 31601 *Devon Diesel Society* took its turn instead. It is pictured near Duffield with the 12.11 departure from Shottle with BR '2MT' No. 78018 on the rear. MARTYN TATTAM



Andrew Barclay No. 349 is seen preparing to depart Washford bound for Suffolk on December 19. JOSH BRINSFORD

S&D shunters head for pastures new

THE Somerset & Dorset Railway Trust (S&DRT) has recently sold its two former industrial diesel shunting locos.

The Trust was asked to leave its former base at Washford, West Somerset Railway, in 2020, and has since been relocating

its rolling stock, with the two diesels being sold to other railway preservation groups.

Former Bath Gas Works Ruston & Hornsby 4wDM '88DS' No. 210479 has been sold to the Vale of Berkeley Railway and moved to Sharpness,

Gloucestershire on December 15, while ex-Puriton Royal Ordnance Factory (Somerset) Andrew Barclay No. 349 was relocated to the Leiston Works Railway in Suffolk on December 19, becoming that line's first resident locomotive.

S&DRT chairman Roger Hardingham said: "The last two locos have now departed the redundant site at Washford. The diesels have found new homes to begin useful operations which otherwise would not have been used elsewhere."

Recognition for Worth Valley Class 101 DMU restoration

THE 2023 Railcar Of The Year award has been won by the Keighley & Worth Valley Railway's resident Class 101.

The Railcar Association award recognises the efforts which

went into the overhaul and repaint from BR Green to Blue livery on Nos. M51189+Sc51803.

Also nominated were Class 104 No. M51682 at the North Norfolk Railway, and Class

127 No. M51618 at Llangollen. 'Project Wareham' was nominated for the Swanage Railway's efforts returning Class 121 'Bubble Car' No. W55028 and Class 117 Nos. W51356+

W51388 and W59486 to main line standards.

Entries also included second generation DMUs, such as Class 143 'Pacer' No. 143623 at the Wensleydale Railway.

Severn Valley DMU returns

THE DMU Group (West Midlands) based at the Severn Valley Railway owns five Class 108 DMU vehicles, two of which, Nos. M51941+E52064, have recently returned to service following overhaul.

The pair made their first public run since 2017 in November, from Bewdley to Kidderminster, after which they were used during the line's pre-Christmas Santa season, and then for the new Winter Diesel Day on January 29.

The '108' joined a number of diesel locomotives for the Winter Diesel Day, including Class 17 'Clayton' No. D8568, 'Choppers' Nos. 20007+20142 *Sir John Bejeman* (courtesy of Class 20189 Ltd), 'Crompton' No. 33108, 'Tractor' No. 37263 (on hire from the Telford Steam Railway), 'Whistler' No. 40106 (running without its *Atlantic Conveyor* nameplates), 'Peak' No. 182 (46045) which has recently had its steam heat boiler refitted, 'Hoover'



Class 108 DMU Nos. M51941+E52064 depart Highley with the 11.35 service for Kidderminster on December 29, 2023. STEVE WIDDOWSON

No. 50035 *Ark Royal* and 'Western' No. D1015 *Western Champion*. The diesels were joined by GWR 0-6-0PT No. 7714 from the steam fleet to provide heating for the third rake of coaching stock.

The event was also expected to include Class 14 'Teddy Bear'

No. D9551, but due to the loco's generator being overhauled, it was withdrawn from the line-up.

The diesel day was a deemed a success for the SVR, with about 1200 passengers being carried, and the line plans to hold it again in December this year.

The DMU Group also owns centre car No. NE59250, which is expected to return to use in mid-2024. Vehicles Nos. M50933 and M56208 remain at Bewdley, and both require a major overhaul. Details of how to donate can be found at www.svr-dmu.org.uk.

'Deltics' set for return in 2024

ALL THREE Class 55s owned by the Deltic Preservation Society (DPS) could be back in action by the end of the year.

The DPS has spent considerable time tracing electrical faults on No. 55009 *Alycidon*. An oil leak in the load regulator has been eliminated, and a cable leading to the main generator is being replaced.

The loco began testing on January 13, followed by running in on the Barrow Hill demonstration line. If all goes to plan, No. 55009 will be moved to the Great Central Railway (GCR) in March for testing at higher speeds, but there are no plans at present for any main line tours in 2024.

Refurbishment

Classmate No. 55019 *Royal Highland Fusilier* has also been worked on in recent months. Various parts have been removed and refurbished and are now being refitted. The loco is also being repainted.

It is set to take part in the North Yorkshire Moors Railway's Diesel Gala in June. Everything has been obtained to allow No. 55019 to be certificated for main line operation once again. This will not take place until much later in the year, however, and will involve a loaded test run.

Meanwhile, No. D9015 (55015) *Tulyar* has had two power units installed and is back on its overhauled bogies for the first time in 10 years, with engineers now checking the wiring throughout the locomotive.

Once this has been finalised, it will be started up for the first time in 27 years. The master plan is for all three DPS 'Deltics' to work later in the year at the GCR, which will be a first for the preservation group.

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CLASSIC TRACTION PORTFOLIO



1	4
2	3 5

1
'CROMPTON' ON THE BALLAST: Swanage Railway resident Class 33/0 No. D6515 (33012) *Lt Jenny Lewis RN* works the grade across Corfe Common with the returning (13.02) Norden to Swanage demonstration ballast train on the first day of the line's Winter Warm Up two-day event on January 6. STEPHEN GINN

2
DMU DRAG: Class 20 No. 20142 *Sir John Betjeman* arrives at Arley hauling Class 108 DMU (comprising Nos. M51941+E52064) with the 12.55 Kidderminster to Highley service on December 29 during the Severn Valley Railway's Winter diesel gala (see also story on page 75). TOM MCATEE

3
WORKS TRAIN FROM ABOVE: Bodmin Railway's Permanent Way train hauled by Class 08 No. 08359 is seen on the Boscarnie branch on January 6. JON HIRD/BR

4
AN UPLIFTING SIGHT: Class 50 No. 50021 *Rodney* was lifted at Arlington Fleet Services, Eastleigh Works on January 5 to allow the replacement of a faulty wheelset. While the bogies are released, brake rigging on both bogies is being overhauled. This is the last major activity required before the 'Hoover' is released back to traffic with a view to participating on the 2024 gala circuit. The loco's owner, the 50021 Loco Association, said it was grateful for the support of the Arlington staff. Work is also progressing on No. 50026 *Indomitable*, which is set to return to the main line this year. IAN PENFOLD

5
SANTA CALLS: With a Father Christmas cardboard cutout in the old telephone box, Class 31 No. 31289 (D5821) *Phoenix* passes through the Northampton & Lamport Railway's Pitsford & Brampton station on January 1. PAUL BIGGS





New year, new tour programmes

Main line railtour promoters announce their planned itineraries for the year ahead.

AS winter begins to recede, many rail tour promoters have now confirmed their excursions for at least the first half of the year, while others are still working on the fine detail following DB Cargo's decision to focus more on contracted operations and less on 'ad hoc' charters.

Early in January, Pathfinder Tours published its new brochure and one of the key offerings will be a repeat of the popular 'Cambrian Coast Express'.

A choice of five dates will be on offer – two in April, one in May, and two more in September, with five different originating points. All tours take place on Thursdays and will use Mk.2 Riviera Trains stock hauled by two EE Type 3s from Shrewsbury to Pwllheli and back.

The outline details are:

- **April 4:** Start at Reading, picking up at Didcot Parkway, Oxford, Banbury, Leamington Spa, Dorridge, Birmingham New Street, Wolverhampton, Telford Central and Shrewsbury.
- **April 18:** Start at East Midlands Parkway, picking up at Loughborough, Leicester, Nuneaton, Coleshill Parkway, Birmingham New Street, Wolverhampton and Shrewsbury.
- **May 16:** Start at Cardiff Central, picking up at Newport, Cwmbran, Pontypool & New Inn, Abergavenny, Hereford, Ludlow, Craven Arms and Shrewsbury.
- **Sept 5:** Start at Bristol Temple Meads, calling at Bristol Parkway, Cam & Dursley, Cheltenham Spa, Worcestershire Parkway,

Bromsgrove, Birmingham New Street, Wolverhampton and Shrewsbury.

- **Sept 12:** Start at Swindon, picking up at Kemble, Stroud, Cheltenham Spa, Worcester Shrub Hill, Kidderminster, Stourbridge Junction, Tame Bridge Parkway and Shrewsbury.

All tours will include off-train options at Barmouth, Minffordd, Porthmadog and Pwllheli.

In between these Cambrian tours, Pathfinder has planned a 'Spring Cornish Explorer' for May 4, which will be hauled by a pair of West Coast Class 37s from Dorridge, Warwick Parkway, Leamington Spa, Banbury, Oxford, Swindon and Bristol Temple Meads to Penzance. Off-train options include the Eden Project or the Lost Gardens of Heligan and Truro.

A week later, a 'Golden Arrow' is set to run from Birmingham New Street to Canterbury West via Oxford. A West Coast steam loco is due to haul the train from West London, returning via Dover, Folkestone and Tonbridge – with diesel traction back from the London area.

Destinations

June 1 will see an excursion from Tame Bridge Parkway and selected stations to Swindon continue to Torquay and Paignton for the English Riviera Airshow. The following Saturday, June 8, the 'Lakes Express' starts at Bristol Temple Meads and runs via the Welsh Marches route to Carlisle, where steam takes over for a trip around the Cumbrian Coast line.

June 29 is the annual 'Maze' Day Cornishman' trip from the West Midlands to Penzance, which this year will be hauled by a pair of Class 50s.

The Locomotive Services Group encompasses several rail tour promoters – InterCity, Saphos Trains, Steam Dreams, Midland Pullman and the Statesman – and all have announced comprehensive programmes.

Under the InterCity brand, use is being made of Class 40 No. D213 (40013) *Andania*, LSL's AC electrics, Crewe Diesel Preservation Group's Class 47 No. 47712 *Lady Diana Spencer* and the Mk.2 push-pull set.

On February 9, a Class 90 will work from King's Cross along the East Coast Main Line to Leeds, Skipton and Bradford Forster Square, with photo opportunities at the latter two locations.

Class 40 No. D213 is booked to work from Crewe over the Highland Main Line to Inverness, and then back via Aberdeen and Dundee over the weekend of February 24/25 on the 'Whistling Highlander'.

Then over the weekend of March 29-31, the Class 47 and push-pull set will venture to pastures new. Starting at Crewe, the 'West Of Scotland Push-Pull' will visit Oban, Gourock, Wemyss Bay, Ardrossan Harbour and Largs.

Tours to destinations by Saphos follow formats of previous years and feature the 'Golden Arrow', 'Cotswold Explorer', 'Welsh Marches Express', the 'Settle & Carlisle Fellsman' and 'White Rose' tours. Saphos Tours start from a range of regional towns and cities and normally feature a mix of heritage diesel traction and steam, although some excursions may be steam-hauled throughout.

There are 34 tours in the Saphos programme between

March 13 to October 9. Visit saphostains.com for full details.

LSL's deluxe HST in its 'Blue Pullman' style livery has 37 booked trips between March 5 and October 23, and like the Saphos tours will be visiting destinations which have proved popular in years past. The HST set will be visiting Whitby, Torbay, Blackpool, Oban and Fort William, as well as Torbay. While most are day trips from regional start points, there are a couple of weekend tours in the mix.

Also, Statesman Rail is offering a range of luxury tours throughout the year, and its programme can be found at statesmanrail.com

Off the beaten track

Still to finalise its programme for the first half of the year, UK Railtours (UKR) has three confirmed excursions which are booking now. These include the 'Gateway Galloper' on March 23, an 'Off The Beaten Track' tour which starts at King's Cross and picks up at Potters Bar, Stevenage, Huntingdon and Peterborough. It is set to visit Chaddesden sidings Derby, the Mapperley goods branch and East Midlands Gateway freight terminal, from which the tour takes its name. Class 66s will top-and-tail this train.

April 13 is a second 'Off The Beaten Track' tour from Paddington and picking up at Slough, Reading, Swindon and Bristol Parkway. At Newport, the traction will change to a pair of Class 66s top-and-tailed before avoiding Swansea en route to visit the Robeston freight line to its operational limit, and then to Milford Haven for a break before returning to London.

UKR's final confirmed tour at

the time of writing is on April 27 when 'Merchant Navy' No. 35028 *Clan Line* will celebrate its 50th anniversary of its first main line trip in preservation by hauling the Belmond British Pullman from London Victoria to Bath via Salisbury.

While details were not confirmed as this page closed for press, UKR was planning a tour with the Hastings Diesels DEMU for April 20, and was finalising other trips to destinations as varied as Berwick-upon-Tweed and the West Country.

Finally, the Railway Touring Company (RTC) has planned another programme of steam tours to popular destinations over some of the country's classic rail routes. These include 'Cumbrian Mountain Express' trains on February 10, 17 and March 16, with other excursions to Bath and Gloucester (February 10), York (February 24), Chester (March 2), Stratford-upon-Avon (March 9) and Edinburgh (March 24).

On Wednesday, March 27, RTC is running a train from King's Cross to Whitby. This will feature the rare sight of a Class 86/2 on the ECML working from London to York – not forgetting the rare sight of steam running the length of the Esk Valley; steam having taken over at York.

As RTC is an exclusive user of locos and rolling stock provided by the West Coast Railway Company, so the revocation of West Coast's exemption to use hinged door rolling stock (see *Headline News*) could affect some tours. RTC managing director Kelly Osbourne told *The RM* it is proceeding as planned with its tour programme and is in regular dialogue with both West Coast and ORR.

SIDELINES

Hastings Diesels trips for 2024

ALTHOUGH no details are available at present, Hastings Diesels Limited has indicated it is planning four railtours for 2024. They will be to Exeter on April 6, Skegness on June 8, Derby on July 13 and possibly the Gloucester area on September 14. More detail will be provided at www.hastingsdiesels.co.uk when known, or on 'X' (formerly Twitter) at @HastingsDiesels



DB 'TUG' FINALE:

The last booked main line passenger working for a DB Cargo Class 60 was on Pathfinder Tours' 'Midland-lan' tour on December 16, which included several freight lines and loops in the West Midlands. Hauled by No. 60024 *Clitheroe Castle*, the tour is seen passing through Leamington Spa on its way to Banbury. CHRIS MILNER



ELECTRIC SPECIAL: LSL Class 87 No. 87002 *Royal Sovereign* during its booked passenger stop at Preston on January 13, with 1Z32, the 16.11 Glasgow Central to Crewe 'The Ayr Extension' railtour. Top-and-tailing with No. 86101 the special ran as far as Barassie Junction as access to Ayr was still restricted following a fire at the former station hotel on September 25, 2023. STEVE SIENKIEWICZ

'Thunderbird' for Branch Line Society tour

AHEAD of a three-day charity railtour around Scotland, the Branch Line Society will utilise a GB Railfreight Class 57/3 'Thunderbird' loco as part of a rolling stock positioning move on March 7, for its 'BWC 2 Scottish' trip.

The 'Thunderbird' will work a rake of stock from Derby (09.50) to Linlithgow calling at Chesterfield, Swinton, Castleford, York, Darlington and Newcastle, but will set down additionally at Edinburgh Waverley. The route will include several goods and passenger loops. Rolling stock is all first class and fares for this train are £69 and £89 at a guaranteed table for two. For under 18s, there's a £34.50 reduction on the adult price, and the tour is open to non-BLS members.

On March 8, the first day of the BWC2 tour will utilise Class 37 No. 37403 *Isle of Mull* and depart from Bo'ness station, picking up at Linlithgow, before a circuit of the Edinburgh suburban line and a pickup at Waverley.

From Edinburgh, the tour heads via the Cowlairs East

Curve and Dalmeir to Fort William for an overnight halt, passengers arranging their own accommodation.

For day two, it's a very early start (06.35) and back south over the West Highland line to Crianlarich, where after reversal the train runs to Oban for a two-hour break. There will also be calls at both Tyndrum stations for those wanting to enjoy some walking. The train returns to Fort William for another overnight stop, but there will be another photostop at Crianlarich.

Mallaig & Wemyss Bay

On day three, the tour heads west to Mallaig (photostop) before returning to Fort William and around Glasgow and out to Wemyss Bay, returning via Glasgow Central to set down and then via Glasgow Queen St high level on its way back to Bo'ness where the estimated arrival is at 23.20. A GBRf loco will bring the train back from Wemyss Bay and assist with any reversing moves on the way back to Bo'ness.

This three-day train is for BLS members only and

first class seats are priced at £299. However, all seating at a guaranteed table for two has been sold. Under 18 fares are half price. All profits from this charter will be donated to Martin House Hospice and Great Ormond Street Hospital.

On all trains, a buffet car will serve a limited range of hot and cold drinks, snacks and light refreshments.

To enable passengers to return south on March 11, a one-way train will leave Linlithgow at 09.40 with a circuit of the Edinburgh suburban line, before heading to Carstairs, south over Beattock and via Hexham and Darlington, setting down as outward to Derby, with the '57/3' hauling the train.

Adult fares on this final

train are £69 and £89 at a guaranteed table for two, and for under 18s, there's a £34.50 reduction on the adult price.

Full details of positioning and the main tour is online at branchline.uk

The BLS is planning a charity charter train with a four-day excursion around Cornwall from May 3-6, but details have not yet been released.

STEAM TOURS: FEBRUARY

Date	Name	Steam Section	Locos	Promoter
10	Winter Cumbrian Mountain	Camforth-Shap-Carlisle-Settle-Preston	WCRC Pool	RTC
10	Bath & Gloucester Express	Paddington-Bath-Gloucester-Paddington	WCRC 'Black 5'	RTC
17	Winter Cumbrian Mountain	Camforth-Shap-Carlisle-Settle-Preston	WCRC Pool	RTC
24	S&C Winter Express	Camforth-Shap-Carlisle-Settle-Preston	WCRC Pool	PT
24	White Rose	King's Cross-Grantham-York-Peterborough	WCRC 'Black 5'	RTC

Notes: WCRC Pool: Locos from 45596/45680/45699/46115/35018/34067

DIESEL AND ELECTRIC TOURS: FEBRUARY

Date	Name	Steam Section	Locos	Promoter
9	West Riding Limited	King's Cross-Leeds-Skipton-Bradford FS-King's Cross	LSL Class 90	IC
17	Statesman S&C Circular	Leamington Spa-Crewe-Hellfield-Carlisle-Leamington Spa	LSL Class 47s	SR
24	Whistling Highlander	Crewe-Carlisle-Stirling-Inverness	D213	IC
25	Whistling Highlander	Inverness-Aberdeen-Dalmeny-Cumbernauld-Crewe	D213	IC

All tours listed above may be subject to cancellation due to industrial action – check with your promoter.

Key: IC InterCity 0800 038 5364 PT Pathfinder Tours 01453 835414 RTC Railway Touring Company 01553 661500
SR Statesman Rail 0345 3102458

SIDELINES

Maritime hopeful of further growth

JOHN Bailey, the managing director of Maritime Transport's intermodal business, says the company is looking forward to "further significant growth opportunities" following the announcement of a new three-year contract with Tesco.

At the end of October last year, Maritime (which also provides road haulage services for the retailer) took on the management, planning and execution of all rail operations at Tesco's central distribution hubs within Daventry International Rail Freight Terminal (DIRFT) in Northamptonshire.

This includes responsibility for the seven daily container train services which link DIRFT with terminals at Mossend, Tilbury, Wentloog, Teesport and Inverness, and onward distribution by road to Yorkshire, Teesside, the Midlands and London. The company has also taken on former Eddie Stobart Ltd employees who were involved in Tesco rail operations.

"This Tesco contract represents another step in our growth as we continue to reposition our business and focus on a more environmentally-conscious, carbon-cutting economy," added Mr Bailey. "DIRFT is a great fit for Maritime. Our dedicated management team now operating on site is doing a fantastic job leading day to day operations alongside our new colleagues who we are delighted to welcome to the company."

Battery shunter plan

CARBON emissions related to traffic using Mossend International Railfreight Park (MIRP) in North Lanarkshire could be further reduced through the acquisition of a pure battery-powered shunting loco. Outlining plans for growth, MIRP operator Peter D Stirling Ltd says it hopes to place an order for the shunter as well as facilitating the shift of more Scottish export traffic from road to rail.

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Government sets 2050 rail freight growth target

A 75% increase in net freight tonne kilometres is envisaged over the next 25 years.

TRANSPORT Secretary Mark Harper says setting a net tonne kilometre growth target for rail freight of at least 75% by 2050 demonstrates the Government's confidence in the sector.

The Department for Transport describes the figure, equating to an average increase of around 3% per annum as "highly ambitious".

It was announced in December after a range of options for achieving what was described as a "stretching but realistic target" were developed by the Great British Railways Transition Team (GBRTT), which works on behalf of the Government to advise ministers on decisions regarding the future direction of the railway.

GBRTT used findings from its nationwide 'Call for Evidence' in summer 2022, to better understand market demand, opportunities for and challenges to delivering rail freight growth, the driving factors for logistics decisions made by freight customers and views on how a growth target should be designed.

A total of 88 replies were received (deemed by the DfT to be a "strong response") from freight operating companies, industry representatives, transport authorities and



Carrying around 40% of UK rail freight, the West Coast Main Line is a vital artery for cargo, but the cancellation of HS2 between the West Midlands and Manchester presents new challenges for delivering future capacity. Heading south on the WCML through Cumbria, Colas Rail Freight Class 56 Nos. 56094 and 56090 are seen nearing Shap on the 6J37 14.02 timber working from Carlisle Yard to Chirk Kronospan on February 27, 2023. Transferring further timber traffic to rail has been explored in recent years, trial workings resulting in regular traffic from Aberystwyth to the same destination as the train pictured. **DARREN ROBSON**

current and potential rail freight customers.

Favour

Although 97% of respondents regarded greater use of rail as a viable way of reducing emissions from their operations and 86% said they would like to transfer some of their supply chain traffic, 44% said they had facilities adjacent to, but not linked to railway lines.

Network capacity was stated as a concern for 18% of

potential users, with cost and connectivity of terminals both scoring 17%.

Maggie Simpson, director general of the Rail Freight Group, which represents operators and customers, said the target was a "strong message of support". She added that meeting it would require continued Government investment in capacity upgrades. The figure was also welcomed by GB Railfreight and Freightliner.

The DfT says the 75%

increase over 25 years is not a ceiling. It is, however, viewed as giving a "strong balance" between meeting Government objectives and securing value for money. The department says it is committed to achieving it through support, investment and regulation, but has ruled-out setting an "action-by-action delivery plan". That will be down to the rail freight industry, working alongside Network Rail and GBRTT, assisted by a Rail Freight Growth working group.

Preparations under way for iPort Phase 2

A PROJECT to develop a second phase of Doncaster iPort, doubling its size and storage capacity, is expected to be completed in around a year.

The rail freight interchange, which opened in 2018, is linked to Southampton, Felixstowe, Immingham and Teesport by daily services, and connected to the East Coast Main Line.

Once this latest phase is completed, it will have the ability to accommodate a greater number of trains each day and a total of six million square feet of accommodation for logistics and light industry.

Additional warehouse facilities are also planned.

The UK subsidiary of global transport specialist MEDLOG has agreed a long-term lease to run the terminal. Handover from site developer Verdion is due to be completed by the spring.

"This agreement with MEDLOG will underpin current operations as well as creating a strong platform for future growth, including more business and employment opportunities across the Doncaster and South Yorkshire region," said Verdion executive director John Clements.



Direct Rail Services Class 66 No. 66423 leaves Doncaster iPort, bound for Tees Dock with a Tesco container train on July 14, 2020. **ADAM GIBBONS**

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Minding the gap in TfL's latest capital funding

London's transport officials set out revised plans after £250 million injection gives them half of what had been hoped for this year.

FOLLOWING the announcement of a £250 million capital funding settlement for 2024 from the Government, Transport for London says it has had to take "difficult decisions" with longer term impacts, in order to allow improvements and renewals to proceed.

Using delegated authority, a business plan was agreed by TfL's Finance Committee, three days before Christmas. TfL said it had "always been clear" that it could fund around 75% of its capital programme for 2024/5 but would need Government support to cover its full proposals.

Rail Minister Huw Merriman said that the sum approved was "fair for Londoners and taxpayers". He added: "We have invested billions into the

capital's transport system in recent years. This investment must be well managed in a way that doesn't unfairly burden the pockets of taxpayers and motorists."

Shortfall

Among TfL's measures to mitigate the shortfall and enable its plan to be delivered are the rephrasing of some payments to Siemens Mobility for the 94 new trains on order for the Piccadilly line. TfL said this would not affect the delivery of the first train this year for testing in London (prior to entry into service of the new sets in 2025) and will safeguard plans to uplift the line's timetable in 2027.

It will also mean a higher proportion of trains than the



As part of a £500 million programme of improvement, units on the Central line are being fitted with new traction motors and electrical systems. Their interiors are being revamped to feature wheelchair bays, CCTV, passenger information screens and a new seat moquette, as seen here on the first set to emerge from the programme. TfL

originally anticipated 50% will be built at the new Siemens factory in Goole, but its plans for 2025/6 onwards assume 50% of funding from the Government

for capital investment. The projects still dependent on further commitment from ministers include an order for new stock for the Bakerloo line.

First new Subway trains enter public service in Glasgow

AFTER an extensive period of testing, which included night-time running on the system, the first two trains from Glasgow Subway's new fleet of 17 units entered passenger service on December 11.

More of the Stadler-built four-car sets will be introduced this year. They will ultimately replace the existing Metro-Cammell trains, which operate as three-car units, originally introduced in 1980.

Mark Toner, project director for the Subway's operator Strathclyde Partnership for

Transport (SPT) said that the new fleet would "take time" to achieve full reliability and capability.

Also included in the £288 million Subway modernisation programme is a new operational control centre, yet to be inaugurated. Completion of signalling and communications work and installation of 'half height' screen doors on platform edges will give an option for the new trains to be used in driverless mode, but Mr Toner added that the installation of the doors at all stations was "still some way off".



Glasgow Subway unit No. 306, one of 17 new Stadler-built trains for the system, is pictured at Kelvinbridge station on the afternoon of December 20 last year. Two of the four-car sets were in operation on consecutive outer circle services so that they could rescue the other in the event of a failure. ANGUS DUNCAN

RVLR CONTRACT SIGNED:

Over two years after plans to manufacture them were announced to the media, construction of three 'pre-series' Revolution Very Light Rail (RVLR) vehicles will get under way this year. Rolling stock leasing firm Eversholt Rail has agreed a deal with Transport Design International, which will produce the three units. Their intended appearance (as seen in the computer-generated image left) is in-keeping with the demonstration RVLR unit that has been undergoing trials and testing since 2021 using a stretch of track at the former Ironbridge Power Station site in Shropshire. Unlike this vehicle, which utilises both battery and diesel power, the 'pre-series' trains will run entirely on batteries and be capable of fast recharging via a lineside system. Working with the industry to explore opportunities to improve low density rail operations, Eversholt and TDI aim to have the first of the three units ready for passenger operation in 2026. EVERSOLT RAIL



SIDELINES

Financial restructuring completed

TRAMLINK, which operates Nottingham Express Transit services, says the renegotiation of terms with lenders has stabilised its position for the next 10 years.

Ridership remains at around 80% of pre-pandemic levels and inflation and rising electricity prices have also created economic pressures.

The completion of the two-year project to restructure the organisation's finances is expected to allow investments in new technology, recruitment of more revenue protection officers and updates to ticketing systems. Extensions to the network could also be considered.

Fare rises

WEST Midlands Metro fares increased by around 5% on average from January 2, the first change since June 2022.

A peak-time adult Zone 1 ticket went up from £3.00 to £3.20. A weekly ticket covering all zones rose from £24.10 to £25.30.

On the Glasgow Subway, fares have risen for the first time since 2019, by an average of 3%, but there is no increase for child season tickets.

Further Class 555 delivered

TYNE & Wear Metro Class 555 Nos. 555013 and 555015 were delivered to South Gosforth depot in Newcastle in mid-December.

Respectively the fourth and fifth of the Stadler-built units to arrive in the UK, they were brought onto the system from Bill Quay, between Pelaw and Hebburn, by Nos. 555003 and 555005.

Tram named after England goalkeeper

NOTTINGHAM Express Transit Alstom Citadis tram No. 222 has been named *Mary Earps*.

The England and Manchester United goalkeeper, who was born in Nottingham, unveiled the name at a ceremony at the city's Wilkinson Street tram depot on December 14, also attended by current members of the West Bridgford Colts team, which she played for as a 10-year-old.

No. 222 has carried the names of a number of other Nottingham figures in the past.

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TransPennine project leads long list of festive upgrades

'Orange army' renews and enhances network during Christmas shutdown.

THE TransPennine Route upgrade dominated the Christmas work schedules in the north of England.

Despite facing difficult weather conditions, hundreds of engineers worked around the clock throughout the festive season between Manchester, Huddersfield, Leeds and York in order to complete a number of projects.

These included replacement of points outside York station; track replacement at Mirfield; decommissioning of platform 2 at Mirfield station; and installation of a new undertrack crossing at Huddersfield.

While these tasks were taking place, extensive piling and electrification work was completed across various sections of the TransPennine route, alongside signalling and telecommunication equipment testing.

On the southerly TransPennine route, a new bridge was installed near Dore & Trolley station.

Nationally, there was extensive work over the Christmas and New Year periods and highlights included the replacement of six sets of switches and crossings at Doncaster, and Overhead Line Equipment (OLE) improvement, plus further installation of equipment for the East Coast Digital Programme between Welwyn Garden City and Hitchin.

In preparation for Cambridge South station, teams realigned 1.5km of track, installed 2.86km of track and new OLE with the old track being removed in preparation for the piling for the eastern station building and island platforms.

In London, a life-expired bridge on Kingsbury Road between Canonbury and



TransPennine Route Upgrade work taking place at Mirfield station during the Christmas and New Year period. NETWORK RAIL

Dalston Junction was removed ahead of a replacement later this year.

Scottish work included the replacement of Greenhill junctions and 1km of track; along with the signalling, new

drainage systems at Princes Street Gardens and Haymarket station, Edinburgh, the demolition of three bridges at Hairmyres as part of the East Kilbride electrification project and the modernisation of several

level crossings and signalling in the Helensburgh area.

Further soil nailing and netting work was completed between Dawlish and Holcombe to reduce the risk of rock falls.

Oxford-Bristol services could make a return

GWR says it hopes to introduce two daily return services between Oxford and Bristol Temple Meads.

From September 14, the operator said it intends to run the following trial services on Saturdays until December: 10.18 Bristol Temple Meads-Oxford; 11.55 Oxford-Bristol Temple Meads (via Didcot); 15.18 Bristol Temple Meads-Oxford; and 17.12 Oxford-Bristol Temple Meads.

The proposal is still being discussed and needs final approval from the Department for Transport and Network Rail. A similar direct service ceased in 2003.

GWR managing director Mark Hopwood said: "We are always looking at innovative ways of creating new business and improving connectivity. Changing customer patterns since Covid-19 have provided a clear opportunity for us to expand our leisure offering and the Bristol-Oxford route is one which offers real potential."

Progress at Beaulieu Park station

THE construction of a new station on the north-eastern edge of Chelmsford moved a step closer during the Christmas and New Year holidays.

Over an eight-day period, work on Network Rail's Anglia region saw changes to the track layout as part of the preparation for the new station at Beaulieu Park.

Engineers slewed the existing tracks,

connecting them to a new loop and down main line. The station will have three platforms with a central loop line, with the new tracks used for stopping services calling at the station, while allowing fast trains to pass through. The realignment will allow the island platform to be constructed safely.

Elsewhere on the site, the station building has been roofed and is being

prepared for the external walls and internal fit-out.

Costing £124 million, the station is part of a wider regeneration of the Beaulieu Park estate with a new road infrastructure and up to 14,000 homes.

It is expected the new station will ease the pressure on Chelmsford and cut car journeys on local roads. Projected opening is by the end of 2025.



Greater Anglia EMU No. 745005 on the new Down Main alignment through the Beaulieu Park station site with 1P34, the 14.00 London Liverpool Street-Norwich on January 2. The disconnected and part lifted former main lines are in the foreground. DRAIN C SCOTCHMAN

Crew training underway on revived Levenmouth line

A MASSIVE step towards the re-opening of the Levenmouth branch took place on January 8 when crew training on the five-mile line commenced using a Class 158 DMU.

Over the weekend of January 6/7, Network Rail undertook final testing and commissioning of the signalling system on the new £116m line which has been funded by the Scottish Government.

The crew training trips run between Glenrothes with Thornton and Leven, with a stop at the intermediate station on the branch, Cameron Bridge. On January 9, the line had a rare visit from Colas HST power cars Nos. 43285 and 43321 working back-to-back, which ran from

Slateford, repeating the visit on successive days.

Expected to open in June, the project was first announced back in the summer of 2019 by then Scottish Transport Minister Michael Matheson following a campaign backed by the community and local politicians. Work on the line began in May 2020 with the clearance of vegetation.

Reinstatement of passenger services lost when the line closed in 1969 will bring a big boost to the Fife seaside town, and the expectation is for two trains per hour between Leven and Edinburgh Waverley.

Construction of the line has included provision for electrification at a future date.



The first train to arrive at Leven on January 8 was ScotRail Class 158 DMU No. 158704 which had worked from Haymarket depot to undertake two return trips to Glenrothes as part of the inaugural crew training diagrams, which were scheduled to be stepped up from January 10. It was the first of any type of passenger train to run over the branch. NETWORK RAIL



ORNATE CANOPIES RESTORED:

A project to restore the Victorian platform canopies at Great Malvern station has been completed. Network Rail's contractor Murphy began the painstaking work in April 2022 and in the intervening time has replaced glazing panels, completed structural strengthening and repainted the ornate ironwork on both of the station's platform canopies. The project, which was supported by West Midlands Railway, Wychavon District Council and part funded by the Railway Heritage Trust, was completed shortly before Christmas. Each of the floral arrangements on the canopy pillars of the Grade II listed station was carefully removed and restored by a specialist company before being refitting. NETWORK RAIL

Levelling Up funding for Mid-Cornwall Metro scheme

AN OFFER of £50m Levelling Up Funding towards the delivery of the £56.8 million Mid Cornwall Metro initiative has been provisionally accepted by Cornwall Council's cabinet. Work is to start this year.

The money will be used to improve the current links between four of the county's largest towns – Newquay, St Austell, Truro and Falmouth/ Penryn – with the introduction

of an hourly direct train service. This will double the number of rail services between Newquay and Par.

Encouragement to use rail to will help reduce carbon emissions, improve air quality, aid sustainability and alleviate traffic congestion and is within the Metro plan, according to the council's portfolio holder for transport Coun Richard Williams-Pears.

He said: "As well as its green credentials and being a catalyst for economic growth and local regeneration around the stations, I see this as the beginning of a transport revolution for Cornwall."

Additionally, the project will see the reinstatement of a second platform at Newquay, the creation of a new passing loop on the Newquay branch at Tregoss Moor, level crossing

upgrades, more frequent services between Par, St Austell and Truro, some public realm and accessibility improvements at stations and the introduction of a 'tap-on/tap-off' pay-as-you-go ticketing system.

Work to replace the semaphore signalling between Lostwithiel and Truro was started last autumn, and more work is planned for the spring.

Developers are chosen for 'York Central' project

NETWORK Rail and Homes England have selected McLaren Property and Arlington Real Estate as the preferred developers for their major brownfield scheme, York Central.

York Central is a scheme which involves redevelopment of the large plot of land encircled by the railway lines though the station and the avoiding line at York.

The site is already home to the National Railway Museum, Network Rail's York Regional Operating Centre and some residential housing, but the new plans will cover the transformation of underutilised railway land. The land includes

the former coal drops, and other unused land within the boundary of the railway lines.

The 45 acre site will provide up to 2,500 homes, 20% of which will be affordable, and create up to 1 million sq ft of commercial space for offices, retail and leisure, supporting 6,500 jobs. A network of vibrant public squares linking to surrounding neighbourhoods in the city centre will also be delivered, as well as improvements to York Railway station and an expanded and enhanced National Railway Museum.

There are already £135m of infrastructure works underway



A generated image of how York Central in the vicinity of the coal drops might look. On the extreme left is York station. NETWORK RAIL

to enable this major regional scheme to progress. These include over 3km of new roads,

footpaths, cycleways and include two new bridges over the East Coast Main Line.

SINGLE LINES

ScotRail increases fares by 9%

TRANSPORT Scotland has confirmed that fares on ScotRail services will rise by 8.7% from April. Since October 2023, ScotRail has been running a pilot scheme where off-peak fares apply all day, but to encourage further rail use, this pilot will be extended by three months to the end of June.

Caledonian Sleeper fares have also been increased on average by 8.7% from January 1, but the rise excludes seated tickets.

WCML signalling upgraded at Rugeley

BETWEEN January 20-22, Network Rail engineers completed signalling upgrades between Rugeley Trent Valley and Colwich Junction to conclude an £85million project between Rugby and Stafford which has been carried out in stages since 2017.

The work has seen 39 new signals installed, 124 axle counters and the amalgamation of Colwich and Trent Valley workstations at the Rugby Rail Operating Centre.

Step-free at Shortlands

WORK commenced on January 15 at Shortlands station, Bromley to install three lifts and a new footbridge to make the station fully accessible.

Included in the £8.5million project are lighting upgrades, the installation of CCTV and a new emergency staircase to provide an additional exit for passengers to use in an emergency.

The works is due for completion in spring 2025.

MBE for lifesaving rail worker

CUSTOMER service assistant Rizwan Javed, 33, from east London, was made an MBE in the New Year Honours list for saving 29 people from taking their own lives. Mr Javed works for the MTR Elizabeth Line at Ealing Broadway station and has learned to recognise the signs of vulnerable and distressed individuals. He's approached them, intervened and engaged them in small talk, before working with the BTP to get the person help.

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SWR's long overdue arrival

More than four years later than anticipated, the phased introduction of Class 701 'Arterios' is finally under way.

SOUTH Western Railway Class 701 'Arterio' electric multiple unit No. 701037 became the first member of the class to operate a public service on January 9.

It formed the 10.25 service from London Waterloo to Windsor & Eton Riverside and the corresponding return working to the capital. No. 701039 was used on the route on January 10 and 11. With the exception of a three-day engineering blockade from January 13-15, during which no passenger services ran on the Windsor branch, SWR said it would initially run Class 701s on the route on weekdays (expected to consist of one unit on off-peak services) before looking to increase the frequency of their operation. It added that the launch had given "invaluable insight and assurance on the reliable performance of both the fleet and method of operation".

SWR intends to complete the phased introduction of all 90 units (60 10-car Class 701/0 and 30 Class 701/5 five-car sets) "in the coming months", but perhaps understandably for a programme now running more than four years later than originally planned, is cautious about definite time frames, as the testing, crew training and certification processes continue on a route-by-route basis.

'Important step'

Describing the first train in service as "an important step", an SWR spokesman told *The RM*: "It is however important we take a careful and phased approach to rolling out these trains across the rest of our suburban routes. We are in the process of closely looking at the phasing, to ensure we are delivering the increased capacity where it is most needed."

When the contract to supply the new trains was signed with Bombardier in June 2017 it was expected that the process of introducing the entire fleet would take 18 months. An initial target of mid-2019 had been set for the first unit to enter service, but the project suffered a series of setbacks. There were issues with train software and drivers' union ASLEF and Alstom (which by this time had taken over Bombardier Transportation) also identified problems. The Covid-19 pandemic contributed to delays and in early 2022, SWR admitted it was still awaiting a train that performed to specification.

The operator's confidence in the Class 701s had, however, increased by summer last year. In addition to the Windsor route, the 'Arterios', which are part of the 'Aventra' family of multiple units, are also ultimately due to enter service on the Reading



South Western Railway 'Arterio' No. 701037 stands at Waterloo station prior to becoming the first member of the class to operate a public service on January 9. On that day, the unit worked the 2U91, 10.25 Waterloo-Windsor & Eton Riverside before operating the return 2U92 service. SWR

and West London suburban routes, displacing Class 455, 458 and 707 units. As well as offering greater capacity, they feature accessible toilets, Wi-Fi, charging points, air conditioning and doorless, full-width gangways between vehicles.

■ Despite suggestions that

Southeastern's introduction of Class 707s would be completed in December, Nos. 707024 and 707030 have remained in service with SWR. Southeastern expects that they will be part of its operation fleet by June this year, alongside the other 28 members of the class.



CLASS 319 SWANSONG: Originally intended to be withdrawn by the start of the December timetable, Northern Class 319 Nos. 319368 and 319369 managed to make it into 2024 on revenue-earning duties, the latter working between Wigan North Western and Manchester Victoria on New Year's Day. On January 2, No. 319368 is pictured at Earlestown with the 15.32 Manchester Airport-Liverpool Lime Street service. It was hauled from Allerton depot to Newport Docks along with No. 319381 for scrapping on January 11. TERRY EYRES

Tri-mode pioneer undergoes static testing

RAIL Operations Group No. 93001, the first of 10 Class 93 Bo-Bo tri-mode locomotives built for the company at Stadler's plant in Valencia, Spain, underwent static testing at Crewe during January.

With a maximum speed of 110mph, it can deliver almost 6,200 horsepower when drawing energy from overhead wires, 1,200hp running on its diesel power unit and 540hp in battery mode and will be the first tri-mode locomotive to run on the main line railway in the UK.

The Harry Needle Railway Company (HNRC) depot at Worksop in Nottinghamshire is being used as the base for No. 93001, which arrived in Britain via Portbury Docks in June last year.

The locomotive has moved under its own power on the HNRC site but was taken to Crewe on January 8 for static testing as part of the process for clearing it for operation on the network. It was returned to Worksop on January 12.



Between barrier vehicles hauled by Class 37 No. 37901, Rail Operations Group No. 93001, the first of 10 Class 93s for the company, is seen at Derby on its way from Worksop Down Yard to Crewe South Yard on January 8. No. 37901 also provided the power for its return journey to Worksop on January 12. SAM PEDLEY

Thameslink's Bedford depot solar panel installation gets under way

A TOTAL of 932 photovoltaic panels are being installed at Thameslink's Bedford Cauldwell Walk depot in the latest phase of a project to generate electricity using roof space at railway depots.

The project is the most recent phase of a partnership between the operator's parent company Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR) and not-for-profit organisation Energy Garden, which has already led to solar cells being installed at Streatham Hill depot in South London.

It will give Cauldwell Walk one of the biggest solar arrays in the area, capable of generating 322 megawatt hours of electricity a year – the equivalent to powering 120 typical households for 12 months.

Half of the energy generated will be sold to GTR for depot needs. Energy Garden will invest profits from the sale of the rest into community development projects.

Part of GTR's plan for all its energy needs to be carbon 'net

zero' by 2050, it estimated that the installation at Cauldwell Walk, where Class 700 units are stabled and serviced (and an East Midlands Railway team maintains Class 360s), will reduce carbon equivalent emissions by more than 66 tonnes a year.

Solar panel installations are also planned for the depots at Selhurst depot in Croydon and Three Bridges in West Sussex.

GTR's Net Zero Strategy also includes the removal of the few

diesel multiple units in use in its operations through further electrification or use of battery-powered units. Southern is its only operating company to run them – and even it only has 17 Class 171 DMUs in a fleet of 233 trains, the rest of which are electric. Other measures include replacing gas as a source of depot heating, replacing fossil fuel systems and changing air conditioning systems to limit the potential environmental impact of refrigerant.

Fallen tree rips through HST cab

ASLEF Scotland said it was continuing dialogue with ScotRail regarding the future of High Speed Trains after an Aberdeen-Glasgow service hit a fallen tree, which ripped through the cab of leading power car No. 43129.

There were no injuries to the driver or passengers in the collision at Broughty Ferry on December 27 during Storm Gerrit, but the extent of the damage led to concerns being reiterated about the resilience of HST cabs. Unlike more modern cabs, those on HSTs have no steel or aluminium superstructure and consist of a glass reinforced plastic shell attached to the engine room bulkhead and power car underframe.

David Lister, ScotRail's safety, engineering and sustainability director, said that HSTs had "a good safety record" and all necessary certifications to operate. He added that ScotRail had already met with ASLEF to discuss concerns and further meetings were planned.

New Boden facility

BODEN Rail Engineering Ltd's new Colwick Traction Maintenance Depot is understood to be fully operational.

Located on the former oil terminal site at Rectory Junction near Nottingham, the facility replaces those previously used by Boden alongside the Nottingham Eastcroft depot of East Midlands Railway.

The purpose-built two-road shed at Colwick, which includes overhead cranes, will continue to provide maintenance services for Colas and Network Rail.

Along with 37422, 37424 and 37716, Nos. 37407, 37419 and 37425 make-up the final Class 37s to be put up for sale by Direct Rail Services. They are pictured outside York Holgate Works on December 16 last year during an evening photoshoot in aid of Martin House Children's Hospice. It followed the completion of last year's railhead treatment duties. CHRIS MILNER



Four 'Tractors' and spares for sale in latest DRS disposals

CLASS 37 Nos. 37407, 37419, 37422, 37424, 37425 and 37716 were put up for sale by Direct Rail Services in January.

In disposing of the remaining EE Type 3s on its books, DRS

ends a relationship with the class which began in 1997.

Gottfried Eymmer, rail managing director of DRS's parent organisation Nuclear Transport Solutions described

them as a "firm favourite" with staff and enthusiasts.

The previous sale round in October saw Nos. 37069, 37218 and 37423 acquired by Europhoenix and Nos. 37401

and 37402 (now both de-named) bought by Locomotive Services and Andania Engineering respectively, the latter firm being the owner of Class 40 *Andania*.

LATEST AVANTI ADDITIONS ARRIVE AT OXLEY



January 8 saw Avanti West Coast Class 805 No. 805008 make its own way from Hitachi's plant at Newton Aycliffe in County Durham to Oxley depot in Wolverhampton. The next delivery was No. 805009, seen on January 15 at Rearsby in Leicestershire, heading towards Syston East Junction en route to Oxley from the factory's Merchant Park Sidings. PAUL BIGGS



No. 807002, the first of the 10 seven-car Hitachi units on order from Hitachi, was delivered under its own power on December 20. It is seen at Darlington station prior to working the long way round to Oxley via Edinburgh. TONY WINWARD

SINGLE LINES

New trains role for Heaton depot

NORTHERN'S Heaton depot in Newcastle is expected to be used for servicing some of LNER's 10 tri-mode units, ordered late last year from CAF.

Anticipated to enter service in around three years' time, Neville Hill in Leeds will be their base, but some diagrams will lead to sets being 'on-shed' at Heaton.

Later this year, three Class 158s currently allocated to Neville Hill are due to move to Heaton to augment its complement of the class in time for the launch of Northumberland Line services.

More trains for Varamis

BIRMINGHAM International-Mossend parcels train operator Varamis Rail has added Class 321 Nos. 321407, 321419 and 321428 to its fleet. The Class 321s were converted for logistics as part of Eversholt Rail's now abandoned Swift Express Freight unit project after prototype No. 321334, the first unit in service with Varamis.

Replacement Chiltern Main Line stock sought

Operator considers leasing up to 70 existing vehicles with the expectation of them being available for driver training later this year.

HAVING already sought proposals within the last six months for the provision of battery-electric multiple and low emissions multiple units, Chiltern Railways has published a further notice – this time regarding the lease of existing vehicles.

The latest advertisement envisages a relatively quick solution, allowing driver training this year and entry into

service in early 2025.

Established rolling stock owners are invited to submit plans for leasing and associated maintenance of 25-70 of their existing vehicles for use on intercity and regional Chiltern Main Line services. These could be either multiple units or loco-hauled/propped stock, capable of operating at 100 miles per hour. Chiltern expects to lease

the units or coaching rakes plus locomotives for three to 12 years. Among the requirements for the stock (further information will be provided as part of the procurement process) is that it will facilitate fixed formation trains of five or six passenger vehicles and be compliant with existing Chiltern Main Line infrastructure, including the Mark 4 Train Protection

& Warning System (TPWS). It should have a lower ambient noise level than the existing Class 68 and Mk. 3 vehicles and feature air conditioning, on-board CCTV and real-time passenger information systems.

Any diesel vehicles proposed should be able to run on hydro-treated vegetable oil from the outset, to deliver lower emissions than conventional diesel fuel.

IPSWICH NAMING: Continuing GB Railfreight's extension of a long railway tradition of naming locomotives after football clubs, Class 66 No. 66307 officially became *Ipswich Town* on January 12 at Ipswich station. Formerly EuroCargo Rail No. 77502, the 'Shed' was still in the process of being converted for UK use. Pictured alongside it are Ipswich Town chairman Mike O'Leary, GBRF chief executive John Smith, Mediterranean Shipping Company managing director Dan Everitt, lifelong Ipswich fan Philip Drury, former Scottish international, Ipswich player and manager George Burley and Ipswich Town chief executive Mark Ashton. GBRF



Wagon Report

Compiled by Steven Fredrick Lappage

STOKE wagon works, now part of the DB Cargo UK group but perhaps better known by its previous identity as Marcroft Engineering, is carrying out a further programme to convert BRA/BYA bar and coil carriers.

Work is centred on wagons that already have had their three-piece hoods removed. Further modification involves cutting down the end bulkheads and welding in place eight sets of coil-retaining extensions.

In all 40 wagons have been, or are being converted. Recent conversions have been No. 964041, Nos. 966031/036/041/045/058/062/067/085/093/096/111/118/129/136/143/149/168/181/216/237/238/253/254/258.

Prior to this, the major conversion programme carried out at Stoke was the MXA 'Lobster' scheme of 2015-16. However, after around eight years in

traffic, the mismatch between the newish bodies and their more than 60-year-old underframes is becoming apparent. This is not surprising as during the rebuilding process more than a dozen wagons were rejected as donors because of their poor underframe condition.

As a result, large-scale disposals have begun, and already scrapped are Nos. 950010/204/232/272/371/403/473/517/527/549/576/690/783/888/932/963/965/968, Nos. 951017/066/157/179/192/246. ■ ALSO built on refurbished underframes are Loram UK's JNA-Y gondola opens for Network Rail. Recent deliveries have run from No. 81705831172-8 to No. 81705831198-3.

More MRA side-tipper donor wagons arriving at Derby RTC for conversion have been Nos. 501004/006/020/053/

064/066/080/113/128-131/135/136/178-180/277-279.

■ A FURTHER batch of redundant IIA coal/biomass wagons are being converted into HYA 'shorty' aggregate hoppers by WH Davis at Langwith Junction, Nos. 37706955225-7/235-6/248-9/257-0/265-3/267-9/273-7/274-5/277-8/282-8/284-4/286-9/287-7/288-5, Nos. 83706955312-6/315-9/320-9/321-7/323-3/329-0/330-8/331-6/342-3/343-1.

■ MOST new cement wagons in recent years have been JPAs designed and built by Feldbinder Spezialfahrzeugwerke in Germany. However, there are also two smaller batches of high-capacity cement hoppers built in France. Owned by Ermewa, they are JGAs Nos. 81707829000-1 to 053-0.

Dating from 2016-21, they were

constructed in Douai, by Titagarh AFR or its successor Millet AFR.

Unusually for recent revenue stock, they have a gross weight of just 90 tonnes. Tarmac CRH hires the fleet for traffic from Tunstead to terminals in South East England, where demand for cement remains buoyant.

■ PRIVATE owner wagons withdrawn have been JNA aggregate box opens Nos. VTG 3248/249/253/255; JGA limestone hoppers Nos. RMC 17209/228/246 and No. RMC 19242.

Disposal of redundant MHA/MPA* 'Coalfish' spoil and ballast opens by DB Cargo UK continues. Recent movements to scrapyards have been Nos. 394046*/093/137*/150/179*/205*/259/282*/337/369/399/500/511/524/566/568/579/620/772/785/821/831/839/849*/862/913/982/986, Nos. 396116*/139*/147*/153/162.

Also now under way is the removal of the septuagenarian YWA 'Salmon' railflats from the active wagon fleet. This follows the introduction of 260 new FEA-W intermodal flats financed by Wascosa and leased to Network Rail/GBRF for infrastructure traffic. Now deleted from stock are Nos. DB 996115/122/125/127/140/142/216/219/227/230/248/274/279/292/303/326/330/341/348/349/382/387/399/402/414/418/425/426/436/440/441/463/466/472/477/485/486/499/525/528/539/547/571/577/590/602/609/614/619-621/648/650/661/663/667/669/673/852/857/877/917/927/941/993, Nos. DB 997017-019.



JNA-Y 'Hawk' converted ballast open No. 81705831083-7 stabled in Bescot Engineers Yard on December 10, 2023.

POOL CODES

WBHT DBC Class 66 Re-gear
WBVT DBC Class 66 Victra Hire for
shunt duties at Peak Forest

LOCOMOTIVES

Allocations

20118 BH/HNRL-CD/LSLO
20132 BH/HNRL-CD/LSLO
37059 CD/LSLO-BH/HNRL
37069 KM/XSDP-LR/EPUK
37218 KM-XSDP-LR/EPUK
37401 KM/XSDP-CD/LSLO
37402 KM/XSDP-HQ/MBDL
37423 KM/XSDP-LR/EPUK
57002 KM/XSDP-CD/LSLO
57303 KM/XSDP-PG/GBBS
60010 WQAA-WQBA
60024 TO/WCAT-WQ/WQBA
60062 TO/WCAT-WQ/WQBA
60066 WQAA-WQBA
60074 TO/WCAT-WQ/WQBA
66004 WBAR-WBAT
66006 WBAR-WBAT
66007 WBAR-WBAT
66010 WBRT-WBAT
66014 WBAR-WBAT
66017 WBAR-WBAT
66019 WBAR-WBAT
66021 WBAR-WBAT
66026 WBAI-WBAT
66030 WBAR-WBAT
66040 WBAR-WBAT
66041 WBRT-WBAT
66044 WBRT-WBAT
66051 WBAR-WBAT
66054 WBAR-WBAT
66055 WBLE-WBLT
66056 WBLE-WBLT
66057 WBLE-WBLT
66059 WBLE-WBLT
66060 WBAR-WBAT
66065 WBAR-WBAT
66066 WBAR-WBAT
66067 WBAE-WBAT
66068 WBAR-WBAT
66069 WBAE-WBAT
66070 WBRT-WBAT
66077 WBAR-WBAT
66079 WBAR-WBAT
66083 WBAR-WBAT
66084 WBAE-WBAT
66085 WBRT-WBAT
66096 WBAE-WBAT
66099 WBBE-WBBT
66100 WBBE-WBBT
66101 WBBE-WBBT
66102 WBBE-WBBT
66103 WBBE-WBBT
66104 WBRT-WBBT
66106 WBBE-WBBT
66109 WBAR-WBAT
66110 WBBE-WBBT
66111 WBBE-WBBT
66112 WBBE-WBBT
66114 WBBE-WBBT
66124 WBAR-WBAT
66129 WBAE-WBAT
66142 WBAR-WBAT
66149 WBAE-WBHT
66156 WBAE-WBHT
66160 WBAR-WBAT
66161 WBAE-WBHT
66162 WBAR-WBAT
66165 WBAR-WBAT
66167 WBAE-WBHT
66168 WBAR-WBAT
66169 WBAR-WBAT
66171 WBAR-WBHT

66174 WBAE-WBHT
66176 WBAR-WBAT
66181 WBAR-WBHT
66183 WBAE-WBHT
66185 WBRT-WBAT
66188 WBAR-WBAT
66194 WBAR-WBHT
66198 WBAR-WBAT
66200 WBAE-WBVT
66206 WBAE-WBVT
66207 WBAE-WBAT
66221 WBAR-WBHT
66244 WBAE-WBAT
66591 LD/DFIN-FD/DHLT
67001 WQBA-WQDA
67003 WQBA-WQDA
67004 WQBA-WQDA
67009 WQBA-WQDA
67011 WQBA-WQDA
67018 WQBA-WQDA
67019 WQBA-WQDA
67026 WQBA-WQDA
67028 CE/WAAC-WQ/WQBA
67030 WQBA-WQDA
70009 DFGI-COLO
90019 WQBA-WQDA
90020 WQBA-WQDA
90021 WQBA-WQDA
90024 WQBA-WQDA
90026 WQBA-WQDA
90028 WQBA-WQDA
90029 WQBA-WQDA
90034 WQBA-WQDA
90035 WQBA-WQDA
90036 WQBA-WQDA
90037 WQBA-WQDA
90039 WQBA-WQDA
93001-30 Newly registered HQ/
MBEL
93001 MBEL-GROG

Liveries
DB Cargo red: 66164
Freightliner orange: 59201
GBRF: 66310
Loram red and white: 37418
ScotRail InterCity: 37409

Named
37409 *Loch Awe*
66307 *Ipswich Town*

Names removed
37401 *Mary Queen of Scots*
37423 *Spirit of the Lakes*

Renumbered
91105-91000

For Sale
37407/19/22/24/25, 37716
67001/03/04/09/11/18/19/
26/28/30
90019-21/24/26/28/29/
34-37/39

Sold
HNRC: 73951/52

Exported
66529, 66955

Newly imported
77506

To be exported to Mexico
43007, 43295,
43306/07/16/20/78



Newly outshopped in eye-catching Loram livery, Type 3 No. 37418 powers away from Derby with a rake of seven newly-converted JNA wagons in tow as 6Z37, the 10.05 Derby RTC to Toton North Yard on January 25. STEVE DONALD

Stored/stopped locations
Leicester LIP: 37069, 37218,
37423
Long Marston: 68024/32
Longport: 56081
Toton: 60062/74
Warrington Arpley: 60024

Names removed
323212 *Bromsgrove*
323214 *Wylde Green*
323220 *Lichfield Trent Valley*

Change of ownership
321341, 321407/19/28 Eversholt
to Varamis Rail

18: 508120/31; December
19: 153330/32; December
20: 319366/83; December
22: 319361/70; January 8:
153360; January 9: 319372/85;
January 11: 319368/81;
January 15: 508108/14;
January 24: 319433/57

MULTIPLE UNITS

Allocations
153330/32/60 sent for disposal
156417 NH-HT
197107/15 HQ-CH
197121 newly delivered HQ/
HLHQ
319361/66/68/70/72/81/83/85
sent for disposal
319433/57 sent for disposal
323212/14/20 SO/EJHQ-AN/
EDHQ
331101/06/07/12 NL-AN
398004/14/15 newly delivered
HQ/HLHQ
508108/14/20/31 sent for
disposal
701037/39/43 HQ-WD
701526/27/28 newly delivered
HQ/HYHQ
710375 HQ-WN
720102 newly delivered HQ/
EBHQ
720509 HQ-IL
730002/15/20/22 HQ-BY
730046/48 newly delivered HQ/
EJHQ
777017/22/25/28 HQ-KD
777029/43/45 newly delivered
HQ/HEHQ
805010 newly delivered HQ/
HFHQ

Liveries
Avanti West Coast: 805008/09
Red Dragon: 197120
SWR: 444004/37/45, 450059/99,
450118, 458404

Named
800028 *Sir Peter Parker/*
Oliver Lovell
802210 *Hailes Castle*

Sold
Great Central Railway: 153308

Renumbered 458504-458404

Formations
180101: 50901+54901+
55905+56901+59905
180102: 50902+54902+
55902+56903+59902
180103: 50903+54907+
55906+56902+59903
180105: 50905+54905+
55901+56905+59901
458404: 67604+74004+
74104+67704

Now in passenger traffic
180103
197107/15
701037/39/43
710375
720509
730002/15/20/22
777017/22/25/28

Stored/stopped locations
Bournemouth: 458404
Crewe: 197113
Crewe South yard: 175108,
507004, 508104
Eastleigh: 701526/27/28
Kirkdale: 777021/232/34
Landore: 175005, 175101/10
Long Marston: 701518/24
MoD Bicester: 701520/22/23/25
Old Dalby: 810001
Oxley: 730048
Taff's Well: 398004/05/14/15
Workshop: 720102
Walton Old Junc: 777029/43/45

Disposals
Sims Metals, Newport:
Arrival dates: December

HAULED COACHING STOCK

Allocations
10593 sent for disposal

Liveries
Welsh Ambulance Service:
82226

Named:
1953 *Caerdydd*

Formations
HD01: 12225+12315+10325+
11323+12454+82226

To be exported to Mexico
40750, 40902, 41026, 41193,
42036/52/53, 42366/73/78/80,
42408, 42585, 44017/52/72,
45002/05

Stored/stopped locations
Castle Donington: 10229,
10413, 11078/95, 12021/91
Eastleigh Works: 1203, 3122/40,
10416
Great Yarmouth: 5919, 6046,
6173, 42408
Long Marston: TP03/04/05/
06/12
Longsight: TP02/05

Disposals
C F Booth, Rotherham:
Cut date: January 18: 12480
J Watson, Metal Recyclers,
Stafford: Arrival date:
January 12: 10593

■ STOCK CHANGES CORRECT
AS OF JANUARY 26.

The network's notable moves

RHTT

The RHTT season along the southern section of the Midland Main Line continued during December with DB Class 66 Nos. 66041+66104 being the regular pairing on the 3J91/3J92 23.17 Toton TMD to West Hampstead Thameslink and 3J93/12.01 return, being seen on December 1. However, when seen on December 4 Nos. 66010+66085 were in charge. On Monday, December 11 Class 66 Nos. 66010 and 66085 were seen top-and-tailing RHTT 3J93 from West Hampstead Thameslink to Toton TMD as they passed the new station at Brent Cross West.

Class 66 Nos. 66041 and 66104 were observed on an RHTT in Nottingham on December 14.

Monday, December 4 found RHTT 3S14 from Grimsby Tunn to York Thrall Europa on one of the through roads at Sheffield station. The train was headed by Class 66 No. 66847 *Terry Baker*, with No. 66849 *Wylam Dilly* at the rear.

The GBRf season out of

Stowmarket finished on Friday, December 15, but during the last few weeks of operation, with no lingering overnight frosts and autumn leaf-fall taking longer to materialise, the southern GEML route saw four daily operations, two overnight and two during the day, so a busy period for the Class 66s at the Suffolk base.

On December 6, Class 66 Nos. 66715 *Valour* and 66753 *EMD Roberts Road* were noted on 3S60 (morning run) into Harwich International, while later on 3S99 (afternoon call) Nos. 66724 *Drax Power Station* and 66754 *Northampton Saints*. The following week, which proved to be the last full operation, saw DRS-loanees Nos. 66430 and 66432 on 3S60 on December 12 and 13 before the final run on December 15 when Nos. 66720 *Wascosa* and 66773 *Pride of GB Railfreight* were allocated to 3S60 and in the afternoon Nos. 66715 and a stalwart of the working throughout the three months, No. 66753.

On Friday, December 15 the

RHTT 3S85 from Effingham Junction CHS to Effingham Junction CHS was seen passing platform 1 at Barnes formed of Multi Purpose Vehicles Nos. DR98926 and DR98976.

Avanti West Coast

With AWC diagrams being redrawn in early December, all Anglo-Scottish WCML passenger services are now worked by Class 390 units. One of the last regular twin Class 221 DMU workings was the 9S77/13.16 Euston to Glasgow, which on Friday, December 8 was worked by Nos. 221107 + 221112. On the following day 9S77 was worked by No. 390119 and on Monday, December 11 by No. 390010.

On the gloomy mid-winter afternoon of Wednesday, December 20 plain white liveried Class 807 No. 807002, under its own power, passed through Lancaster at 14.44 heading south to Oxley Depot in Wolverhampton. Earlier, it had been moved from Merchant Park sidings to Darlington (5Q91/08.16) by

Class 69 No. 69008. It then ran north to Edinburgh (12.24) then south to Carlisle (13.44) and Crewe (16.08) to arrive at Oxley Depot right on time at 17.15.

Heavy flooding on the northern section of the WCML on Wednesday, December 27 meant that after AWC's 9M51 service departed from Glasgow Central at 08.00 for London Euston, operated by Class 390 No. 390117, the next direct AWC London-bound service from Glasgow wasn't until the following day when 1M06 departed at 05.33 worked by No. 390135.

LNER

On Monday, December 18 Class 91 No. 91119, in InterCity Swallow livery, was seen leaving King's Cross station on the 1D17/14.03 to Leeds.

Great Western Railway

The 1F07/07.28 from Cardiff Central to Portsmouth Harbour on December 13, formed initially of Class 165 Nos. 165132 and 165102, and Class 166 No. 166220, was

delayed by 27 minutes leaving Bristol Temple Meads, where the two Class 165 units were detached. Further delays were accumulated until the service was terminated at Fratton at 11.33, 50 minutes late.

The return to Cardiff, 1F16 started from Fratton seven minutes late but some time was made up, arriving at Westbury three minutes late at 13.14.

Greater Anglia

The following Aventura Class 720s have been noted on the Harwich branch: No. 720108 on December 11, No. 720524 on December 20, No. 720133 on December 23 and 28 and No. 720571 on January 3.

ScotRail

Severe weather has affected ScotRail on numerous occasions of late. Following the issue of a Met Office yellow warning for heavy rain on Thursday, December 7 Network Rail imposed blanket speed restrictions in large parts of Scotland. These covered services between Edinburgh



Waverley/Glasgow Queen Street and Inverness, and between Glasgow Queen Street and Oban/Mallaig. Emergency timetables, as used in previous similar flood warnings, were put into place.

Storm Pia struck Scotland on Wednesday, December 20 and brought continual rain and very high wind speeds with gusts of 80mph being recorded on the mainland.

ScotRail services were amended on several routes due to a blanket speed restriction and these included services between Glasgow Queen Street to Mallaig, Oban and Inverness, and services between Inverness and Wick, Kyle of Lochalsh, Lairg, Ardgay, Aberdeen, and Edinburgh.

The ScotRail situation was not helped by an early morning train failure at Hyndland which caused major disruption to central belt services. The blanket speed restrictions also affected other operators, with Avanti West Coast trains observed passing Thankerton in the region of 50mph. Trains from Glasgow Central to England were in the region of 35 minutes late upon reaching Carstairs. Further problems

were caused by the up line being blocked between Penrith and Oxenholme as an object was caught on the overhead wires.

TPE was terminating its Manchester to Edinburgh services at Carlisle. Being the sole provider of services at Lockerbie, this caused major issues for the regular rail users travelling from there.

While working between Dundee and Glasgow, HST power car No. 43129 crashed into a fallen tree at Broughty Ferry on Wednesday, December 27, resulting in what was described as "horrendous" damage to the driver's cab and severe delays on the line. Thankfully, the driver was not physically injured but clearly very shocked. It came as a combination of severe weather, signalling faults and overrunning engineering works which had sparked travel chaos across Britain. The accident again raised the crash worthiness of the HST power cars.

Saturday January 6, saw the 5H70/06.52 Corkehill CSMD to Wolverton Works worked by Class 156 No. 156456 for overhaul.

Northern Rail

Three-car Class No. 150002 was seen at Wombwell station forming the 2B46/08.35 from Sheffield to Huddersfield on Tuesday, December 5.

Northern has, amongst some people, a poor reputation for reliability. However, personal experience over the last year by one of our regular contributors has found few Northern services cancelled and timekeeping, although not perfect, generally acceptable.

That said, during December two services that would have been used were cancelled. On Tuesday, December 5 the 2B64/17.34 from Sheffield to Huddersfield, was cancelled, according to Realtime Trains "due to an issue with the train crew". The following day, the 2B07/08.07 from Huddersfield to Sheffield, was cancelled, with Realtime Trains giving the reason as "late arrival of an inbound service". It is possible the underlying reason why both these services were cancelled was industrial action by ASLEF.

With the Class 319s due to be taken out of traffic by the close of 2023, the following observations were received, including on Tuesday, December

19 No. 319372 in the bay platform – number 3 – at Wigan North Western on the way south at 09.47. On arrival at Liverpool Lime Street, No. 319385 had arrived on the 09.24 Wigan North Western to Lime Street train. It then left Lime Street heading to Allerton Depot. Later in the day, No. 319372 had moved to Springs Branch depot, while No. 319369 formed the 16.45 stopping train from Liverpool Lime Street to Wigan North Western.

The final use of the Class occurred on January 2 when No. 319368 worked the 2C31/20.52 Wigan North Western to Liverpool Lime Street. Disposals to Sims Metals, Newport are taking place on a regular basis and can be seen below.

There was some less than impressive running reported on December 28 from Northern Rail involving the 10.05 Southport to Manchester Oxford Road service formed with hybrid unit No. 769424. It had arrived at Southport well ahead of departure time, but the train left 10 minutes late for some

unknown reason and lost more time en-route to Wigan Wallgate where it left 17 minutes late and arrived at Manchester Oxford Road 16 minutes behind schedule.

TransPennine Express

The first TransPennine Express service to stop at the newly opened East Linton station took place on December 13 when Scottish Transport Minister Fiona Hyslop formally opened the new East Linton station, marking completion of the latest investment in Scotland's Railway.

The £15m station reconnects East Linton to the national rail network for the first time in almost six decades. The Minister was joined on the platform by guests including representatives from the rail industry, East Lothian Council, RAGES (Rail Action Group East of Scotland) and the local community to unveil a plaque to mark the opening of the new station. In connection with the opening, TPE named Class 802 No. 802210 *Hailes Castle*. ▶

Below: LNER 'Azuma' No. 800108 forms the 1E13/07.55 Inverness to King's Cross at Blackford, Perth and Kinross, on January 18 with Ben Vorlich and Stuc a' Chroin mountains in the background. JOHN CUMMING



Hull Trains

On December 3 Hull Trains services were diverted via the Midland Main Line. Class 802 No. 802304 *William Wilberforce* worked the 1A91/08.30 Hull-London St Pancras and 1H03/12.30 London St Pancras-Hull, and No. 802302 *Jean Bishop (The Bee Lady)* on the 1A94/14.12 Hull-London St Pancras and 1H06/18.50 London St Pancras-Hull. Hull Trains were back on the MML on December 24 when No. 802302 worked the 1A91/08.30 Hull-London St Pancras and 1H03/12.30 London St Pancras-Hull.

Grand Central

Class 180 No. 180103 has finally resumed service. A correspondent rode it from Wakefield Kirkgate to Mirfield on January 2 on the 16.27 King's Cross to Bradford, it having gone south in the morning. It is now formed: 50903+54907+55906+56902+59903 meaning other sets have been reformed (see Stock Update for revised formations).

Transport for Wales

IPEX Consulting has announced the successful acceptance of the first of 36 Stadler built Class 398 Citylink tram-trains at Taff's Well depot, Rhondda Cynon Taf. The achievement marks the third Stadler fleet accepted by

Transport for Wales following on from the operational Class 231 units and the ongoing acceptance of the Class 756.

Designed for the South Wales metro, the Class 398 fleet will be used on rail and tramway networks in and around Cardiff. As technical advisors to the owners, SMBC Leasing (UK) Limited and Equitix, IPEX works closely with the Transport for Wales and Stadler project teams.

Merseyrail

Movements of new Class 777 units have included No. 777022 being top-and-tailed from Wembley to Walton Old Junction on December 7 by RailAdventure Class 43 Nos. 43465+43484 and 43480+43468. A similar move followed on December 18 with RailAdventure moving Nos. 777032+777034 north from Wembley. The pair were moved to Kirkdale on January 9-10 by Nos. 43468+43480 and 20142+20007.

West Midlands Railway

Movements of Class 730 units continue to attract attention from our correspondents, including No. 730027 being moved from Derby to Oxley by Class 37 Nos. 37901+37601 on December 12. No. 37601 was in use again on December 14 to move Nos.

730004+730045 from Derby to Oxley followed by taking No. 730103 (730203) back to the Falcon Works, Loughborough. A move on December 29 had Class 37 No. 37800 take Nos. 730021+730006 from Bletchley to Soho.

Further Class 730s have entered traffic working in and out of Euston with No. 730015 on January 2 and 730020 on January 8.

Thameslink Railway

Brent Cross West station opened on Sunday, December 10 with the first train due just before 07.00 met by crowds of railway enthusiasts who had gathered for its arrival.

The first service booked to call at the new station was the 9M02/06.33 from St Pancras International to Luton, scheduled to stop at 06.47. However, the train left St Pancras 32 minutes late, a delay which remained throughout the journey, meaning the actual first service at Brent Cross West was, according to Realtime Trains, the 9M03/06.24 from Luton to St Pancras International, scheduled to stop at 06.58, but running 20 minutes late. An official opening took place later in the day.

A correspondent made a personal first journey to the new station the following day, arriving on the 9O36/12.19

Sutton to St Albans, which was joined at Wimbledon and was formed of Class 70 No. 700034.

After the briefest of waits it proved possible to photograph No. 700024 forming the 9O45/13.22 from St Albans to Sutton stopping by platform 1 at the new station. Brent Cross West station is a substantial structure, with two island platforms, although all regular scheduled services use platforms 1 and 2 on the island between the slow lines.

Access to the island between the fast lines was closed at the time of the visit. The main feature of the new station is the substantial footbridge, which not only gives access to the platforms, but also links the two parts of Brent Cross, which traditionally had been cut in two by the Midland Main Line.

In addition to the stairs leading over the footbridge there are lifts and escalators and it was somewhat surprising that, on only the second day the station was open, some of these lifts and escalators were already out of service.

South Eastern Trains

On Sunday, December 17 Southeastern services which would normally have terminated at Victoria, ran instead to Cannon Street or Blackfriars. A journey

was made on the 2D55/19 24 from Orpington to Blackfriars, which was joined at Bromley South and was formed of Networker Nos. 465183+465042. This terminated at platform 4 at Blackfriars.

Southern Railways

The 15.16 Victoria to Littlehampton ran as single unit No. 377432 throughout on December 20 due to a shortage of traincrew. On arrival at Littlehampton the 17.13 return was cancelled and berthed to become the rear portion of the 21.13 to Victoria. The other unit, No. 377436, worked the 19.16 Victoria to Littlehampton again running as a single unit which was full and standing on departure and on arrival at Littlehampton attached to No. 377432 and at 21.13 ran with booked stock to London.

The 17.33 ex-London Bridge to Littlehampton ran on December 22 formed of Nos. 387210+387222+387226 instead of the normal eight carriages. It later formed the 19.50 ECS move to Brighton Depot.

January 3-4 were not good days for Network Rail due to signalling problems, especially in the Hilssea area. Brighton to Portsmouth services were diverted into Bognor Regis while Littlehampton to Portsmouth were terminated at Havant. Only the Brighton to Southampton, and London to Southampton were running through. The services from London to Bognor Regis all went direct to Bognor Regis with no attachments/detachments at Horsham.

Further problems caused by the signalling fault followed, this time at Lancing on January 4 with the 08.43 Littlehampton to London diverted via Horsham calling all stations to Gatwick. The 07.29 Victoria to Brighton formed of Nos. 387222+387208 were used to form the 08.56 Brighton to Eastbourne as No. 387211, the original unit, failed in the depot.

Following on with the signalling problems at Lancing the 10.14 ECS move from Eastbourne to Littlehampton on arrival formed the 12.13 to London formed of Nos. 377110+377118 as the original stock 10.16 ex-Victoria units Nos. 377135+377403 was running some 26 minutes behind schedule with that stock berthed and then used for the 13.43 to London Victoria.

South Western Railway

Operating as service 5X73 from Wembley Reception Sidings to Bournemouth Depot on December 13, Class 56 No.



LEFT: One of this winter's series of storms, Storm Henk, blew the roof off the footbridge at Okehampton station around midday on January 2, 2024 as No. 150247 was on the branch with the 11.32 from Exeter Central. The DMU was stopped before reaching the station and given permission to proceed to the east end of the platform so that passengers could exit via the front set of doors. The service was then cancelled until the following day, when No. 150221 is pictured under the damaged footbridge with the 14.26 to Exeter Central. D W V HUNT



A line-up of '47s' and '57s' outside the GBRf shed at UKRL's Leicester depot on December 29, with Nos. 47749 and 47739 heading the row on the left, and Nos. 47727, 57306, 57310 and 57305 on the right. MARTIN TURNER



There was a prestigious working for DBC's No. 66192 on January 9, albeit as empty stock, when it was rostered to take the Royal Train from Crewe to Wolverton – seen passing Heamies Farm, north of Stafford. BRAD JOYCE

56081, followed by two barrier coaches and Class 458 No. 458424 and two more Arlington Fleet Services barrier coaches, passed Southampton Central at 11.00. The whole consist was tailed by Class 69 No. 69008.

A journey was made on Wednesday, December 20 by a correspondent from Richmond to Staines on the 2U23/10.03 from London Waterloo to Windsor & Eton Riverside, which was formed of Nos. 455868+455859. This would have been unremarkable except that since the signalling was replaced Class 455s have been unable to call at the short Down platform at Datchet. Consequently, throughout the journey the guard made announcements the train would not be calling at Datchet and passengers for Datchet should change at Staines and get the next Windsor train, which was 30 minutes later.

The new Class 701s continue to attract much attention from our correspondents with new ones being delivered from Derby to Eastleigh, others going to store at Bicester and Long Marston, while others continue on test runs. Movements reported include Nos. 701520+701522 being moved by Class 47 No. 47749 on December 20, followed by the Class 47 moving Nos. 701518+701524 from Eastleigh to Long Marston on January 4.

New No. 701527 was delivered from Derby to Eastleigh on January 9 by Class 69 No. 69010. The following day the Class 69 took Nos. 701523+701525 from Eastleigh to Bicester.

Finally, on Tuesday, January 9 No. 701037 entered traffic on the 2U91 Waterloo to Windsor & Eton Riverside and back, with No. 701039 on the same diagram the following day.

Charter Trains

After arriving in Oxford from Crewe (5Z42) LSL's Blue Pullman Class 43 Nos. 43047+43055 worked a 1Z43/05.40 361 mile journey via Ship to Edinburgh on Saturday, December 9. Later this formation returned to Oxford from Edinburgh at 16.19 (1Z44).

The Midland Pullman ran from Holyhead to Edinburgh and back on December 19. Leaving Holyhead at 06.05, it was two minutes early at Llandudno Junction but left there 103 minutes late for an unknown reason. It did make up some time and arrived at Edinburgh around 35 minutes late.

Returning for its third year of merriment, the Steam Dreams 'Santa Steam Express' trips



GBRf 'Grid' No. 56098 was hired to Colas in the second week of January and was allocated to log train workings between Carlisle and Chirk (6J37 out and 6C37 return empties). On January 9, the loco is seen leading classmate No. 56049 on the 12.52 Carlisle-Chirk at Blea Moor, but a reported traction motor flashover three days later saw the loan come to a premature end. STEVE SIENKIEWICZ

offered families a chance to meet Father Christmas and his helpers on a steam train departing from and returning to London Victoria. The extra special journeys were scheduled to depart four times a day on Friday, December 15, Monday, December 18, and Thursday, December 21. 'Black Five' No. 45231 *The Sherwood Forester* was seen on December 15 between Barnes and Putney at the head of the 09.26 from London Victoria to London Victoria, with a reversal at Willesden No. 7. Class 47 No. D1924 (47810) *Crewe Diesel Depot* was at the rear of the train.

There had been a locomotive change on December 18 when 'West Country' No. 34046 *Braunton* was seen bringing empty stock from Battersea loop alongside platform 7 at Victoria. No. D1924 was again at the rear of the train.

DB Cargo

Class 60 No. 60074 *Luke* in Puma Energy livery was hauling the empty steel to Boston (6E01 Wolverhampton to Boston and 6E02 Toton to Boston) and the loaded steel from Boston from November 13 to 22. Class 66s have been hauling them since, including Nos. 66013, 66023 in blue livery with 'Celebrating the King's Coronation' slogan, 66065 and 66127. Class 60 No. 60074 *Luke* in Puma Energy livery hauled 6E02 Toton to Boston empty steel on December 11 and January 5 and 8, and it hauled 6E01 Wolverhampton to Boston empty steel on January 3, 9 and 10.

Class 60 No. 60062 *Sonia* in Steel on Steel flame livery hauled 6E02 Toton to Boston empty steel on December 20.

The overnight Humber Refinery to Kingsbury loaded tanks, 6M35, was diverted via

Scunthorpe and Derby from December 5 to 8. Class 66s Nos. 66059 and 66207 hauled its return, the 6E54 Kingsbury to Humber Refinery empty tanks, on December 6.

Class 66 No. 66207 hauled 6E54 Kingsbury to Humber Refinery empty tanks on December 11-13. No. 66171 hauled them on December 18; No. 66100 *Remembrance 100* on December 19 and 20; 66030 on December 22; No. 66128 on December 28; and No. 66074 on January 8. Class 66 No. 66100 hauled 6M00 Humber Refinery to Kingsbury loaded tanks on December 28.

Class 66s Nos. 66055 *Alain Thauvette*, 66059, 66060, 66061, 66096, 66128, 66172, 66197 and 66207 have been observed hauling 6E54 Kingsbury to Humber Refinery empty tanks and 6M00 Humber Refinery to Kingsbury loaded tanks since November 13.

The regular scrap moves between Cardiff Tidal and Sunderland saw No. 66005 on the diagram on December 7 followed by No. 66009 on December 12. It was No. 66009 in use again on December 19 returning to Tees Yard where No. 66041 took over for the return to Cardiff.

Two days later, No. 66041 worked the complete diagram. Unusually on December 21 No. 66170 hauled a Cardiff Tidal-EMR Kingsbury-Tidal diagram, the first time DB Cargo had been at Kingsbury for a number of years.

On Wednesday, December 14, and again on the next day, Royal Mail liveried Class 325 No. 325001 ran empty from Crewe (5C19/08.48) to Carlisle and back (5K23/12.54).

Freightliner

The 09.11 Westbury to Crawley New Yard has produced a variety

of unusually liveried Class 59s during December with the following observed: December 11 and 21 No. 59102 *Village of Chantry*; December 13 No. 59001 *Yeoman Endeavour*; December 14 and 15 No. 59206 *John F Yeoman Rail Pioneer*; and December 18 No. 59005 *Kenneth J Painter*.

The service ran for the first time in 2024 with No. 59204 providing the power on January 5, being noted passing Barnham and later seen in Crawley New Yard parked while the wagons were being unloaded.

DRS

The 4S43/08.25 Daventry IRFT to Mossend Euroterminal on Thursday, December 7, hauled by Class 88 No. 88002 came to a stand just south of Beattock Summit. Assistance was required, and Class 68 No. 68008 was observed passing Thankerton when running between Mossend and Beattock Summit. The rescued service 4S43 was observed 122 minutes late passing Beattock Summit.

The incident had a knock-on effect on other services with the 1S46/10.04 Manchester Airport to Edinburgh 145 minutes late passing Beattock Summit and according to Real Time Trains was terminated at Carstairs. The 1S48/09.30 Euston to Glasgow Central was 116 minutes late passing Beattock Summit, while the 1S51/12.03 Preston to Glasgow Central was held at Lockerbie and was 94 minutes late.

Likewise, the 9S54/08.40 Euston to Edinburgh was held south of Lockerbie passing there 114 minutes late. In addition, the 6S36/11.38 Dalston Oil Terminal to Grangemouth hauled by Class 70 No. 70813 was about 90 minutes late having been held in Lockerbie Down Loop.

Class 66 No. 66423 and silver liveried Class 68 No. 68010 ran as a light engine duo from Carlisle (0Z10/07.12) to Crewe on Friday, December 8.

TPE liveried Class 68s Nos. 68019 *Brutus*+68020 *Reliance* pulled two white FNA flask vehicles on Saturday, December 9 from Sellafield (6K73/08.21) via Ulverston to Crewe.

When running as a light engine duo, with both engines working, Class 68 Nos. 68016+68033 were held on the up through line at Lancaster station at 14.06 on Friday, December 15 to allow AWC Class 390 No. 390126 working the Glasgow (9M55/11.56) to London Euston to call at Platform 4 and then take the mainline ahead of the two Class 68s.

GBRF

Class 69s Nos. 69001 *Mayflower* and 69009 in green undercoat have been hauling 6X55 Beeston Sidings to Toton North Yard Civil Engineer train from November 22.

Coal trains from Immingham to Ratcliffe Power Station started running around November 16. Class 66 No. 66780 *The Cemex Express* hauled 6M81 Immingham HIT to Ratcliffe coal via Nottingham from November 20 to 29 and No. 66745 hauled it on December 5.

Even though the new December 2023 timetable shows the existing intermodal arrivals into Harwich Parkeston Quay yard from Doncaster and Tinsley, and indeed a new diagram from Hams Hall, since the opening of the GBRf intermodal sidings at Peterborough in early November, the weekend stopover arrivals have ceased. The exception is a 4A28 movement from Felixstowe Port late on the Saturday evening, ▶

which on the following Monday becomes the 4M22 11.30 Parkeston Quay-Trafford Park diagram.

On December 2 it was No. 66702 *Blue Lightning*; December 9 No. 66303; December 16 No. 66749 *Christopher Hopcroft MBE 60 Years Railway Service*; December 23 No. 66736 *Wolverhampton Wanderers* (on RTT and other third-party sites it was listed as No. 66762 but a visit to the yard on Boxing Day confirmed otherwise); and on January 2 it was No. 66715.

The Harwich Refinery-North Walsham and return diagram saw No. 66703 *Doncaster PSB 1981-2002* provide the motive power, after arriving from Peterborough MPD on 0L41, on December 6 and 7.

The following week on December 13 and 14 it was No. 66730 *Whitemoor* in the role, although its return run was an hour later than normal because the light engine move from Ipswich Reception Sidings in the morning of December 14 was delayed en-route to North Walsham because of a trespass incident between Stowmarket and Norwich.

The week before Christmas saw No. 66711 *Sence* arrive on Monday from Ipswich, and it performed a double run that week on December 18-19 and 20-21 and exited Harwich Parkeston Quay yard mid-evening on 0E06 to Peterborough MPD. Between Christmas and New Year there was no traffic but come January 3 No. 66777 *Annette* moved round

from Felixstowe Port to take 6P41 out returning the next day. It did not take the normal exit route but waited until January 5 to work 4Z03/08.53 to Peterborough North Yard.

It returned from Peterborough later in the day as 4Z04, before then going light engine back to Peterborough, the assumption being that condensate tank(s) needed attention at Wabtec's Peterborough depot. The servicing used to be accomplished in Harwich Parkeston Quay yard under a scaffolding derrick – which still exists in an offshoot siding – but several years have passed since it was used.

Cement-carrying trains between Clitheroe and Carlisle normally run via Settle. However, on Wednesday, December 6 the service ran via Shap. Having arrived at Clitheroe via Shap from Carlisle at 14.17, Class 66 No. 66711 returned on the same 115 mile route (6Z00/16.40) pulling five Castle Cement branded vehicles.

Scrap metal trains reported included Class 66 No. 66712 on a Small Heath yard to Swindon, then loaded back to Liverpool on December 7. The same locomotive was in use again on December 13 on a Liverpool-Saltley-Liverpool diagram, and on December 15 on a Liverpool-Swindon-Liverpool turn. It was back on a Liverpool-Saltley-Liverpool diagram on December 29 and to Saltley and back on January 3.

MoD traffic reported

included Class 66 No. 66738 pulling a short train made up of four containers on Friday, December 8 from Longtown MoD (3F05/12.16) to Kineton. Three days later, it worked from Bicester back to Kineton.

The following day it worked stock from Kineton to Marchwood and through to Southampton Docks. Working in the opposite direction on December 13, it went from Southampton Docks to Marchwood then to Kineton and finally north to Glen Douglas.

On Thursday, December 21 GBRf Class 66 No. 66738 pulled four round-topped containers and 10 small-sized containers from Longtown MoD (3F02/12.42) to Kineton MoD. A change of power on January 5 found No. 66743 work a Kineton-Ditton-Kineton diagram.

Class 69 No. 69009 in green undercoat was hauling 6X55 Beeston Sidings to Toton North Yard civil engineer train on December 12.

Class 66 No. 66784 *The Keighley & Worth Valley Railway 50th Anniversary 1968-2018* hauled 6M81 Immingham Humber International Terminal to Ratcliffe coal via Nottingham on December 14, No. 66782 hauled it on December 28, and No. 66750 *Bristol Panel Signal Box* on January 6.

Class 57 locomotives Nos. 57305, 57306 *Her Majesty's Railway Inspectorate 175* and 57310 *Pride of Cumbria* were observed at Leicester depot on December 23.

Class 66 No. 66708 *Glory to Ukraine* hauled 4M23 Felixstowe North to Hams Hall containers through Leicester on December 23. Class 66 No. 66781 *Darius Cheskin* hauled 4M23 Felixstowe North to Hams Hall containers, No. 66735 *Peterborough United* hauled 4L04 Birch Coppice to Felixstowe North containers, and No. 66722 *Sir Edward Watkin* hauled 4M29 Felixstowe North to Birch Coppice containers through Leicester on January 5.

Container loadings on the daytime Hams Hall to Mossend (4S57) service still continue to be light. On Friday, December 22 service 4S57, pulled by Class 66 No. 66710 conveyed just two Tesco branded containers. On the following day this same service, pulled by the same Class 66 loco, did not carry a single container.

On Wednesday, December 20 Class 69 No. 69004, in grubby blue and red livery, was seen passing Staines station on the 6Y48 from Eastleigh East yard to Hoo Junction up yard, the train consisted of just two empty FEA container flats.

Storm Henk on January 2 caused major flooding. Though passenger trains ran through Barnetby, no freight trains worked through on January 3 and most of January 4. The majority of freight trains on January 3 were cancelled at the request of the freight operator but one did not run due to severe flooding. A light engine ran from Leeds Balm Road to

Immingham Dock Nordic (0D66) on January 3 but may have used the Grimsby District Line to reach Immingham. Freight trains resumed running normally through Barnetby on the morning of January 5.

Colas Rail

Class 56 No. 56301 hauled the Burton on Trent to Chaddesden empty spoil train on November 13. Class 60 No. 60055 *Thomas Barnardo* hauled the Acton Yard to Burton on Trent spoil train and the Burton on Trent to Chaddesden train on November 22, and No. 60029 *Ben Nevis* hauled them on November 29.

Class 56 Nos. 56091 *Driver Wayne Gaskell* and 56301 hauled the Peak Forest Cemex to Chaddesden loaded stone train on November 27. No. 56301 hauled the Chaddesden to Brandon loaded stone train on November 28.

Class 70 Nos. 70806, 70807 and 70816 have been observed at Nottingham on 6M57 Lindsey Refinery to Kingsbury loaded tanks from November 13.

Running via Stafford and Shap on Sunday December 10 the 6C37/10.09 from Chirk to Carlisle, with Colas Rail Class 70 No. 70817 pulling 21 empty log wagons, passed through Lancaster dead on time at 15.34.

The Carlisle to Chirk 'runs-as-required' loaded log train (6J37) normally operates via Settle to Preston, but on Wednesday, January 3 service 6J37 ran south via Shap to Preston being double-headed by Colas Rail Class 56 No. 56049 *Robin of Templecombe* and No. 56113.

Class 70 No. 70810 has been observed at Nottingham on 6M57 Lindsey Refinery to Kingsbury loaded tanks on December 13, 15, 20, 21 and 23. Class 70 No. 70815, running 37 minutes early, on Sunday December 31, and No. 70816 on December 28 and 29 and January 5, 6 and 10.

On Friday, December 15 Class 56 No. 56094+56113 double-headed a set of 'Land Recovery' branded grey JNA box wagons from on a 6M39/12.44 Carlisle to Longport.

Class 70 No. 70804 hauled 6Z46 Kingsbury to Lindsey Refinery empty tanks on December 15 about six hours later than 6E46, which had been cancelled due to a points failure at Kingsbury.

Class 37 Nos. 37057 *Barbara Arbon*, 37175 and 37254 *Cardiff Castle* ran light from Derby RTC to Nottingham Eastcroft on December 23.

Class 56 No. 56051 *Survival* ran light on Tuesday, January 2 from Carlisle (0Z56/13.46) to Crewe.

Colas Rail Tamper unit



'Hastings' DEMU No. 1001 calls at Crowhurst on January 6 to pick up passengers for the 'Surrey Hills Surprise' railtour from Hastings to Hayes, Blackfriars and Guildford. CHRIS LIVING

No. DR73930 was moved on Tuesday, January 2 from Coventry (6J01/07.43) to Carlisle. En route this unit was held at platform 3 at Lancaster at 12.45 to allow Colas Rail Class 43 Nos. 43272+43357 top-and-tail a set of yellow Network Rail track inspection coaches (1Q18/10.10) from Derby to overtake using the down through line heading for Edinburgh. On the following day this same formation ran from Slatford Depot in Edinburgh (1Q18/05.40) south to Crewe.

DC Rail

Class 60 No. 60055 *Thomas Barnardo* dominated the Chaddesden, Peak Forest Cemex, Brandon, King's Lynn, Middleton Towers, Ravenhead, Chaddesden circuit until November 26. The trains of 18 box wagons convey stone from Peak Forest to Brandon, sometimes direct and sometimes via Chaddesden, and sand from Middleton Towers to Ravenhead.

No. 60029 *Ben Nevis* hauled the sand train December 1-2 and No. 60046 *William Wilberforce* hauled it December 8-9. No. 60029 was observed at Leicester LIP on December 9. A Willesden-Chessington South-Willesden stone train on December 7 was worked by No. 60046.

Class 60 No. 60029 hauled 6Z46 Chaddesden to Burton on Trent loaded spoil train and 6Z48 back to Chaddesden on December 13.

No. 60029 was observed at Nottingham hauling 6Z82 Peak Forest to Brandon stone train on December 14 and December 21, and at Leicester hauling 6M89 Middleton Towers to Ravenhead sand train on December 23.

Class 60 No. 60055 *Thomas Barnardo* was seen at Chesterfield hauling 6Z82 Peak Forest to Brandon stone train on January 4. It was held at Mansfield Junction, Nottingham for over two hours. There was a signalling fault at Nottingham East. It was observed at Leicester and Narborough hauling 6M89 Middleton Towers to Ravenhead sand train on January 6.

On Wednesday, December 20 Class 60 No. 60028, in Cappagh blue livery, was seen passing platform 13 at Reading station on the 6Z52 from Tytherington to Quainton Railhead.

Class 60 No. 60028 and Class 56 No. 56301 were seen at Leicester depot on December 23.

Class 56 No. 56301 hauled 6Z56 Chaddesden to Acton empty box wagons on January 9.



A problem with Network Rail Type 3 No. 97303 *Dave Berry* while working the Cambrian Line log train on December 30 saw the eastbound working halted at Welshpool so that the loco could be removed to the civil engineer's siding by the second train loco No. 97304 *John Tiley*. The shunt is pictured in progress with the loco train stabled in platform 1. No. 97304 then took the train solo to Shrewsbury. VIC SMITH



Freightliner's No. 70020 pauses at Nuneaton for a crew change on January 4 while heading an intermodal from Felixstowe to Birmingham. ANDY MASON



A panning shot of Europhoenix 'Slug' No. 37901 *Mirrlees Pioneer* as it passes Wilmorton, Derby, while running light engine as the OR57/12.26 Castle Donington to Derby on January 19. STEVE DONALD

Rail Operations Group (ROG)

Class 37 No. 37901 moved a rake of coaching stock Nos. 10229+11078+11095+10413+12021+12091 from Great Yarmouth to Crewe on January 5 in readiness for testing with new Class 93 No. 93001. The Class 93 was itself moved from Worksop to Crewe on January 8, also by Class 37 No. 37901, in readiness for testing reportedly between Crewe and Carlisle.

In the event, the Class 93 was returned to Worksop on January 12 by the Class 37.

West Coast Railway Co.

Reported on Wednesday, December 6 was the running of 0Z61/09.00 Carnforth Steamtown to Perth with Class 37 No. 37518 leading 37685 as they passed Thankerton. It is understood that No. 37685 was deposited at Joppa Straight before No. 37518 continued solo to Perth.

WCR's Class 47s Nos. 47804+47826 double-headed a rake of Pullman and maroon Mk.1 coaches ECS on Thursday,

December 7 on a 5V42/12.57 from Carnforth to Southall.

Sims Metals, Newport

The end of the year was busy at Newport with regular deliveries of Class 319 and 508 units. On December 11 Class 37 No. 37800 delivered Nos. 508103+508136 from Birkenhead, followed two days later when it brought Nos. 319367+319384 south from Allerton.

It was in use again on December 18 bringing Nos. 508120+508131 from Birkenhead and again, two days later Nos. 319366+319383 from Allerton. Between these two runs, on December 19 Class 153 Nos. 153330+153332 arrived from Long Marston by road. A further delivery from Allerton on December 22 had No. 37800 again, moving Nos. 319370+319361. No. 153360 was delivered by road from Long Marston on January 8. Rail deliveries continued on January 9 with Class 37 No. 37800 again in use to bring Nos. 319372+319385 south followed by Nos. 319368+319381 on January 11.

Loram

The monthly Engineers' train visit down the Harwich branch, the 1Q97 Ferme Park to Clacton-on-Sea, was in the hands of Class 37 Nos. 37219 *Jonty Jarvis 8-12-1998 to 18-3-2005* and 37254 *Cardiff Canton* on December 6. The following month on January 3 the two Colas Rail Class 37s were No. 37254 again with this time No. 37057 *Barbara Arbon*, the first time that the latter locomotive has been down to Harwich Town terminus since 2019 when it sported an all-green livery but now has the yellow/orange/black of Colas Rail.

The New Measurement Train (NMT) was seen arriving at platform 1 at King's Cross on Monday, December 18 running as 1Q06 from York Loop (Holgate). After a few minutes the NMT left as 1Q07 to Cambridge T&RSMD formed of Network Rail power car No. 43013 *Mark Carne CBE*, Staff coach No. 977984, Conference coach No. 975814, Overhead Line Test coach No. 977993, Recording coach No. 977994, Lecture coach No. 975984 and

power car No. 43272. The whole train was in grimy yellow livery with the exception of power car No. 43272, which is in shabby red livery with Colas diamond.

On Tuesday, December 19 Colas Rail Class 43 Nos. 43257 + 43277 top-and-tailed a set of yellow liveried Network Rail track inspection coaches from Derby (1Q47/10.52) via Whitehaven to Carlisle.

Christmas Day saw six Class 66s all on engineers' trains heading towards Eastleigh from the Herne Hill and Victoria Blockade passing through Barnham. They were Nos. 66089, 66170, 66718 *Peter*, Lord Henty of *Richmond Hill of Imber in the County of Wiltshire*, 66784 *Keighley & Worth Valley Railway 50th Anniversary 1968-2018* and Nos. 66846 and 66850 *David Maidment OBE*.

Our thanks

THE Railway Magazine's thanks for information go to: Paul Atkinson, Mike Bechley, John de Boer, Gene Collins, Mike Cooper, Barry Knock, Sean Morris, Mark Reynolds, Craig Wellum and Chris West. ■



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Fresh hopes for further rail reopenings

Two mothballed lines to be included in the EU's TEN-T network, significantly boosting reinstatement prospects.

PLANS to reopen two railway lines in the Republic of Ireland have moved a significant step closer to becoming reality.

The Rosslare Strand to Waterford line has been mothballed since its closure in 2010, while the Athenry to Claremorris has been mothballed since 2003.

In a surprise move on December 5, Irish Transport Minister Eamon Ryan brought a memo to the Irish Cabinet to have them included in the Trans-European Transport Network (Ten-T) as part of Ireland's comprehensive network, opening potential EU funding for their reinstatement.

A spokesman for the Department of Transport confirmed that both lines would not be considered part of the core network and said: "The Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) for Transport is

the EU's funding instrument for the development of the TEN-T network. The two rail projects proposed for inclusion on the TEN-T Comprehensive Network are likely to be eligible to apply for future CEF funding in this regard."

Given the recommendations in the draft All Island Rail Review, the spokesperson said: "It also notes that given the current condition and alignment of the track, reinstatement works should be commenced relatively soon, that is by 2030."

Iarnród Éireann contractors started work clearing Athenry to Claremorris on December 6.

Ireland's existing TEN-T network consists of the Dublin to Cork line and Limerick Junction to Limerick line and the Foynes line which is currently being rebuilt.



No. LM303 and its train arrived onto the tippler at 1015hrs on December 22, and brought to a close an era of rail-served Irish power stations stretching back to the opening of Portarlington Generating Station in 1950. SEAN CAIN

Power station peat haulage trains end

AFTER almost 74 years, haulage of peat by rail to power stations finally came to an end on December 22, when Edenderry power station received its last loads of rail-hauled peat.

No. LM420 followed by No. LM303 passed Cloncreen with the last peat trains to serve Edenderry Power Station. Five trains operated the 17-mile round trip on the final morning, loading at the peat stockpile at the site of the former briquette factory at Croghan.

At its peak, Edenderry required 1.2m tonnes of peat a year, and was served by an extensive 3ft gauge system which supplied the peat.

It is undergoing a €100m upgrade, and will continue in operation, burning biomass which has gradually replaced the peat over the past few years.

The only rail-based operation that will continue at Edenderry will be the ash train which will operate on alternative days, a nine-mile round trip, when the power station is on stream.

Foynes to reopen in December 2025, as funding for Works Package 2 is finalised

THE Irish Department of Transport has confirmed it is reviewing the business case for Works Package 2 of the Foynes line reinstatement. Peer reviewed by the National Transport Authority, it was received on December 22, for sign off and funding.

The €60m package approved by the board of Iarnród Éireann in August will fund and deliver signalling for the route, including CCTV level crossings for 13 public

roads, the elimination of accommodation level crossings where practicable, GSMR train radio, and track connections at Limerick, Adare and Foynes Port.

David Vaughan, IÉ programme manager, design & construction, told local Limerick councillors on December 12 that he expected track laying would start in quarter two of 2024 and be completed by the end of the year. Mr Vaughan also confirmed that

the installation of the signalling and CCTV level crossing would commence in quarter two of 2024. The signalling package will allow the operation of 0.85 trains per hour or roughly a train every 30/40 minutes with the passing loop at Adare.

Mr Vaughan told councillors that work to restore the partially collapsed trainshed at Foynes station would start in quarter four of 2024, with the line being commissioned for traffic in December 2025.



Tracklaying is expected to start on the Foynes reinstatement project this spring (quarter two of 2024). Work on laying the final ballast base began just before Christmas when a trial layer was installed at Morgons South, near MP 23½ between Askeaton and Foynes. The freshly laid ballast can be seen on December 21, looking towards Limerick with main contractor Sisk's compound in the distance. HASSARD STACPOOLE



NIR CAF built Class 4000 No. 4001 arrives at a foggy Lisburn station with the 1545 Portadown to Bangor service on January 7. Lisburn station, which is in the process of being resignalled could see the line to the border electrified and the line to Antrim reopen following the allocation of funds from the UK's Department for Transport because of Lord Hendy's Union Connectivity Review. NEIL DINNEN

Northern Ireland gets £4.8 million in rail funding for infrastructure enhancements

A £4.8 million package for Translink to deliver rail improvements in Northern Ireland was announced on December 7. The news came from Transport Secretary Mark Harper in response to Lord Hendy's Union Connectivity Review.

The package includes £3.3 million of funding support to Translink to commission a study on the cost, feasibility, and value for money of electrification of the railway in

Northern Ireland from Belfast to the border.

£700,000 has been provided to investigate the reopening of the Lisburn to Antrim line which closed to passengers in 2003 after the former route from Antrim to Bleach Green reopened in 2001 with Derry/Londonderry services diverted. The study will include providing a station for Belfast Aldergrove airport. The line is still maintained but was last used in 2018 for engineering trains.

£800,000 for a more in-depth study to be carried out by Translink on reopening the former GNR rail line between Portadown and Armagh closed in September 1957. This follows the in-depth technical study by AECOM, funded by Armagh Banbridge Craigavon Council and the Department for Infrastructure, published in November. All three schemes have been recommended for delivery in the Draft All Island Rail Review published in 2023.

Hydrogen demonstrator train travels to Saudi and Canada

Alstom ships its hydrogen trains around the world for demonstration services.

ALSTOM has shipped its two 'iLINT' hydrogen trains from Europe to help demonstrate the technology in new regions.

Two Class 654 demonstrator two-coach trains were built in 2016/17, and two fleets of similar production trains (numbered as Class 554) have entered service in Germany, operating services west of Hamburg and north of Frankfurt.

In the last five years Alstom has taken the demonstration Class 654 trains to multiple European countries where they have worked passenger and test trains.

The second 'iLINT' demonstrator 654102+654602 was shipped from Bremerhaven to Jeddah, Saudia Arabia in September 2023. It was then moved by road as two separate vehicles to the Saudi capital Riyadh where the two coaches were attached to each other again and the train commissioned for use.

From November 14 the train was used for a limited number of demonstration runs, over three days, for rail and government officials and their guests. The train, which had been given a special Saudi Arabian Railways (SAR) vinyl wrapping at each end, was used for 20km round trips from the Riyadh East SAR station.

The train remained in Saudi Arabia in late 2023 and it was unclear whether it would return to Germany or be shipped elsewhere in the world.

Canadian demonstration

The other 'iLINT' demonstrator train 654101+654601 spent much of 2023 in Canada where it was used for demonstration passenger services between Quebec City and Baie-Saint-Paul on the Chemin de fer Charlevoix between June 17 and the end of September. All the Alstom 'iLINT' trains use hydrogen fuel cells supplied by North American



The Alstom 'iLINT' demonstrator 654102+654602 at Riyadh on October 16, 2023. In the background is SAR CAF DEMU No. 5012 forming train 10, the 12.26 departure to Dammam. ALASTAIR FYFE

firm Accelera, which has factories in Canada.

Italian order

Alstom has received no further orders for its 'iLINT' HEMU in Germany (the first two fleets benefitted from one-off German government subsidies). Orders for hydrogen powered

trains in Europe are far behind those for new battery powered, although small orders for operators in Italy have added 10 to the total sold by Alstom in the last few years.

The first were six bought by north Italian operator Trenord; the first of which was presented in October. These trains use

Alstom's Coradia Stream EMU platform for their design. The Trenord trains are designed for use on the Brescia-Iseo-Edolo line replacing DMUs.

In January Alstom announced Trenord had ordered two more trains and Ferrovie del Sud Est from southern Italy has also ordered two.

New Nightjet in service

AUSTRIAN national rail operator ÖBB introduced the first of its brand new 'Nightjet' overnight train sets on the route from Vienna and Innsbruck to Hamburg on December 10.

The new trains have been delivered as seven coach semi-permanently coupled push-pull sets, although operation in push-pull mode using the driving trailer with a loco on the rear is currently not permitted. Each train contains three couchette coaches each with 28 'Mini cabin' capsule-style single couchette berths in addition to conventional compartments.

Siemens is building the new trains in its Austrian factories – 33 seven-coach fixed formation sets, each able to carry 254 people, were ordered in two batches in 2018 and 2021 valued at a total of €720 million.

All are expected to be in service by 2026.

Namibia reinstates 1Co-Co1 diesel

NAMIBIAN rail company TransNamib has reinstated one of a handful of nearly 60-year-old 1Co-Co1 diesel locos in its fleet.

The locos were built by General Electric in the USA as South African Railways (SAR) Class 32 in two batches; 115 locos as Class 32-000 delivered from November 1959 and

November 1961 (GE model U18C1) and a further 10 (also GE model U18C1) as Class 32-200 in 1966; the later Class 32-200 locos have a cab based on those found on the subsequent Class 33 (GE U20C) locos.

SAR needed locos with the 1Co-Co1 wheel arrangement to spread axle loads on lightly built

lines, although following Class 32 it bought only standard six axle or four axle diesel locos.

Some of both type of Class 32 were used in what is now Namibia, which was administered by South Africa until the country gained independence in 1990. The bulk of the current TransNamib fleet are later ex SAR Class 33 design GE U20C locos. TransNamib

reportedly owns four of the Class (ex Nos. 32 205-208) but the other three are currently non-operational.

SAR also sold many of its Class 32-000 locos after withdrawal in the 1980s/90s, with many ending up in Zaire (now Democratic Republic of the Congo); some may still be there although it is likely most are out of use.



Back in service – TransNamib No. 207 (ex-SAR No. 32 207) seen on December 9 at Kranzberg with a passenger service. The loco returned to traffic on December 2 and a week later was given passenger work working a train to and from Oshikango on the border with Angola; north of Tsumeb this line was only built this century, opening in 2012 and rarely sees passenger trains. TransNamib ran a small number of passenger trains before and after Christmas covering routes from Windhoek to Oshikango and Walvis Bay; these trains ran as a combined service between Kranzberg and Windhoek. JAMES HINTON



Class leader – or so it seems – No. 32 001 is preserved in original condition outside the main station in Namibian capital Windhoek, which also houses a railway museum – several other items of rolling stock are plinthed outside too. The loco, which is actually the second Class 32; No. 32 002 (GE September 1959, No. 33723) renumbered as 32 001, is seen in its original livery on May 28, 2023. KEITH FENDER



A rare view inside Albanian Railways locomotive works in Durres on September 1, 2023 shows several of Albanian Railways Czech-built locos awaiting maintenance including Nos. T669-1049, 1047 and 1039. These 1970s-built locos (basically similar to Class 770 in the Czech Republic) form the entire operational loco fleet in Albania; few are now in working order. RICHARD GENNIS

New line from Albania to Kosovo?

ALBANIAN Railways is leading work to build a new railway connecting Albania and Kosovo; currently there are no rail links between the two countries.

A consortium led by an Austrian engineering consultancy has been appointed to lead the planning work which should be complete

by the end of this year. A new line is estimated to cost around €700 million and would be financed by the two nations' governments.

Tren Maya opens

MEXICAN president Andrés López Obrador has opened the new Tren Maya rail network, which connects the Yucatán resort of Cancún with regional cities and also serves the famous archaeological remains at Chichén Itzá.

The new standard gauge railway utilises a fleet of 42 diesel and bi-mode multiple X'trapolis units built by Alstom in Mexico in three differing configurations (14 are bi-modes).

Electrification of at least 690km of the system (Merida to Chetumal via Cancún) at 25kV AC is planned, although initial operation is entirely diesel. Operations are managed by Mexican Army controlled firm Olmeca-Maya-Mexica. Freight services will also be offered.

The new railway has been highly controversial for destroying jungle habitat for

jaguars and other animals but is intended to aid economic development of areas which have previously been economically disadvantaged.

The first stage – the 473km line between San Francisco de Campeche and Cancún Airport was opened on December 15. The section from San Francisco Campeche to Izamal uses the trackbed of a former line; the rest is new construction mostly in the median of a motorway. The next section south to Palenque, adding another 419km, opened on January 1.

The final sections of the massive 1554km project are a new line from Cancún Airport south to Chetumal and then west to Escárrega (midway between San Francisco Campeche and Palenque), and are set to open on February 29.

'RegioFox' enter service

CZECH National rail operator České dráhy (ČD) has introduced the first of its Class 847 'RegioFox' DMUs built in Poland by PESA Bydgoszcz.

Pesa describes the trains as 'Regio 160'.

The first of the new trains entered service in August 2023 and initially the new trains are being used for regional services in the area around Prague. In November ČD ordered another 30 RegioFoxes, for use from Rakovník depot

west of Prague in a contract worth over CZK3 billion CZK (over €120 million), bringing the total on order to 106 trains.

The framework contract with PESA allows for up to 160 trains.

ČD will replace the older Class 810 (some branded now as 'RegioMouse') and some loco hauled trains with the new units. Between 2012 and 2014 Pesa previously built 31 Class 844 'RegioShark' DMUs for ČD these were the earlier Pesa 'link' model.



In mid November ELL supplied DB Regio with an additional locomotive for the pool that works Ulm Wendlingen (Neckar) IRE200 services via the Ulm-Wendlingen high speed line in southern Germany. The loco provided, 6193 940, seen at Ulm Hbf on November 12 with the 15.29 IRE200 service to Wendlingen (Neckar), is exactly as it left the Siemens factory on August 3, 2023 with no branding for ELL or DB. KEITH FENDER

200 more Vectrons for ELL

ONE of Europe's largest loco leasing firms, Vienna-based European Locomotive Leasing Group (ELL), has agreed a contract with Siemens for up to 200 more Vectron locomotives.

The contract is the fourth framework agreement between ELL and Siemens. The deal means Siemens has now sold over 2,200 Vectrons of all types; the locomotives are currently approved for operation in 20

European countries. Siemens builds all the Vectron locos at its Munich-Allach factory.

By the time the initial firm order for 60 new ELL locos has been delivered between 2025 and 2027 ELL will have bought more than 300 Vectrons – and; if all the options are used the fleet will grow to over 400, which would make it the largest Vectron fleet. The latest framework contract includes

various Vectron electric locos and the electro diesel Vectron Dual Mode.

ELL leases Vectron locos to passenger operators as well as freight. Dutch Railways NS increased its fleet in late 2023 with a pool of 16 locos, all from ELL. Since December the NS locos work Amsterdam to Berlin Intercity trains as well as 'Nightjet' trains between Germany and Amsterdam.



'RegioFox' No. 847010 in the new 'pid' livery carried by Prague area suburban trains at Rakovník on September 24, 2023 (pid is the name for the Prague area regional transport fare system Pražská integrovaná doprava). ČD owns both units – one in new pid livery the other in ČD livery. SHAUN WALLACE

Global shipping container movements switch from ships to trains

DROUGHT and conflict have caused shipping firms to move containers from ships to trains around the globe.

Ongoing drought has led to lower water levels in the Panama Canal, part of which is fed by freshwater lakes. As a

result, shipping lines including Maersk have switched containers from some ships in the Pacific to trains on the 47 mile Panama Canal Railway which runs roughly parallel with the canal to take them to the Atlantic side of the

country where they are reloaded to ships. Other ships with lower payloads and consequently higher draft continue to use the Panama Canal.

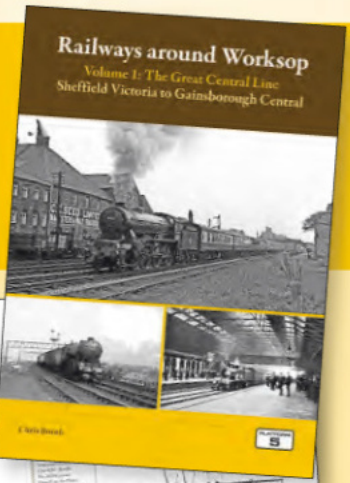
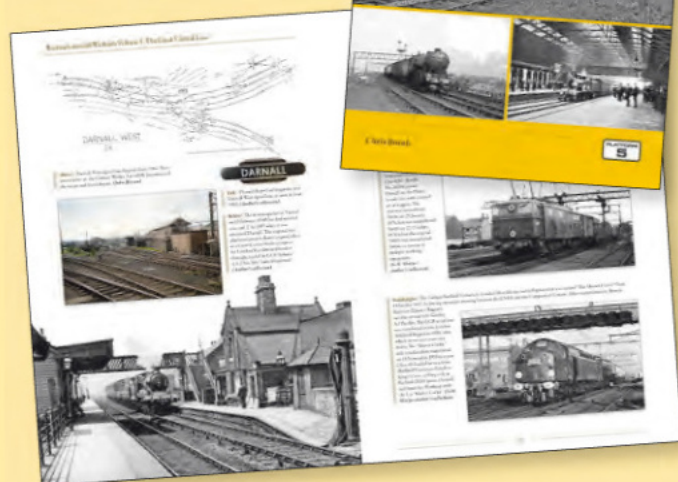
Separately, the ongoing conflict in the Middle East and Red Sea have

led many shipping lines to switch to routes around Africa between Asia and Europe, avoiding the Red Sea and Suez Canal, leading to additional rail traffic via various routes between the two continents as well.

Railways around Worksop

Volume 1: The Great Central Line Sheffield Victoria to Gainsborough Central

Worksop in Nottinghamshire has been a vital railway hub since the arrival of the Manchester, Sheffield, and Lincolnshire Railway in 1849. Positioned 15 miles from Sheffield and Doncaster, and 25 miles from Nottingham, Worksop served both the Great Central and Midland Railways. This volume explores the former Great Central Railway line from Sheffield Victoria to Gainsborough Central, including the



Clarborough Junction to Sykes Junction route. Written by local author and rail expert Chris Booth, who spent over 40 years as a Worksop signaller, the book offers a detailed account of the region's railway history. Features over 400 illustrations capturing decades of change, from steam to modern diesels and electrics. **176 pages. A4 size.**

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Colonel Stephens Light Railway Locomotives

By Brian Janes

THIS is another superb book from the author, combining his in-depth knowledge of all things Colonel Holman F Stephens with access to the Colonel Stephens Museum archives at Tenterden Town, from where many of the numerous photographs are sourced and used in addition to some detailed information.

The book chronicles the vast variety of locomotives that ran across the various railways Col Stephens was involved with. From the numerous recycled, swapped, hired and rented locomotives, some might raise an eyebrow to see that chapter one is entitled 'new and novel locomotives'. New locos were ordered to Stephens' specifications from Peckett and Hawthorne Leslie.

There are some wonderful

photographs of Stroudley's Terriers, a favourite among enthusiasts today, which were purchased second-hand and, while the first two went to the KESR, they were also bought for the Edge Hill Light Railway, Shropshire & Montgomeryshire Railway, and the Weston Clevedon & Portishead – while two were temporarily swapped to the Sheppey Light Railway and East Kent Railway (EKR) to assist with their construction before returning to their original lines.

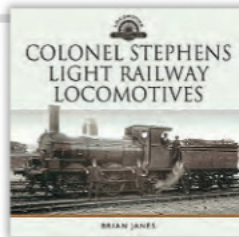
The Ilfracombe goods locomotive was a small tender engine and in 1910 Stephens moved to purchase and then hire six of them; most had been rebuilt in some way, with the exception of No. 0394. He then looked to Beattie Saddlebacks, which were similar to the Ilfracombe locomotives: No. 7 went to

the EKR (No. 7), while the No. 4 went to the KESR.

Manning Wardles have their own chapter with eight acquired: three going to the Hundred Tramway, four to the WCPR and one to the KESR. Each locomotive is detailed by its name. The Shropshire & Montgomeryshire's LNWR-built 0-6-2T coal engines were hired from the LMS and kept the numbers on them while they ran there.

SERO and O1 class locomotives arrived from 1923, three each to the EKR (where they were especially useful) and the KESR. Some were still running in the 1950s.

The chapter called Oddments/One-offs/Singletons, with 34 pages, covers unusual locomotives that ran across various Stephens lines, from the tiny *Gazelle* to the much larger *Hecate*. Readers with some



knowledge of Stephens' locomotives may find this to be their favourite chapter.

The narrow-gauge chapter covers the locomotives that ran on the Rye & Camber Tramway, Ashover Light Railway, Snailbeach District Railway and Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland railways. Then the book winds up with a nameplates chapter and a very useful locomotive index.

With interest in Stephens' lines still on the increase, this book will enthrall both new and more established enthusiasts while also adding something extra to those who feel they may already have a wealth of knowledge on the King of Light Railways and his locomotives.

Published by Pen & Sword
www.pen-and-sword.co.uk
176 pages, hardback. £25

Swiss Electric Locomotives since 1900

By Martin Fisher

THIS is an excellent survey of the wide variety of electric locos built and used by Swiss Railways, of all gauges and types in the last 120+ years.

Switzerland saw several major lines open as electrified routes, such as the main line from Spiez to Brig via the Lötschberg Tunnel in 1913 and the metre-gauge Bernina Bahn in 1908, and moved early to main line electrification when the First World War saw the country surrounded by countries at war and with no domestic source of coal to power the steam loco fleet. The country did, however, have large numbers of rivers and plenty of rain or snow making hydro-electric power a realistic option



at a time when most of the rest of the world was burning coal.

Some of the material has been published previously by the Swiss Railway Society, but the new book brings together all Swiss operators and locos, plus much new information. The book includes both locomotives and motor luggage vehicles, of which there have been multiple types over the last century; EMUs, however, are not covered.

The book deals with the loco fleets of the main standard gauge company Swiss Federal Railways (SBB) in detail, with sections looking at loco designs as they evolved from the 1920s to the present day. It then deals with the biggest non-SBB company, the Bern Lötschberg Simplon (BLS) and other standard gauge operators, with the last section dealing with present-day open access and leased locos.

The remainder covers the wide variety of narrow gauge companies and their fleets, in alphabetical order based on their 2023 names. Rack-equipped electric locos, which Switzerland leads the world in using and building, are covered by sections at the end of the standard and narrow gauge parts of the book.

Very well illustrated with both photographs showing a wide variety of livery variations and locations plus line drawings, this book is highly recommended to anyone interested in the history of Swiss railways or its locos.

Published by the Swiss Railways Society
www.swissrailsoc.org.uk
343 pages, hardback. £38

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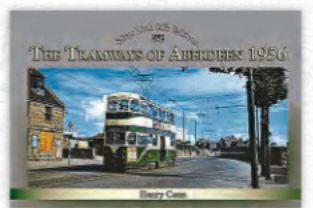
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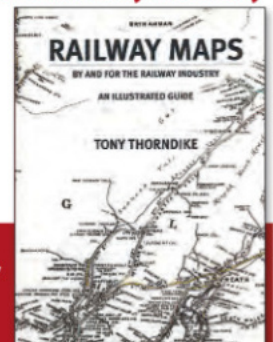
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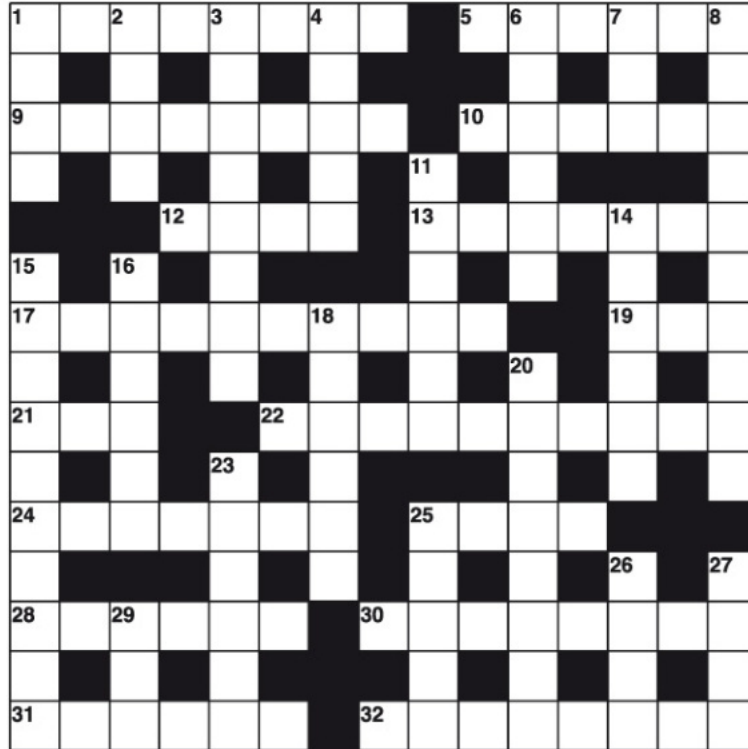
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Across

- 1 GWR station on the Fairfield branch, and 'Manor' No. 7825
- 5 Preserved Class 50 No. 50002 (6)
- 9 Former name of LNER No. 4489 *Dominion* of 23 down, later transferred to No. 4493 (8)
- 10 Word dropped from Norwich station's name in 1969 (6)
- 12 Castle ____, junction station between Westbury and Taunton (4)
- 13 Sir James ____, Midland Railway General Manager, 1853-80 (7)
- 17 Former Southport CLC station (4,6)
- 19 London's automated light railway (initials)
- 21 Former BR Sector that was responsible for mail and parcels transport (initials)
- 22 '____ Express', London-Hereford-Worcester service introduced in 1957 (10)
- 24 ____, Burlington & Quincy Railroad, part of Burlington Northern since 1970 (7)
- 25 Loco depot (4)
- 28 South Wales location of Knuckle Yard, opened in 1960 (6)
- 30 Fourth-largest city in France, served by the Tisséo transport network (8)
- 31 Station between Blackheath and Dartford (6)
- 32 ____ & Carlisle Railway (8)



Down

- 1 'The ____', nickname for the concourse area at Paddington station (4)
- 2 Thomas ____, railway excursion pioneer (4)
- 3 Kyle of ____, terminus of a line from Dingwall (8)
- 4 'The Royal ____', London-Penzance express introduced in 1957 (5)
- 6 ____ Junction, at the south end of the Weston-super-Mare 'loop' (6)
- 7 Heritage railway based at Bolton Street station, Bury (initials)
- 8 and 27 down New station adjacent to the Midland Main Line in London, opened in December 2023 (5,5,4)
- 11 Sir ____, 'King Arthur' No. 30765 (6)
- 14 Town that had a Clegg Street station (6)
- 15 Terminus of an LSWR/SR line from Barnstaple (10)
- 16 Piero ____, co-designer with Attilio Franco of a type of steam loco boiler (6)
- 18 First station south of Wrexham (6)
- 20 ____ Hall, GWR No. 4901, and ____ Park, between Birmingham and Coventry (8)
- 23 'Jubilee' No. 45553 (6)
- 25 Czech car manufacturer that also produces trams, locos and rolling stock (5)
- 26 'EM2' electric loco No. 27004 (4)
- 27 See 8 down
- 29 Unflattering nickname for a Class 24 diesel (3)

February crossword entry form

Name _____

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Send completed form (photocopies are accepted) to: February 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 April 2024 issue. The winners will be the senders of the first all-correct solutions opened in our office. **You can also 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 December issue.

Across: 8 Buchanan 9 Street 10 LCDR 11 Row 12 Embsay 13 Wistow 15 Osterley 17 Andover 19 Ryburgh 22 Scotsgap 24 Madras 25 Hudson 27 Lad 28 Wren 29 Stroke 30 Boadicea

Down: 1 Junction 2 Thor 3 Ingrow 4 Snowdon 5 Oswestry 6 Crab 7 Bedale 14 Trout 16 Round 18 Engineer 20 Grateley 21 Appleby 23 County 24 Midday 26 Scot 28 Whin

December winner: John Staves, Desborough.

Runners-up: Howard Brier, Shepley; Peter Hughes, Colwall.

The closing date for this month's crossword is Friday, March 8, 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...

CORNWALL is set to lose three more of its historic signalboxes as those at Lostwithiel, Par and Truro come to the end of their service

life this spring, with their wonderful GWR lower quadrant signals being replaced by modern colour lights. We take a detailed

look inside and out at all three, and find out what the signalling upgrade will mean to rail services in this part of the country.



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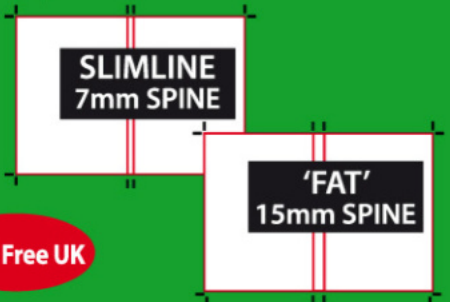
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