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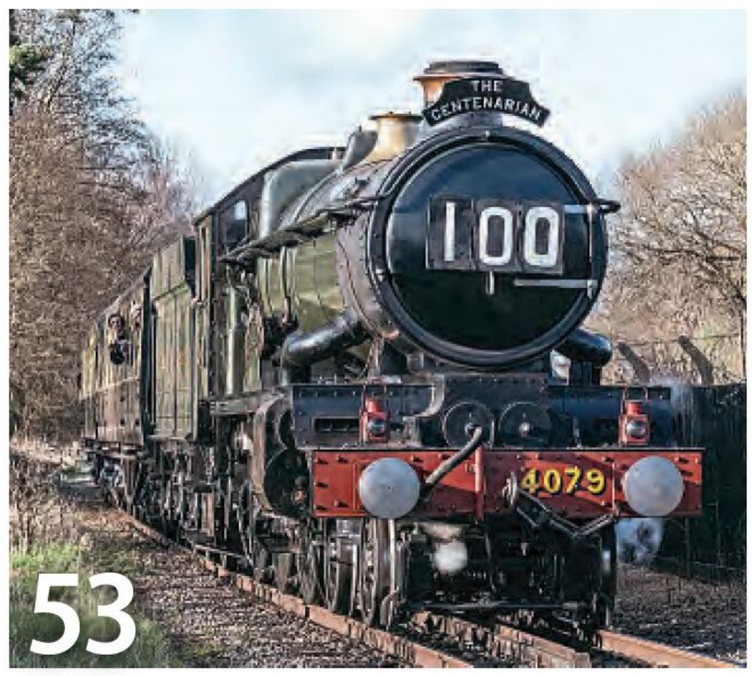
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Sixty years ago saw the opening of Tinsley diesel depot, but it was all swept away by the late 1990s.











■ **COVER:** The start of West Coast's 2024 'Jacobite' season has been delayed. 'Black Five' No. 45407 is seen at Craigag on the afternoon of September 28, 2023. IAN DIXON

The RAILWAY Magazine

PUBLISHING
Production editor: Sarah Wilkinson
Designer: Tim Pipes
Editorial assistant: Jane Skayman
Publisher: Tim Hartley
Sales and distribution manager: Carl Smith
Marketing manager: Charlotte Park
Commercial director: Nigel Hole
Publishing director: Dan Savage
Published by: Mortons Media Group Ltd, Media Centre, Morton Way, Horncastle, Lincs LN9 6JR
Tel: 01507 529529 **Fax:** 01507 371066
Email: railway@mortons.co.uk

ADVERTISING
Group advertising manager: Sue Keily
Advertising: Craig Amess
camess@mortons.co.uk Tel: 01507 529537
By post: The Railway Magazine advertising, Mortons Media Group, Media Centre, Morton Way, Horncastle, Lincs LN9 6JR

SUBSCRIPTIONS
Full subscription rates (but see page 32 for offer):
(12 months, 12 issues, including post and packing) £63 for the UK. Export rates are also available, see page 32 for more details. UK subscriptions are zero-rated for the purposes of Value Added Tax.
Enquiries: subscriptions@mortons.co.uk

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Monday-Friday: 8.30am-5pm
Answerphone 24hr
help@classicmagazines.co.uk
www.classicmagazines.co.uk

Archive enquiries
Jane Skayman 01507 529423
jskayman@mortons.co.uk

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

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This issue was published on April 3, 2024.
The next issue will be on sale on May 1, 2024.

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'Jacobite' on the blink

AS this issue went to press, the Office of Rail and Road (ORR) and West Coast Railway Company (WCR) were engaged in a stand-off over the matter of fitting central door locking to heritage carriages – most notably the Mk.1s used on the 'Jacobite' steam service between Fort William and Mallaig. Both sides seem to have dug in, and it is not clear who might blink first.

This hugely popular train has its origins back in 1984, when it was launched by British Rail as the 'West Highlander' to help tourism in the area. The licence passed to WCR at Privatisation in the 1990s, and there was a boost in the 2000s when the locos and stock were featured in the Harry Potter series of films – sparking global interest in the daily service. The trips have been so successful that now two trains a day operate in the peak season from June to August – a major source of income for WCR, while fulfilling the original BR goal of supporting local tourism.

However, following a series of incidents involving Mk.1s over the years, the ORR has said all remaining vehicles must have central door locking to operate on the main line. It has, in fact, been saying this to owners of similar rolling stock for almost 20 years, ever since the relevant 'Regulation 5' came into force in January 2005. Since then, operators have been given exemptions to continue using them on the understanding CDL would be fitted at some point.

WCR is now one of the last owners of non-CDL Mk.1s, and the ORR has had enough, insisting that the time has come for action. In response, WCR decided to cancel the 'Jacobite' just before the operating season was due to begin at Easter.

In looking for a solution, money talks, and the ORR has nothing to lose in this respect – but WCR does through lost ticket sales. But for the sake of local businesses that depend on tourist pounds, let us hope one side does indeed blink first so that this superb steam operation can get back to full operation as soon as possible.

Free BR steam DVD next month!

Readers in the UK will receive a free Videoscene DVD worth £19.95 with next month's issue, including some superb footage filmed over the final years of BR steam across England, Scotland and Wales. Look out for *The RM* in shops from May 1, or pre-order now via www.classicmagazines.co.uk/issue/RM



Paul Bickerdyke,
Editor

OUR WRITING TEAM



GARETH EVANS
Deputy editor



CHRIS MILNER
Contributing editor



GRAEME PICKERING
Senior correspondent



NICK PIGOTT
Consultant editor



JOHN HEATON
Practice & Performance



CLIFF THOMAS
Narrow gauge



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THE FUTURE FACE OF EUSTON

Three Hitachi sets were captured together at Euston on March 19, with (from left) Avanti Class 805 bi-modes Nos. 805006+805007 (5Q73, the 14.19 test run to Stafford), Avanti No. 805002 (5Q92, the 14.03 test run to Edge Hill, Liverpool), and GWR bi-mode No. 802101 (5Q85, the 14.06 empty stock move to North Pole depot, West London).

The Avanti sets are due to replace the operator's diesel 'Voyagers' later this year, while the GWR set was making a series of trial runs ahead of future engineering work around Old Oak Common that will see Paddington temporarily closed and services diverted. For the same reason, No. 802101 had also visited Waterloo the day before.

BRAD JOYCE

WCML open access service to Stirling given five year licence

New entrant will offer an alternative way to travel from Euston to Scotland.

By 'Industry Update'

PASSENGERS could soon have a new service between Stirling and London Euston after the Office of Rail and Road agreed that new open access services can operate on the West Coast Main Line between the Scottish city and the UK capital.

In its decision letter dated March 7, access rights were granted for five years from June 2025. While three non-franchised operators have been granted access rights on the East Coast Main Line, there have so far been no similar services from Euston – although Arriva had been due to begin an open access service to Blackpool using Class 90s and Mk.3 stock until the Covid pandemic put paid to that.

The Stirling service is a proposal from Grand Union Trains (GUT), where the expertise of Ian Yeowart as a promoter of open access services has been used to demonstrate that the timetable meets the ORR demand of balancing the provision of open access services with the protection of Government finances from the franchised operators.

Four return weekday services will be operated serving Milton Keynes, Nuneaton, Crewe, Preston, Carlisle, Lockerbie, Motherwell, Whifflet, Greenfaulds and Larbet. The proposed rolling stock will be Class 221 'Super Voyager' trainsets displaced from Avanti by new Hitachi bi-mode Class 805 units, which will take over the diagrams between Euston and North Wales.

'Meridian' option

Details of Class 221 cascade are yet to be finalised, and some may be transferred to CrossCountry to fill the gap left by the withdrawal HST sets. So the ORR decision also allows GUT to use Class 222 'Meridians' that will be displaced from East Midlands Railway by the new fleet of 33 Class 810 trains being built by Hitachi.

The strength of the application was seen as the opportunity to offer increased journey opportunities between London and central Scotland avoiding the need for passengers to use connecting services to travel to Glasgow and Edinburgh. The regulator also identified the new services would offer a broader range of seating opportunities, something that is increasingly relevant for discretionary travel where appropriate interior vehicle design suitable for family groups has become more important.

As part of the consultation process, Transport Scotland had no objection as it judged there would be no significant revenue abstraction from its ScotRail or Caledonian Sleeper services, while there would be improved connectivity and journey opportunities. It did note a preference for electric traction using electrified lines, but recognised the environmental benefit of all forms of rail traction over other transport options.

Network Rail advised there were no material performance concerns, but could only support access rights being granted until December 2030 due to potential interactions with HS2. Assurance was also sought that operations would commence by mid-2025, probably reflecting concerns about the delay to the start of another authorised open access service between Carmarthen and Paddington.

Revenue abstraction

The regulator applies the NPA (not primarily abstractive) test to all open access applications. Although economic benefits are evident from previous decisions to authorise open access on the East Coast Main Line, it remains necessary to show that new revenue is sufficient to compensate for the abstraction of income from existing operators.

A benchmark has been established that new services must generate at least £0.3 of new revenue for each £1 of revenue abstracted from franchised operators. For the Stirling services, the forecast revenue is £0.38:1, with expected new annual income of £9.3 million and abstraction of £24.4 million. But GUT's own figures suggested there would be a greater demand for the new services, attracting passengers from short-haul air services, pushing revenues to £11.4 million and taking the NPA test close to £0.50/£1.

The ORR also has benchmark figures for the level of absolute abstraction if that is considered to be excessive, but approval in this case was within the parameters established with earlier applications, and the presence of competition has been shown to help revenues of all competing operators.

■ Grand Union Trains has made a separate application to operate five daily services between Cardiff and Edinburgh via Birmingham to supplement the timetable provided by CrossCountry, which is said to lack capacity to meet demand.

CrossCountry has responded with a plan to provide similar services by combining its existing Cardiff-Birmingham and Birmingham-Edinburgh trains, but doubts remain about whether this will provide sufficient capacity. Fares are also very high, with an on-the-day standard class single from Edinburgh to Cardiff costing around £230.

Northern units derailed by sinkhole

A NORTHERN service was derailed on the approach to Grange-over-Sands, Cumbria, on March 22, with the wheels of at least four of the six carriages resting on the ballast, although all of the carriages remained upright.

The train was 2C37, the 05.18 Preston to Barrow-in-Furness formed of CAF Class 195 DMUs Nos. 195104+195133.

There were four crew and four passengers on board, no one was injured and the crew led the passengers to safety. The derailment was around a half-mile from Grange station as the train would have been slowing for the stop.

Network Rail has confirmed the presence of a large sink hole or void in the track formation around 150 metres to the rear of the train, which they say is unusual in its nature. The line was expected to be closed until after Easter, but the Rail Accident Investigation Branch had dispatched a team to gather evidence.



Northern units Nos. 195104+195133 derailed on the outskirts of Grange-over-Sands on March 22 after passing over a void in the track.
NETWORK RAIL

■ A SUBSTANTIAL landslip west of Oakengates on March 8 resulted in the closure of the line west from Wolverhampton to Shrewsbury. Network Rail estimated around 5000 tonnes of material slipped beneath a 50 metre section of embankment after persistent heavy rainfall over the winter months had weakened the earthworks. Nationally, there have been an increased number of landslips primarily because of heavy rainfall during January and February – see also Network News, p78.

Couple appear in court over Altnabreac 'trespass' claim

A COUPLE who own the station house at Altnabreac on the Far North Line appeared at Inverness Sheriff Court on March 4 facing a number of charges stemming from an access dispute at the remote Scottish station.

Following an incident on March 1, Ian Appleby (46) and former Greater Manchester Police detective Elizabeth Howe (48) have been charged with trespassing in dangerous proximity to a Network Rail track; maliciously interfering with the running of the railway and bringing trains to a halt; obstructing British Transport Police officers in the execution of their duty and behaving in a threatening or abusive manner.

The pair entered no plea and have been released on bail pending a future court appearance.

The couple further appeared in a private hearing at Wick Sheriff Court on March 20 accused of stealing property belonging to Network Rail. Both were granted bail with special conditions.

The dispute over access at Altnabreac first surfaced in March 2023 when Network Rail staff were blocked from entering the station to install one of eight request stop kiosks. Unable to access the station, ScotRail took the decision in November 2023 to withdraw the station stop until further notice as it had not been possible to inspect the station to ensure the platform and facilities were safe for customers to use during the winter period. The situation remains unchanged.

The disagreement is believed to stem from a dispute over ownership of the station platform as well as the rights to use of more than five miles of adjacent forestry roads to access the isolated station. In 2022/3 the station was used by 280 passengers, up by 50 on the previous year.

West Coast suspends 'Jacobite' operation

The row over fitting Mk.1s with Central Door Locking takes a dramatic turn.

By Chris Milner

JUST eight days before the start of the 2024 'Jacobite' season was due to begin, the West Coast Railway Company (WCR) announced it was suspending the start of the seasonal operation over the West Highland extension.

The shock announcement came on March 20 and the suspension is until further notice.

WCR's decision came just two weeks after it had submitted a new application to the Office of Rail and Road (ORR) for an exemption from Regulation 5 of the Railway Safety Regulations 1999 (RSR). It relates to the operation of hinged door rolling stock without Central Door Locking (CDL).

The new application, submitted on March 8, was in response to the outcome of a judicial review handed down on December 22 last year in which Mrs Justice Thornton dismissed WCR's challenge that the ORR 'misinterpreted' the regulations, was irrational and had a draconian effect. The judge said the regulator's stance not to grant a further exemption was "justifiable" and "common sense".

Following the December judgment, on January 10 this year the ORR made the decision to revoke a temporary Regulation 5 exemption that had been granted last November. This revocation grounded WCR's non-CDL fitted Mk.1 fleet, which it uses on many steam charter services.

Following the ban, WCR has been using a CDL-fitted set of Mk.2 stock on its steam charters for customers. Use of this set requires an air-braked steam loco.

In its new application, WCR had also asked the ORR for a temporary exemption while the application was being considered, thereby effectively asking for special treatment.

The ORR told *The RM*: "We are assessing an application made by West Coast Railways on March 8 for an exemption from Regulation 5," adding that the process could "take up to four months".

Compliance push

The ORR has been reinforcing the need for industry compliance with Regulation 5 since 2018. Regulation 5 came into force on January 1, 2005 and WCR was initially granted an exemption on May 1, 2005 to March 31, 2013. A new exemption was granted in 2012, which expired on March 31, 2023. Since then, a series of temporary exemptions have been granted until the outcome of the judicial review in December.

Other train operators have either fully fitted CDL to fleets, or had made a commitment to do so on a transitional timescale approved by the ORR.

WCR commercial manager James Shuttleworth said: "We are disappointed to have to suspend this service, and we are sorry for the inconvenience caused to our customers who have booked trips. We again appeal to the ORR to reconsider our request for a temporary exemption.



'Black Five' No. 45407 leaves Fort William with the morning 'Jacobite' to Mallaig on September 7, 2023, but the start of this year's season had been cancelled as this issue of *The RM* went to press. GORDON KIRKBY

"The 'Jacobite' service is enjoyed by thousands of customers every year. It boosts the local economies of Mallaig and Fort William, and brings an estimated £20 million into the UK's tourism sector.

"If the ORR does not grant us a further exemption, we believe this could lead to up to £50 million in lost value to both local and national communities.

"We remain committed to working with the ORR to find a long-term solution which safeguards the future of heritage services on the main line."

Passengers with bookings on the 'Jacobite' will be offered a full refund.

They can also contact WCR by email via: enquiries@westcoastrailways.net for more details.

An ORR spokesperson said: "All heritage operators were told several years ago that in order to operate after March 31, 2023 they either needed to fit central door locking or obtain an exemption from us.

Tickets still sold

"West Coast Railway's application for an exemption failed and they made a claim for judicial review. A temporary exemption was granted in order to maintain the status quo, enabling WCR to operate whilst the litigation reached a conclusion.

"Despite this, WCR chose to sell tickets when it was far from certain that a new application for an exemption would be granted, either in time for the commencement of services or at all. It submitted an exemption application on March 8, which we are now assessing. ORR is disappointed that WCR appears not to have made sensible contingency plans for the benefit of their customers."

As we closed for press, WCR was believed to be trying to source alternative CDL-fitted stock for the 'Jacobite'.

■ The ORR has asked *The RM* to clarify Regulation 6 of the RSR permits ORR to grant exemptions from the prohibition of Regulation 5. Any such exemption may be: (i) subject to conditions; (ii) subject to a time limit; and (iii) revoked by a certificate in writing at any time.





ALL CHANGE AT PAR: The mid-Cornwall resignalling work (reported last month) has been completed, changing the face of the railway at Par, Truro and Lostwithiel as the traditional GWR semaphore signals were removed and replaced by colour lights. This view (left) shows Par's former PR2 signal being lowered into the station yard on March 7, while right is the modern face of Par station on March 16, as No. 150233 arrives from Newquay past the out of use signalbox, with the signals now controlled from a panel at Exeter. It is hoped that some of the old equipment will find a new home at a heritage site. CRAIG MUNDAY / STUART WARR

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‘FastCharge’ trial begins on London’s Greenford line

Testing on the two-mile route could pave the way for battery-powered trains on other GWR-operated branches in the Thames Valley.

By Graeme Pickering

GREAT Western Railway says it has already carried out work to explore how ‘FastCharge’ battery-powered trains, similar to the prototype being trialled on the Greenford route in West London, could be used on other branch lines.

Following static testing to confirm compatibility with the charging technology installed at West Ealing, the 12-month trial of Class 230 No. 230001 on the two-mile long Greenford line, was officially launched on March 18. The unit will not be in public use and will run in between scheduled passenger trains. It did, however, carry a party of invited guests along the branch for a media preview three days earlier.

Operation

Activated in the presence of the train, the patented ‘FastCharge’ system uses charging rails (within the ‘four foot’ between the running rails) to top-up the on board battery system. These can complete charging in 3.5 minutes and are themselves connected to battery banks trickle-charged from the national grid.

No. 230001 is based at GWR’s Reading depot, where it arrived under its own power in February from Long Marston following a fortnight of ‘shakedown’ workings. The unit was first unveiled to coincide with the COP26 UN Climate Change Conference in Glasgow in November 2021.

When plans for the Greenford trial, supported by Network Rail and the Department for Transport, were first announced in February of the following year, it was expected it would begin within months, but delays due to “unexpected challenges” were compounded by Class 230 developer and creator of the ‘FastCharge’ system Vivarail collapsing into administration. Nine Vivarail staff transferred to GWR. It also bought the intellectual property relating to ‘FastCharge’, along with No. 230001 and other related rolling stock and equipment.

Future applications

As part of research into possibilities for wider use of ‘FastCharge’ trains, GWR has conducted simulations for Thames Valley branches. It claims their introduction could reduce carbon dioxide equivalent emissions by 1700 tonnes a year.

Loughborough loco shed to be moved

THE Great Central Railway (GCR) is to relocate its Loughborough locomotive shed to an as yet unconfirmed location, paving the way for a more authentic northern approach to the station as part of the Reunification Project.

While track could have been squeezed around the outside of the building to reconnect both halves of the GCR, it has been decided the optimum solution is to dismantle the shed and route the track through the centre of the site. As a result, the double-track can continue north from Loughborough Central station to the bridge over the Grand Union Canal.

GCR said that in practical terms it also simplifies the track layout approaching the station, assisting future operations.

The GCR has recently invested in new lighting and doors for the shed, which along with further forthcoming improvements in staff accommodation, will take the building to the end of it’s life in approximately five years’ time. A project group is examining possible locations for a new engine shed, from across the entire proposed 18-mile line. A review is also being carried out into the uses of existing sheds. A full plan will be announced in due course. The scheme will be developed alongside the Reunification project, subject to fundraising and necessary permissions.



An aerial view of Loughborough locomotive shed looking towards the Grand Union Canal bridge. GCR

Carriage shed nears completion

A NEW carriage shed at Nottingham Transport Heritage Centre, Ruddington, is set to be finished imminently.

Contractors were on site in early March installing track to connect the shed to the rest of the railway on site. Work was then due to resume on pouring a concrete floor inside the building, which will allow it to be used as an exhibition venue as well as a storage shed, protecting carriages at the Great Central Railway (Nottingham) from the weather and vandalism.

Funding

The project has received £40,000 from Rushcliffe Borough Council, the money having come from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF), part of the UK Government’s Levelling Up agenda. Combined with match funding from East Midlands Railway Trust and LNER (GC) Heritage Trust, the grant has unlocked the long stalled project.

Supporters have raised more than £11,500 to install a roller door on the front of the building.



BLUE PETER BACK IN ACTION:

‘A2’ Pacific No. 60532 *Blue Peter* has been undergoing light engine test runs at the Severn Valley Railway (SVR). The 4-6-2 is seen at Bridgnorth after its second run on March 21. At the time of writing, there were no plans for the loco to operate public trains while on SVR metals. JOHN TITLOW

SIDELINES

Costly storms

BAD weather, which disrupted train journeys last autumn, meant the railways missed out on an estimated £21 million revenue in the three months to December – according to the Great British Railways Transition Team (GBRTT). Despite this, total rail passenger revenue was still up slightly (+1%) compared to the three months prior, which GBRTT said can be attributed to the fact that although rolling overtime bans had an impact, fewer strikes helped to offset the loss of revenue from the storms. Business trips were down 6% on the previous quarter, in an unusual twist for the season, suggesting business travellers were most put off by weather disruption.

Gresley exhibition

A NEW exhibition called ‘Gresley – Genius of Steam & Speed’ will open at the Danum Gallery, Library and Museum in Doncaster on April 23. Celebrating the achievements of locomotive designer Sir Nigel Gresley and the unsung heroes that worked alongside him, the free exhibition runs until September 21. The display is a collaboration between the trustees of the Doncaster Grammar School Railway Collection, the Gresley Society Trust, Heritage Doncaster, and XP Trust.

Valuable signs

HISTORIC railway station signs, introduced in the early 1950s and removed during the 1970s, are reaching unprecedented levels in value 50 years later, according to auction house Railwayana Auctions UK Ltd. Items once picked up by rail enthusiasts for £5 or less, are now changing hands for thousands of pounds, with top famous named examples now showing a five-figure return. Totem signs from Paddington and King’s Cross both achieved £14,400 at its March auction. Other locations that exceeded expectations were Brighton (£9480), Penzance (£8400), Bristol Temple Meads (£7440), Lake Side (£6000), Darlington (£4800), West Hartlepool (£4080) and Royal Oak (£3840).

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SIDELINES

Recruitment drive

NORTHERN is seeking to recruit 108 train drivers and 198 conductors this year.

New recruits will have to complete paid apprenticeships at one of the train operator's training academies in Leeds or Manchester.

Driver roles come with a starting salary of £23,000 a year, rising to £54,500 following the completion of a 64-week training course. Salaries for conductors start at £22,000, increasing to £29,000 upon completion of a 16-week training course.

The roles will be advertised in the coming months. A small number of vacancies will also be available for qualified train drivers.

Save a station

AN APPEAL to save the world's oldest railway station has been launched by the Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway.

Heighington station lies in a derelict state beside the line on the edge of Newton Aycliffe. The station was one of three buildings commissioned by the railway company in 1826 to handle goods and passengers before the concept of the railway station was fully realised, and it was first in operation in early 1827. It is estimated that £500,000 is needed to buy and stabilise it ahead of the railway's 200th anniversary in 2025.

It is hoped that £400,000 can be raised through grant applications, which leaves the Friends appealing to members of the public to help raise the remaining £100,000.

Visit sdr1825.org.uk for further details.

Incident investigation

MEMBERS of the Rail Accident Investigation Branch are looking into the derailment of a passenger train near Walton-on-Thames on March 4.

At around 05.40, a passenger train, travelling along the Up Fast line between Woking and London Waterloo, struck a piece of redundant rail on a railway access point on the approach to Walton-on-Thames station.

The train was travelling at around 85mph when the collision occurred. Although the leading set of wheels derailed, the train remained upright. There were no injuries, but the train and several hundred yards of railway infrastructure were damaged. The results will be published in due course.

Rail performance 'not good enough' says watchdog

The National Audit Office says that the rail system needs to change – and that subsidies are too high.

By 'Industry Update'

A REPORT issued by the independent National Audit Office (NAO) on March 8 had little good to say about the performance of the railway industry. However, the NAO had nothing to say about how changes in employment practices, which it says are needed to reduce costs, might be implemented.

The report cites the current £3.1 billion subsidy paid to train operators holding National Rail contracts, and links this to operational statistics showing 3.8% of trains were cancelled in the 2022/23 financial year, with another 13.7% late arriving.

The Department for Transport has been tasked with cutting costs by £2.6 billion in the three-year period to 2024/25, and thereafter saving £1.5 billion annually.

The NAO says that on current trends, the DfT will only save £2 billion by 2024/25 (a 23% shortfall) – in part due to anticipated savings from the creation of Great British Railways failing to materialise. It is worth remembering here that in the post-pandemic period, revenue from the Government-controlled passenger operators is paid directly to the Treasury, while the DfT manages costs.

Workforce reform

The savings that have been made reflect post-pandemic reductions in train services. However, the main cost reduction in the DfT's plan was to come from workforce reform. That proposition came unstuck when the proposal to reduce staffing by closing booking offices was met with general uproar, and it was quickly identified that alternative arrangements failed to meet the requirements of the Ticketing and Settlement Agreements contained in train operators' contracts.

The other thrust to expand Driver-Only Operation (DOO) has also made no progress, and it is hard to see that DOO will happen any time soon unless significant and expensive incentives are offered.

The NAO report fails to reflect that an emphasis on cost cutting without regard to the effect on revenue is likely to be counterproductive, while pressure to reduce costs can be the source of cancellations and delay. Past DfT interventions to restrict recruitment has also been the cause of traincrew shortages that continue to impact on service reliability.

TBMs COMPLETE CHILTERN TUNNEL BORES:

Tunnel boring machines *Florence* and *Cecilia* have completed their 10-mile (16km) tunnelling work under the Chilterns from near Rickmansworth to the Great Missenden area, the pair emerging at the northern portals on February 27 (pictured) and March 20 respectively. The Chiltern Tunnels are the longest on the HS2 route to Birmingham, and the TBMs have worked nonstop for three years, averaging around 16 metres a day. For more HS2 news, see page 16.

PHIL MARSH



GTR secures ex-GA 'Electrostar' fleet following sale

AFTER two years in warm storage following withdrawal by Greater Anglia, Class 379 units are expected to return to revenue-earning use this summer on Govia Thameslink Railway's Great Northern services, *writes Graeme Pickering*.

All 30 of the 'Electrostars' have been purchased from Akiem by Porterbrook for leasing to GTR. "Subject to acceptance, these additional trains will start the development of a design for the future growing demand across our network," said GTR engineering director, Steve Lammin.

Built at Derby by Bombardier for GA, the Class 379s were first introduced in 2011, being phased into use on 'Stansted Express' and Cambridge services. However, as part of its 2016 franchise award, Abellio committed to the complete replacement of the Greater Anglia fleet. The Class 379s were at the time more costly to lease than new vehicles and, in February 2022 – following the arrival of the Stadler 'Flirt' and Class 720 Alstom 'Aventra' sets – they were withdrawn.

Porterbrook says that the units, which have been periodically connected to traction current since their withdrawal, have a life expectancy of at least another 20 years.

A spokesman for GTR told *The RM* it intends to use the '379s' primarily on longer distance Great Northern routes, including those from King's Cross to Peterborough and King's Lynn. He added that they will allow an increase in services to meet greater post-pandemic demand.

The units could also allow the release of some GN dual-voltage Class 387 units to other services in the South East.

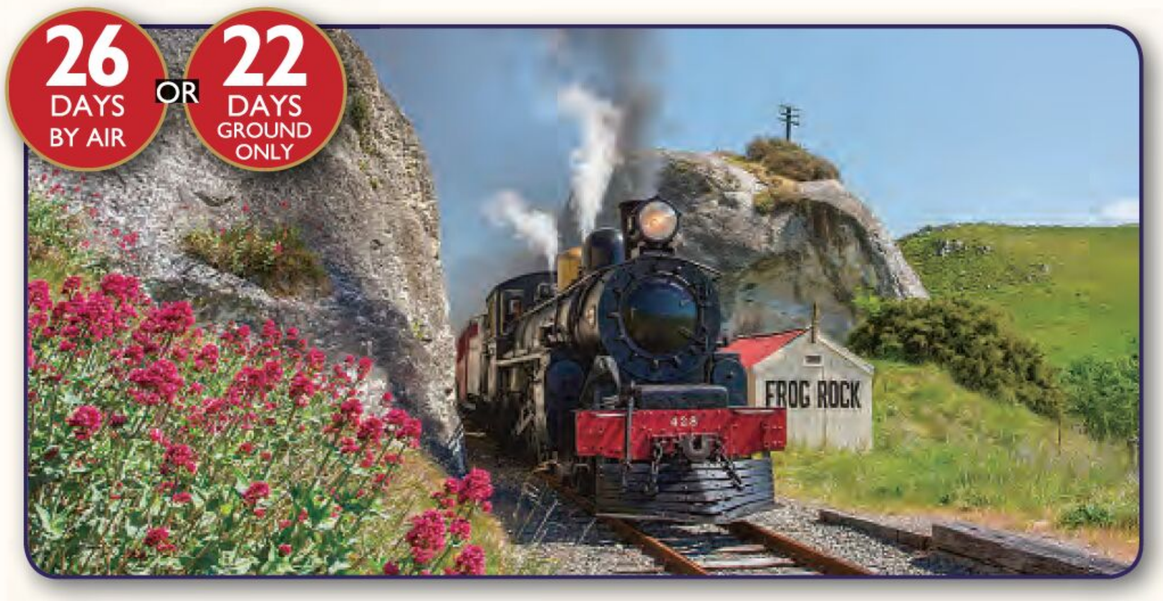
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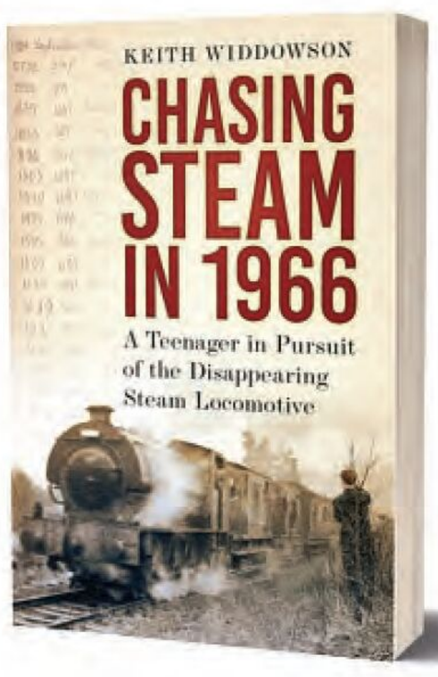
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Keith Widdowson

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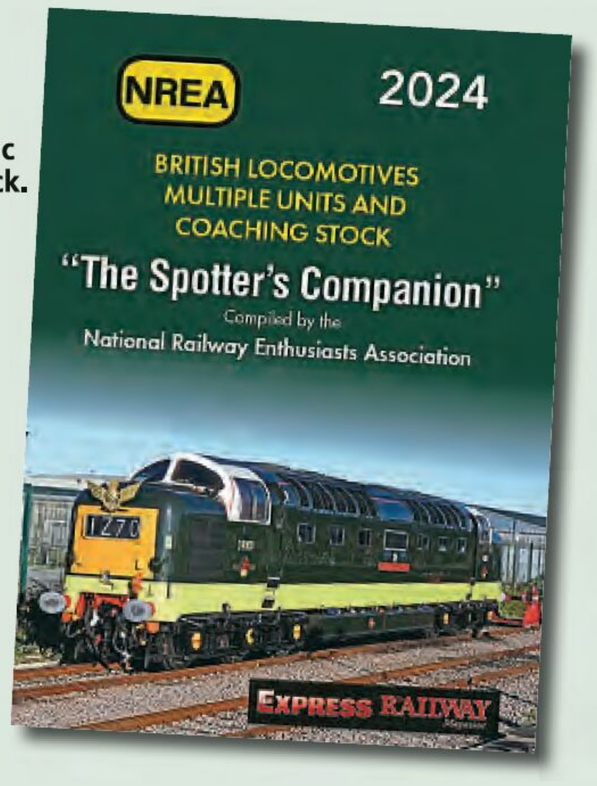
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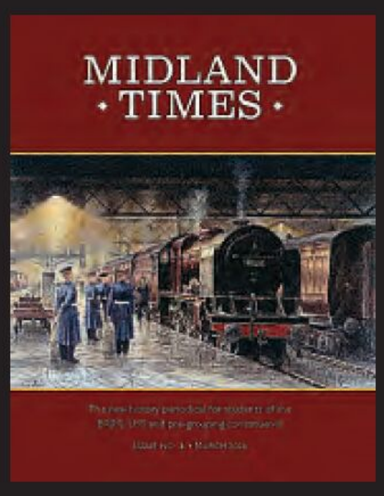
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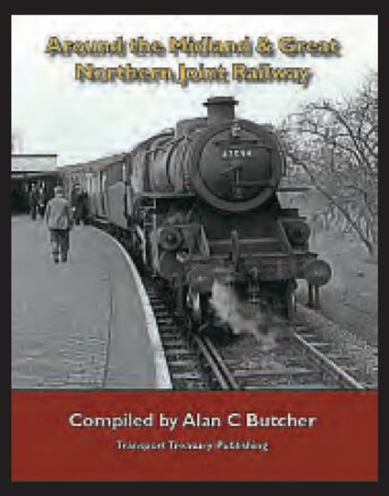
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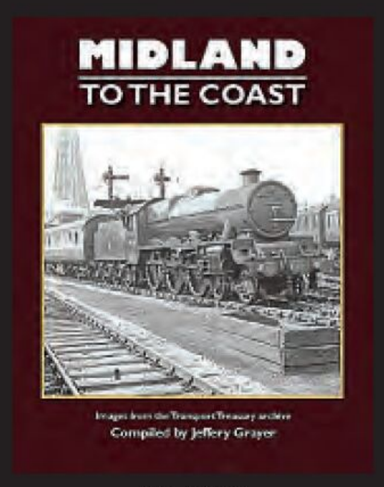
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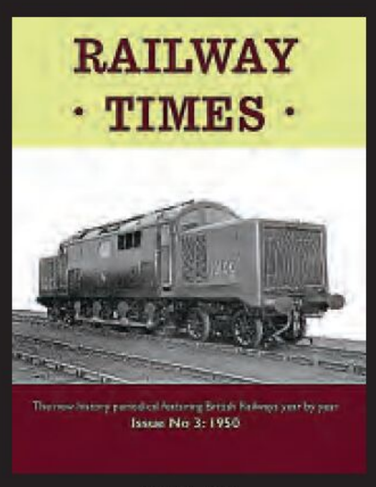
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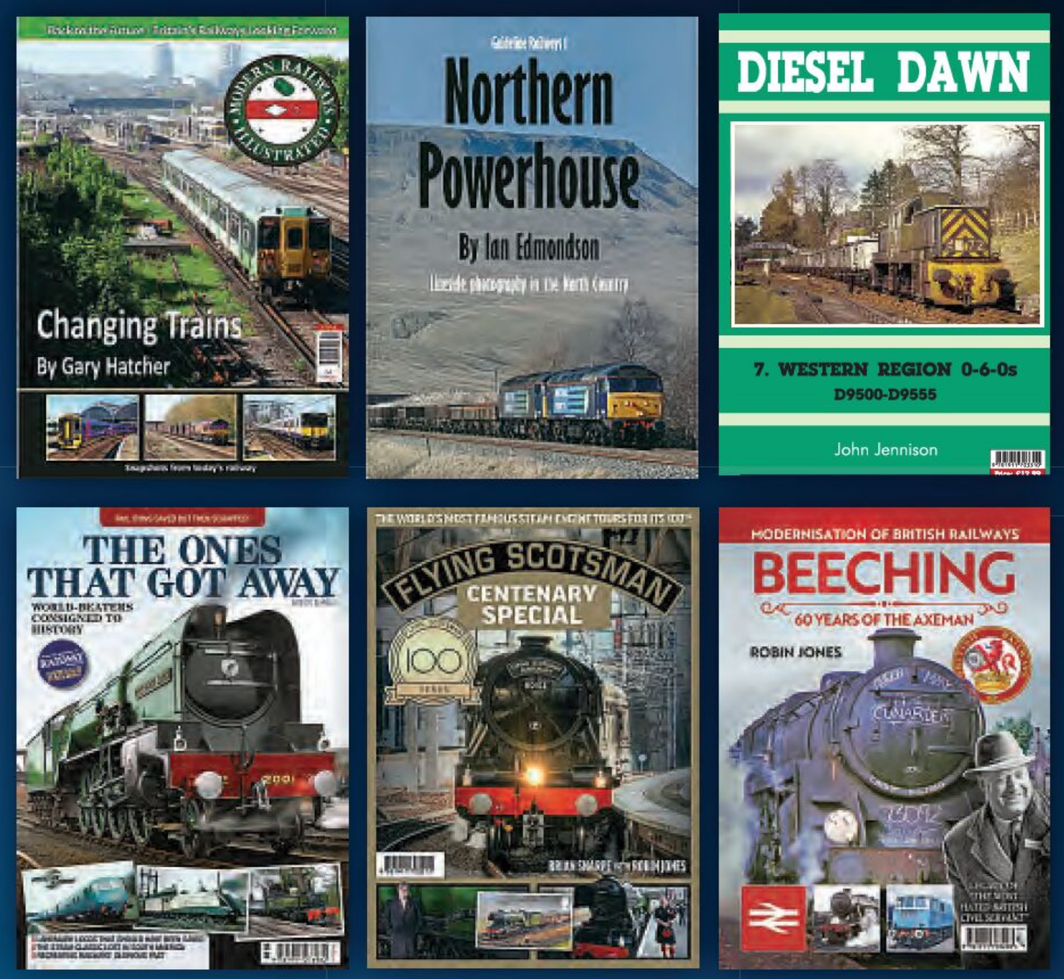
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Get involved!

The 200th anniversary of the Stockton & Darlington Railway next year offers an important opportunity to promote railways to the wider public.



Attendees at the HRA Spring Conference in Llandudno on March 5, which was sponsored by *The Railway Magazine* and *Heritage Railway*. PAUL BICKERDYKE

By Paul Bickerdyke

THE Heritage Railway Association held its Spring Conference over two days in Llandudno on March 5/6, including a plea by the organisers of next year's Railway 200 celebrations to get involved with the year-long programme.

Railway 200 coincides with the 200th anniversary of the Stockton & Darlington Railway opening in September 1825. While the SDR milestone will have its own dedicated events, Railway 200 has a much broader scope celebrating the past, present and future of railways across the country. It is spearheaded by Network Rail, but supported by the wider rail industry, including the heritage sector.

The SDR was not the first railway, but its opening marked a pivotal point in railway history. The organisers say that marking the milestone is as important as a Royal Jubilee or the Olympic Games, but with a far wider remit from engineering to social history and economics.

Conference attendees were urged to plan relevant events to get their heritage lines involved, which will help attract more visitors, tell the story of railways and boost the profile of rail in general. Examples cited included staging events linking local history to a line's own heritage; putting on more family-focused days to attract those who might not be regular rail users; use anniversary-related news events to gain general media coverage; or hold book festivals, talks and film shows.

In return, the HRA and Railway 200 team will help promote all such events. For more information, see the HRA's website at www.hra.uk.com/events/railway-200

■ The lively conference, which was sponsored by *The Railway Magazine* and our sister title *Heritage Railway*, also covered vital topics such as level crossing safety, developing standards for heritage railways, what the general election might mean for preserved lines and the importance of 'adapting to survive'.

Railways in Parliament Compiled by **Jon Longman**

Open access plea

WOKINGHAM MP John Redwood asked the Department for Transport (DfT) to take steps to allow multiple train operating companies to operate on each rail line and take other steps to help increase competition on regional lines.

Transport Minister Hugh Merriman said: "We recognise that competition can be beneficial for passengers as it can drive innovation and improvements to services.

"We have been clear that, in the right circumstances, open access operators can play a role in increasing this competition and have supported recent applications such as Wrexham, Shropshire & Midland Railway's application to operate services for customers in North Wales, the West Midlands and on the West Coast Main Line."

Bristol to Oxford trial

LIFE peer Baroness Randerson wanted to know why the Great Western Railway trial on the service from Bristol to Oxford will be limited to weekends and leisure travel, and not commuter traffic.

Lord Davies explained: "Great Western Railway has proposed to the DfT a limited trial of extra direct services between Bristol and Oxford. The proposed trial is planned to take place between mid-September and mid-December and will be restricted to Saturdays. This coincides with the Bath Christmas Market, which experiences increased demand for trips on Saturdays to and from Oxford and Bath during the busy Christmas season.

"The trial is only currently planned for weekends because, during the week, the additional trains needed to run the services are already used on other commuter routes."

Euston HS2 tunnels

FORMER *TRM* correspondent Lord Berkeley asked the Government for details of the latest design for the tunnels and grade separation works for the HS2 approaches to Euston; how many platforms are they designed to accommodate; and whether this design has received full safety approval?

Transport Minister Lord Davies of Gower replied: "HS2 Ltd is responsible for designing and building the Euston approaches. The company is continuing to progress with the existing design for the approach tunnels and grade separation in line with the requisite technical, safety and environmental standards.

"The design of the HS2 tunnels has been refined to minimise ground movement and settlement mitigation measures have been developed to be compatible with the operation of the existing railway. As set out in the Network North Command Paper, the HS2 station at Euston will comprise six platforms which can accommodate the trains we will run to Birmingham and onwards."

2019 promises

BARONESS Randerson then asked whether annual reporting on the Railway Enhancements Network Pipeline committed to in 2019 will begin this year.

Lord Davies said: "While the Government remains committed to investing in rail, as demonstrated by the Prime Minister's Network North announcement which detailed an unprecedented number of commitments, significant changes to travel patterns after the pandemic and the challenging fiscal environment rightly require reconsideration of the rail infrastructure portfolio. We understand the interests of stakeholders – industry and local representatives – in the visibility of our forward programme of work. Moving forward we intend to review, with involvement from the supply chain, how best to provide updates on the rail enhancements portfolio."

Haughley upgrade

LIFE Peer Baroness Jones of Moulescoomb asked for details of the timescales for the Ely Area Capacity Enhancement and upgrading of Haughley Junction.

Lord Davies said: "The Network North announcement confirmed the Government's support for the Ely Area Capacity Enhancement programme and the substantial benefits this will bring, along with the related Haughley Junction scheme.

"As with all schemes, these will undergo all formal approvals and governance. Specific timescales will be set out in due course."

Thameslink tribulations

ST Albans MP Daisy Cooper wanted to know whether the DfT had made an estimate of the potential increased cost to the public purse of performance fees due under the train operating company management contracts when deciding to lower performance standards for Govia Thameslink Railway.

Mr Merriman replied: "Targets are updated annually and are calibrated to incentivise operators to deliver the best outcomes for customers within the budget available. They should be challenging but achievable.

"This process was followed when setting Govia Thameslink Railway's Service Quality Regime (SQR) targets for 2023/24. The SQR fee is capped at a maximum level, however, the actual fee is dependent on performance, which is not known in advance."

North Road works

DARLINGTON MP Peter Gibson wanted to know what progress had been made on improvements to North Road station in Darlington ahead of the 200th Anniversaries of the Railways.

Mr Merriman answered: "North Road station is currently under consideration for Northern's ongoing platform improvement programme, designed to improve the stepping distance between the platform and the train."

Compiled by **Graeme Pickering**

SIDELINES

Further carbon-saving bridges designed

WITH work on the project's first double composite viaduct at Wendover Dean in Buckinghamshire already under way, HS2 Ltd has announced that designers and engineers have also succeeded in reducing the carbon footprint of four other major bridges by adopting the same construction technique.

Production of steel and concrete is carbon intensive, but by using steel beams sandwiched between layers of concrete rather than traditional methods, it is possible to create a structure which maximises strength while using significantly less of both materials.

The process of moving the Wendover Dean deck into place began earlier this year and a similar operation has begun to bridge the flood plain of the River Great Ouse close to the Buckinghamshire village of Westbury.

By using the double composite system on these viaducts and those at Turweston, Small Dean and Lower Thorpe, HS2 Ltd estimates that their carbon footprints will be reduced by between 52 and 66% compared to conventional construction.

Remedial work to Colne Valley viaduct

CONSTRUCTION work using the launching girder on the Colne Valley Viaduct was temporarily halted in February while remedial work was carried out to one of the sections already in position.

HS2 Ltd said that cable tensioning needed to be repeated on the most recently completed span, requiring drilling out the concrete join.

Million tonnes to Quainton

IN its first 16 months of operation, HS2's Quainton railhead, north of Aylesbury, dealt with more than a million tonnes of construction materials for the project.

Opened in November 2022, south of Quainton Road station, it is expected to receive a further 1400 trainloads over the next two years, which will bring the total to around three million tonnes.

See also the Fishbone article on page 20.



An aerial view of the Victoria Road Crossover Box at Ealing in West London. Tunnel boring machines (TBMs) *Emily* and *Anne* can be seen in position, in preparation for excavating the western section of the Northolt Tunnel. HS2

Two more tunnelling machines are launched

TBM *Emily* gets under way on the western section of London's Northolt Tunnel and *Elizabeth* begins work on the Bromford second bore in the West Midlands.

THE third tunnel boring machine (TBM) to be launched to work on HS2's London tunnels began excavation of the western section of the Northolt Tunnel in late February.

Emily – and *Anne*, which will follow, tunnelling the adjacent bore – will each cover a distance of 3.4 miles from the Victoria Road Crossover Box at Ealing in West London to Greenpark Way at Greenford.

Already halfway to completing their journeys, TBMs *Sushila* and *Caroline* are working in the opposite direction on the eastern section of the tunnel from West Ruislip to Greenford. The four machines are creating 8.4 miles of twin bore tunnel between them.

Emily and *Anne* were lowered section by section into an 82ft deep ancillary shaft at Victoria Road last October, prior to their assembly. The four TBMs are due to complete their work next year and will then be lifted back to the surface through the giant shafts in place at Greenpark Way.

Euston Tunnel

Two further TBMs are due to be delivered to Old Oak Common later this year for work on the 4.5-mile long Euston Tunnel which will form the route to and from the high speed line's eventual terminus, although funding and arrangements for its delivery are still being reviewed following the Government's Network North announcement last October.

On March 5, contractors Balfour Beatty VINCI launched the fourth and final TBM being used in the West Midlands. *Elizabeth* is excavating the second bore of the 3.5-mile long Bromford Tunnel between Water Orton in Warwickshire and Washwood Heath in Birmingham. The other bore is being completed by *Mary Ann*, which, having begun work last June, is around a third of the way through its task. It is due to break through later this year. *Elizabeth's* journey should end in autumn 2025.

Material excavated during the work will be sifted and reused in the construction of the project's Delta Junction, where the first viaduct section over the westbound link road between the M6 and M42 near Coleshill was moved into place in February.





'GREEN BRIDGE' PROGRESS: Construction of the foundations for the largest of HS2's 16 'green bridges', close to the village of Turweston, near Brackley, is well under way. As can be seen from this February 2024 picture (left), work is also progressing on the cutting. The computer-generated aerial perspective (right), shows how, with a width of almost 325 feet, as well as carrying a local road, footpath and bridleway over the rail route, it will include hedgerows and vegetation to provide a habitat for wildlife. HS2

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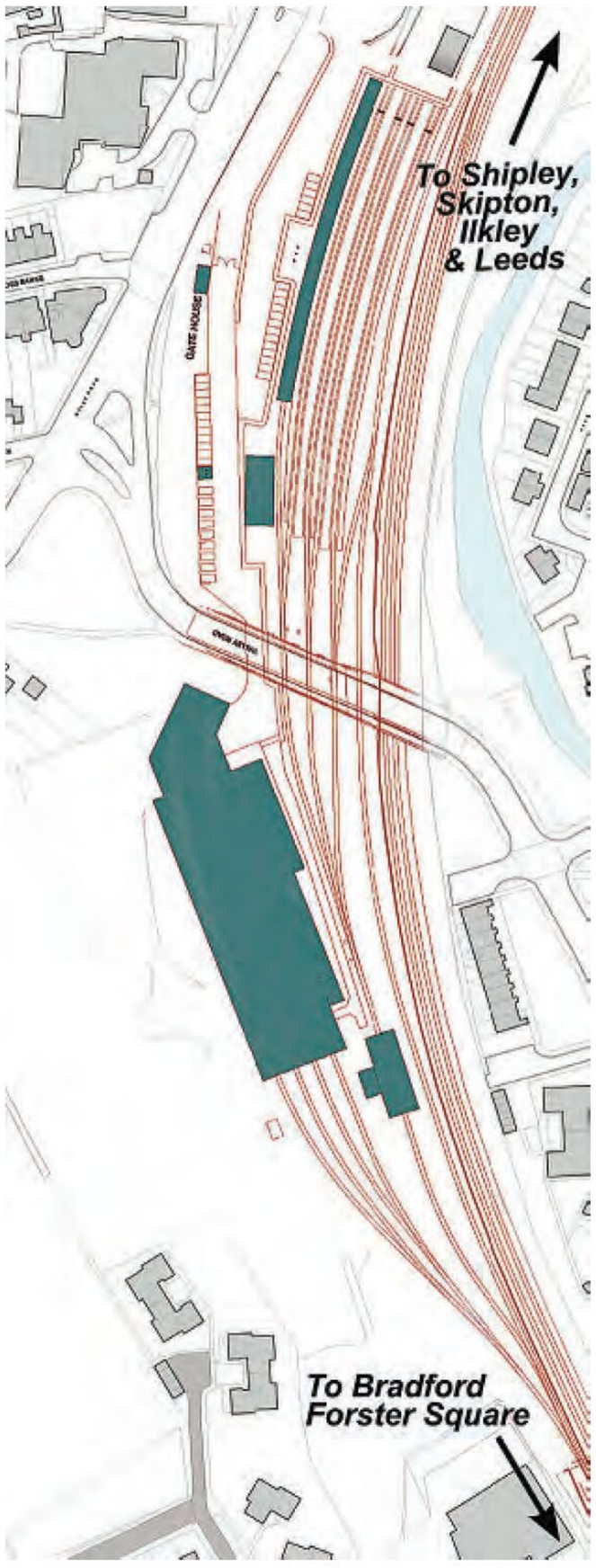
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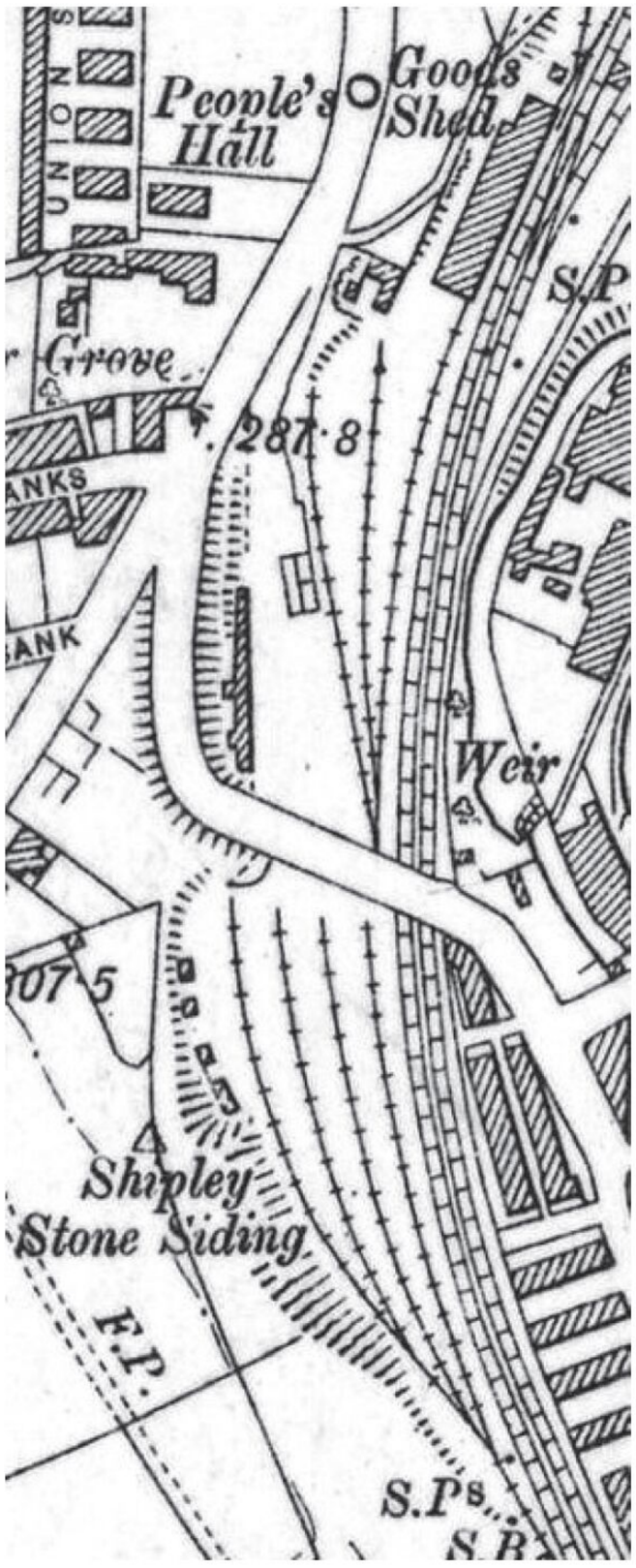
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New depot for Shipley

Railway land to the south of Shipley station is being converted from a scrapyard to a brand-new depot for Northern's Class 333 fleet, as Paul Bickerdyke reports.



A plan of the new Northern EMU depot just south of Shipley station adjacent to the line to Bradford Forster Square. South of Valley Road will be a four-road maintenance shed, while the north side will have five stabling sidings.



A map of the site in Midland Railway days, with the goods yard to the north of Valley Road and additional stone sidings to the south. (CC-BY NLS)

Below: A computer-generated image of how the new four-road maintenance shed could look inside. NR



THE site for a new EMU depot at Shipley in West Yorkshire – first reported in last month's *RM* – has been revealed. The £100 million facility will be built just south of the town's triangular station, on the west side of the line to Bradford Forster Square, on a piece of land previously used by scrap metals firm Crossley Evans.

The investment is part of the £3.9 billion Transpennine Route Upgrade (TRU) and is needed because future work in the west Leeds area will mean that Northern's largest depot at Neville Hill will be largely out of action for several weeks in 2026.

However, the Shipley site will be more than just a temporary arrangement, as it will become the permanent home for the Aire and Wharfe Valley Class 333 EMUs. This fleet of 16 four-car units is dedicated to the routes between Leeds, Bradford Forster Square, Ilkley and Skipton, and moving their base from Neville Hill to Shipley puts them at the heart of their network instead of on the edge.

"This brand-new depot will support rail services while we carry out essential improvements and also leave long-lasting legacy benefits for the town going forward," said Neil Holm, managing director of the TRU.

Rob Warnes, Northern's strategic development director, added: "As the future home for most of our electric train fleets for West Yorkshire, the new site will bring a wealth of highly skilled jobs into the region, as well as providing resilience for our network across the North."

Site of two halves

The site is split into two connected halves by Valley Road, which passes over the railway on a bridge. North of the bridge is the former goods yard and sidings opened by the Leeds & Bradford Railway in 1846 (later part of the Midland Railway, LMS and British Railways); while the south side was home to additional stone sidings added in 1877.

Over the past few months, Crossley Evans has been gradually clearing the site as it prepares to move to a brownfield site elsewhere within the town. The new EMU depot will include a four road maintenance shed south of Valley Road, with five stabling sidings on the north side.

Crossley Brothers began handling scrap on a small part of the site during the First World War, when there was a need to start recycling metals. This demand gradually grew and the company took over the whole site in the 1970s after the goods yard closed. The company changed its name to Crossley Evans in 1983.

The site remained rail connected, however, and scrap metal was taken away by rail at various times – but the last such trains ran in June 2016. A small fleet of industrial locomotives was used over the years to shunt the wagons internally for these trains, beginning with Andrew Barclay 0-4-0ST No. 1823 (of 1924) in the mid-1970s. This was replaced in the 1980s by diesels, including former Esholt Sewage Works Hunslet 0-4-0 diesel-hydraulic No. 7159 (of 1969), ex-Army Ruston & Hornsby 0-6-0 diesel-hydraulic No. 459519 (of 1961), and ex-NCB Sentinel No. 10118 (of 1962). Two 88DS Class Ruston & Hornsby four-wheel diesel-mechanical locos Nos. 425483 (of 1958) and No. 284838 (of 1950) were kept as spares, but were rarely – if ever – used. ■



Looking north from the Valley Road bridge in the 1960s as 'Britannia' Class No. 70003 heads past the goods yard towards Bradford Forster Square. RICHARD PULLEYN



A view of the goods yard in the late 1970s after being fully taken over as a scrapyard. Andrew Barclay No. 1823 can be seen shunting wagons, while Ruston & Hornsby '88DS' Nos. 425483 and 284838 are tucked away in a siding. HAWTHORNE COLLECTION



'Grid' No. 56312 pulls into the scrapyard with a rake of empty wagons for loading in September 26, 2012. Ex-Army Ruston & Hornsby 0-6-0 No. 459519 waits to do the internal shunting.



Site clearance underway in the former goods yard on January 25, as EMU No. 333001 passes on the main line with a Bradford Forster Square to Leeds working. These EMUs should be based here at the new depot from 2026. PAUL BICKERDYKE



The south side of the site on September 26, 2012. After Ruston & Hornsby No. 459519 had taken away half the rake of empties, No. 56312 runs round the remaining wagons and prepares to stable on the access road to the main line while the wagons are loaded.



A similar view on January 24, shows how the south side of the site had already been cleared. EMU No. 333019 heads away to Bradford. PAUL BICKERDYKE



An impression of how the new depot building will look. NR



The future of the yard's industrial locos is not yet known, but on January 24, Ruston & Hornsby No. 459519 was parked in the archway under Valley Road. PAUL BICKERDYKE



DB Cargo's No. 66085 stands at the Calvert North (Claydon curve) temporary railhead on June 23, 2021, as its stone train is unloaded by RFS. ALL PHOTOS BY PHIL MARSH

Finding a way

Regular readers will have seen photographs in this magazine of aggregate trains being unloaded north of Aylesbury for HS2, but the name of the firm behind this award-winning idea may be less familiar, as Phil Marsh reports.

FISHBONE Solutions' Rail Logistics Team may not be a name familiar to many *RM* readers, perhaps because it has only been in business for five years. But the firm has recently won the Rail Freight Group's 2023 'Project of the Year' award after finding a way to deliver millions of tons of stone aggregate to HS2 worksites by rail instead of by road.

The team is headed up by Ed Johnson, Mick Tinsley and Paul Clews, who between them have around a century of rail experience at all levels. Mr Johnson, an aircraft engineer, brought his engineering and innovation skills to rail at the turn of the century and was head of production for the EWS fleet. Mr Clews started as a 16-year-old TOPS boy at Liverpool Lime Street and went on to become chief operating officer for DB Cargo in the Netherlands; while Mr Tinsley joined BR at York as a shopman in the Welding School and ended up leading DB Cargo's Construction Sales and the Wascosa wagon supply project to Network Rail.

A chance conversation on a train between Mr Johnson and a rail colleague resulted in a short consultancy looking at how Fishbone could advise EKFB, one of HS2's Tier One contractors, on using rail to bring in material direct to its worksites. Mr Clews and Mr Tinsley were brought in to assist using their operational and commercial experience.

"We used our collective skillsets and worked with people we already knew," said Mr Clews. "And within three weeks we were able to inform EKFB it was possible to use rail deliveries direct to HS2 sites."

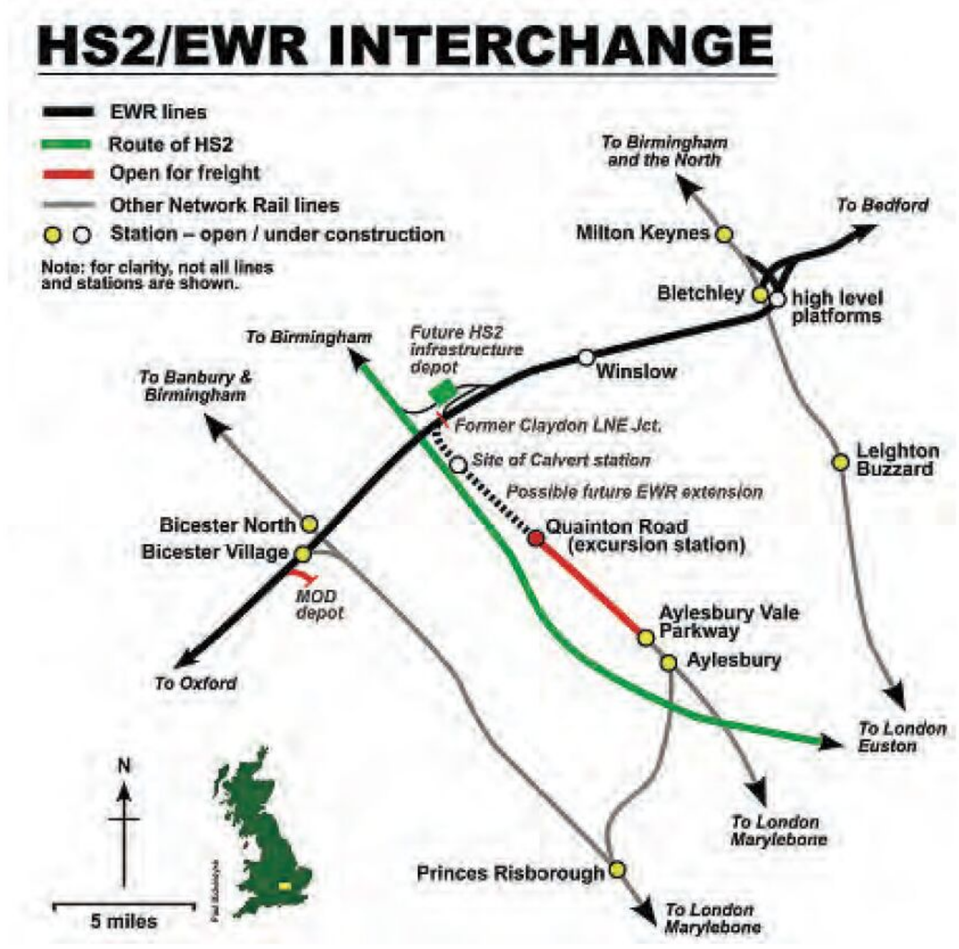
After the Fishbone team presented its proposals, EKFB invited them to become its long-term Rail Advisory Team, working with the rail industry to ensure rail was used to convey stone from UK quarries to HS2 railheads. The proposals were said to reduce costs by £7.50 a tonne, avoid tens of thousands of HGV movements, and lower carbon emissions by thousands of tonnes compared to using lorries and damaging local country narrow roads around Quainton and Calvert in Buckinghamshire.

Workings begin

The first railhead was 10 miles north of Aylesbury, intended as a 100,000-tonne trial delivering stone to be used for haul and access roads to the work compounds. Because of pathing issues on busy sections of line from Tytherington Quarry (South Gloucestershire), the team decided to operate an 'on-time' policy. "This ensures a delivery focus by the entire supply chain, and protects EKFB and HS2's reputation as 'good users' of the network," said Mr Johnson. "We provide comprehensive reporting on every aspect of the rail service, including tonnage delivered, and manage the supply chain relationships with Network Rail and freight operators on behalf of EKFB."

Setting up the Calvert North unloading point (actually located on the former Claydon curve) took 26 weeks, including a Covid lockdown. Apart from negotiating haulage contracts with Network Rail, more than a mile of out-of-use line had to be reopened north of the former Calvert station area, which last saw a train in 2018.

Calvert North groundframe had been retained to shunt waste trains serving the nearby landfill site, which proved critical – as was relocating the Claydon LNE signalling cabin four miles south to the site of the former Waddesdon station. The line north of there to Calvert North became a long siding split into four operational zones controlled by a shunter at Calvert.





An aerial view looking north-east over the HS2/EWR interchange site on May 30, 2022. The route of HS2 runs north to south (left to right) along the bottom of the image, with EWR running diagonally west to east (bottom left to top right), the two routes connected by Claydon curve (track lifted in this view, but which had been the site of Calvert North temporary railhead).

"We looked at where stone could be unloaded direct to EKFB/HS2 from the live railway," said Mr Clews. "The site north of Calvert's groundframe, which left the former Great Central Railway route onto the Second World War emergency connection with the Varsity Line at Claydon, was right in the middle of the HS2 and East West Rail interface area."

The line at Calvert was brought back into operation at very slow speed (5mph), but using this was only possible until July 2021, when it was lifted as EKFB commenced major earthworks there for the HS2/EWR interface.

The 1000-tonne stone trains initially had to run overnight due to pathing constraints, especially between Princes Risborough, Aylesbury Parkway and Calvert, which is mainly a single line route also used by Chiltern Railways' passenger services. Fishbone also had to arrange wagon hire and haulage from freight operators, beginning with DB Cargo, and then devise a method of operating a lineside discharge facility to unload the 100-tonne wagons.

Mr Clews had previously worked with RFS Works Ltd on similar schemes, and so RFS was tasked with the fast lineside wagon unloading that was required to maintain the train punctuality. RFS used manually operated mobile grabs to unload trains in 60 minutes onto a temporary storage pad, and from there transported the stone to an adjacent virtual quarry. The unofficial record to empty a 100-tonne wagon was claimed to be 150 seconds!

Moving south

The 100,000 tonne trial started in December 2020, during the Covid pandemic, and was so successful a further 251,000 tonnes were delivered before the track at Calvert was lifted. These stone trains, combined with the waste trains still operating to the Calvert Waste Transfer facility at this time, probably signified the busiest period, by tonnage and amount of trains, on this remaining section of the former GCR since 1966 when the main line route closed! ▶



Looking north from the former Calvert station, which had a typical GCR island platform arrangement, towards the Calvert North railhead in the distance on February 26, 2021. On the right is DBC's No. 66125 with a train of empties, which had backed down from the railhead. On the left, stablemate No. 66156 departs the runround loop for the railhead with a train of loaded wagons.

TEMPORARY HS2 STONE RAILHEADS

	First Train	Last Train
Calvert North	December 10, 2020	July 28, 2021
Calvert South	August 2, 2021	October 2, 2021
PRA	January 10, 2022	October 21, 2022
Quainton Road	November 7, 2022	

"These stone trains, combined with those to the Calvert Waste Transfer facility, probably signified the busiest period on this remaining section of the former GCR since 1966"



As the HS2/EWR project progressed, the former GCR main line was cut back in stages from Claydon/Calvert to Quainton Road. This view on November 5, 2021 shows some of the lifted track panels being transported away.

This first stage of delivering stone by rail saved an estimated 17,550 HGV trips (each way), reducing carbon emissions by 5,100 tonnes, and was regarded as a huge success. Both EKFB and HS2 were therefore keen to explore further opportunities for direct stone deliveries by rail, and so the project was extended.

After the track had been lifted southwards from Claydon, a new temporary discharge point was created in September 2021 in conjunction with the Calvert Waste Transfer Facility. This was named Calvert South, about a mile south of the former Calvert station. A further 228,919 tonnes of stone were delivered by the time the track again had to be lifted southwards, this time to Quainton Road station – home of the Buckinghamshire Railway Centre – in October 2021.

A third site (named PRA) was created just south of Aylesbury on the single line Princes Risborough branch. This was to deliver stone in conjunction with the revised branch line alignment over the HS2 route, which again saved time and money while reducing the environmental impact when measured against HGV traffic delivering 337,243 tonnes. "Not only were carbon emissions reduced, but also community stress with less traffic, road damage and noise. These were key benefits," said Mr Johnson.

A fourth discharge point was then set up a mile south of the new end of the line at Quainton Road, which accepted its first train on November 7, 2022. This serves the worksite constructing the long HS2 Thame Valley viaduct being built by EKFB.

At the time of writing, up to three trains a day serve Quainton South, operated by DC Rail and GBRf, and these will continue into 2025 delivering around three million tonnes by the end of the project.

Fishbone Solutions has used innovation, data analysis and old-fashioned railway experience to create a modal shift from road to rail, which should see five million tonnes of aggregate/stone delivered by rail with high punctuality statistics.

"There are too many silos in the rail industry," said Ed Johnson. "As a private entrepreneurial company, we have to collaborate and innovate to survive." This attitude and that of its partners (EKFB, Network Rail, Hanson, DB Cargo, RFS, Great Western Railway, Chiltern Railways, other freight operating companies and other HS2 contractors) have made this a success story recognised by the freight industry. ■



The signal cabin at Claydon loop was relocated south to Waddesdon (between Quainton Road and Aylesbury) to control access to the railheads north of there. On July 6, 2021, the driver of DBC's No. 66063 collects the token to proceed south to Aylesbury Parkway with an empty stone train from Calvert.



The Fishbone team of (from left) Ed Johnson, Paul Clews and Mick Tinsley.

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SCAN ME

A view of Marylebone from the Rossmore Road bridge on January 28, 2020, showing (from the left) the full length platforms 1-3 and the shorter 4-6. The right-hand section of trainshed was originally the middle one over a wide taxi road. When the station opened in 1899, land on the right was earmarked for future expansion. ROBIN WEBSTER (CC BY-SA 2.0)

Marylebone milestone



The logo celebrating Marylebone's 125th anniversary, and as applied to Chiltern Railways DMU No. 168215.

The Great Central Railway's London terminus has seen mixed fortunes over the years, but is thriving today as it celebrates its 125th anniversary. Paul Bickerdyke reports.

CHILTERN Railways named DMU No. 168215 *Marylebone Station 125 Years* with a vinyl plaque at the London terminus on March 15, to mark the station's milestone anniversary.

Although the station is thriving today under Chiltern, it has had mixed fortunes over the years, even surviving a close shave with closure. Marylebone was officially opened by the Great Central Railway on March 15, 1899 (although coal traffic had begun the previous July) and was the last main line terminus to be built in London.

Unlike its nearby neighbours Paddington, Euston, St Pancras and King's Cross, Marylebone has always been a modest affair – opening with just four platforms, although there were plans to double the size as traffic demanded and finances allowed. The main station building and concourse were built to the potential full width that was never actually required, giving rise to today's unusual 'reverse-L' shape layout.

In its original form, there were four full-length platforms south of the Rossmore Road overbridge, with extensive facilities for goods, carriages and locomotives north of there. There was a ramp down from the bridge to a taxi road between platforms 1 and 2; platforms 1-3 were covered to halfway by three metal and glass trainsheds; while platform 4 on the western side was outside trainsheds but covered by a canopy.

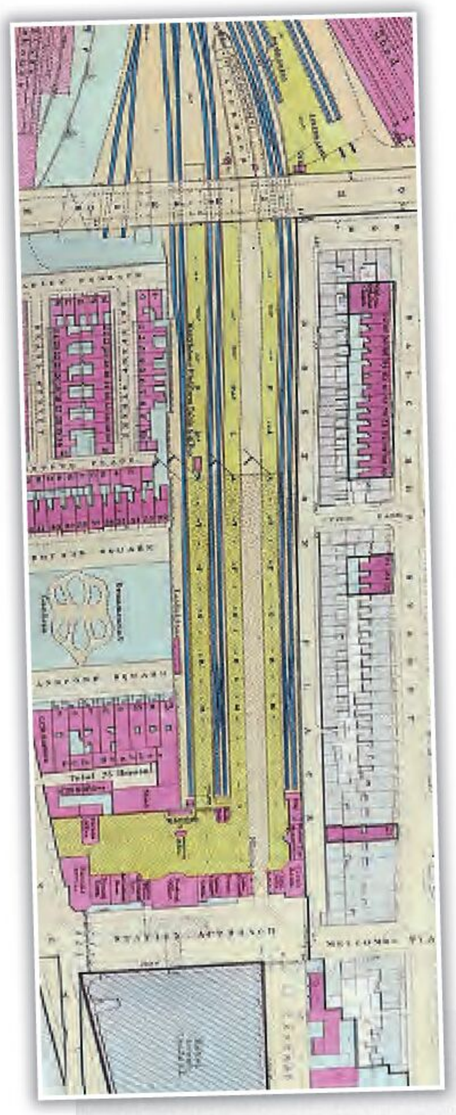


Right: A photograph from the April 1899 issue of *The Railway Magazine* showing the dignitaries and crowds seeing off the first special train from Marylebone's original platform 2 on March 9, 1899 – a week before the official opening to passengers on March 15. The locomotive is GCR Class 11A 4-4-0 No. 861 (later LNER 'D6' No. 5861).

Mixed fortunes

Passenger numbers were never as high as hoped – with most of the GCR's traffic being goods and coal from the North and East Midlands – but commuter use increased after the opening of the GWR/GCR joint line via High Wycombe in April 1906. The station's heyday came in the pre-Second World War LNER era, but decline set in after Nationalisation – not least when British Railways transferred control of the GCR main line to the London Midland Region in the late-1950s, and it was then regarded as duplicating the busier Midland Main Line. Express services ended in 1960, and the GCR line north of Calvert was closed in 1966.

The low point came in the mid-1980s with a





Above: The station frontage on October 4, 2014. It was built wider than required to allow for possible future expansion. The porte-cochere on the right connects the station to the adjacent hotel. JOHN SALMON (CC BY-SA 2.0)

Left: A plan of the 1899 station, with the platforms and concourse in yellow, and Rossmore Road bridge crossing the northern end, separating the station from the goods and carriage sidings. The large square building at the bottom is the Great Central Hotel, which became the headquarters of British Rail from 1948 to 1986, but reopened as the Landmark Hotel in 1993.





LNER 'V2' No. 60831 leaves Marylebone on May 11, 1964 with the 2.38pm to Nottingham Victoria. Behind the loco can be seen the ramp down from Rossmore Road to the station's taxi road. V C K ALLEN



Above: The station has a run-down air in this July 1975 view, as a Class 115 DMU prepares to depart from the original platform 3 for Aylesbury. The taxi road is on the left. HUGH LLEWELYN (CC BY-SA 2.0)

Left: A view of Marylebone in January 1966 showing platform 1 nearest the camera and the wide taxi road under the middle section of the trainshed. GEOFFREY SKELSEY (CC BY-SA 4.0)



The layout between 1990 and 2006 (and seen in 2000), when the taxi road had been converted into new platforms 2 and 3 (left), the old platform 2 had become new platform 4, and the stubs of the old platforms 3 and 4 were used for stabling DMUs (right). Note also the western (right-hand side) third of the trainshed has been removed. NIGEL THOMPSON (CC BY-SA 2.0)



The naming of No. 168215 at Marylebone on March 19, with the Lord Mayor of Westminster Cllr Patricia McAllister (left), the managing director of Chiltern Railways Richard Allan (right) and children from nearby St Edwards Primary school. CR

campaign to close the station and turn it into a coach terminus, with the tracks converted to roads. But thankfully rising passenger numbers in London saw this move defeated, and investment followed as part of Chris Green's Network SouthEast sector.

Route modernisation in 1990/91 saw the Chiltern line resignalled and Marylebone remodelled. The taxi road was excavated to create two new platforms (today's platforms 2 and 3); the old platform 2 became a new platform 4; and the land occupied by the old platforms 3 and 4 was sold off to help fund the work. These changes also meant Marylebone lost the western-most section of its trainshed.

More changes were to follow after Privatisation, when Marylebone became the London terminus of Chiltern Railways. A series of works under the 'Evergreen' banner saw two carriage sidings on the western side (the northern stubs of the old platforms 3 and 4) converted into two extra half-length platforms (numbers 5 and 6) in 2006, with platform 4 cut back to the same length to create passenger access to the new 5 and 6. Line improvements and doubling to Banbury allowed the introduction of regular through services to Birmingham and beyond, rivalling those out of Euston, while Oxford was added to the Chiltern network in 2015.

Despite all the changes, Marylebone's initial independent spirit survives today. It remains one of the smallest main line termini in London, it is that last to remain served by all-diesel trains, and it is the only one not managed by Network Rail. ■

A Baker's dozen

THE LONDON EXTENSION

To celebrate 125 years since the opening of the Great Central Railway's route to London Marylebone, John Baker delves into *The RM* archive to take a pictorial journey along much-missed main line.

DEPENDING on your point of view, the Great Central Railway's London Extension was either too late to the party or ahead of its time – neither of which was particularly good for business.

When it opened fully in April 1899 (the official opening and the first passenger trains were the month before), the 92-mile line from Annesley (north of Nottingham) to Quainton Road (near Aylesbury) and then on to the new London terminus at Marylebone was destined to become the last new main line to be built in Britain until the first section of HS1 opened over a century later in September 2003.

The route was conceived by the Manchester, Sheffield and Lincolnshire Railway (which changed its name to the GCR in August 1897) as a strategic connection to London. The MSLR was strong across the North of England from the Mersey to the Humber, but relied on agreements with rival companies to access the capital.

The extension was built with easy gradients for fast running, but south of Leicester it passed through mostly sparsely populated areas, crossing over two of its rivals without connections at Loughborough (Midland Railway) and Rugby (LNWR).

There were only two stations of any size en route – at Nottingham Victoria (shared with the Great Northern Railway) and Leicester Central – with two dozen others serving relatively small towns. Notably, all but three of these (at Carrington and Arkwright Street, just north and south of Nottingham respectively, and then later at Rushcliffe Halt, north of Loughborough) were of the standard GCR island platform design, while famously Lutterworth was the only town not served by another railway company.

The extension joined the Metropolitan Railway just north of Quainton Road, the GCR then sharing the Met's route towards London until branching off for the final two miles to Marylebone. However, the busy



nature of this line led to a GWR/GCR joint line opening in 1905/6 that gave the GCR a slightly longer but faster route into Marylebone via Princes Risborough.



The GCR's London extension began at Annesley, about 10 miles north of Nottingham, and the joint GCR/GNR Nottingham Victoria station – one of only three major stations on the route – was in a deep cutting between tunnels at the north and south ends. In October 1959, in the last few months of through workings between London and stations north of Nottingham, Standard Class 5 4-6-0 No. 73010 arrives at Victoria with the up 'South Yorkshireman' from Bradford Exchange to Marylebone via Huddersfield and Sheffield Victoria. T H HEPBURN



Nottingham Victoria was a substantial station, shared with the GNR, comprising two large island platforms each with bays at both ends. 'Black Five' No. 44690 is pictured after arriving with a stopping train from Sheffield on April 25, 1962. J F HENTON

The dream ends

The London line offered high speed running for passenger and freight services, but was never as busy as its rivals, and thus not as financially successful. It became part of the LNER at Grouping in 1923, then British Railways' London Midland Region after Nationalisation in 1948. BR came to regard it as unnecessary duplication of other routes (not least because it was under the same management team as the Midland Main Line), leading to its run down and eventual closure.

Through trains from Marylebone to Sheffield, Manchester and Bradford ended in January 1960, leaving three daily semi-fast services to Nottingham, while local services were withdrawn north of Aylesbury.

The end came after publication of the Beeching Report in June 1966, with all passenger services between Aylesbury and Rugby ending in September that year. A residual DMU service survived between Rugby Central and Nottingham until May 1969 – this being cut back to Nottingham Arkwright Street from September 1967 after Victoria station closed for the site to be redeveloped as a shopping centre.

Surviving at the southern end today is Marylebone and the two former joint line routes, while HS2 is to reuse some of the trackbed for a few miles north of Quainton Road. At the northern end, the Loughborough-based Great Central Railway heritage line offers a great period feel for the former main line – including its unique two-track section south of Loughborough – while ongoing plans are progressing to reconnect it over the Midland Main line with another surviving section to Ruddington, south of Nottingham, to create a combined 18-mile heritage line. ■



Left: After leaving Nottingham Victoria, the GCR crossed over the Midland Railway's main station in the city (on a route now used by tram services), then almost immediately came to Arkwright Street. A Class 104 DMU set is seen there on April 12, 1969 with the 12.27 to Rugby Central – a service that would end the following month, the last curtain call for passenger trains on the former London extension. A B GARSIDE



The GCR Main Line crossed over the Midland Main Line at Loughborough (just north of the Midland station) using a bridge once removed but now reinstated as part of a heritage line project. The GCR can be seen overhead in this shot of ex-Midland Railway 483 Class (a forerunner of the LMS '2P') No. 423 on a Nottingham to Leicester train in early 1934. J G EARP ▶



1



2



1: LNER 'B7' (GCR Class 9Q) No. 5032 hurries south through Quorn & Woodhouse in mid-1935 with a train from Sheffield. Although no 'B7s' survive, the station is now part of the GCR heritage line between Loughborough Central and Leicester North. A B COMPTON

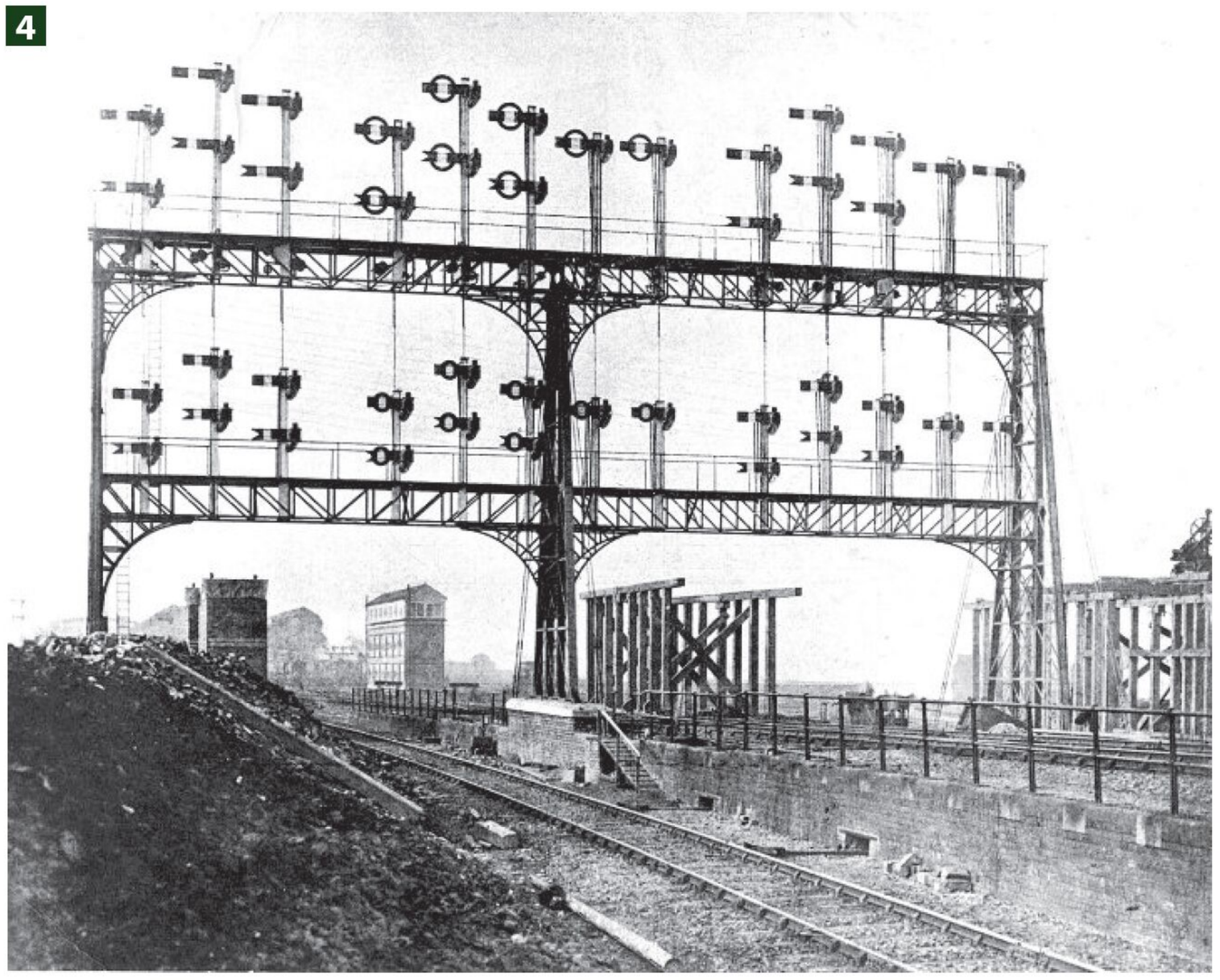
2: Leicester Central was the only GCR station of substantial size between Nottingham and Marylebone, comprising one large island platform with bays at the north and south ends. 'Black Five' No. 45444 arrives from the north on May 18, 1963 with a Nottingham Victoria to Marylebone service. G D KING

3: In the bay platforms at the south end of Leicester Central, rebuilt 'Royal Scot' No. 46106 *Gordon Highlander* waits to take over a southbound train on June 16, 1962. Note ex-GWR 'Hall' No. 6906 *Chicheley Hall* can be seen in the background on the right – GWR locos were regular visitors to Leicester Central on through services from the South Coast. H A GAMBLE

4: After crossing the Midland Railway at Loughborough, the GCR then had to cross the LNWR at Rugby, south of the LNWR's station. This classic view shows the GCR bridge being built over the established line just behind the impressive LNWR signal gantry around early 1896.

5: Rugby Central station was a classic GCR island platform, but in a quieter part of the town than the much larger LNWR station. On April 30, 1966 'Black Five' No. 44825 departs Rugby Central with the 17.15 Nottingham Victoria-Marylebone. IAN G HOLT ▶





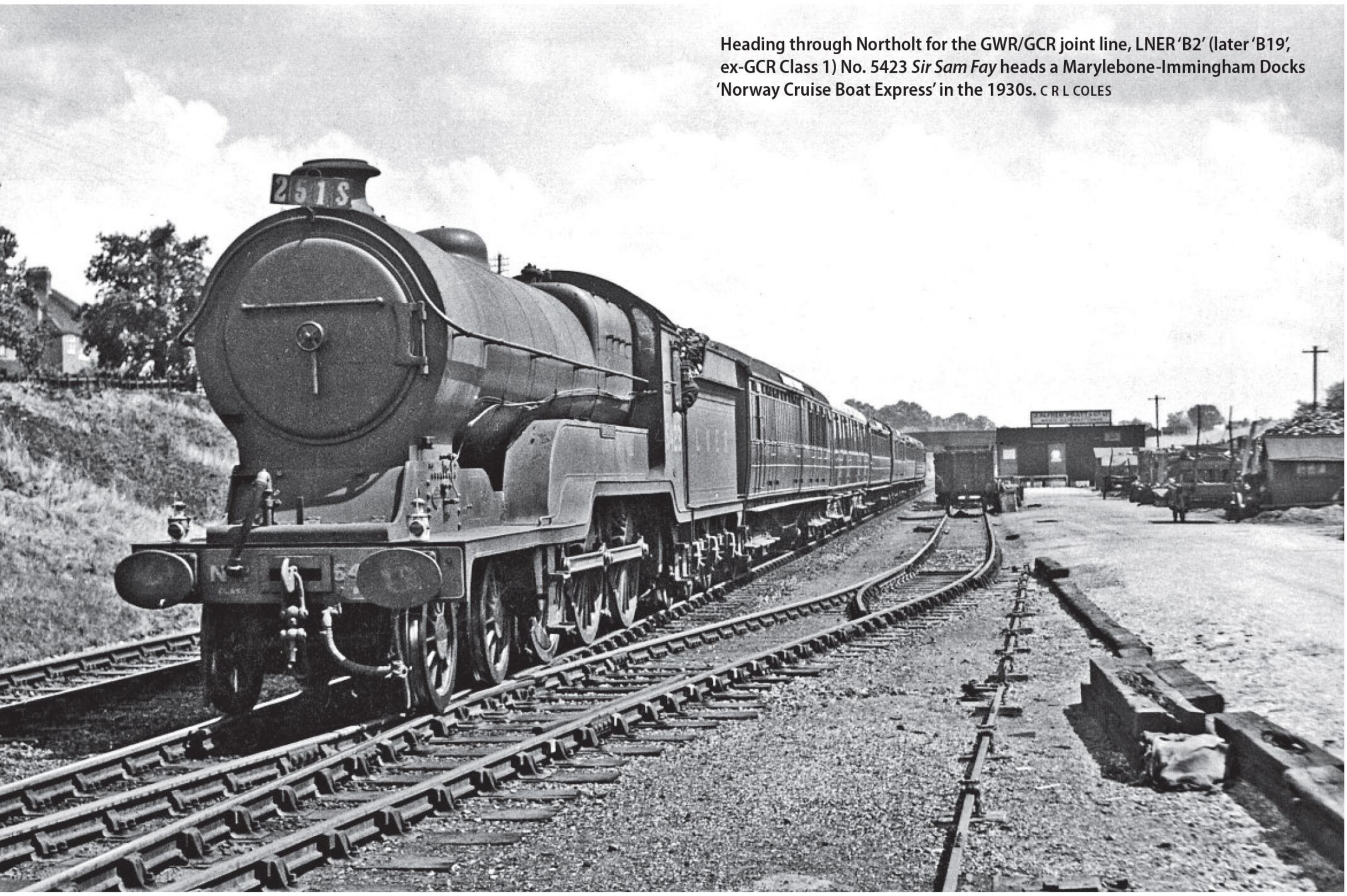


The relatively infrequent passenger service on the London Extension meant more capacity for goods services, including coal from the Northern and Midlands collieries. LNER 'B7' (GCR Class 9Q) No. 5469 heads an up mixed goods near Braunston & Willoughby on January 15, 1945. J F ALLEN

Woodford Halse was a variation of the standard island platform arrangement as there was an extra platform for the connection (just south of the station) to the Stratford-upon-Avon and Midland Junction Railway (SMJ). There was also a large motive power depot here, while just over a mile-and-a-half south was the junction for the GCR branch to Banbury – used by through trains between the South Coast, East Midlands and Yorkshire. On April 24, 1965 ex- LMS Fowler '4F' No. 44188 runs round the SLS 'Farewell to the SMJ' tour from Birmingham Snow Hill. FLYING STAG (CC BY-SA 2.0)



The GCR used both of the joint lines at the London end as paths allowed, this late 1930s view shows LNER 'A3' No. 4478 *Hermit* heading a Marylebone to Manchester express near Northwood. Note the fourth-rail Metropolitan Railway electrification. C R L COLES



Heading through Northolt for the GWR/GCR joint line, LNER 'B2' (later 'B19', ex-GCR Class 1) No. 5423 *Sir Sam Fay* heads a Marylebone-Immingham Docks 'Norway Cruise Boat Express' in the 1930s. C R L COLES

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PAUL BICKERDYKE, EDITOR

A flashback to June 1972 as Type 4 No. 1725 (later Nos. 47490/47768) heads west along the Devon coastline at Teignmouth. HAWTHORNE COLLECTION

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MIDLAND TRANSITIONS 3

The 125 era

John Heaton FCILT brings the story of the Midland Main Line up to date with a look at HSTs, 'Meridians' and the route's all-time record holder.

IT was to be more than 30 years from the introduction of 125mph-capable trains to the Midland Main Line before matching track was provided.

As we have seen in the previous Midland Transitions article (*RM* September 2023), the main line from St Pancras to Sheffield in 1982 was the fiefdom of Sulzer Class 45s, by then fitted with electric train heating and hauling air-conditioned stock, but limited to only 90mph over what could be a racing ground – especially sections of the 99.1miles from London to Leicester.

Sectorisation resulted in the appointment of Cyril Bleasdale (my management training mentor) as director of InterCity Services, with his ambitions for the Midland service group. After the new West Hampstead signalling installation assumed control of nearly 60 route miles from St Pancras to Sharnbrook, and completion of electrification to Bedford, 100mph running became a possibility. With an eye on turning around falling revenue and making best use of the overall IC125 HST fleet, Mr Bleasdale purloined some less remunerative sets from the Western Region for the Midland's October 1982 timetable, concluding the conversion process the following May.

Immediately before the HSTs arrived on the Midland, the down flagship 'Master Cutler' was booked 80min from St Pancras to Leicester, at a 74mph average, then another 70min to Sheffield via the Erewash Valley. Most other trains took 83min to Leicester and nearer to three hours for the overall journey via the 6.35 mile-longer Derby route.

In contrast, the May 1983 operation had all the hallmarks of Bleasdale's visionary approach. London to Leicester times were immediately reduced by 22%, compared with loco-hauled schedules, to 68min net. Semi-fasts were not forgotten either, benefiting from an even better 25% improvement, from a typical 120min to 91min. This was the sort of enhancement formerly associated with electrification. Further incremental upgrades, eventually to 110mph top speeds, continued (might one say 'in typical Eastern Region fashion'?) so that by the end of the decade the net schedule was down to an astounding 64min at a start-to-stop average of 92.8mph, despite the addition of an eighth trailer to the ex-WR sets which reduced their power/weight ratio by 1hp/tonne to 11.06. As is so often the case, retrenchment to 67min was to follow, partly in pursuit of Public Performance Measure punctuality targets.

The best London to Sheffield schedule came down to 133 min, but the norm was nearer 145 min. It was the general opinion that the HSTs had an easy ride on the Midland Main Line, but the diagrams were intensive and their acceleration from intermediate restrictions at the likes of Wellingborough, Kettering and Market Harborough meant they earned their keep.

Below: Sectorisation of British Rail in 1982 saw HSTs drafted in from the Western Region to accelerate Midland Main Line services to Derby, Nottingham and Sheffield. On March 5, 1988 power car No. 43069 waits at St Pancras for its next working north. Note the Class 08 station pilot on the right.

HAWTHORNE COLLECTION



A step change

Looking at the Railway Performance Society (RPS) electronic archive, the fastest down Leicester express time with a loco-hauled service train was the 76min 15sec run by 'Peak' No. 114 shown in the second Midland Transitions article. On October 9, 1982 the down 'Master Cutler' had Midland Main Line timetable compilation guru Eric Rudkin on board, a stickler for detail who is likely to have been pleased by the achievement of 68min 48sec with a clear run on the 69min net schedule he probably helped devise (as featured in *The RM* February 1983 issue).

Two days later, Western regional operating manager Peter Barlow seems to have been keeping an eye on his former sets, timing a new record of only 67min 12sec, and by the end of the month John Wrottesley had clocked a 65min 50sec run. Table 1 uses the clearest available October 1982 unpublished example in the RPS archive: a run of 69min 40sec timed by Derby deputy chief controller Ken Barlow.

At the turn of the next decade, the best time was down to 63min 7sec, also timed by Mr Rudkin and shown in Table 1. This was close to the ultimate HST performance of 62min 43sec (with only a 2+6 set), even after the 125 mph era eventually arrived in 2013. Back in 2005, the new 'Voyager'-style 'Meridians', usually then in nine-coach formations, had superseded HSTs on the fastest trains



Right: HSTs finally bowed out from MML services in May 2021, but there was a boost from May 2003 to September 2004 by 'Project Rio', when HSTs displaced from CrossCountry were used between St Pancras and Manchester Piccadilly via the MML and Hope Valley during upgrade work on the West Coast Main Line. Still carrying Virgin Trains red livery, power car No. 43162 is seen at Leicester in mid-2003 bound for Manchester.
HAWTHORNE COLLECTION

and seen the IC125s relegated to Nottingham trains. Within three years, the nine-car formations were reduced to seven to enable some four-car sets to be enhanced to five. At 15.5hp/tonne, the resultant power/weight ratio of the seven-car formations was an almost negligible 0.1hp/tonne lower than a nine-car.

Opportunities for HSTs to challenge their previous 63min 7sec achievement remained few and far between until the HSTs had one last unexpected chance to prove themselves on the 'Master Cutler', the 16.47 St Pancras-Sheffield, in 2018 on a 68min timing (only 64min net). In a survey of 20 runs in eight weeks of long-distance commuting, Nigel Smedley's second fastest run to the 2+6 HST's 62min 43sec time was 65min 9sec, which was at least a match for the 2+6 run after allowing for signal delays of 2½ min around St Albans.

Congestion issues

The introduction of Class 222 'Meridians' in 2004/5 gave the keen Midland drivers a chance to show their paces with an even faster piece of machinery than the HSTs. Table 1 shows the first 'Meridian' St Pancras-Leicester run in the RPS archive, which took 65min 45sec, timed by Brian Milner. Despite their 40% power/weight advantage in comparison to 2+8 HSTs, it took until 2010 before a recorder lodged a faster run than the 63min 7sec HST record, when Dr R A Knight clocked 62min 56sec. However, it was necessary to await the arrival of the 125 mph era before times could reach the 'level hour'.

The RPS held 'mass timing days' in 2014 and 2015 with the cooperation of operator East Midlands Trains, which granted travel facilities in return for a copy of the society's report. In 2014, Network Rail had failed to provide all the 125mph upgrades necessary to deliver the timetabled 'Meridian' accelerations, although the HST 110 mph sectional running times had actually been retained. A Temporary Speed Restriction (TSR) remained in force to 95mph between Napsbury and St Albans, but the most crippling was a 50mph on the old steam 'galloping ground' of Rous-Marten and C J Allen at Ampthill, followed by 110mph at Elstow where the modern motive power should have been exulting in 125mph running towards Bedford. Other minor restrictions also served to dampen endeavour.

The 'Meridians' in the 2014 survey were managing to keep the sharp 13½min start-to-pass timing out to St Albans, with the HSTs not far behind on an easy 15½min timing managing a best run of 13min 42sec. Most trains took advantage of the new 125mph limit through Harpenden, with one or two excesses by HSTs – including one shown in the log as 130mph. The best nonstop time to Leicester was recorded by a 'Meridian' in 61min 23sec on net schedules of 60½min.

Of course, the distance from St Pancras to Leicester ▶

TABLE 1: LONDON ST PANCRAS TO LEICESTER. HSTS AND MERIDIANS

Power Cars/Unit		43xxx/43xxx			222007			43114/43045			222005		
Vehicles/tare/gross tonnes		2+7/373/-			9/444/470			2+8/407/415			7/338/-		
Train		11.40 St P-Sheffield			13.55 St P-Nottingham			17.00 St P-Sheffield			08.58 St P-Sheffield		
Date		October 19, 1982			July 4, 2005			June 12, 1990			June 6, 2015		
Recorder/Position		K J Barlow			B Milner			E G Rudkin 5th of 10			F G Collins 4th of 7		
Miles	Timing point	Sch	MS	MPH	Sch	MS	MPH	Sch	MS	MPH	Sch	MS	MPH
0.00	St PANCRAS d	0	0 00		0	0 00	T	0	0 00		0	0 00	
1.53	Kentish Town		3 54	-		2 38	57		2 48	63	3	2 31	64
3.85	West Hampstead				6	4 57	81	5	4 45	82	5	4 26	83
5.08	Cricklewood					5 46	94/107		5 35	89		5 15	-
6.91	Hendon	7½	8 17	95	8	6 51	106	7	6 44	103	7	6 21	105
9.30	Mill Hill		9 43	100/103		8 10	10/112/100		8 08	103/100		7 41	110
12.43	Elstree		11 33	100		9 55	103		9 56	104		9 21	-
15.15	Radlett		13 09	105		11 26	111		11 24	113/115	11	10 45	126/127
19.85	ST ALBANS	15½	16 00	90	15½	14 06	96	14½	14 01	95	13½	13 10	-
21.16	Sandridge		16 50	98	[1]	14 54	104/111		14 48	102		13 57	108/115
24.60	Harpenden		18 54	103		16 48	107		16 42	110	16	15 47	108
27.21	Chiltern Green					18 17	104		18 09	106		17 17	99
30.19	LUTON	22	22 27	86	22½	20 09	91	21	19 58	93/92	19½	19 12	-
32.71	Leagrave		24 05	99		21 40	109/112		21 33	100	21	20 43	110
37.20	Harlington		26 43	106		24 05	111/tsr83		24 00	112		22 59	125/126
40.14	Flitwick		28 26	103	28½	25 55	93		25 35	110	24½	24 23	125
42.18	Ampthill					27 07	106/102		26 43	106	[1]	25 21	127
43.69	Millbrook					27 59	110/112		27 34	108		26 04	127/113
46.96	Elstow					29 46	109/108		29 20	112		27 43	122/125
49.81	BEDFORD	34	34 11	90	33½	31 19	113	32	30 52	112	30½	29 09	110
52.90	Oakley		36 09	101/103		32 59	111/tsr49		32 31	111		30 47	121/123
56.63	Sharnbrook	37½	39 19	100	37½	36 00	63	36	34 30	113	34½	32 36	110
59.69	Sharnbook Summit (MP59¾)		40 08	97		38 18	95		36 13	104/115		34 17	110
62.56	Irchester		41 36	91		39 56	112		37 45	113		35 41	126
64.99	WELLINGBOROUGH	43½	44 03	60	43	41 42	62	41	39 30	70	39	37 14	82/80
66.96	Harrowden Jct		45 30	-		43 18	91/101		40 56	89		38 32	101
69.29	Burton Latimer		47 02	92		44 44	100		42 25	100/101		39 51	110/113
71.91	KETTERING	48½	49 00	77	47½	46 22	94/90	45½	44 02	92	43	41 23	97
75.50	Glendon & R					48 39	101		46 16	98		43 30	106/108
78.44	Desborough N		53 22	94/97		50 25	99		48 02	100/110		45 11	100/109
82.88	MARKET HARBOROUGH	56	56 43	56	54½	53 20	60/101	52½	50 51	61	49½	48 08	59
86.44	East Langton	[3]	59 24	88	[2]	55 51	100	[1]	53 26	99		50 39	102
89.61	Kibworth N		61 37	84		57 45	99/100		55 21	101		52 31	100
91.48	Great Glen		62 47	98		58 53	98		56 27	103		53 38	101
93.43	Kilby Bridge Jct		64 00	91		60 15	tsr67/84		57 36	101		54 47	101
95.96	Wigston N Jct	68	65 43	69	65	62 11	82	62	59 19	74	57½	56 25	83/96
97.96	Knighton S Jct		66 58	85		63 34	92		61 00	70	<1>	57 45	
99.01	LEICESTER a	72	69 40		69	65 45		65½	63 07		61½	59 50	

Notes: RPS mileages from 'middle of train' at St Pancras
Some times rounded from half seconds for publication but retained for checking averages
Minor editing to harmonise logs. 222005 journey approx 0.16miles shorter than the others
2220007 schedule is from 2006. Weights are as quoted by Mr Milner
Mr Rudkin's times have been slightly edited to fit the mileages being used



Left: Four and nine-car Class 222 units (now reformed as five and seven-car sets) started work on the MML from the end of May 2004, displacing HSTs due to their superior acceleration. On February 27, 2024 set No, 222023 is pictured at Market Harborough with 1B55, the 13.50 Nottingham to St Pancras. PAUL BIGGS

TABLE 2: HSTS ON THE 16.47 ST PANCRAS-SHEFFIELD MASTER CUTLER IN 2019

Power cars			43060/43xxx		43060/43xxx	
Vehicles/tare/gross tonnes			2+8/407/415		2+8/407/415	
Date			May 9, 2019		March 28, 2019	
Recorder			N I Smedley		N I Smedley	
Miles	**Timing point**	**Sch**	**MS**	**MPH**	**MS**	**MPH**
0.00	St PANCRAS d	0	0 00	T-/49rbt/38	0 00	T-/54/rbt
1.30	Kentish Town	3	3 14	47	3 15	44/43
3.68	West Hampstead	5½	5 21	81	5 45	72
4.86	Cricklewood		6 13	89	6 41	82
6.76	Hendon	8	7 22	102	7 56	96
9.11	Mill Hill		8 44	106	9 21	100
12.20	Elstree		10 27	108	11 10	103
14.98	Radlett		11 52	125	12 41	118
16.51	MP 16¾		12 37	125	13 28	120
19.66	ST ALBANS	15½	14 19	100	15 12	99
22.76	MP 23		16 06	110/112	17 03	05/111
24.40	Harpenden		17 01	108	17 58	108
27.04	Chiltern Green		18 30	101	19 27	102
30.01	LUTON	21½	20 24	90/88	21 20	90/88
32.53	Leagrave		22 02	101	22 59	98
35.43	Sundon		23 37	119	24 38	114
37.01	Harlington		24 23	128	25 26	122
39.96	Flitwick	26½	25 46	126	26 52	24/122
41.54	Ampthill SS		26 32	124	27 38	123
43.51	Millbrook		27 28	128	28 36	126
46.79	Elstow		29 02	122	30 12	119
49.65	BEDFORD	32½	30 29	111/109	31 42	08/111
52.71	Oakley		32 08	114	33 23	110
54.76	MP 55		33 10	120	34 27	117
56.45	Sharnbrook	36½	34 04	108	35 21	108
58.56	Souldrop		35 15	106/105	36 33	03/102
59.51	Sharnbook Summit (MP59¾)		35 47	107/123	37 06	03/121
62.39	Irchester		37 15	113	38 37	116
64.81	WELLINGBOROUGH	41½	39 49	80	40 10	81/79
66.76	Harrowden Jct		40 11	95	41 35	89
69.11	Burton Latimer		41 34	107	43 04	01/102
71.76	KETTERING	45½	43 10	92	44 40	95/101
75.31	Glendon & R		45 22	103/104	46 53	99/100
78.26	Desborough N	[1]	47 06	97/111	48 40	98
80.16	Braybrook		48 12	110/sigs12	49 45	108
82.70	MARKET HARBOROUGH	53½	51 55	58	51 37	59
86.26	East Langton		54 32	100	54 20	95
89.44	Kibworth N	(3)	56 23	104/112	56 19	97/110
91.30	Great Glen		57 24	107/sigs	57 23	106
93.94	Kilby Bridge Jct		59 19	40/sig stop	58 58	96
95.79	Wigston N Jct	64½	67 09	36/33	60 14	81
97.26	Knighton S Jct		69 25	45/sigs	61 20	80/sigs
98.85	LEICESTER a	68	73 58		65 13	

Notes: RPS mileages from 'middle of train' at St Pancras. [1]=1min recover (3)=3min pathing
Half second times rounded for publication but retained for checking average speeds
Slightly abbreviated for publication

is now less than 99 miles because the Midland platforms were moved further north when the terminus was adapted for Eurostar in the mid-2000s. The miserly four-platform shorter accommodation accorded to Midland services in the rebuild is a significant cause of delay if there is any disruption. For instance, a 4 min late arrival of the 07.55 from Nottingham arriving at 'left hand side' platform 1 caused a 2 min late departure of the 07.57 express from platform 2, meaning the 08.00 to Corby incurred a 1½ min late start.

Even when St Pancras is operating efficiently, the modern timetable has other traps in store from the intensive Thameslink service that muscles over to the fast line to secure paths for its limited-stop examples. Matters came to a head in 2018 with major deceleration of Midland expresses, to the tune of 12 min to the 'Master Cutler', to accommodate Thameslink's expansionism.

The way in which decades of progress were obliterated by the press of a keyboard button was a blot on the successes of Privatisation, even though most of the damage was eventually to be repaired. Apologists would rightly claim that running more trains obviously represents a challenge to both fast schedules and punctuality, but commentators at the time had shown how it could have been mitigated.

'Engine out' issues

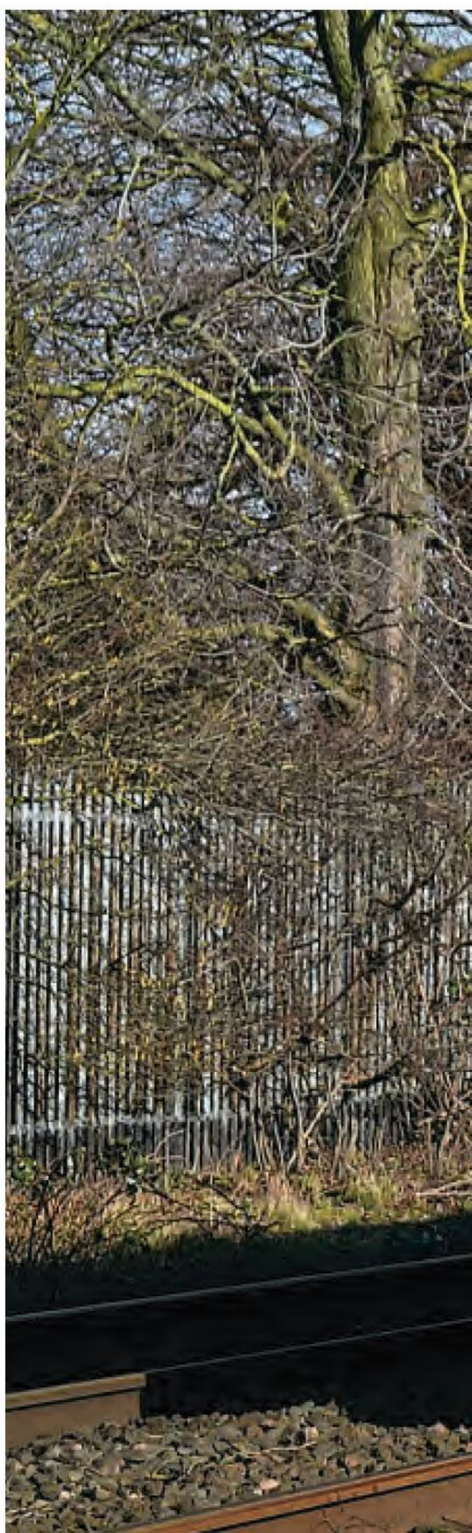
Back in 2014, the mass timing day saw 97% of trains arriving 'close to on time' (up trains at St Pancras, down trains at Leicester/Corby), 87% within 5 min, but only 29% precisely on time or early. The average lateness of down nonstop St Pancras-Leicester trains was 2 min.

Repeating the exercise in 2015, more 'precisely right time/early' running was expected, but extra incidents intervened to affect performance. Also, the removal of the temporary restrictions did not yield the time benefit expected, arguably because subsequent compensatory running was more subdued. Engine reliability of the Class 222s was another factor.

An audit was completed by RPS technical officer Dr David Stannard over the two days of the 2015 timing survey. Six out of thirteen sets had an engine 'not contributing to traction' on the first day, although this was down to just one of nine on the second. Back in 2008, David Horne had arranged for me to complete two round-trip cab rides from St Pancras to Leicester with an HST and 'Meridian' in each direction. Both 'Meridians' had a failed engine, which did not prevent early arrivals being attained by Derby driver G Davies (*RM* December 2008).

It was significant that the arithmetic mean of working engines in Dr Stannard's 2015 survey was only 536 rail-horsepower compared to 558 the previous summer, and of 551/559 and 560 in three other investigations. It was thought this could be the result of altered fuel consumption management chips, as the results were

Below: Four ex-Hull Trains Class 180s transferred to MML services from the December 2020 timetable as a stop-gap to arrival of new Class 810 units in 2024, but the '180s' were not a success and all four were withdrawn by May 2023. No. 180113 is pictured south-west of Attenborough on February 13, 2021 with a Nottingham-St Pancras working. DINGRAWD (CC BY-ND 3.0)



of similar magnitude to trials undertaken in January 2015. We have seen such fuel consumption measures affect punctuality on CrossCountry over the years, when engineers have claimed timings could be kept whereas time was in reality being borrowed from extended planned dwell times and recovery allowances, which had been applied to counter other causes.

The lower power figures seem small, but over a seven-car 'Meridian', the reduction amounts to more than a quarter of an engine. There is a point where maintaining many small engines in a DMU is less efficient, and therefore either less dependable or more expensive (or both), than using one large engine in a locomotive. Perhaps nine-car 'Meridians' were the wrong side of this line, and current seven-car configurations remain so.

Of course, if an HST has one of its two engines 'not contributing to traction', everyone knows about it, but fortunately this does not seem to have afflicted the Midland Valenta/VP185 engines as badly as some other operating companies.

The 2015 mass timing day resulted in the RPS fastest recorded St Pancras-Leicester service train time being taken by chairman Frank Collins and magazine editor David Ashley (see Table 1). After a good start passing Hendon in 6min 20sec, No. 222005 reached 126mph at Radlett and ran to, or slightly above, the speed limit until a TSR at Millbrook intervened. In the modern way of such minor reductions to the speed of powerful trains, this cost only 6sec before resuming 125mph and taking Sharnbrook summit at a minimum of 110mph. There was no train in the way at Wigston, so a time of 59min 50sec was recorded against the working time of 60½min, so far the first and only known such sub-60 min timetabled run of the 125mph Midland Main Line era.

Since the 'shortened course' from the middle of a 'Meridian' at St Pancras to the middle of Leicester station is now 98.85 miles, a time of 59min 50sec meant the average speed was 99.1mph. A 100mph average now needs a time of 59min 18sec.

Perhaps a word of explanation is due about the mileages used in the tables of this article. The overall distance changes according to the mileage assessed by the recorder, some of whom 'double count' by taking the buffer-stop ▶

TABLE 3: LONDON ST PANCRAS TO MARKET HARBOROUGH

Loco		43050 + 43049			222006			180109		
Vehicles/tare/gross tonnes		2+8/407/415			7/338/-			5/253/265		
Train		12.15 St P-Nottingham			18.57 St P-Sheffield			11.05 St Pancras-Nottingham		
Date		March 5, 2015			July 18. 2015			June 10, 2021		
Recorder/Position		J Heaton 2nd of 10			F G Collins			J Heaton 2nd of 5		
Miles		Sch	MS	MPH	Sch	MS	MPH	Sch	MS	MPH
0.00	St PANCRAS d	0	0 00	T -/48/rbt42	0	0 00		0	0 00	½E -/rbt
1.36	Kentish Town	3	2 45	45	3	2 40	-	3	2 58	56
3.69	West Hampstead	5½	4 53	81	5	4 30	82	5	4 52	80
4.91	Cricklewood		5 44	89		5 20	93		5 46	92/108
6.75	Hendon	8	6 52	105	7	6 26	106	7	6 51	107
9.14	Mill Hill		8 12	108/111		7 46	110		8 10	111/112
12.26	Elstree		9 54	107		9 28	110		9 51	109/114/sigs101
14.99	Radlett	12½	11 19	126	11	10 52	125	11½	11 22	118
18.03	Napsbury		12 48	110/98		12 20	118		12 52	123/sigs98
19.69	ST ALBANS	15½	13 46	100	13½<½>	13 18	101	14½	13 49	101/105/sigs87
24.44	Harpenden	18	16 28	110	16½	15 58	110	17	16 45	88/sigs83
27.05	Chiltern Green		17 58	100		17 27	104		18 37	86/98
28.98	Luton Airport P		19 10	93		18 39	94		19 53	95/sigs87
30.03	LUTON	21½	19 51	89	20	19 20	91	20½	20 33	90/sigs
32.55	Leagrave	23½	21 26	101	21½	20 52	109	22	22 16	85/119
37.04	Harlington		23 48	126		23 09	125	[1]	24 47	111/sigs38
39.98	Flitwick	27	25 13	124	25	24 33	125	25½	27 28	71
42.01	Ampthill TSP		26 12	126		25 32	125		28 54	102
43.53	Millbrook	[1]	26 56	123	[1]	26 16	125/tsr110		29 43	116/125
46.80	Elstow		28 34	120		27 55	123/125		31 20	123/125
49.65	BEDFORD	32½	30 06	109	31	29 21	110	31½	32 45	109
52.74	Oakley		31 47	113/120		30 56	119/124		34 20	120/125
56.46	Sharnbrook	36½	33 40	109	35	32 48	110	35	36 11	108
59.53	Sharnbook Summit (MP59¾)		35 25	104/124		34 28	110	(3)	37 53	111/125
62.40	Irchester		36 56	115		35 54	125		39 18	124
64.83	WELLINGBOROUGH	41½	38 32	82	39½	37 27	-/tsr53	43	40 49	81
66.80	Harrowden Jct		39 50	98		39 23	80		42 09	100
69.13	Burton Latimer		41 14	107		40 52	107		43 27	112/113
71.75	KETTERING p/a	45½	42 51	94	43½	42 26	95	47½	45 44	
75.34	Glendon & R		45 04	98/103		44 35	109			
78.28	Desborough N		46 50	100		46 15	100/110			
82.19	Little Bowden		49 20	58		-				
82.71	MARKET HARBOROUGH a	53½	50 38		51	49 39				

RPS mileages from 'middle of train' at St Pancras. [x]= mins recovery time
45138 schedule is that of the 13.00 St Pancras-Sheffield in summer 1982.



"There is a point where maintaining many small engines in a DMU is less efficient, and therefore either less dependable or more expensive (or both), than using one large engine in a locomotive"

mileage. Then comes the shortening of the platforms with similar considerations. Intermediately, different recorders time different points at the same overall location on a railway where the principal landmarks have sometimes moved and, especially in the case of manual signalboxes, even disappeared.

The aim has been to select mileage displays that cause the least alteration to the original logs, at the cost of initially apparent inconsistencies.

Down train top ranking

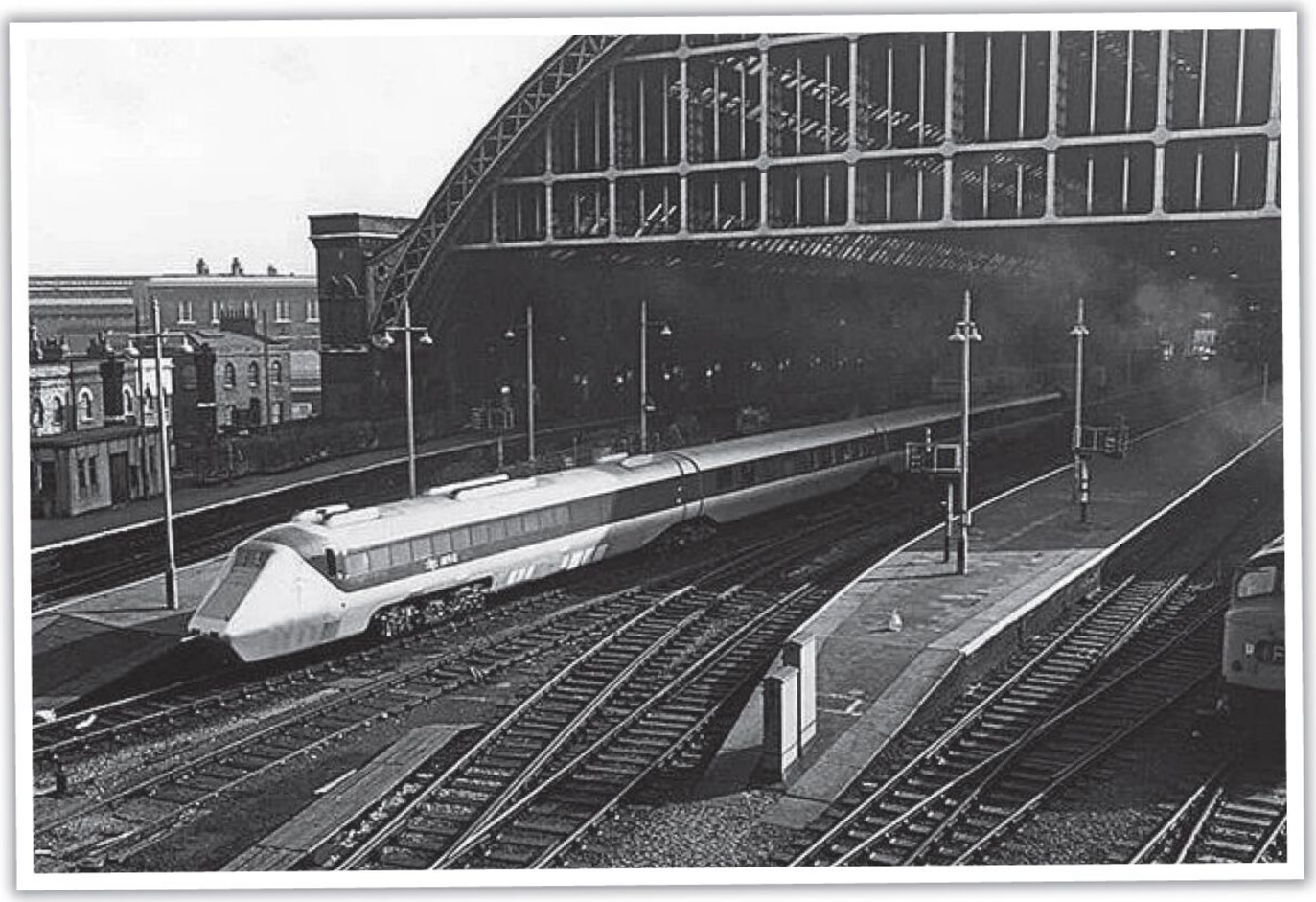
In the previously mentioned exercise with the down 'Master Cutler' HST in 2018, Nigel Smedley assessed 10 key aspects of the journey and awarded 0-3 points on the performance of each to establish an overall ranking. These comprised the fastest starts to pass West Hampstead, the speed climbing to Elstree, Sharnbrook, Desborough and Kibworth, recovery after the restrictions at Luton, Bedford, Wellingborough and Market Harborough and, perhaps debatably, the top speed.

Table 2 shows the run assessed to be the best. This ranking was not based on punctuality, as it was 6min late into Leicester owing to signal checks on the last lap. Paradoxically, the second run in the table was the lowest scoring one, but still arrived in Leicester early.

Perhaps it was a case of 'more haste, worse arrival times' as the pinch points of delay in Thameslink-land, and catching up with a slightly late Nottingham train leaving Market Harborough, were avoided by this 'slower' driver and set, which was thought to be about 10% down on power and driven accordingly. To some extent, the retained 110mph timings on a 125mph railway were likely to induce delays from early running.

Above: In EMR Intercity livery, No. 222104 heads north at Kilby Bridge, Wigston (south of Leicester) with 1D48, the 14.35 St Pancras to Nottingham on March 1, 2024. PAUL BIGGS

Below: Coming just a few years after the end of steam, the gas turbine-powered APT-E was a striking vision of a possible future, making its main line debut with a test run in July 1972. Trials on the MML saw it set a time of 58min 30sec for the 99.1 miles from London to Leicester, a record that still stands today. The experimental four-car set, which never entered public service, is seen at St Pancras in October 1975. BR



The 2018 'Master Cutler' suffered from an extra train being pathed through Wigston North Junction between the 16.34 St Pancras-Nottingham (at 17/43½) and the Sheffield flagship service (which would otherwise have passed at 17/48½). But the priority given to the 16.52 Birmingham-Cambridge (passing at 17/47½) resulted in the indignity of a 3min pathing allowance being inserted into the schedule of the 'Master Cutler'. The best way of ensuring the HST arrived on time at Leicester was to make sure it did not run early, but then use up its pathing allowance over the 13 miles from Market Harborough to Wigston North Junction.

'Adelante' interlude

Although this three-part Midland Transitions series has concentrated on St Pancras-Leicester nonstop runs, 'first-stop Market Harborough' performances of the modern era Nottingham HSTs cannot be ignored. Table 3 shows the fastest HST run in the RPS archive, which was also my personal best, of 50min 38sec. It was admittedly profligate on fuel, but at least it kept out of the way of other trains. There was one service back in 2015 that was booked for a 'Meridian' on this stopping pattern, and I was surprised to see it take nearly a minute out of my exhilarating HST time, also shown in Table 3.

A decision which had little substance in the reality of railway operations resulted in the Class 180 'Adelantes' displaced from First Great Western to Hull Trains being transferred to the Midland Main Line to replace HSTs, partly on disability access grounds. The history of the '180s' has included door problems and engine unreliability, and on some days none of the three diagrams could muster a single 'Adelante'. In June 2021, I therefore considered myself fortunate to find No. 180109 with all engines working on the 11.05 St Pancras to Nottingham, albeit the only one fit for service that day.

Even better, from a selfish train-timing viewpoint, the 11.02 to Sheffield was going to be late, delayed on its inward journey by signalling failure between Kettering and Bedford. However, the 10.45 Class 360 empty stock to Corby did not leave until 10.58 causing delay to my Class 180 at Harpenden Junction, as the empties were checked by the 09.25 Brighton-Bedford making its booked transfer from the down fast to down slow line, and then there was more delay to the Class 180 at Flitwick Junction as the Corby empties performed a similar manoeuvre.

The Class 180 driver responded with the alacrity one has come to expect from his apparently highly motivated colleagues, running hard at 125mph and taking Sharnbrook at a full 110mph. The time of 45min 44sec to a Kettering stop was nearer 42½min net, with start-to-stop average speeds of 94.2 and 101.3mph respectively (see Table 3). At least GPS works in Class 180s, which might well be a contributory factor to my preferring Class 180s over 'Voyagers' and 'Meridians'.

"The best way of ensuring the HST arrived on time at Leicester was to make sure it did not run early"

All time fastest

And so to the fastest run so far recorded on the St Pancras-Leicester section, which was briefly mentioned in Midland Transitions Part 2. Many readers will have been aware that the time of 58min 30sec at an average speed of 101.5mph was not with a service train, but a run with tilting Advanced Passenger Train 'APT-E' in its gas turbine '2+2' manifestation of 1975. Yes, nearly half a century ago.

Perhaps the exceptionally fast run was unplanned, as the Practice & Performance writer at the time (O S Nock) had not been invited. He was sent the log of speeds to 0.1 mph and times taken to 5 sec intervals (although Mr Nock chose to round the figures to 0.25mph). The report at the time was camouflaged among details of the Shildon 150 celebrations and its guest list of famous steam locomotives, but one does not have to be a modern traction devotee to believe speeds of '136¼mph' on the then-90mph Midland Main Line merited headline status!

RPS member Alan Varley, a resident of France who specialises in high-speed running in his adopted country, keeps a tally of APT logs in normal service. He has undertaken detailed analysis of the Midland APT-E special run to harmonise the 5sec timings with the quoted speeds and mileages, and so convert the log to locations that readers could recognise and compare with conventional presentation. The result is shown in Table 4.

Alan emphasises this is a reconstruction and should be treated as such. The first problem was that a timing of 2min 40sec to Milepost 1 could not easily be reconciled against the other readings, whereas 2min 30sec fitted well. At the other end of the run, the final stretch into Leicester required a speed of 19-25mph on the 15mph restriction to make it fit. There are errant figures elsewhere in the log, but these are more obvious and easily corrected. In fact, the log sometimes appears as November 30, 1975, but it was definitely October 30.

Another sheet of speeds at most mileposts, but without times, was also submitted for a similar run the day before, which assisted information processing. We must also be grateful that Alan retained the Special Traffic Notice for the trial, which a friend had sent him at the time and which it is believed has not hitherto been published other than within the RPS. The APT-E actual time of 58min 30sec is not precise and could possibly be up to 20sec out in a worst-case scenario of recording errors. However, 58min 30sec remains the most likely figure.

The skill of the APT-E driver in negotiating this experimental train at speeds exceeding up to 50% over the normal maximum should be recognised. Most of the braking for restrictions was admirably conservative – especially when compared to the case of the 2015 SNCF Est TGV test train, where getting an initial brake application wrong by 12 sec led to a fatal derailment at Eckwersheim; or 2013's RENFE Santiago de Compostela tragedy that was caused by overspeeding at the crucial moment.

TABLE 4: LONDON ST PANCRAS TO LEICESTER. APT-E RECONSTRUCTION BY A VARLEY (SEE TEXT)

Vehicles/tare/gross tons			4/-/-		
Date			October 30, 1975		
Miles	**Timing point**	**Sch**	**M S**	**M P H**	**Ave MPH**
0.00	St PANCRAS d	0	0 00		
1.94	Carlton Rd Jct		3 25½	68/76	34.0
3.94	West Hampstead		5 04	73	73.1
5.04	Cricklewood		5 57½	75/74	74.0
6.94	Hendon	7	7 27	78	76.4
9.29	Mill Hill		9 00	101	91.0
12.38	Elstree		10 43	112	108.0
15.19	Radlett		12 05½	125/126	122.6
18.10	Napsbury		13 31	118	122.5
19.81	ST ALBANS		14 27½	107	109.0
21.19	Sandridge		15 13	111/126	109.2
24.58	Harpenden		16 55½	118/122	119.1
27.19	Chiltern Green		18 13½	120/97	120.5
30.19	LUTON	19½	19 59½	106	101.9
32.71	Leagrave		21 19½	120	113.4
33.94	MP 34		21 55	126/137	124.7
37.19	Harlington		23 24½	123	130.7
40.19	Flitwick		24 50½	126/125	125.6
42.18	Ampthill TSP		25 50	115/113	120.4
43.69	Millbrook		26 37½	115	114.4
47.19	Elstow		28 19½	127/102	123.5
50.19	Bedford N Jct		30 02½	104/118	104.9
54.94	MP 55	29	32 34	112	112.9
56.60	Sharnbrook		33 26	116	114.9
59.65	Sharnbook Summit		35 00	118	116.8
62.04	Irchester South		36 08½	126	125.6
65.04	WELLINGBOROUGH	37½	38 04	72	93.5
68.19	Finedon		40.05½	112/117/102	93.3
71.94	KETTERING	42	42 09½	104	108.9
74.44	Glendon South		43 32	113/115	109.1
78.44	Desborough Summit		45 39½	112/116	112.9
80.38	Braybrook		46 40	112	115.4
82.86	MARKET HARBOROUGH	48½	48 16½	77	92.5
84.38	Great Bowden		49 21½	97	84.2
86.44	East Langton		50 30½	114	107.5
88.87	Kibworth		51 46	117/127	115.9
91.49	Great Glen		53 03½	124	121.7
93.43	Kilby Bridge Jct		53 59	126	125.8
95.83	Wigston N Jct	56	55 19½	97/98	107.3
97.44	Knighton S Jct		56 21	85	94.2
99.01	LEICESTER a	59½	58 30		43.8

Note: Timing points as assessed by Mr Varley

Below: The near future of the MML will be with Hitachi-built Class 810 bi-mode 'Aurora' units, similar to this Hull Trains '802' but with an extra engine per set. No. 802302 is seen near Market Harborough on January 13, 2024 with 1A92, the 08.05 from Hull that was diverted to St Pancras due to engineering works on the East Coast Main Line. PAUL BIGGS



20 seconds a year

The 120 years between the Johnson 4-2-2 'Spinners' and the current Class 222s has reduced the journey time from St Pancras to Leicester by 40%, or some 20 sec a year, which is higher than some other routes can claim. Will IETs continue the process? The infrastructure improvement at Market Harborough from 60mph to 85mph has still to be factored into the running times, so perhaps that '59min 18sec, 100mph average' is achievable.

Dare we hope to beat the APT-E's 1975 record though? At least current operator East Midlands Railway has recognised the standard Hitachi Class 802 bi-mode is underpowered, even on the highest of its diesel settings, and has specified an extra diesel engine per five-car set, each one enhanced by 5% to 986hp, for its Class 810 'Aurora' fleet currently under construction, making them almost match current 'Meridian' capabilities. We might have hoped for an actual improvement I suppose, but that might come from electric power initially at the southern end of the line and, who knows, one day to Leicester, Nottingham, Derby and even Sheffield? ■

On shed/No shed TINSLEY

Sixty years ago this month saw the opening of one of the country's biggest purpose-built diesel depots at Tinsley in Sheffield, but it was all swept away by the end of the 1990s.

TINSLEY MPD (coded 41A to May 1973, then TI under TOPS) was a major purpose-built diesel depot in north-east Sheffield near the city's border with Rotherham. It was part of a plan by British Railways to modernise and rationalise rail operations, being built in coordination with the expansive Tinsley Marshalling Yard that was designed to handle wagonload freight in the area.

The Tinsley site was chosen because it offered access to and from all directions, being situated on the Sheffield District Railway (SDR) with connections to the former Midland Railway and Great Central Railway routes. The only problem was that the SDR ran from Treeton to Brightside via a summit at Tinsley Wood Tunnel, where the line skirted around a large hill. Building the new marshalling yard and sidings meant excavating this hill area by some 50-100 feet (15-30 metres) to create a wide and level cutting into which the SDR line was diverted, although the depot was built at the higher level of the original SDR route.

Tinsley TMD formally opened in April 1964, replacing the area's steam age sheds at Millhouses, Grimesthorpe, Darnall and Canklow, and soon became home to more than 200 main line diesels of Classes 20, 25, 31, 37, 47 plus around 75 shunters – including the three unique Class 13 'master and slave' pairs converted from standard '08s' to work Tinsley's hump shunting yard.

The shed building was double-sided with six roads at each end, but it could only be accessed from the west using a connecting line up from the marshalling yard that followed the route of the original SDR line. A smaller diesel loco servicing shed was also built adjacent to the main marshalling yard at the lower level, along with an electric locomotive servicing shed alongside the sorting/reception sidings for Class 76s using the Woodhead Route.

Closure and redevelopment

Tinsley TMD survived into the Privatisation era, but new owners EWS soon decided it was surplus to requirement. The depot was closed on March 28, 1998 (No. 47145 being the last to leave the day before, when it was hauled away to Saltley by No. 47375), and demolition was complete by the following March. Redevelopment followed and today the site of the depot is home to a large car dealership.

The yards, which were officially opened in October 1965, fared little better as wagonload freight declined heavily through the 1970s. Hump shunting finished at the end of 1984 (meaning the end for the Class 13s), while the connections to the main line at the eastern end were removed in 1993. Some residual steel traffic continued, but much of the yard fell into disuse.

However, there has been an element of resurgence over the past two decades, with the first stage of the Sheffield International Rail Freight Terminal (SIRFT) opening on the site of the main marshalling yard around 2007, then in 2021 Newell and Wright began using the site of the former reception/sorting sidings as an intermodal container terminal. ■



No. 47215 was named *Tinsley Traction Depot* in September 1987, but the plates were transferred to No. 47375 with additional *Quality Approved* plates in February 1990. No. 47186 was also unofficially named *Tinsley TMD, Silver Jubilee 1965-1990* from March 1990 to April 1993. DAVE HITCHBORNE (CC BY-SA 2.0)



An official view of the western end of Tinsley depot on October 15, 1965, with Classes 08, 25, 31, 37 and 47 on shed. The reception/sorting yard was a deep and wide cutting off to the left of this shot. BR



Class 47 No. D1542 (later 47430) and Class 20 No. D8052 (20052) inside a spotless Tinsley depot on May 13, 1964.



The depot looked a bit more 'lived in' by the time this shot of No. 47338 was taken on August 23, 1997 – about seven months before it was closed for good. HAWTHORNE COLLECTION



A view of the eastern end of the depot on April 19, 1990 with Classes 37 and 47 visible. The depot seems empty, but this was taken on a weekday when most locos would be at work. DAVE HITCHBORNE (CC BY-SA 2.0)



The site of the depot today, which is now a large car dealership. The electricity pylon on the left provides a reference point.



Looking east in April 1982 over the reception/sorting yard that was excavated out from a large hill – note the lines nearest the camera are electrified at 1500V DC for the Woodhead Line electrics. The depot sidings can just be seen at the higher level on the right, roughly at the height of the original Sheffield District Railway. MARTIN ADDISON (CC BY-SA 2.0)



The site of the reception/sorting sidings today, which was reborn in 2021 as an intermodal terminal. This view on October 19, 2023 shows GBRf's No. 66744 shunting a rake of container wagons.



Looking west over the hump marshalling yard on May 27, 1981, showing the small diesel servicing depot on the left. ROB NEWMAN (CC BY-SA 2.0)



How the former hump yard looked on October 19, 2023, with buildings of the rail connected SIRFT in the background.

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

PUTTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT

■ THE article on centralised door locking (February, p18) mentioned a list of heritage rolling stock owners with CDL exemptions in place, one of the named companies being Hastings Diesels Ltd. I would like to point out that these comments are inaccurate in relation to Hastings Diesels Ltd. We completed the fitment of centralised door locking to our rolling stock by 2008, and have operated tour and charter trains on the national network using CDL since June of that year.

Francis Wallace, Hastings Diesels Ltd

■ THE photograph at the top of page 91 of the March issue does not show the site of the former Hawthorn Colliery (or 'Combine'), which was some 2.5 miles away over the photographer's left shoulder. The buildings on the skyline to the east of the railway are on the site of the former Dawdon Colliery, which was close to Seaham Harbour, the piers of which can be seen further to the right in the image.

Sheldon Clark, Washington

■ KEADBY sliding bridge (March, p8) crosses over the Stainforth & Keadby canal, not the River Trent as stated, which the railway crosses about a mile to the east.

John Pearse FCILT, Bradford-on-Avon

■ THE history of No. 71000 *Duke of Gloucester* is misrepresented (March, p12). Not only was it not an unfinished prototype, but it was – of course – not scrapped. It was in service for about eight years, then rescued from Barry scrapyard.

Kevin Driscoll, Prestatyn

■ THE Greater Anglia units to receive tables (March, p8) are not the main line Class 745/0, which already have them, but the Class 745/1 Stansted Airport units.

Brian Scott, Stowmarket

■ To correct the dates that No. 33116 and inspection saloon No. 975025 visited the Buxton area (March, p47): they arrived on March 1, 1994 and did not leave until March 4.

John Frisby, by email

Not fit for purpose

I FOUND Chris Milner's excellent rolling stock article very interesting (February issue). Prior to Covid-19, I enjoyed rail travel for leisure and pleasure. Age and potential risk put an end to that, and I am only now tentatively starting to travel again.

His article encapsulated some of the pitfalls of rail travel. I want to avoid overcrowded trains for obvious reasons. It is shameful that almost new rolling stock, like Mk.5 coaches, are now seemingly redundant.

There seems to be a lack of planning coupled with over-interference from the Government's Department for Transport, which frankly makes a nonsense of what Privatisation is about.

It strikes me that the difference between the former nationalised system and the incoherent system we have now is merely a play on words.

We already know Network Rail is a not for profit organisation, which seems little different from state ownership.

Much as railways have brought me a great deal of pleasure, I fear that short-term planning has gifted us a system hardly up to date or fit for purpose.

David Mathias, by email

Argentina thanks

WE were part of the party whose train derailed in Patagonia on November 11, (World News, February). We would like to publicise our thanks to the rail crews for swiftly extracting us from the coaches and retrieving everyone's belongings.

We would also like to thank the local tour leaders and the Argentinian Health Service for their care. We understand the final casualty was flown back to the UK at the beginning of January.

As well as where we were derailed (8km south from Cerro Mesa) there was a known major washout 10km further south of Cerro Mesa.

With the country's change of government so soon after our accident, the future of the railway and many other government institutions in Argentina is uncertain.

John & Karen Hammond By email

Missing a trick

READING the article on the draft Rail Reform Bill (March issue), the section on 'large scale events' is just a mind-boggling example of counterproductive action driven by current policies.

Transport of large numbers of people between two discrete points at a specific time is exactly the kind of situation for which trains are ideally suited. Yet, instead of trying to flex services to maximise capacity and enable smooth transport of passengers, whilst simultaneously minimising environmental impact (whether emissions or road congestion), the current approach is to raise fares to eye-watering levels and restrict tickets to actively drive people away from using the train as an option.

Putting aside the obvious social and environmental benefits from providing enhanced train capacity for large scale events, they also offer a unique marketing opportunity.

There are many people who have never travelled by train previously who, if presented with a clean, efficient and reasonably priced service, may well consider further use of trains in future. Whereas if their only experience is a quick internet search revealing limited service with extortionate fares, you can almost guarantee that they will never consider using the train again.

Simon Dodd, by email

Cornish memories

I READ with interest Craig Munday's article about signalling in Cornwall (March issue).

I remember staying in the camping coach at Fowey station with my mother and sister in spring 1960 when I was 11 years old. While on the platform watching trains, the signalman invited me into the signalbox, where I spent many happy hours.

One day an extra carriage was shunted onto an auto-train hauled by 0-4-2 No. 1419. When the train set off towards Lostwithiel, the extra carriage was left in the platform! I mentioned this to the signalman, who quickly replaced a signal a few hundred yards down the line. The train returned to the station, attached the carriage, and the complete train set off again. Probably no one was the wiser!

Tony Smith, Stamford Bridge

Time to rethink steam?

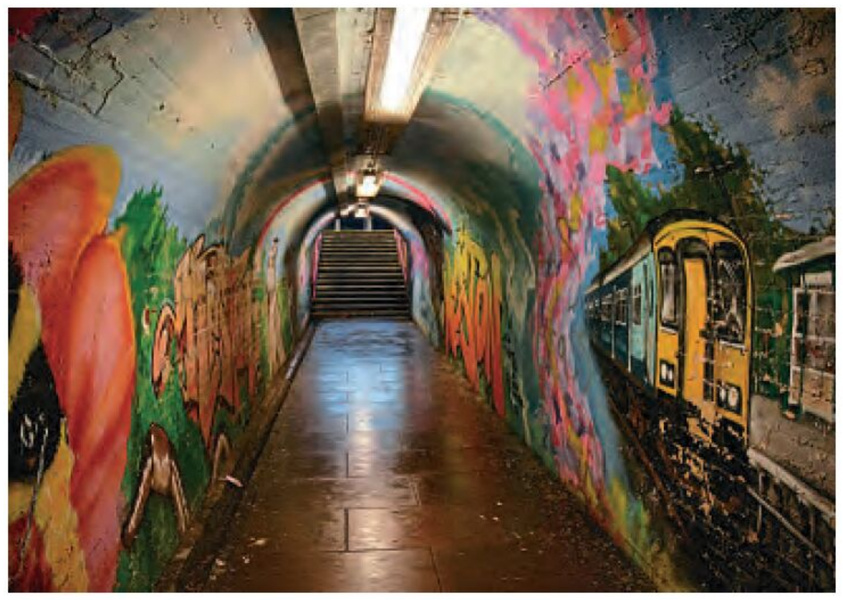
THE March edition of *TRM* records the last train of Welsh mined coal, and there is undoubtedly an issue for steam locomotive owners and operators as to where future stocks of coal will come from, and at what cost.

I therefore fail to understand why proposals continue to emerge for new-build steam locomotives and extensive rebuilds. These also cost huge sums of money, from a limited pool of enthusiasts, which could otherwise be directed to much-needed infrastructure maintenance and improvements.

Why, for example, spend money restoring No. 92219 (March, p7), which has not run for 60 years, when the class is already well represented by No. 92214. Would it not be more sensible to use the former for spares and raise funds for more worthwhile projects?

As a long-term enthusiast for steam locomotion, it must be admitted that the UK is well blessed with plenty of active locos from many different classes and, in a world moving rapidly away from coal, expanding this pool further is hard to justify.

Richard Atkinson, Gnosall



Where is it? Our pictorial quiz, for fun only

THE attractive scene pictured last month (and again right) was taken on January 28 alongside the Montgomery Canal at Welshpool Town Lock, where there are the remains of a 2ft-gauge railway that formerly ran to a canal maintenance yard, the site now taken over by a building industry firm.

In this month's mystery photo (above), which station subway includes this mural of a Class 150 DMU?



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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.

Compiled by **Jon Longman**

THURSDAY, APRIL 4

GCR Society. Farm Road Sports & Social Club, Sheffield S2 2TP. 19.30. 'The Railways of Colonel Stephens': David Hanger.
Lutterworth Railway Society. Lutterworth Bowls Club LE15 4RB. 19.30. 'Taking Trains abroad before the Tunnel': Dave Coxon.
Norfolk Railway Society. United Reformed Church Hall, Norwich NR4 6QR. 19.30. 'The Woodhead Line revisited': Chris Mitchell.
RCTS. Library Leatherhead, Station Approach, Leatherhead. 11.00-16.00. Open day.
RCTS. Network Rail – The Quadrant: Milton Keynes MK9 1EN. 19.30. 'Great Central Railway – 'Re-Unification': Tom Ingall.

FRIDAY, APRIL 5

Kettering & District Locomotive Society. Corn Market Hall, Kettering NN15 7QA. 19.45. 'The Bedford to Cambridge Line': Stephen Owen.
RCTS. St Teresa's Church Hall, North Filton BS34 7PL. 19.30. 'East Coast Main Line part 2 – North from York': Stephen Gay.
SLS. Newport Community Hub, Paul's Rd (off Union St), Middlesbrough TS1 5NQ. 19.30. 'Twelve years of China Steam from 1992': Barry Burns.
SWRS. The Manor, Slough station. 19.30. TBA

MONDAY, APRIL 8

Lincoln Railway Society. St Hugh's Church, North Hykeham, Lincoln LN6 8JG. 19.30.
Oxfordshire Railway Society. Kidlington Baptist Church OX5 2DS.19.00. 'Steam in India – Metre Gauge Memories': Jeff Warren.
RCTS. Greenfinch Church Hall, Ipswich IP2 0SQ. 19.15. 'Interrailing for the Older Crowd': Dave Hepper.
SEG. Deall Room, Southwick Community Centre BN42 4TE. 19.30. Annual meeting followed by Mike Stringer's slides.

TUESDAY, APRIL 9

Enfield Transport Circle. Enfield Drill Hall Sports Club EN2 6PJ. 20.00. 'Railways before the War - That's the Great War - Part 2': Jeremy Harrison.
GW Society. Room 4, BAWA, 589 Southmead Road, Filton, Bristol BS34 7RF. 19.30. 'Were Two GWR Locomotives Identical?': Gerry Nichols.
LCGB. Parish Room, St Michael's Church, Wood Green, London N22 8HE. 14.00. 'Spanish and Portuguese Railways in the 1970s': Terence Bagworth.
RCTS. The Swifts, Haggis Gap, Fulbourn, Cambridge CB21 5HD. 19.30. 'An Evening with Father's Slides': David Cross.
RCTS. East Croydon United Reformed Church CR0 5LP. 19.30. 'Roaming around London with a Camera': Geoff Brockett.
RCTS. The New Mechanics, 3 North Sherwood Street, Nottingham NG1 4E. 14.00. 'Deltics: 1965 to the present day': Richard Walsh.
RCTS. Farm Road Sports & Social Club, Sheffield S2 2TP. 14.00. 'East Anglian Railways in transition': John Day.
Pewsey Vale Railway Society. Woodborough Social Club SN9 5PL. 19.30. 'Dorset Branch Lines': Bob Bunyar.
The 8E Railway Association. The Gladstone Club, Station Road, Northwich CW9 5RB. 19.30. 'The Lynton & Barnstaple Railway': Bob Barnard.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 10

LCGB. Friends Meeting House, Butter Hill, Dorking RH4 2LE. 19.30. 'Waterloo 175': John King.
NYMR. St Lawrence's Church Hall York YO10 3WP. 12.00. '55 Years of Continental Steam': Ian Foot. Meeting is preceded by a buffet.
RCTS. Library Leatherhead, Station Approach, Leatherhead. 11.00-16.00. Open day.
RCTS. Old Church Rooms, Park Road, Radyr, Cardiff CF15 8DF. 19.00. 'Newport: The South Wales Main Line Recalled': Ray Viney.
SLS. Abbott Hall Social Centre, Kendal LA9 4DN. 19.15. 'Modern Traction in Cumbria': Ian Clemment.
Sutton Coldfield Railway Society. St James' Church Centre, Sutton Coldfield B75 5BW. 19.30. Test track evening.

THURSDAY, APRIL 11

Continental Railway Circle. St Paul's Church Centre, Rossmore Road, Marylebone NW1 6NJ. 18.30. 'China – Manchuria in 1987': John Sloane.
LCGB. St Bartholomew's Church, St Albans AL1 2PE. 19.30. 'A History of Carriages, Part Two': Colin Brading.
Nuneaton Railway Circle. Chilvers Coton Conservative Club, Nuneaton CV11 5UD. 19.45. 'The Hixon Level Crossing Disaster': Malcolm Garner.
RCTS. St Luke's Church, Mayor's Walk, Peterborough PE3 6EZ. 19.30. 'End of Southern Steam – 50 years on': Des Shepherd.
Shropshire Railway Society. Gateway Education and Arts Centre, Shrewsbury SY1 1NB. 19.00. 'The Corris Railway: Overcoming adversity in re-establishing a much-loved line': Chris Jones.
South East Essex Railway Society. Friends' Meeting House, Leigh-on-Sea SS9 1NB. 19.30. Track night.

FRIDAY, APRIL 12

SLS. Conference Room, 1st floor (access via Black Swan Courtyard), Newcastle Arts Centre NE1 1SG. 19.00. 'A Photographic Journey from 1956-1969 in the N. E. Area – More photographs from the Alan Brooks Collection': Malcom Paul.
SWRS. The Manor, Slough station. 19.30. TBA.

SATURDAY, APRIL 13

RCTS. Methodist Church, Fore Street, Exeter EX4 3AT. 'Diesels through Devon': Amyas Crump.
SLS. Kidderminster Railway Museum DY10 1QX. 14.00. 'Walschaerts Valve Gear - A Closer Look, Robin Gibbons.
SLS. Friends' Meeting House, Mount St, Manchester M2 5NS. 14.00. 'Railways between Relief and Rebuilding: Rail Operators Initiatives and Refugee Evacuations from Ukraine': Dr Simone Gigliotti.

MONDAY, APRIL 15

RCTS. Shenfield Parish Hall CM15 8LP. 19.30. 'Inter-Railing for the Older Crowd': Dave Hepper.

TUESDAY, APRIL 16

Leicester Railway Society. Braunstone Civic Centre, Leicester LE3 2PP. 19.30. 'The closure of the Rugby, Market Harborough to Peterborough Line': Gavin Ramsey.
RCTS. Library Leatherhead, Station Approach, Leatherhead. 11.00-16.00. Open day.
RCTS. Highway Public House, Willerby Road, Hull HU5 5LH. 19.30. 'Just what you wanted': Tony Buckton.
RCTS. Didcot Civic Hall OX11 7JN. 19.00. 'LMS Patriot Project': Colin Hale.
SLS. Langdon Square Community Centre, Coulby Newham TS8 0TF. 14.00. 'My Railway Career and how I set up The Railway Children Charity': David Maidment OBE, former BRB Head of Safety Policy.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 17

Giggleswick Railway Circle. Settle Victoria Hall BD24 9DZ. 19.30. 'Railway Cameramen': John Hillier.
Grimsby & Cleethorpes Railway Group. The No.1, Station Approach, Cleethorpes DN35 8AX. 19.30. 'Rails on the Isle of Man': Jason Cross.
Pennine Railway Society. Doncaster Town Fields Sports Club, Doncaster DN2 6AA. 19.30. 'The North Lindsey Light Railway and a few shots 1968-72': Bryan Longbone.
RCTS. Junction Church, 2nd Floor, Smith Bradbeer House, Eastleigh. 19.30. 'Swindon Origin': Rev Canon Brian Arman.
Sutton Coldfield Railway Society. St James's Church Centre, 59 Mere Green Rd, Sutton Coldfield B75 5BW. 19.30. 2024 photograph competition with Jack Boskett.

THURSDAY, APRIL 18

Aln Valley Railway. Barter Books, Alnwick Station. 19.30. 'One Man's View of the ECML in 1962 Part 2': Malcolm Paul.
Lutterworth Railway Society. Lutterworth Bowls Club LE15 4RB. 19.30. 'Hong Kong Tramways': Dave Carson.
Marlow & District Railway Society. Bourne End Community Centre SL8 5SX and on Zoom. 19.30. 'A Magical Mystery Tour': Colin Miell.
Monmouthshire Railway Society. Lysaght Institute, Orb Drive, Newport NP19 0RA. 19.00. 'The Vale of Berkley Railway': Graham Sturgess.
Norfolk Railway Society. United Reformed Church Hall, Ipswich Road, Norwich NR4 6QR. 19.30. 'Welsh Narrow Gauge Slate Railways': Alan Denny.
RCTS. Victory Club, Burlington House, Cheltenham GL50 2SY. 19.00. Cheltenham branch annual meeting and 'Cheltenham St James to Broadway': John Dagley-Morris.
RCTS. Saltaire Methodist Chapel BD18 3HJ. 19.30. 'Along the ECML – King's Cross to York': Stephen Gay.
RCTS. Woking United Reform Church, White Rose Lane, Woking. 19.30. TBC.

FRIDAY, APRIL 19

GW Society. Village Hall, Stoke St Mary, Taunton TA3 5DE. 19.30. 'Tony Whitby Collection Part One': Peter Triggs.
LCGB. Keen House, 4 Calshot St, London NW1 9DA. 18.30. '34007 Wadebridge: Barry to the Main Line?': Stephen Evans and David Ford.
Railway Club of the New Forest. Village Hall, Brockenhurst. 19.30. Annual meeting followed by 'Ffestiniog Railway': Charles Clark.
SWRS. The Manor, Slough station. 19.30. TBA.

SATURDAY, APRIL 20

RCTS. Brunel Suite, Grand Station, Wolverhampton WV10 0BF. 11.00-17.00. Members' Day and 88th annual meeting with 'From Royalty to Railways': Jack Boskett, and 'Railway Observer in the United States': Sholto Thomas.

MONDAY, APRIL 22

RCTS. Cox Green Community Centre, Maidenhead. 19.30. 'Just like the old days': Des Shepherd.
RCTS. Weston Favell Parish Hall, Booth Lane South, Northampton NN3 3EP. 14.00. 'Nothing stays the same – a tour of railway works': Mike Corbett.

TUESDAY, APRIL 23

RCTS. The New Mechanics, Nottingham NG1 4EZ. 19.30. '20 years of high-speed railways in the UK': David Hanger.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 24

RCTS. Bassil Shipham Centre, Tozer Way, Chichester PO19 7LG. Meeting on Zoom. 19.15. 'The Hixon High Speed Crash of 1968': Malcolm Garner.
Sutton Coldfield Railway Society. St James' Church Centre, 59 Mere Green Rd, Sutton Coldfield B75 5BW. 19.30. 'The HST Story': Alex Wood.

THURSDAY, APRIL 25

Nuneaton Railway Circle. Chilvers Coton Conservative Club, Nuneaton CV11 5UD. 19.45. Annual meeting and photographic competition.
Shropshire Railway Society. Gateway Education and Arts Centre, Shrewsbury SY1 1NB. 19.00. Annual meeting.
South East Essex Railway Society. Friends' Meeting House, Leigh-on-Sea SS9 1NB. 19.30. Annual meeting.
Stevenage Locomotive Society. Community Arts Centre, Roaring Meg Retail Park, Stevenage. 19.30. 'Railtours and Specials – the last 40 years': John Day.

FRIDAY, APRIL 26

SWRS. The Manor, Slough station. 19.30. TBA

SATURDAY, APRIL 27

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

TUESDAY, APRIL 30

RCTS. Didcot Civic Hall OX11 7JN. 14.00. Swindon Works and Railway Sites Walkaround Tour.
RCTS. Digswell Village Church Hall, Welwyn AL6 0DH. 14.00. 'That Was The Year That Was - 1971': Geoff Plumb.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 1

Bradford Railway Circle. Bradford Mechanics' Institute Library, Bradford BD1 1SZ. 14.00. '50 Years Back': John Holroyd.
Pennine Railway Society. Zoom meeting. 19.30. 'My favourite pictures': Robin Skinner. www.penninerailwaysociety.com.
RCTS. Royal Station Hotel, Carnforth. 19.30. '35mm gricing at home and abroad': Mike Robinson.
Sutton Coldfield Railway Society. St James' Church Centre, Sutton Coldfield B75 5BW. 19.30. Test track evening.

THURSDAY, MAY 2

GCR Society. The Farm Road Sports & Social Club, Sheffield S2 2TP. 19.30. 'Rusty Buffers - Tinsley Footplate Memories': Roger Wainwright.
Lutterworth Railway Society. Lutterworth Bowls Club LE15 4RB. 19.30. 'The History of the Milwaukee Road': Guy Hardy.
RCTS. Library Leatherhead, Station Approach, Leatherhead. 11.00-16.00. Open day.

PANORAMA

A showcase for the best in railway photography







1 | 3
2 | 4

1

MEMORIES OF LEEK: North West Rail Charters organised a photo evening on March 17, at Kingsley & Froghall station on the Churnet Valley Railway. Visiting Standard Class 4 No. 75014, from the Dartmouth Steam Railway, was disguised for the event as scrapped classmate No. 75035 –the loco that hauled the final passenger train to Leek in January 1965. TOM MCATEE



2

STONE ME! DB Cargo's No. 66025 and its train of aggregate wagons is dwarfed by the DFDS Ro-Ro ferry *Seven Sisters* (launched 2006) at Newhaven Marine on February 22 as it prepares to depart for Langley (Berkshire). This ferry shares the route between Newhaven and Dieppe with sister ship *Côte d'Albâtre* (launched 2005). CHRIS LIVINGS

3

WEST HIGHLAND 'GROWLER': A flashback to the 1980s when Class 37s were masters of the West Highland Line, although the stock back then was Mk.1s rather than Mk.2s, and certainly not air-con Mk.2s as here! On March 9, No. 37403 *Isle of Mull* passes County March summit, north of Upper Tyndrum, with the third of five linked tours organised by the Branch Line Society which set off from Derby on March 7, to visit lines around Edinburgh, Glasgow, Oban, Fort William and Mallaig. MATT FISHER

4

WELSH WONDER: A timeless scene at Dolgoch, Tayllyn Railway, on March 11, as 1866-built No. 2 *Dolgoch* poses next to one of the station's water towers during a David Williams charter. ROBERT FALCONER

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PANORAMA

A showcase for the best in railway photography

TIME MACHINE: Is there anything in this shot that gives it away as being taken on February 24 this year and not towards the end of steam in the 1960s? A weathered SR 'Battle of Britain' Class No. 34070 *Manston* calls at Ropley on the Mid-Hants Railway during a Warwick Falconer/Matt Allen charter. MARTYN TATTAM



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From the archive

100 YEARS AGO APRIL 1924

First ever film shown on a British train service

A CINEMA film was shown for the first time on a British passenger train on March 12.

The 'cinema train' was the down 'Scotsman', leaving King's Cross at 10 am. The saloon in which the film was shown had been specially arranged with seats all facing one way. A small screen was fitted at one end of the carriage, and a projector at the other end threw its beam over the heads of the audience in the usual manner.

On the journey to York, the film Ashes of Vengeance was shown. At York, the saloon was taken off and returned to London on another train.

Preparing for the Kennington loop

THE new Kennington Loop, which is to connect the Hampstead Tube with the City and South London Tube, will be commenced shortly. Borings are being taken of the soil to determine the nature of the ground through which the new Tubes will have to be driven.

At Hungerford bridge, two barges have been moored and from these engineers are taking borings through a 4-inch diameter pipe. The pipe enables the soil to be extracted from any depth without interference from water or any other loose material.

The new loop, when completed, will provide south-west London with a direct line to Charing Cross and Leicester Square.

50 YEARS AGO APRIL 1974

Possible fast freight locomotive for BR

WITH the prospect of an increase in freight traffic on British Railways, the chief mechanical & electrical engineer has invited the freight and operating departments to submit a specification for a diesel-electric locomotive of 4000hp or more suitable for fast freight traffic. The CM&EE's department would then design a locomotive to meet this specification, with a view to inviting tenders for construction provided the money could be made available.

In 1970, T C B Miller, then chief engineer (traction & rolling stock) BRB, read a paper to the railway division of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers that outlined the 2250hp Class 41 power units for the High Speed Train, and also a 4500hp Co-Co locomotive with two 2250hp engines for fast freight trains.

It was subsequently intended that future freight could be handled by pairs of existing locomotives displaced from passenger traffic by HSTs, but the delay in bringing the HSTs into service, and the distinct possibility of an increase in freight traffic, have led to reconsideration of the proposal.



No. 66503 being named by *The RM* team on February 17, 2004. CHRIS MILNER

20 YEARS AGO APRIL 2004

Freightliner '66' named *The Railway Magazine*

ONE of the proudest moments in the long history of *The Railway Magazine* occurred on February 17, when editor Nick Pigott and deputy editor Chris Milner jointly named a Freightliner Class 66 locomotive after the journal.

Unveiling the plates, Nick said: "*The RM* has probably covered more naming ceremonies in its 100 or so years than any other publication, so it is pleasing to be on the other side of the cameras for a change!"

The event was staged at Freightliner's Birmingham Lawley Street terminal following a plush reception in the boardroom of nearby Birmingham City Football Club.

RCTS

Britain's leading Railway Society

The RCTS: then and now

AMONG the large membership of the RCTS are individuals particularly interested in just about every aspect of railways, from locomotives and train services to historical development and station architecture, all of which feature regularly in the pages of the Railway Observer.

If there is one place in the country offering scope for students of all these topics, then surely it is York station. The first railway to reach the city was the York and North Midland Railway (YNM), part of the George Hudson empire, opening to a wooden building outside the city walls in 1839. By 1841, operations moved to a terminus building now known as York Old Railway station, still in existence, but it was 1877 before the present magnificent structure came into use.

The YNM was by now the North Eastern Railway (NER), whose extension south to Shaftholme Junction near Selby had given an end-on connection with the Great Northern Railway (GNR) from London in 1871, finally giving the GNR direct access to York. Now the scene was set for glamorous through trains, with the NER and GNR creating East Coast Joint Stock specially for its prestige services, powered by ever more powerful locomotives.

The company variety was completed by the Midland Railway, coming in from Sheffield and Rotherham. Thus prior to the 1923 Grouping, York station was host to the trains of three of the country's principal railway companies, and then after Grouping the LNER and LMSR. The 1877 station was designed for the NER by architects Thomas Prosser and William Peachey, its 13 platforms making it the world's largest at the time. The elegantly curved layout and elliptical wrought-iron roof arches created a building universally admired ever since, subject only to minor extension in later years and some bomb damage in the Second World War.

From 1923, the LNER assumed responsibility for all north-south expresses through York, ushering in a golden age of teak coaching stock headed by Gresley Pacifics of Classes 'A3' and 'A4', later on supplemented by the 'A2s' and 'A1s' of Thompson and Peppercorn. Locomotive enthusiasts also had the benefit of major steam sheds at each end of the station, York North and York South, both having significant allocations.



York station: 'A magnificent structure'. STEPHEN CRAVEN (CC BY-SA 2.0)

In the British Railways era from 1948, the principal trains and their motive power were largely unchanged, apart from liveries. Experimental blue quickly gave way to lined Brunswick green for locomotives, and custard and cream for coaches, later maroon. From the early 1960s, York became an ideal spot to view the unique East Coast diesels, the English Electric 'Deltics', which were superseded in the late-1970s by High Speed Trains.

The next major change came in 1990, when overhead electrification reached the city, Class 91s now in charge, replaced just a few years ago by 'Azuma' train sets. York in 2024 is served by passenger trains of LNER, Northern, CrossCountry, Transpennine Express and open access operators Grand Central and First Group.

In addition to all the attractions already mentioned, York station is also just a short walk away from Leeman Road and the entrance to the National Railway Museum on the site of the old North shed.

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

Can you give your time?

There are hundreds of organisations, 'friends of' groups, heritage lines, museums and more all linked to this fabulous pastime of ours, and none of them have been able to escape cost of living pressures.

Some railways have cut costs in the past year to ensure they can carry on running, but all the while the sector is crying out for volunteers... from drivers, firemen, ticket inspectors and guards to accountants, cooks, cleaners, IT experts and marketing gurus.

The pandemic saw many vulnerable volunteers leave and quite a few have not been able to return... so is now the time when you could step forward and help a great group make ends meet with the gift of time?

As well as helping to ensure the railway's future, volunteering has many personal benefits such as learning new skills, boosting confidence, building new friendships, keeping active... and giving exclusive opportunities not available to the public.

Any time you can give up is always greatly received, be it an hour or a full day, and on these pages you'll find just a few groups hoping you may help them secure the future for groups we all care about.



Join the fun (and hard work!) at the Sittingbourne & Kemsley Light Railway



Maintenance Operations Corportate Volunteering

Visit www.sklr.net or email info@sklr.net

FREE POLO SHIRTS!!!
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at FAWLEY HILL RAILWAY & MUSEUM
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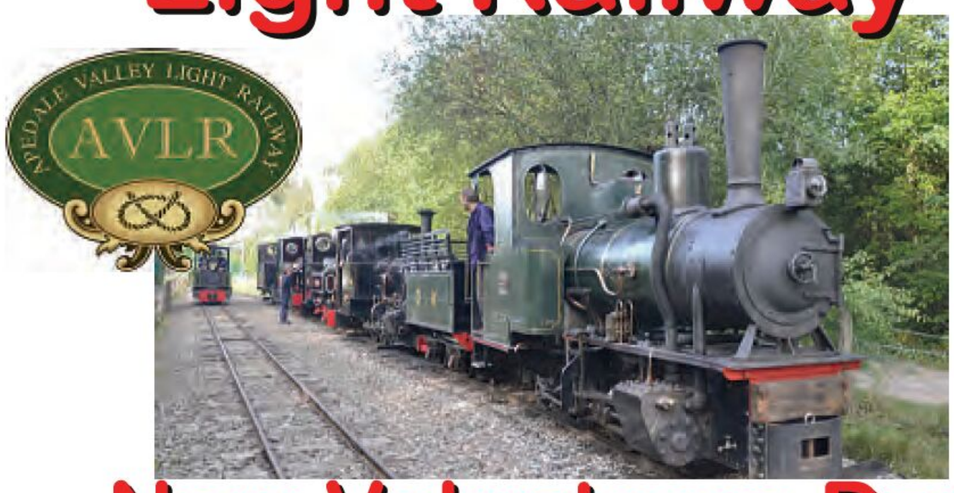
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Travellers' Choice 2022

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New Volunteers Day
April 6th

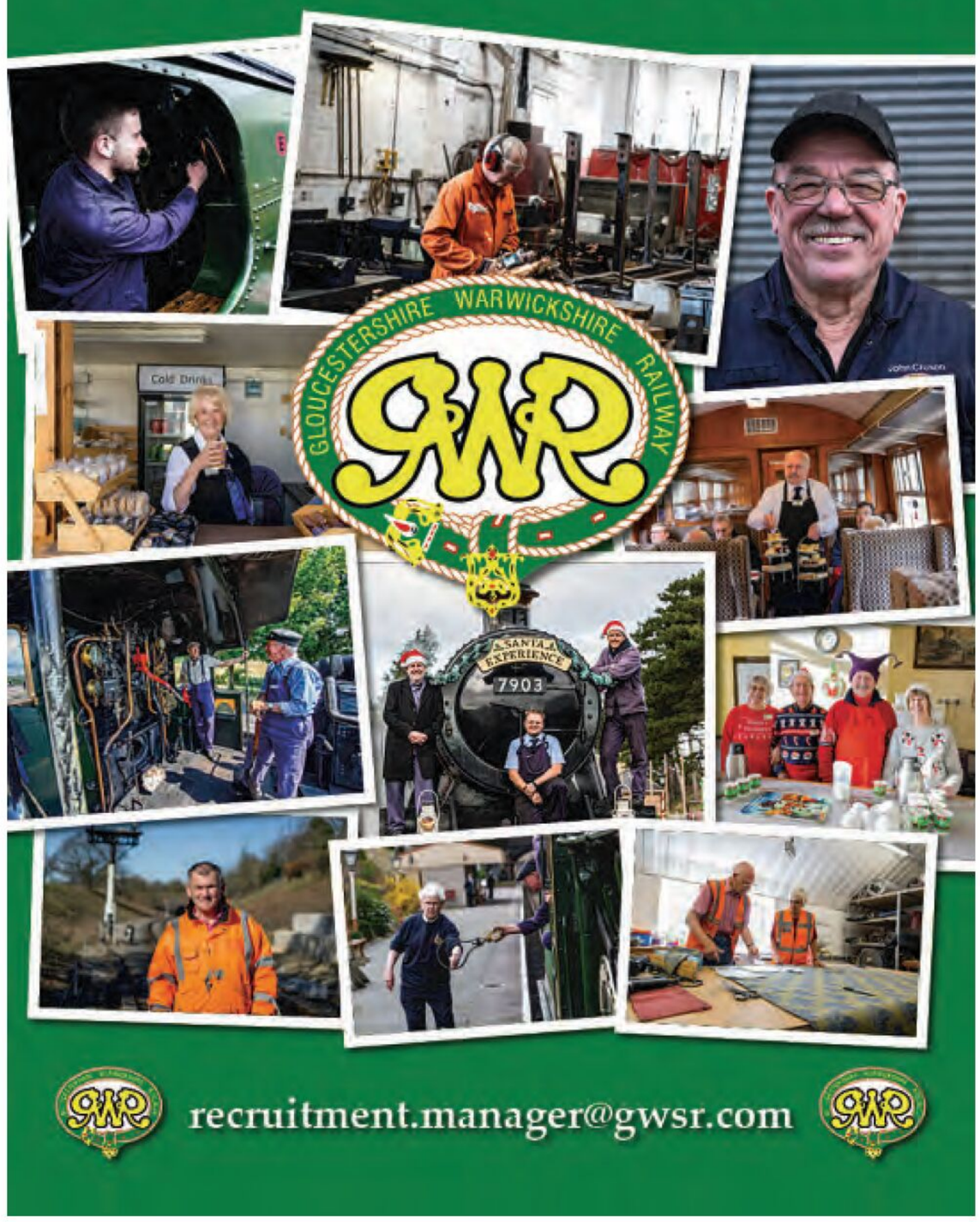
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Photo Credit: Tony Middleton

WEST SOMERSET RAILWAY

Summer Diesel Festival
6th June - 8th June 2024

Locomotive line up.

- Class 03 No. D2133
- Class 09 No. D4107
- Class 14 'Teddy Bear' No. D9526
- Class 33 'Crompton' No. D6566
- Class 33 'Crompton' No. D6575
- Class 35 'Hymek' No. D7017
- Class 50 'Hoover' No. 50033 "Glorious"
- Class 46 'Peak' No. D182 (46045)

More visiting locomotives to be announced
Advance discount tickets available online.
For full information regarding the event please visit our website.

www.west-somerset-railway.co.uk

TRACKRECORD

The Railway Magazine news digest

'DELTIC' AT NIGHT

The Deltic Preservation Society hosted a fundraising photoshoot at its Barrow Hill headquarters on February 24. Called 'Shadows of Finsbury Park', and organised by Alex Stojanovic, it featured BR blue-liveried Nos. 55009 *Alycidon* (pictured disguised as scrapped classmate No. 55013 *The Black Watch*) and 55019 *Royal Highland Fusilier,* plus BR two-tone green No. D9015 (55015) *Tulyar*. CHRIS GEE

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Compiled by **Gareth Evans**

SIDELINES

'Box reopened

NENE Valley Railway's Orton Mere signalbox was ceremonially reopened on March 9. The 'box was damaged in an arson attack on March 13, 2023. A sponsored walk undertaken by two local boys, who have since become NVR volunteers, raised over £15,000. The building has been refurbished by NVR volunteers and Stamford-based contractor Handy Hobman. Guests arrived at the 'box on a special train hauled by Hudswell Clarke 0-6-0T No. 1800 *Thomas*. A plaque was unveiled by NVR chairman Michael Purcell and Honorary President Miranda Rock.

Card only payments

ALL purchases on the Swanage Railway will have to be made by card as of March 25. Cash donations will still be accepted. "We will no longer accept cash payments at our ticket offices, gift shop, our refreshment kiosks or for on-train purchases," the heritage line said in a statement. "Bank branches closing and the banks charging for processing cash make going cashless a cheaper option for the railway – and in the present circumstances, every penny saved counts."

Museum boost

IN 2023 Bury Transport Museum welcomed 13% more visitors than the previous year, with almost 12,000 people passing through the doors. A host of new exhibits – including several from the National Railway Museum (NRM) – helped boost visitor numbers to the attraction at the East Lancashire Railway. Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway 2-4-2T No. 1008 is due to arrive in early April from the NRM. It will complement other exhibits, which include Stanier 2-6-4T No. 2500 and 1887-built Horwich Works 0-4-0ST shunter *Wren*, both of which are on loan from the NRM.

Western traction

THE Bluebell Railway's May 10-12 Branch Line Gala Weekend is to feature four Western Region locos. No. 7812 *Erlestoke Manor* is due to be in action alongside South Devon Railway-based 0-6-0PT No. 1369, Severn Valley Railway-based 0-6-0PT No. 7714 and 'Modified Hall' No. 6989 *Wightwick Hall*. Resident locos rostered for the event include BR '4MT' No. 80151, SECR No. 65 and 'Terrier' No. 72 *Fenchurch*.

Wheel appeal for *Calbourne*

Funds required to swiftly return Isle of Wight Steam Railway's flagship loco to traffic – plus hopes for 'Terrier' to be back by the autumn.



LWSR 'O2' 0-4-4T No. W24 *Calbourne* is pictured at Haven Street on March 15, following the removal of its bogie and driving wheels. The latter are seen in the foreground awaiting dispatch to Buckfastleigh for new tyres to be fitted. MARC MORGAN HUWS/IOWSR

A £36,000 appeal has been launched by the Isle of Wight Steam Railway (IoWSR) to ensure a key member of its locomotive fleet is fit for the future.

After more than 60 years of use, the tyres on 'O2' 0-4-4T No. W24 *Calbourne* have worn to the extent that they now need replacing.

"The tyres have never been changed in preservation," Marc Morgan Huws, IoWSR interim general manager told *The RM*.

"We are keen to get it back in action as soon as possible. The tyres cost £36,000 and the work is being carried out by South Devon Railway Engineering (SDRE) at Buckfastleigh."

By mid-March, the appeal had reached £9000. A crane was on site on March 8 to lift No. W24 from its wheels – the bogie was removed on the same day to allow maintenance to be carried out on the running gear. The loco also requires smokebox repairs. It is hoped *Calbourne* will return to traffic in July in time for the school holidays.

Progress

Calbourne's driving wheels departed Haven Street for SDRE on March 18. The same lorry brought the driving wheels for 'Terrier' 0-6-0T No. W8 *Freshwater* back from Buckfastleigh where they have been reprofiled.

Freshwater is undergoing a full overhaul. Time was lost on the project due to Covid, however, with the wheels now back at Haven Street, reassembly of the loco is underway.

It is hoped that *Freshwater* will back in steam in time for the line's autumn gala in September.

Work continues to progress on the 'E1' 0-6-0T No. 110, which is being reborn as No. W2 *Yarmouth*. A year ago, a contract was awarded for the construction of a new boiler – which is due for delivery in the first quarter of 2025.

By mid-March, a full set of boiler pressings was almost to hand. The firebox tubeplate and backhead have been made. The main operation to form the inner firebox doorplate has also been carried out – it now awaits setting up in the 150T press to put a big dent in it to give a flat area where it meets the firehole door ring. A large sheet of plate has been acquired from which the inner firebox wrapper will be formed.

Due to be in traffic this season are BR '2MT' 2-6-2T No. 41313 and 'Austerity' 0-6-0STs Nos. 192 *Waggoner* and 198 *Royal Engineer*.

> It is hoped *Calbourne* will return to traffic in July in time for the school holidays

Following the completion of *Freshwater*, it is planned for workshop attention to be focused on getting the Ryde Pier tram trailer car ready for service.

While the chassis for the trailer was built some time ago, the body has recently been constructed by a local ship builder. It now needs glazing fitting and exterior panelling, plus painting.

It is hoped that during October/November, the temporary driving position will be removed from the power car – the aim being to have a two-car unit ready for Christmas.

"The tram has proved very popular with our passengers," said Marc. "We use it on the second path. The views are stunning. It only has 22 seats at present but with the trailer it will be 40 plus, so it will be a useful asset commercially. It is a regular and reliable performer."

The railway's infrastructure and visitor facilities are also being enhanced. As part of the Department for Transport's Communities and Connections scheme, a new signalbox and waiting room are under construction at Smallbrook Junction. Mainline train operating company South Western Railway, which runs the Island Line (IL), has sponsored the project to the tune of £40,000, while the IoWSR has contributed £10,000 – with more to follow.

Enhancement

"The station is off-grid," explained Marc. "We have installed solar power and we have a diesel generator as back-up. A new waiting facility in SR style replaces an old bus shelter and it will include real-time information for both IL and IoWSR services."

The project has also involved the reconstruction of Smallbrook Junction signalbox on its original site. The superstructure is complete and fitting out is now underway. The upgraded facilities at Smallbrook Junction are due to be formally opened in early June.

At the same time, the latest phase of improvements at Haven Street will be officially launched.

"We are a visitor attraction – we've got to have first class facilities," said Marc. "We have invested £85,000 in fitting out one of the barns at Haven Street as a cafe bar. It's in the events field. The facility will be home to a display of signage from the end of steam – including those not seen for many years."

With drier weather conditions hopefully on the horizon, the construction of a goods shed and additional period signalling at Wootton is due to continue in the coming weeks. The footings in are in place, but ground conditions – clay – mean the project has been unable to progress over the winter.

'Grange' joins the guest list at Poppy Line this summer

RE-CREATED GWR 4-6-0 No. 6880 *Betton Grange* is booked to spend three months at the North Norfolk Railway (NNR) from August – joining the resident fleet and two other visiting locos this season.

No. 6880 will see extensive use on the line's summer and autumn services, as well as headlining at the NNR's August 24-September 1 mixed-traffic Festival on Rails gala.

A second visiting locomotive on the roster this season is privately-owned Hunslet 'Austerity' 0-6-0ST No. 22 (3844/1956), based at the Appleby Frodingham Railway-Scunthorpe. No. 22 was expected to enter NNR service during the Easter holidays.

As reported last issue, Dartmouth Steam Railway-based GWR 2-8-0T No. 4277 *Hercules* is also on hire to the NNR this season. The visiting locos will help bolster the NNR steam fleet.

Meanwhile, it has been confirmed that '9F' No. 92203 *Black Prince* (*RM* March) has been formally withdrawn from traffic. The 2-10-0 was sidelined in December and thorough investigations by the NNR's engineering team have revealed a leak in the main internal steam pipe. The leak was traced to the point where the pipe is expanded into the smokebox tubeplate behind the superheater header.

"Unfortunately, the location of the fault and the amount of work needed means it is not possible to carry out a cost-effective repair given the limited use possible before the boiler ticket expires in early May," explained NNR interim general manager, Graham Hukins.

CROWD PULLER: The Great Western Society's 'Saint' No. 2999 *Lady of Legend* helped to attract record visitor numbers to the East Somerset Railway's 50th Anniversary Steam Gala on March 16/17. No. 2999 performed alongside home-fleet locos GWR Large Prairie No. 4110, Ivatt '2MT' No. 46447 and Andrew Barclay 0-4-0ST No. 1719 *Lady Nan*. *Lady of Legend* is seen just after leaving Mendip Vale station with the first train of the day on March 16. ROBERT BATTY

New-build Atlantic *Beachy Head* emerges!

HISTORY was made at Sheffield Park in early March, when new-build 'Marsh Atlantic' No. 32424 *Beachy Head* emerged from its non-rail-connected workshop, Atlantic House.

The 4-4-2 was moved the short distance to Bluebell Railway metals using a low-loader and it was partnered with its tender for the first time on March 6. No. 32424 subsequently moved into the railway's maintenance shed for commissioning work as part of getting the loco into public service.

The roots of this project can be traced back to 1986 when Nick Pigott, the then editor of *The RM*, found a Great Northern Railway Atlantic boiler, subsequently identified as boiler No. 9359 built at Doncaster in 1941. Since the LBSCR Atlantics were built to drawings modified from the GNR design, it was recognised that the boiler could correctly form the basis of a Brighton Atlantic re-creation, hence when it was offered for sale, it was bought by the Bluebell Railway.

Members of the team in Atlantic House will now begin work on their next projects – Adams Radial Tank No. 30583 (488) and Adams 'B4' No. 96 *Normandy* – which as previously reported, are to be returned to steam inside the dedicated workshop. The pair have moved into the space vacated by No. 32424.



Coupled to its tender for the first time on March 6, new-build Marsh Atlantic No. 32424 *Beachy Head* sits in the yard at Sheffield Park ahead of its move into the maintenance shed for final assembly and commissioning to start. Although no date has yet been given for its debut, it is hoped that running trials will commence by the summer. JAMES CUMMINS/BLUEBELL RAILWAY



BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS: The centenary of No. 4079 *Pendennis Castle* was marked in style at its Didcot Railway Centre home over the weekend of March 2/3. Among the highlights was a display of more than 100 'Castle' related artefacts, including models, numbers and nameplates from scrapped and preserved classmates – plus archive photographs. A limited-edition real ale, Hook Norton brewery's Pendennis 100 was launched at the event. *Pendennis Castle* performed alongside 0-4-0ST No. 1340 *Trojan* and 'Saint' No. 2999 *Lady of Legend*. The GWR 4-6-0 is seen in action on March 2. FRANK DUMBLETON/GWS

Four locomotives rostered to be in steam for Llangollen Railway Branchline gala

LLANGOLLEN Railway's April 12-14 Branchline Gala is expected to see a quartet of steam locomotives in action for the first time in several years.

GWR 0-6-0PT No. 7754 is to be formally rededicated to traffic after a restoration which has taken almost 20 years and largely completed using volunteer labour.

Another highlight is set to be the return of GWR 2-8-0 No. 3802 which should be back in steam for the first time in over two years following a comprehensive 'bottom end' and cylinder overhaul.

Kitson 0-6-0 *Austin 1* is also due to be in action hauling a short rake of passenger-carrying brake vans, while Hudswell, Clarke 0-6-0ST No. 68067 (75091/1943) will be operating its last trains at Llangollen for the foreseeable future before heading off for hire to another railway.

Diesel traction is also due to feature in the mix – with Class 26 No. 5310 (26010) working a Glyndyfrdwy-Corwen shuttle with No. 68067. A DMU will be in action – either the Class 127/108 hybrid or the Class 108.

SIDELINES

'Spaceship' will cross Pennines to East Lancs

THE first guest loco has been announced for the East Lancashire Railway's October 11-13 Autumn Steam Gala. BR '9F' No. 92134 is to cross the Pennines from the North Yorkshire Moors Railway. The weekend is due to see an intensive all-steam timetable with attractions including express and goods trains, shunting demonstrations, brake van rides and a bar car. Meanwhile, locos on the roster this season will include SR Bulleid Pacific No. 34092 *City of Wells*, 'Jinty' No. 47298 and Hunslet 0-6-0 No. 2890. Manchester Ship Canal 0-6-0T No. 32 will be withdrawn in January 2025 for its 10 yearly overhaul.

Commercial appointment

LONDON Transport Museum has appointed Sarah Fellingham-Adkin as its new enterprise director. She will lead the museum's commercial and enterprise strategy, developing the retail offer and Hidden London tours and its venue hire and filming. Under the leadership of new director and CEO Elizabeth McKay, Ms Fellingham-Adkin joins Ruth Brockbank (chief financial officer), Christopher Nix (director of content), Claire Williamson (director of audiences and development), Fenella Goodhart (director of learning and participation) and Tom Campbell (director of estate and customer experience) as part of the museum's leadership team.

Guided tours of Tyseley

VINTAGE Trains is offering tours of parts of Tyseley Locomotive Works. The experience includes a briefing in the original GWR staff club, a visit to locomotive roundhouse footprint and turntable, the miniature railway and the locomotive depot to view operational locos. The engineering workshop does not form part of the tour. Due to take place on April 27, May 18, June 15, July 13 and August 13, the tours cost £12 for adults and £6 for children (aged 10-15). The tours are not suitable for children aged nine or under. Bookings can be made online at https://vintagetrains.co.uk/ or by telephoning 0121 7084960.

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Gala to celebrate half century

Kent & East Sussex Railway's special celebration weekend will pay tribute to the past as well as whet appetites for future collaboration with Rother Valley.

THE operation of a passenger train at Robertsbridge is to be among the highlights of the Kent & East Sussex Railway's (KESR) 50th anniversary gala weekend on June 1-2.

Celebrations at the line will kick off with a recreation of the opening ceremony before the departure of the first train on the opening day of the gala. The ceremony in June 1974 was performed by the then MP for Ashford, W F (Bill) Deedes (later Baron Deedes), and this time will be carried out by current Ashford MP, Damian Green.

Three guest locos are expected at Tenterden for the weekend spectacular, to lead a special timetable of passenger services. As agreements were still being finalised in mid-March, details remained under wraps, but their identities will be announced in coming weeks.

In addition to lots of action on the rails, there will be behind the scenes tours and a programme of on-station entertainment, representing the last five decades.

Attractions

The gala weekend will not only celebrate the achievements of the last 50 years of the railway but also look forward to its next chapter, in collaborative activity with the Rother Valley Railway (RVR) which is preparing to start the groundwork for the line to be reopened between Robertsbridge and Bodiam.

Gala tickets will entitle passengers to travel to and from Robertsbridge on a heritage bus service. Using the same ticket, passengers can then ride a special shuttle train service operating between Robertsbridge Junction and Northbridge Street – a stretch of line which has not been in operation since 2013.

The shuttles will be hauled by BR Standard Class 7 No. 70000 *Britannia*, which will be based at Robertsbridge throughout the weekend.

Also at Robertsbridge Junction, passengers will be able to view displays about the plans to rebuild the line and booking office and see the restored turntable in action.

The gala weekend will also see representatives of the KESR and RVR sign an official Memorandum of Understanding. This will pave the way for the KESR to eventually run regular services through to Robertsbridge Junction once the line has been rebuilt and the station recommissioned.

Further details about the gala will be announced shortly.

Meanwhile, the KESR has launched its Anniversary Appeal to return WR 0-6-0PT No. 1638 to traffic.

Pannier appeal

Reflecting the 1951-built loco's number, the target is to raise £163,800 – the figure being based on initial work estimates, plus a contingency. The first step will be to complete work on the chassis and motion, before any investigation of the boiler can begin. The railway is hoping to attract 250 supporters who are each willing to commit to a monthly contribution of £16.38, for a fixed period of three years, to fund the project. Any upfront larger donations will enable the railway to fast track the start of the overhaul.

Visit www.kesr.org.uk for further details.

Duffield landslip remediation project takes shape

WORK to enable trains to run along the full length of the Ecclesbourne Valley Railway following a landslip continue to progress.

Slewing of the track at Duffield has begun – with the drainage being the first priority. A large part of the new trench to re-route the existing drainage has been dug, along with clearance of most of the vegetation.

A local quarry has offered what the EVR described as "a very good deal" on limestone – while a heavy-duty rail slewing machine has been loaned by Peak Rail . The machine will be used to push the track over and into place an inch at a time.

Negotiations are ongoing between engineers, insurance loss adjusters and legal professionals regarding the landslip itself.

The railway said it is grateful for the donations from well-wishers, which are allowing work to progress. Visit www.gofundme.com/f/operation-duffield to donate online.



BEWDLEY BY NIGHT

A night photoshoot was organised by 30742 Charters on the Severn Valley Railway at Bewdley on February 23 and 24. GWR 4-6-0 No. 7812 *Erlestoke Manor* hauled a passenger train, while GWR 0-6-0PT No. 7714 worked a goods train – cameo scenes being created at various points around the delightful GWR station. Both locomotives had been in steam either side of the event for footplate courses. Initially offered on a single date, the event proved to be an instant sell-out, so a second date was added to meet demand. No. 7812 is seen at the south end of Bewdley on February 23.

ROBERT FALCONER



SUPER STEAM POWER: LNER 'A4' No. 60007 *Sir Nigel Gresley* and BR '7MT' No. 70000 *Britannia* double head the second train of the day through Burrs Country Park during the East Lancashire Railway's Legends of Steam gala on March 15. MATTHEW DITCH

'Dukedog' returns to Aberystwyth

THE sole-surviving 'Dukedog' is back in its former Mid Wales stomping ground after being in preservation in the south-east of England for over 60 years.

No. 9017 is now on display in the restored GWR 1938-built engine shed at Aberystwyth as part of a loan agreement between the Bluebell Railway and the Vale of Rheidol Railway (VOR).

As previously reported, the building has recently been transformed into a museum, display and events space as part of a larger project called Wales to the World, which is developing the VOR's terminus at Park Avenue into a GWR-style station suitable for the modern tourist.

This location is especially significant for No. 9017, as it will be displayed in the building where it was based and used to work in the 1950s.

Llŷr Ap Iolo, managing director of the VOR, said: "As part of the project to construct our new museum, standard gauge track was laid to facilitate this kind of visit – the 'Dukedog' seemed the perfect choice to be the first standard gauge locomotive to be put on display. I am very grateful to the board of the Bluebell Railway for making this loan possible."

The VOR and museum are open daily until the start of November.

Meanwhile, in late February Wainwright 'P' 0-6-0T No. 178 departed Bluebell metals on loan to the One:One Collection, a museum which is in development in the former Hornby warehouses in Margate.

No. 178, which was named *Pioneer II* while in industrial service at Bowaters Paper Mill, Sittingbourne from 1958 until its purchase by the Bluebell in 1969, will appropriately be displayed alongside 2ft 6ins gauge 0-4-2ST *Leader* (see separate story on page 62).



GWR 'Dukedog' 4-4-0 No. 9017 inside Aberystwyth shed on Mach 4 – note the appropriate 89C shedplate. PHIL BUDD/VOR

New plans for returning Tenterden 'Terriers' to traffic

THERE are fresh hopes that both LBSCR 'A1X' 0-6-0Ts owned by The Terrier Trust (TTT) CIO could be back action at their Kent & East Sussex Railway (KESR) home.

In late February, No. 2678 (*Knowle*) entered the works at Rolvenden for attention to the frames which has kept the loco out of service for almost two years. An initial assessment in the summer of 2022 found No. 2678 would require a major chassis overhaul. Following a recent evaluation by the K&ESR Locomotive Department, while that work will be needed as part of the next major overhaul, it has been decided that the loco can be sufficiently repaired to allow limited operation for the next few years ahead of that overhaul.

Work on the chassis is likely to take around a couple of months and statutory inspections on the boiler will also be required before the loco can again haul trains.

Being aware that No. 2678's cylinders are weak, it has been decided to fit replacements at the next overhaul. The target is to have the loco overhauled by 2030 in time to celebrate its 150th anniversary.

With that in mind, the trust and KESR are collaborating on fundraising. A recent welcome boost has been a £10,000 grant from the M J Camp Charitable Foundation to help with No. 2678's next overhaul.

Separately, TTT has received a donation of £2,000 + gift aid meaning that so far £12,500 has been raised. The exact cost will remain unknown until the loco is dismantled for assessment in approximately three years.

Meanwhile, long-awaited repairs to damage sustained on No. 70 *Poplar* (No. 3 *Bodiam*) while at the Bluebell Railway on July 29, 2022 have edged closer. The KESR submitted an insurance claim following the incident and discussions with insurers have been protracted. A number of engineering inspections have taken place and the insurers' loss adjuster has now agreed a path towards obtaining a settlement.

By early March, with the guidance of the insurers' technical authority, KESR is producing the specification of testing and repairs to create an invitation to tender for circulation to potential outside contractors. Physical work on some of the components which sustained damage could start shortly.

SIDELINES

APRIL
Until Apr 4 Great Central Railway: Ruffle the Rail Dog Family Adventures
Until Apr 7 Gloucestershire Warwickshire Steam Railway: Children's Craft Activities
Until Apr 7 Keighley & Worth Valley Railway: Easter Expresses
Until Apr 12 Isle of Wight Steam Railway: The Great Railway Easter Hunt
Apr 4 Bodmin Railway: Steam Shanty Evening
Apr 5-6 Churnet Valley Railway: Mad Hatter's Tea Party
Apr 6 Middleton Railway: Community Day
Apr 6-7 North Norfolk Railway: 60th Anniversary of Closure
Apr 6-7 South Devon Railway: Mad Hatter's Travelling Tea Party
Apr 7 East Anglian Railway Museum: Steam Day
Apr 7 Kent & East Sussex Railway: Spring Fun Day
Apr 12-14 Llangollen Railway: Branch Line Gala
Apr 13, 24, 30 Gloucestershire Warwickshire Steam Railway: GWSR Behind Closed Doors
Apr 18-21 Severn Valley Railway: Spring Steam Gala
Apr 20 Swanage Railway: The Purbeck Piddler
Apr 20-21 Buckinghamshire Railway Centre: Spring Transport Festival
Apr 21 Ecclesbourne Valley Railway: Heritage Open Day
Apr 26-28 Embsay & Bolton Abbey Steam Railway: A Taste of Faulty Towers
Apr 26-28 Watercress Line: Spring Steam Gala
Apr 27-May 12 Epping Ongar Railway: Festival of Steam
Apr 27 Lincolnshire Wolds Railway: Fish & Chips Special
Apr 27 Llangollen Railway: Real Ale Train
Apr 27-28 Spa Valley Railway: Days Out With Thomas
Apr 28 Bluebell Railway: Toy and Rail Collectors Fair

MAY
May 3-6 West Somerset Railway: Spring Steam Spectacular
May 4-6 East Lancashire Railway: Days Out With Thomas

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Oswestry station to be revitalised

Funding in place to allow historic building to be restored by local authority owner.

OSWESTRY'S Grade II listed station building is to be renovated after a funding package was secured by Shropshire Council, which owns the building – part of which is used by Cambrian Heritage Railways (CHR).

The cost of the restoration is estimated to be £900,000 and a bid to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund has been successful in securing 70% of this – a total of £630,550. This grant offer requires 30% match funding, which has been made available from the council's capital programme, allowing the project to proceed.

It is hoped work will be carried out by contractors, with the aim of the external restoration being completed before March 2025, to comply with the grant terms.

Shropshire Council took possession of the building in early 2023 after it had suffered storm damage the previous year. During the storm a number of corbels became loose, and as a safety precaution scaffolding has been placed around the building to prevent any corbels or pieces of masonry falling on pedestrians or visitors.

Shropshire Council has since been working with CHR, Oswestry Town Council, the Future Oswestry Group and conservation experts to agree a programme of repairs for the listed building to help secure a viable long-term use for it.

An inspection by the council's conservation team and building surveyors has also identified that, at some time in the past 40 years, the original slates from the roof have been removed and replaced with tiles made of a ceramic composite which includes asbestos. These tiles have become weathered and asbestos fibres are now exposed requiring their replacement.

Once the exterior works are complete, the council will need to undertake any necessary internal works required to bring the building fully back into a suitable end use. Funding has been secured to undertake more detailed building surveys and to commission a Conservation Management Plan (CMP). These surveys and the CMP will be undertaken in the coming months in parallel with the essential external works, before a recommended end-use(s) and business case is brought back to the council's cabinet in the second half of this year.

Once the headquarters of the pre-Grouping Cambrian Railways Company, the structure is listed by Historic England (HE) and dating back to 'circa 1865' It is constructed largely of brick and with an ornate row of corbels forming part of the soffit under the eaves. The corbels are specifically referenced in the listing by HE and are a key feature of the building.



Newly restored BR Mk. 1 BSK No. E35334 arrives at Cambrian Heritage Railways' (CHR) Oswestry yard on March 12. The scene is dominated by Oswestry station building – once the home of the pre-Grouping Cambrian Railways Company – which is to benefit from significant investment by its local authority owner. No. E35334 has been restored to traffic by the line's carriage & wagon volunteers, based at CHR's Llynclys site, four miles south of Oswestry. DAVE ROLL/CHR

New cab for *Dunrobin*

FURTHER progress has been made on the return to steam of Beamish Museum's Sharp, Stewart 0-4-4T (4085/1895) *Dunrobin*, which is being carried out under contract by the Severn Valley Railway (SVR) at Bridgnorth.

SVR has sub-contracted the construction of the new cab/bunker to the Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Railways's Boston Lodge works. The original cab was surveyed, then drawn up as a CAD (computer aided design) package, enabling the components to be delivered pre-cut to size and shape, for assembly at Boston Lodge.

While the bunker could have been patched, it was felt that this area would always be a weak spot in an otherwise sound locomotive, so it was decided that replacing it would provide greater longevity. Handrails, beading and other items have been recovered for reuse.

Most of the new superstructure for *Dunrobin* has been manufactured at Boston Lodge – the new tanks having been made there several years ago.



With the cab back tacked in place, the shape of the structure becomes clear. This view taken on February 28 shows the bench seat, upon which the Duke's guests would reside for their journeys to the castle from Inverness. MATTHEW ELLIS/FFWHR

As previously reported (*RM* February 2024), it is hoped *Dunrobin* will be completed later this year before entering service on Beamish's revived NER branch line at Rowley station in 2025.

The operating days for the Waggonway are daily from April 1 to November 10. Rowley station and the Colliery Railway are open daily (static), with the Colliery standard gauge line in operation on the last Saturday of the month until October 26. The narrow gauge railway operates more regularly – details will be announced shortly.



COMING UP WITH THE GOODS: Hunslet Austerity' 0-6-0ST No. 49 (7093/1943) hauls a demonstration freight train past Causey Arch car park on Tanfield Railway Sunday, February 25. DAVE HEWITT

Moors introduces shorter day trip fares

NORTH Yorkshire Moors Railway has tweaked its fares this year.

Shorter journey tickets are now available, offering day return travel at a fixed fare. To travel to one station (e.g. Pickering – Levisham) it is £13.50 per adult and to travel two stations (e.g. Whitby – Goathland) tickets are £27 per adult.

Due to popular demand, the 'Kids Go Free' incentive applies to all shorter journeys for children up the age of 15.

Adult all line day tickets cost £49.50 and are automatically converted to a 12-month Annual Pass, valid on standard timetable services only.

Compiled by **Gareth Evans**

Coalfish rescued just in time

Another chapter of 'modern' wagon history saved.



Coalfish No. MHA 394001 is seen departing the premises of metal recycler CF Booth in Rotherham. JOHN MATKA

PIONEER Coalfish wagon No. MHA 394001 has been saved by the National Wagon Preservation Group (NWPG) and will be based at the Telford Steam Railway.

It proved to be an 11th-hour escape from the cutter's torch for the open wagon, being spotted in a scrap consist – it's salvation was negotiated within an hour.

Will Snook, co-chair of the NWPG, said: "We are so pleased to be able to preserve such an important example of railfreight history.

"It will help us portray the HAA story to the final chapter and this Coalfish, which is a low-height open wagon, is highly desirable for heritage railway use.

"The underframe, a former HAA wagon, has survived for 43 years and only withdrawn due to modern equivalents."

In due course, it is intended that the Coalfish will be restored to as-converted state in 1997. In the meantime, it will be a useful addition to the Telford fleet.

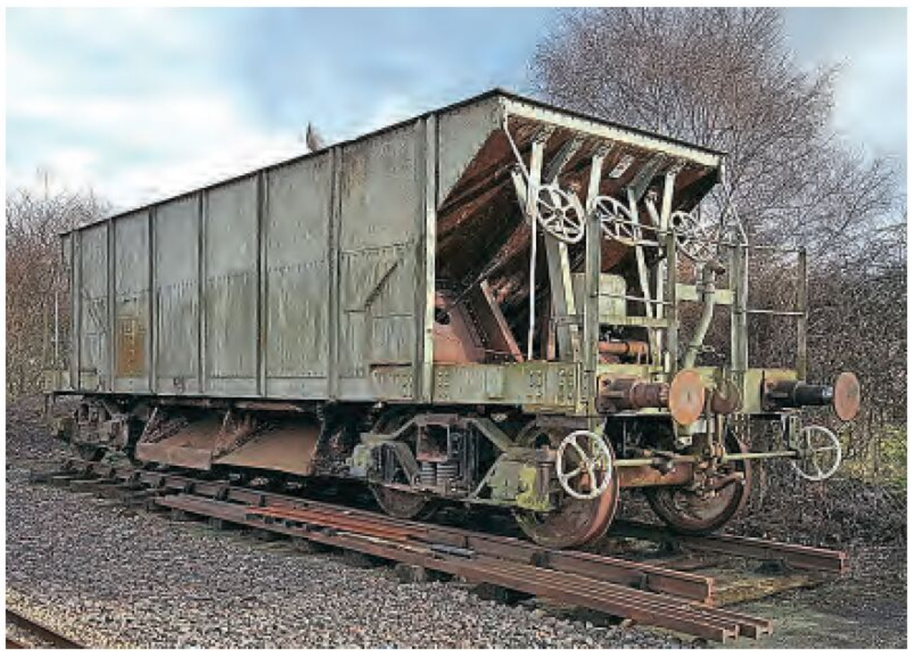
Explaining the background to the acquisition, Mr Snook said: "The NWPG had made some phone calls to get spare parts for our MGR wagon fleet.

"However, the conversations moved fast and we ended up coming away not only with spares, but this pioneer wagon as well. The whole deal was done within the hour.

"A hearty thanks go to the CF Booth team for its cooperation and hard work in allowing us to secure the wagon and lots of spares to ensure the longevity of this coalfish and the MGRs."

Meanwhile, on March 16 staff training on air braked freight commenced at the Bodmin Railway in readiness for operations later this year. It included a run out behind Class 47 No. 47306 (D1787) *The Sapper* – the first rake of CDAs to visit Boscarne Junction.

Visit www.nwpg.co.uk for details of how you can support NWPG.



UNDER OFFER: **The Churnet Valley Railway is seeking to further boost its infrastructure wagon fleet by acquiring an SR Walrus bogie ballast hopper. After a successful appeal (*RM* October 2023), Sealion bogie ballast hopper No. DB982613 was purchased. Following on from this, the opportunity has now arisen to acquire an SR Walrus. With monies raised previously, only an extra £2500 is required to complete the purchase, so the CVR's supporting charity, the North Staffordshire Railway Company (1978) Ltd has re-opened the ballast wagon appeal.**
Visit https://www.totalgiving.co.uk/appeal/bogieballast for details.

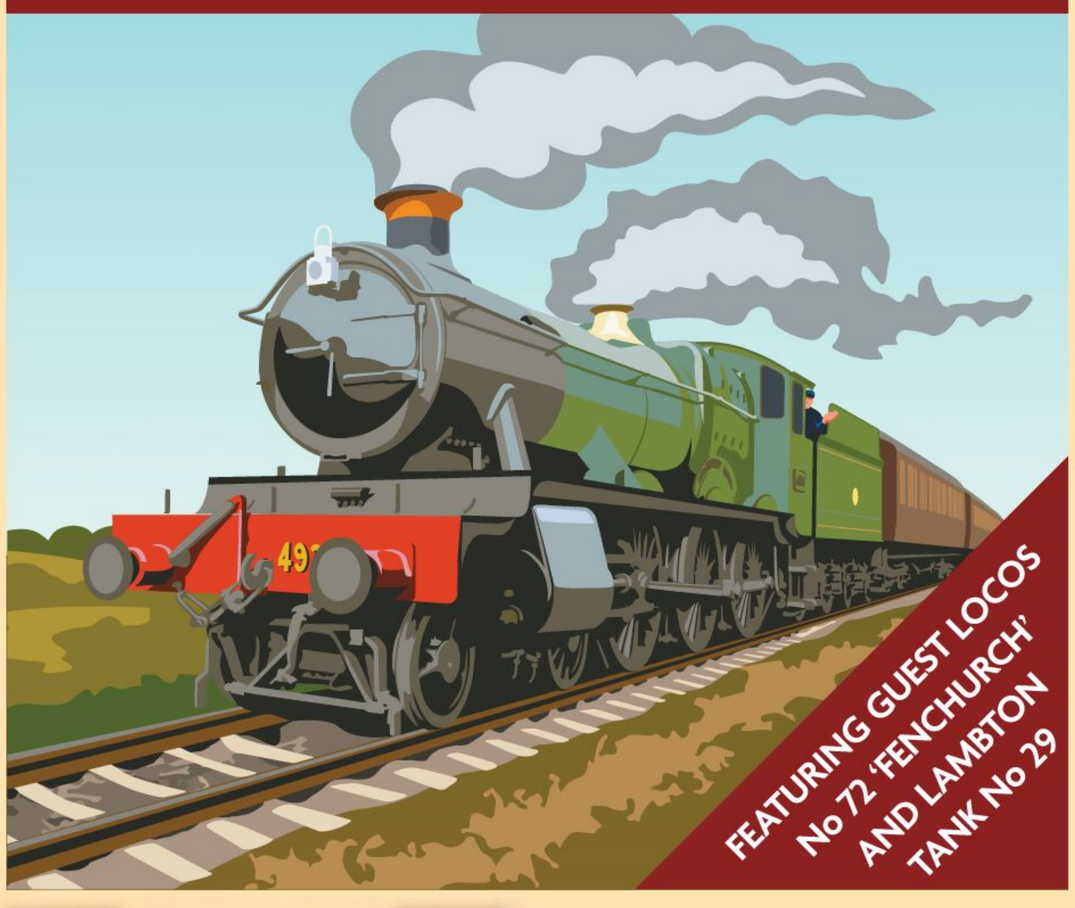
■ CAMBRIAN Heritage Railways has acquired BR Mermaid side tipping ballast wagon No. 989385 from the Colne Valley Railway. The 1960-built vehicle arrived at Oswestry on February 29. It complements Mermaid No. 989205 already at the CHR.

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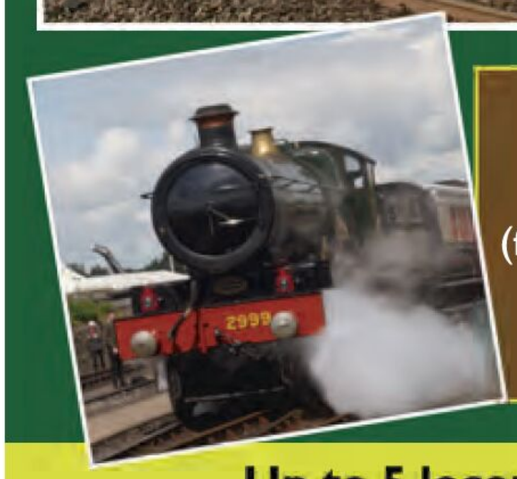
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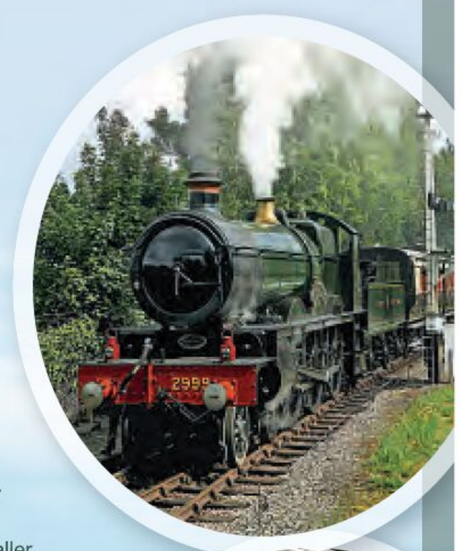
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Compiled by **Ian Smith**

Month at Beamish for *Sir Berkeley*

Historic locomotive to operate at popular County Durham venue.

THE Vintage Carriages Trust has announced that its historic Manning Wardle L class 0-6-0ST *Sir Berkeley*, Works number 1210 built in 1890, is to spend a month at Beamish Museum.

The locomotive will be operating on the Colliery Line on 10 days between April 6 and the May Day Bank Holiday. In mid-March, the locomotive was being prepared at the Middleton Railway's Moor Road workshops for the visit. The loco has recently undergone winter maintenance and a boiler inspection.

In addition to work on *Sir Berkeley*, the Middleton Railway Trust has been attending to *Swanscombe No. 6* over the winter period. This Hawthorn Leslie 0-4-0ST, works number 3860 built in 1935 has also had its annual boiler inspection alongside work on valves and pistons.

'Honorary industrial' No. 68163, Sentinel 0-4-0VBT works number 8837 built in 1933, is also being prepared for work in 2024. While strictly an ex-main line locomotive built for the LNER, No. 68153 spent all its life in Geneva Permanent way yard, Darlington and then several years doing pure industrial work for the early Middleton Railway, and is worthy of a mention here.

The other working steam locomotive, Hunslet 14"0-6-0ST *Brookes No. 1* is available for traffic.

Under major overhaul is Hudswell Clarke 0-6-0ST *Slough Estates No. 3*, works number 1544 built in 1924, which celebrates its 100th birthday this year. Much work has gone into overhauling the chassis, which was recently rewheeled. One frame stretcher requires replacement and work is in hand designing this with a view to manufacture shortly. The boiler will then be attended to with the aim of steaming by the end of the year if possible.

New arrival *Hawarden*, Hudswell Clarke 0-4-0ST, works number 526 built in 1899, has been moved into its display position and the name painted on the right-hand side of the saddletank which now faces the public when on display. As reported last issue, Hawarden was formerly on display at the National Trust's Penrhyn Castle museum.



Manning Wardle 0-6-0ST *Sir Berkeley* at Moor Road in 2023. The loco is scheduled to appear at Beamish from April. IAN SMITH



Peckett 0-4-0ST *May* passing RSH 0-4-0ST *Agecroft No. 3* at Whitwell on February 25, during the line's 15th anniversary gala. The image was taken lineside with permission from the railway. JAMES KINDRED

Milestone marked with *May* visit

THE Whitwell and Reepham Railway Station in Norfolk celebrated its 15-year anniversary with a gala over two weekends in February.

Peckett 0-4-0ST *May*, works number 1370 built in 1915, visited from Buckinghamshire Railway Museum for the event. The ex- Yates Duxbury locomotive returned home to Quainton Road on March 6.

The regular working steam locomotive is Robert Stephenson & Hawthorn 0-4-0ST *Agecroft No. 3*, works number 7681 built in 1951. This locomotive also carries the name *Bolton No. 1* on the opposite side of the tank to its Agecroft name. The loco is a regular performer at the railway and running well, being popular with crews and visitors alike.

May and *Agecroft No. 3* operated on both weekends of the gala in various combinations.

The railway also has a pair of Andrew Barclay 0-4-0ST locomotives. *Annie* is works number 945 built in 1904, while *Victory* is more modern, having been built in 1945 as works number 2199. Both locomotives require overhaul and the railway has decided to do both together as they share many similar parts, thus offering savings by getting similar parts overhauled or replaced together.



A BEAR IN THE AIR: History was made at the Sittingbourne & Kemsley Light Railway on Tuesday, March 5, as Peckett 0-4-0ST *Bear* works number 614, built in 1896 was moved to the Buckinghamshire Railway Centre (*RM* February). The Class W4 loco, the oldest standard gauge Peckett in the UK, had to be craned from its resting place of the last few decades at Kemsley Down onto a low-loader for transport, providing a spectacular sight as it dangled from the crane used to lift it. At the same time, SKLR's standard gauge Andrew Barclay 0-4-0 fireless locomotive No. 1, works No. 1876, built in 1925 was craned to the prime position at Kemsley Down Station previously occupied by Bear. PAUL WILLIAMS/SKLR

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Compiled by **Cliff Thomas**

SIDELINES

■ WELSH Highland Heritage Railway has repainted its carriage No. 7 (known as The Eisteddfod Coach) into a cornflower blue livery. This reflects the period after 1934 when the Ffestiniog Railway leased the Welsh Highland Railway and repainted carriages from their previous green livery into various colours in an effort to encourage tourist traffic; No. 26 was blue, No. 27 pink and No. 29 red.

■ SNAEFELL Mountain Railway (Isle of Man) Car No. 1 is being repainted into traditional Snaefell colours of red, teak and white. It has carried a blue, teak and white livery for the last 10 years.

■ 1863 Mountaineer Locomotive Ltd, which is building a replica Ffestiniog Railway George England 0-4-0T+T *Mountaineer*, has prepared designs for inside and outside motion components and commissioned production from CNC specialists. Most parts are being financed from a reserve fund, but sponsorship is needed towards the crossheads (estimated at £4,000 for the pair) and smokebox materials (estimated £3,600).

■ AS the overhaul of James Evans' ex-Dinorwic Hunslet 0-4-0ST *Velinheli* approaches its conclusion, new *Felinheli* nameplates have been fitted to the saddle tank. Although a change from the historic anglicised spelling to the Welsh spelling of the location after which the loco was named, this does not change how the name is pronounced, in Welsh a single F is pronounced as a V would be in English. In the Welsh language a double F (Ff) produces the English 'F' sound, as in Ffestiniog.

DIARY

APRIL
3-12 Bredgar and Wormshill Light Railway Easter Diesel Days
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'
20-21 Welshpool and Llanfair Railway Vintage Weekend
21 Apedale Classic Vehicles
28 West Lancs Friendly Engines Day

New owner and new future all set for *Nesta*

The most widely travelled 'Quarry Hunslet' clocks up more transporter miles



Hunslet 0-4-0ST *Nesta* pictured at Boston Lodge works on March 15. JAMES WAITE

UNRESTORED Hunslet 0-4-0ST *Nesta* (HE704/1899) has been acquired by Jeremy Martin's Richmond Light Railway, and in late February was transferred from its recent display location at Bala Lake Railway to the Ffestiniog Railway.

Nesta left Penrhyn slate quarry in July 1965 and was exported to the USA, subsequently ending up in Puerto Rico where it was intended to be used in a project which never reached fruition.

Following many years of storage in less than ideal conditions adjacent to a swamp, Rob Gambrill, in conjunction with Martyn Ashworth and Statfold Barn Railway – which wanted to rescue Andrew Barclay 0-4-0WT *Cegin* (1991/1931) which was at the same location, succeeded in bringing the two locos back to Britain in April 2016. This amazing repatriation effort was exclusively described by Rob Gambrill in a feature published in the September 2016 *Railway Magazine*.

Having been initially stored at Rob Gambrill's private workshop, *Nesta* was unveiled to the public for the first time since repatriation at Vale of Rheidol Railway's September 14-15 2019 'Forgotten Engines 2' event, following which it was placed on display in Bala Lake Railway's Llanuwchllyn Heritage Centre.

Richmond Light Railway and the Ffestiniog Railway have formed plans for conservation work which envisages returning *Nesta* to operable condition while conserving as much original material as possible.

Initially, *Nesta* will be displayed in its unrestored state as part of the Ffestiniog's new Boston Lodge behind-the-scenes tours which are scheduled to start this summer. Physical work on the locomotive is unlikely to start until the end of 2024 after a conservation and repair plan has been prepared.

Corris and Talyllyn locos to make reciprocal June/July visits

TALYLLYN Railway's (TR) ex-Corris Railway Hughes 0-4-2ST No. 3 *Sir Haydn* will visit the Corris Railway (CR) during June.

It is expected to operate CR passenger trains on June 1, 8, 22 and 29 and participate in a June 15 Corris Gala Day.

Sir Haydn, a Talyllyn loco since 1951, has returned to Corris previously, but this will be the first time it has appeared with CR's new-build Falcon 0-4-2ST No. 10 which entered service last September.

The visit to the revived Corris line will provide several historic milestones. It will be the first occasion in over a century that two 'Falcons' have run on the Corris trackbed between Corris station and Maespoeth Junction.

The two locos will double-head some trains, possibly the first time two such locos have ever done so – although a pair were pictured heading a train on the original river Dyfi railway bridge near Machynlleth, this is believed to have been staged for a commercial postcard and there are no other known pictures of CR double heading.

With 2005-built Kerr, Stuart 'Tattoo' 0-4-2ST No. 7 (a near-replica of CR No. 4, now TR No. 4 *Edward Thomas*) also present this will be the first time a trio of working steam locomotives have been seen in Maespoeth shed since the cusp of the reigns of Edward VII and George V.

Following *Sir Haydn's* visit to Corris, it will return to the TR with CR's Falcon 0-4-2ST No. 10.

CR No. 10's July visit will include appearing during TR's July 6-7 Anything Goes Gala. Plans for this event include a Saturday loco parade at Wharf with locos in reverse numerical order and a Sunday parade of all operational locos at Abergynolwyn. Sunday morning will also feature a recreation of the 1974 TRPS AGM train which combined two carriage sets with the 12 coach train hauled by TR's 0-4-2ST No. 1 *Talyllyn* and 0-4-0WT No. 2 *Dolgoch*.

Over the weekend, CR No. 10 will appear double-heading trains with Hughes 0-4-2ST No. 3 *Sir Haydn*, Kerr, Stuart 'Tattoo' 0-4-2ST No. 4 *Edward Thomas* (both ex-Corris) and TR's own 'new-build' 0-4-2T No. 7 *Tom Rolt*.

Phil Robinson steps down after 25 years as MRT chairman

PHIL Robinson stepped down as chairman at the Moseley Railway Trust's (MRT) annual general meeting in February.

He first became involved with MRT in 1996 when it operated a railway at a school site at Cheadle, Stockport, becoming acting chairman in 1999 and chairman from 2000.

During his 25 years at the helm MRT has progressed from having to close the original railway and place the collection in storage through to developing the steadily expanding Apedale Valley Light Railway, home to an extensive collection of narrow gauge locomotives and equipment.

Stepping down from the chairmanship is a consequence of failing eyesight and the decision of Phil and his wife Dawn (who has run the shop at Apedale since 2008) to relocate to a new home in Scotland.



Right: Phil Robinson, wearing appropriate First World War uniform, pictured opening the Moseley Railway Trust's 2014 Tracks to the Trenches event at the Apedale Valley Light Railway. This event, and the 2016 follow up, were spectacular highlights in the narrow gauge calendar and demonstrated how far the trust had developed during the period of Phil's chairmanship. CLIFF THOMAS



Black, Hawthorn 0-4-0ST 748/1883 *Portugesa/Escucha* pictured in the museum at Statfold on March 16.. PETER JOHNSON

Statfold to restore 'forgotten' Black Hawthorn

AN historic steam loco which has remained out of the public eye in County Durham for 40 years is to be returned to steam at Statfold.

The Hawthorn Engine and Carriage Trust, owner of 2ft gauge Black, Hawthorn 0-4-0ST 748/1883 *Portugesa*, later known as *Escucha*, and the Statfold Narrow Gauge Museum Trust (SNGMT) have agreed a 30-year loan deal which will see the loco moved to Statfold and restored to steam.

Work is expected to commence shortly with the intention of returning it to operation within five years.

The 140-year-old locomotive was built for export having been ordered through a dealer, Phillips of Swansea. Its early history abroad is unclear, but during the 1920s it became based at the Minas y Ferrocariles de Utrillas in Teruel, Spain where it was named *Escucha*. At this mining railway it was modified, receiving side tanks and longer frames.

Escucha was repatriated in 1984 by the late Eric Maxwell and based at the (standard gauge) Tanfield Railway. A shed was built to house the locomotive and restoration work, primarily on the chassis, started. The restoration had not been completed by the time Mr Maxwell died, but the future of his locomotive collection (standard and narrow gauge) was safeguarded by the transfer of ownership to a new trust.

Hawthorn Engine and Carriage Trust chairman Stewart Waugh, said: "Opportunities for restoration to be completed in the North-East were limited and the deal agreed with Statfold Narrow Gauge Museum Trust was an unmissable opportunity to see *Portugesa* back in steam in a short period of time."

SNGMT views the addition of *Portugesa/Eschuca* to its collection as filling an important gap in the story of British-built narrow gauge locomotives and intends that it will visit other railways, hopefully including the North-East, when it returns to steam to be admired by as wide an audience as possible.

Appeal launched to restore Peter Nicholson collection loco

AN appeal has been launched aimed at restoring F.C. Hibberd 'Planet' 4wDM 2201/1939, which was owned by the late Peter Nicholson.

Peter died last October after contributing to *The Railway Magazine* for almost a quarter of a century in the form of Classic Traction and Miniature Railway news (*RM*, December 2023).

Peter's collection of narrow gauge railway locos and wagons has passed to his family and the appeal effort has been launched by his grandson, Josh Brinsford, who now also contributes to *The RM*.

The 'Planet' was built for the Surbiton Sewage Works in Surbiton, Surrey from where it was purchased for preservation by Peter in 1976. It was initially taken to the then-Brockham Museum, moved to Gloddfa Ganol (Blaenau Ffestiniog) in 1978, relocated to the Somerset and Avon Railway in 1990 and then went to the Vobster Light Railway in 1992.

In 1998 it was moved to the Devon Railway Centre where it has remained, but non-operational, for several years.

"I would really like the locomotive to move to the Westonzoyland Light Railway near Bridgwater in Somerset, which will mean that we can finally start the loco's major restoration for an eventual return to traffic," Peter's grandson Josh told *The RM*.

The appeal aims to raise £6,000 which will cover transporting the loco to Westonzoyland and work including reprofiling the wheels, overhauling the engine, radiator and brakes, replacing the engine controls and work on the gearbox controls.

Donations can be made at https://gofund.me/45e1357f.



F.C. Hibberd 'Planet' 4wDM 2201/1939 pictured on December 11, 2014 when it was in operation shunting on the 2ft gauge line at Devon Railway Centre. JOSH BRINSFORD

Offers to assist with the restoration at Westonzoyland Pumping Station Museum would also be welcomed.

TR mother and daughter footplate crew – a preservation first?

ON International Women's Day (March 8) Sarah Freeman – who became involved with the Talyllyn Railway (TR) in 1993 and passed as a steam driver in 2017 – with her daughter Ffion firing became what the TR believes to be the first mother and daughter steam footplate crew in preservation history.

The train took over 90 women and children from local communities to Abergynolwyn Station to attend a 'Platform Pilates' event. They have been together on the footplate previously, but always with husband/father Mark Freeman as driver or fireman.

The TR has a long history of inclusion, in 1957 Anne Hatherill was passed out as the first qualified female fireman in the UK.

SIDELINES

■ THE Sybil Locomotive Trust's Bagnall 0-4-0ST 1760/1906 *Sybil* undertook test runs under its own power following restoration at the West Lancashire Light Railway on February 11 as part of the commissioning process. The ex-Dinorwic loco is likely to enter service later this year.

■ THE volunteer team overhauling Ffestiniog Railway's ALCO 2-6-2T *Mountaineer* at Glan y Pwll depot have removed all the tubes enabling inspection of the tube plates. The boiler has also been thickness tested, revealing the plate work is in good condition. Pending lifting of the boiler a start has been made on cleaning the frames preparatory to assessing the amount of work required.

■ THE Glyn Valley Tramway Trust has taken delivery at its Chirk base of the first of two ex-Royal Naval Armament Depot flat wagons it has acquired. The vehicle has been re-gauged and restored by C.J.S Engineering Ltd in Wigan following a generous sponsorship which allowed its purchase and restoration. The flat wagon joins the ex-RNAD box van delivered last November.

■ PRIVATELY owned Ruston & Hornsby 11/13 HP 4wDM 201970/1940 *Alistair* returned to operation in mid-February at the Statfold Barn Railway where it is based. Originally built for use at the Lancashire Steel Corporation's Irlam works, it entered preservation in 1968 working on the Ffestiniog Railway's reconstruction between Tan-y-Bwlch and Blaenau Ffestiniog. Subsequently it went to the Gartell Light Railway in 1991, then the Hayling Light Railway before arriving at Statfold in early 2021.

■ Wingrove & Rogers type WR5 battery-electric locomotive, ex-Wheal Jane tin mine, of Baldhu in Cornwall, No. 19 built between 1984 and 1986 (the exact date is unknown) ran at the Golden Valley Light Railway (GVLR) for the first time in preservation on February 24. It arrived at GVLR, where it has acquired the name Baby Jane, in July 1995. An initial attempt to restore it stalled due to missing components including a battery pack and it was stored in a container until a more recent effort was commenced by a GVLR volunteer to return it to operation.

SIDELINES

■ THE new diesel locomotive built by Alan Keef Ltd for the 15in gauge Lappa Valley Railway (*RM* December) has been named *City of Truro*.

■ THE Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway's 2023 revised timetable meant it ran 18% fewer trains than in 2022 but achieved an increase of 15% in traffic income. While the shop operation made a profit, this was offset by in-house catering losses, meaning W&L Sales finished the year "just about breaking even". Overall, the railway finished the year on budget.

Further progress on Corris extension embankment

CONSTRUCTION of the embankment at Pont y Goedwig required to progress Corris Railway's (CR) southern extension was boosted during February with the arrival of large amounts of fill material which became available following completion of the new road bridge over the River Dyfi at Machynlleth.

CR needs to raise further money to maintain progress on this substantial civil engineering project.

Donations can be made via www.corris.co.uk or by sending a cheque, payable to Corris Railway, to Corris Railway (SE), Station Yard, Corris, Machynlleth, SY20 9SH.

Palmerston arrives at transformed VoR Aberystwyth station

Ffestiniog confirms plans for all its England engines.



This February 29 picture showing the arrival of the Ffestiniog Railway's (FR) George England 0-4-0STT *Palmerston* at the Vale of Rheidol Railway (as anticipated by *The RM*, March) also illustrates the transformation of the one-time standard gauge loco shed at Aberystwyth into a magnificent museum, display and events space with glass panels in the side and a new entrance foyer. The building was set to be opened to the public on March 23 when the Vale of Rheidol Railway commenced operations for the new season. CHRIS PARRY/FF&WHR

FOLLOWING the move of Ffestiniog Railway's (FR) George England 0-4-0STT *Palmerston* for initial display and, later this year, retubing and returning to steam (*RM*, March) Ffestiniog Railway general manager Paul Lewin has confirmed the status of the FR's other George England locos.

Princess is located in the far (Blaenau) end of the old loco shed at Boston Lodge, which will become part of the displays in the National Lottery Heritage Fund-backed Boston Lodge Redevelopment & Interpretation Project. There are no current plans to restore *Princess* to operation.

Behind *Princess* on the shed's No. 1 road, the life-expired 'carcass' of *Welsh Pony* which remained after completion of its major overhaul in 2020, comprising the old boiler, frames and cylinder, will be displayed. This will represent a typical historic scene when a dismantled locomotive would usually be in this building.

Welsh Pony itself, which had clocked up 10,000 miles between returning to service in June 2020 (having last worked in 1940) and withdrawal last year when movement of a crank pin was noticed, is to shortly be lifted. Having removed the wheelsets, the crank pins will be taken out and replaced, with the valve gear to be overhauled while this work is in progress.

Work is due to commence as soon as preparation of the FR's Double-Fairlies for summer services has been completed. Hopefully, *Welsh Pony* will return to service by the end of this year.

As anticipated (*RM* February), *Prince*, which last ran in September 2022, has been moved into Boston Lodge works for its overhaul to be progressed this year. While issues may arise during dismantling, the current assessment is that the chassis may not require extensive work and the boiler, although now 70 years old, is believed to be in reasonable condition. It is known that the saddle tank will require extensive attention. The objective remains of returning *Prince* to action in 2025.

While not an England loco, updates on Single-Fairlie *Taliesin* are that the power unit is currently being worked on and the boiler awaits retubing, although delivery of the superheater tubes was still awaited as winter turned to spring. The earliest that *Taliesin* will return to steam is the end of this year, possibly more likely in early 2025.



Kerr Stuart 0-4-2ST *Leader* pictured in the yard at Sittingbourne and Kemsley Light Railway's Kemsley Down base. SKLR

Out of ticket *Leader* to take a seaside break

SITTINGBOURNE & Kemsley Light Railway's (SKLR) 1905-built Kerr Stuart 0-4-2ST Brazil class *Leader* is to be relocated to the One:One Collection storage facility in Margate.

Leader was last steamed May 2022 prior to expiry of its boiler ticket.

SKLR has limited covered storage for locomotives and with *Leader* well down the queue for overhaul, moving it to the safe covered facility in the former Hornby factory will avoid the significant deterioration which would occur during outside storage.

Another loco arrives at Westonzoyland as railway extension progresses

RUSTON and Hornsby 4wDM 235711/1945 has joined the locomotive collection at Westonzoyland Pumping Station Museum, the first Ruston to be based at the museum.

The loco is owned by Jason Keswick, who purchased it from Jeremy Martin's Richmond Light Railway collection. Prior to this it had been at the Devon Railway Centre.

Other internal combustion locos at Westonzoyland are Motor Rail 40S310/1968, Lister Railtruck 34758/1949, Somerset & Dorset Railway Trust's Lister Railtruck 42319/1956, Jason Keswick's F. C. Hibberd 'Planet' 1830/1933 Boothby and Josh Brinsford's Lister Railtruck 6299/1935. A further loco owned by Josh Brinsford could be heading to Westonzoyland (see separate story).

Work on extending the 2ft gauge railway at Westonzoyland (*RM* September 2023) has continued with preparation of the trackbed by a digger in late February. Crushed concrete has been delivered which will be used to form a subbase before laying geo-tech and a layer of limestone ballast followed by positioning turnouts and tracklaying.

New era, new name for Evesham Vale line

THE 15in gauge Evesham Vale Light Railway (EVLR) held a gala day on February 25 to mark the final trains running under the ownership of Adrian and Sandra Corke.

All steam locos were in action with double-heading and periodic freight trains. The final train carried a headboard marking 'The end of an era – the Corke years 2012-2024.'

The new owners of the EVLR, David and Katherine Nelson-Brown (*RM* October 2023) who already own The Perrygrove Railway (branded as The Perrygrove Railway Adventure) were present. The EVLR has now been rebranded and will henceforth be known as The Valley Railway Adventure.

A promotion has been launched whereby the first 10,000 children to visit the 'new-look' Evesham line will receive a free ticket to the Perrygrove line. Similarly, the first 10,000 children visiting Perrygrove from the start of the season will receive a free ticket for the Evesham line.

Compiled by **Josh Brinsford**

Fleet variety aplenty

Up to nine steam locos could be available for the Moors Valley line this summer.

THIRTEEN steam locos are set to be on the Moors Valley Railway (MVR) roster this year – and another engine is set to return to action for the summer peak.

The line, which is located near Ringwood, Hampshire, is home to one of the largest collections of 7¼in gauge steam locomotives in the country, with a 19-strong fleet owned by the MVR or by private individuals.

Workshop resources are currently focused on the 10-year overhauls of two locos: 2-6-2 No.12 *Zeus* and 2-8-0 No.19 *Athelstan*. One of the mainstays of the railway in the peak summer season, work on *Zeus* is being fast tracked to ensure the loco is back in service as soon as possible. The work includes a boiler retube, new wheels and work on the cylinders.

Zeus, which has a South African Railways appearance, was built by Jim Haylock's Narogauge Ltd in 1991, while *Athelstan* is based on the East African Railway's Class 24 locos and was built by T Couling in 2006.

Work continues on the new-build 'ALCo Mini Mountaineer Project' Baldwin 2-6-2T currently being built by Andy Webb in the railway's workshops.

Meanwhile, the first batch of replacement coach bodies are almost complete and these will form part of the new olive coloured set. Considerable time and effort has been put in to ensure an excellent standard of finish and a predicted long life for these carriages.

A rebuilding programme for the wagon fleet is also under way. Members of the team have recently completed a refresh of an open wagon that was built in 2005 by one the line's volunteers with special educational needs. The wagon was in desperate need of attention and the rebuild included a new wooden body – plus refurbished wheels and chassis. It has been repainted and signwritten with the legend 'Gareth's Scrap Metal'.

Three enthusiast galas are planned to be held this year. The May 4/5 Visiting Loco Weekend will see a selection of both guest and resident locomotives in action, while all available resident locos are due to be in operation at the June 15/16 Grand Summer Weekend. The Autumn Steam Gala is due to be held on September 7/8.

For details, visit www.moorsvalleyrailway.co.uk.



One of the Moors Valley Railway's regular operating steam locos is No. 12 *Zeus*. The 2-6-2 is currently undergoing a 10-year overhaul. *Zeus* is seen approaching Lakeside station with a demonstration goods train during the railway's Grand Summer Gala on June 26, 2022. JOSH BRINSFORD



Among the eight locomotives on the roster this season are 2-4-0 No.14 *Horton* and 0-4-2T 'Tinkerbell' *Talos*. The locos are seen departing Kingsmere with a busy passenger train on June 26, 2022. JOSH BRINSFORD

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STEAM PORTFOLIO

1 3
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1 MAINTAINING THE PERMANENT WAY: Following its return from a visit to the Great Central Railway, Andy Booth's Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway 'A' Class 0-6-0 No. 52322 took part in a 30742 Charter hauling a fully loaded engineer's train along the Embsay & Bolton Abbey Steam Railway on February 21. In a short period of brightness on an otherwise wet and windy day, the train approaches the passing loop at Draughton. MIKE HEATH

2 STANDARD IN ACTION: Stuart Robinson's BR '4MT' No. 80078 starred in a 30742 Charter on February 16. The 2-6-4T is seen passing Lealands on the Spa Valley Railway. PETER HOLLANDS

3 FRAMED BY THE TREE: WR 'Manor' 4-6-0 No. 7827 *Lydham Manor* passes Greenway on the Dartmouth Steam Railway during a Timeline Events photo charter on March 7. As previously reported, No. 7827 has recently been outshopped in BR lined green livery for the first time in preservation. STUART CHAPMAN

4 CAMBRIAN RECALLED: Memories of the Cambrian main line in the days of steam were re-created during a 30742 Charter at the Churnet Valley Railway on March 5. Dartmouth Steam Railway-based BR '4MT' No. 75014 operating as No. 75033 approaches Cheddleton complete with an appropriate 'Cambrian Coast Express' headboard. ROBERT FALCONER



CAMBRIAN COAST EXPRESS
75033

WEST SOMERSET RAILWAY



Photo Credit: Tony Middleton

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Compiled by **Graeme Pickering**

Summerlee Tramway operations expected to resume 'soon'

Timescale for resumption of services is dependent on recruiting a member of staff to ensure its safe operation.

HAVING been closed for 18 months due to electrical issues, North Lanarkshire Council has confirmed to *The RM* that the problems affecting the tramway at Summerlee Museum of Scottish Industrial Life in Coatbridge have been resolved.

The council has not given any details regarding the extent of the problem, which has seen the tramway out of operation since October 2022.

'Safe operation'

An authority spokesman said, however, that the issues had been sorted out and that it was in the process of recruiting a suitably qualified employee to "ensure the safe operation of the tramway". He added that it looked forward to welcoming visitors soon and a timescale for its reopening would depend on when the staff member was appointed.

It is expected that there will be a public update once a schedule for reopening has been confirmed.

History

The first section of the tramway, which today covers a distance of around a quarter-of-a-mile, opened in March 1988, running from the museum's main entrance to Sawmill. It has welcomed guests including The Princess Royal, who was shown how to drive Lanarkshire Tramways Company No. 53 during a visit in 2001.

At the time of the temporary closure, the museum's accessible tram, Dusseldorf No. 392 had just re-entered service following overhaul, allowing Glasgow No. 1017 to be withdrawn for maintenance. No. 53 was also operational during the 2022 season. Also based at Summerlee is Glasgow No. 1245, which is undergoing restoration.



RIGHT: Lanarkshire Tramways Company No. 53 is seen in operation on the tramway at Summerlee Museum of Scottish Industrial Life on May 20, 2018. Built in 1908 and used on Hamilton, Motherwell and Wishaw services, it was withdrawn in 1931 and subsequently used as a hay store on a farm in Ayrshire. No. 53 was the first Scottish tram acquired by Summerlee and officially became part of the operational fleet there at the beginning of April 1995 after a 10-year restoration project. MARSUPIUM PHOTOGRAPHY/CC BY-SA 2.0



Lisbon No. 711 prepared for events role in Lincolnshire

WORK has continued at Crowle Peatland Railway in North Lincolnshire on Lisbon tramcar No. 711, which will be used as a venue for events.

February 10 saw the tram lifted using jacks so that the truck could be rolled out from underneath it. Motors, magnetic track brakes and air braking equipment have been removed, leaving an unpowered four-wheel truck with hand brakes.

The railway says it is likely to be more practical to make the stripped components available to other tram preservation groups, rather than to find a suitable environment for their storage on the off-chance of the tram being moved to a location where it could be reactivated at some point in the future.

No. 711 will continue to be used for seasonal activities such as Halloween storytelling and Santa's grotto at Christmas. The railway is exploring offering it for hire as a party venue or for groups who may want a temporary base close to local moorland.

Events information and the railway's contact details can be found on Facebook and at: peatland.co.uk

LEFT: No. 711 was lifted on February 10 using jacks on loan from the National Tramway Museum. CROWLE PEATLAND RAILWAY

Compiled by **Jack Boskett and Josh Brinsford**

SIDELINES

New owners for 'Gronks'

DEAN Forest Railway-based Class 08 No. D3937 (08769) has been purchased by Valley Rail Preservation, securing the long-term future of the locomotive at the DFR.

Meanwhile, the Diesel and Electric Preservation Group has announced the acquisition of WSR resident Class 09 No. D4107 (09019) from JJP Holdings in a deal that should benefit both the WSR and the DEPG. The group also says it is still hoping to buy an additional loco to assist Class 33 'Cromptons' Nos. D6566 (33048) and D6575 (33057) with services on the WSR.

'Deltic' and '31/1' to star at GCR gala

DELTIC Preservation Society-owned Class 55 No. 55009 *Alycidon* (currently masquerading as scrapped classmate No. 55013 *The Black Watch*) and A1A Locomotives Ltd Class 31 No. 31108 (which has not operated since 2020) will both take part in the Great Central Railway's April 26-28 Spring Diesel Gala. No. 55009 arrived at the GCR from its base at the Barrow Hill Roundhouse on February 26.

East goes Western

THE East Lancashire Railway is running a Western Region weekend on April 13/14 using steam and diesel locos that suit the theme. The line up so far includes a three diesel-hydraulics: 'Hymek' No. D7076, Class 14 No. D9531, and 'Warship' No. D832 *Onslaught*. 'Hoover' No. 50015 *Valiant* and 'Peak' No. 45108 will also make an appearance, as well as steam loco No. 4079 *Pendennis Castle* and Class 122 'Bubble Car' No. 55001.

Class 70 first for SVR

FREIGHTLINER Class 59 and 70 locomotives will be two of the modern traction visitors at the Severn Valley Railway's Spring Diesel Festival on May 16-19, for which up to eight further guest locos are planned. This will be the first visit of a Class 70 to the SVR, and only the second of a Class 59 following that of No. 59001 in 1988.

Heavyweight for KESR

CLASS 37 'Heavyweight' No. 37714 *Cardiff Canton* is the second guest loco announced for the Kent and East Sussex Railway's April 12-14 Diesel Gala, visiting courtesy of the Heavy Tractor Group at the Great Central Railway. The loco will join the Diesel Traction Group's Class 17 No. D8568 from the SVR.

Diesel pioneers moved

First built Class 31 and 40 locos hauled by rail from York to Shildon as part of 'huge shunt'.

THE National Railway Museum is carrying out what it calls its biggest ever shunt at its sites in York and Shildon.

A total of 46 rail vehicles are in the process of moving into recently-built New Hall at Locomotion.

A key move occurred on February 27 when pioneer Class 40 No. D200 (40122), first-built Class 31 No. 31018 (D5500), and LMS Coronation Brake Corridor Third No. 5987 were taken by rail from York to Shildon, top-tailed by West Coast Railway's Nos. 37676 *Loch Rannoch* and Class 47 No. 47746 *Chris Fudge*. No. D200 will be exhibited with Locomotion's existing collection in the Main Hall, while the '31' is destined for the New Hall.

The 'Goyle' and 'Whistler' locos will join the other diesel locomotives and EMUs at Locomotion, including 'Deltic' prototype No. DP1, the Gas Turbine ATP-E, prototype HST power car No. 41001, Class 71 No. 71001, Class 306 EMU No. 306017 and Class 414 2-HAP No. 4308.

The mainline convoy caused great interest as it was the first time there had been such a movement from York to Shildon since 2014. Further moves are now in the pipeline.



WCR's No. 37676 propels Nos. 31018, D200 and LMS Coronation coach No. 5987 into the museum yard at Shildon on February 27. KENNY FELSTEAD



CDAs BREAK NEW GROUND: The rake of eight CDA china clay wagons now preserved at the Bodmin Railway (see *TRM* January) had their first outing on March 16 when Type 4 No. 47306 *The Sapper* hauled them on a test run from Bodmin to Boscarne Junction, where they are seen after arrival. Clay traffic via Boscarne Junction to Wenford ended in 1983, five years before the CDAs entered traffic, meaning this was the first visit for this type of wagon to this location. JON HIRD



No. 31210 poses in the sun outside the shed at Ruddington on March 16 during a joint event with the Great Central Railway to mark 125 years of the GCR opening to Marylebone. STEVE DONALD



The to be scrapped No. 31235 is seen at Ruddington shortly after arriving from the Dean Forest Railway on February 14. BILL PIZER

Dean Forest 'Goyles' move to Ruddington

THE diesel fleet at the Nottingham Transport Heritage Railway, Ruddington, has expanded with the arrival of Class 31 Nos. 31210 and 31235 from the Dean Forest Railway.

The '31s' are privately owned but are now in the custodianship of the Type 1 Locomotive Company Limited for an initial five-year period.

Railfreight Grey-liveried No. 31210 was the first to arrive on February 13, with BR Blue-liveried No. 31235 following the next day. However, No. 31235 is to be stripped of any remaining useful components and then eventually scrapped, its wheelsets being used to complete the return of No. 31210 into traffic. The ongoing overhaul of the T1LCL's No. D5830 (31297/31463) is unaffected by the deal.

Class 46 for WSR Gala

'PEAK' No. D182 (46045) is set to be the second preserved Class 46 to visit the West Somerset Railway, courtesy of the Peak Locomotive Company. The loco will star at the railway's June 6-8 Summer Diesel Festival event.

Classmate No. 46010 was due to visit before Covid in 2019, but had to be withdrawn due to the railway's weight restrictions that year. However, Pete Waterman's No. 46035 previously visited for Diesel Gala event in 2003.

No. D182 joins already confirmed Class 50 No. 50033 *Glorious*, but a number of other guest locomotives are still to be announced. Class 14 No. D9518, Class 35 No. D7018, and Class 52 No. D1010 *Western Campaigner* will be on static display at the Diesel and Electric Preservation Group's Williton Diesel Depot.

'Western' and '69' for Swanage Railway gala

THE first three guest locomotives have been confirmed for the Swanage Railway's Diesel Gala and Beer Festival on May 10-12.

Class 52 No. D1015 *Western Champion* will be visiting courtesy of the Diesel Traction Group, the first visit of a 'Western' since 2011. GB Railfreight is to send one of its re-engineered Class 69 locomotives, while Colas Rail has confirmed it will send one of its locomotives, with a Class 37 requested.

Ahead of the gala on May 9, the Branch Line Society is running the 'Jurassic Crompton' charter with the GBRf '69' and Swanage's No. D6515 (33012).

'Hoover' to visit the Poppy Line

HANSON & Hall Class 50 No. 50008 *Thunderer* and Class 33 Crompton No. D6515 (33012) *Lt Jenny Lewis RN* are due to star at the North Norfolk Railway's Rails & Ales event on June 7-9.

The ever-popular London Underground 4TC set will also appear, being hauled by up to eight different locos throughout the weekend.

Interim general manager Graham Hukins said: "We are very grateful to the owners for making both Nos. 50008 and 33012 available for the event. Neither locomotive has hauled passenger trains on the Poppy Line before, so we are pleased to be able to offer this unique opportunity.

"The addition of the 4TC set is equally exciting, and we are thrilled to offer passengers another different experience on the line."



BODYWORK REPAIRS FOR COTSWOLDS CLASS 26

Severe rot has been removed and bodywork repairs have been carried out on Class 26 No. 26043 (D6543) at Toddington on the Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway. The metalwork around the cabs were said to be the worst part, and it was necessary to start again and weld new sections. It is hoped that the locomotive may see passenger trains later in 2024 or early 2025. The '26' is pictured in the David Page shed at Toddington in February. COTSWOLD MAINLINE DIESEL GROUP

DEPG locos set for a return to action

THE Diesel and Electric Preservation Group's Class 47 No. 47077 (D1661, 47613, 47840) *North Star* returned to service on the North Yorkshire Moors Railway on February 13.

The loco had been undergoing an engine overhaul in the depot at Grosmont.

Meanwhile, Class 35 'Hymek' No. D7017 at the West Somerset Railway is also set to return to service, and just requires a successful test run to make it available for use as soon when the WSR reopens at the end of March.

'Hymek' classmate No. D7018 has been found to have damage to one of its directional clutches, which will require the transmission to be removed for repairs. The aim is to get No. D7018 back into service by March 2025 to mark 50 years since it was withdrawn by British Rail and preserved by the DEPG.

SIDELINES

'Bodysnatcher' for East Lancashire gala

LOCOMOTIVE Services Limited's Class 57 No. 57003 will take part in the East Lancashire Railway's June 27-29 Summer Diesel Festival, joining previously announced Freightliner Class 47 No. 47830 *Beeching's Legacy* and the resident diesel fleet.

Epping 'Chopper'

CLASS 20 Locomotive Society-owned No. 20227 *Sherlock Holmes* will spend the 2024 summer season at the Epping Ongar Railway, while the group's other loco No. 20001 is to go to a yet to be confirmed line in the Midlands.

Dales 'Teddy Bear'

REPAIRS have begun on returning Class 14 No. D9513 to traffic at Leeming Bar on the Wensleydale Railway following its arrival from the Embsay and Bolton Abbey Steam Railway in late 2023.

Eden Sentinel gift

SELLAFIELD Ltd has donated its 0-6-0DH 'Sentinel' diesel shunter No. 10111 to the Eden Valley Railway after it was replaced at Sellafield by two new Clayton CBD80s locos.

DIARY

APRIL
4-7 Avon Valley Railway 50th Anniversary Weekend
10 Midsomer Norton Railway Wickham Wednesday
11-13 Ecclesbourne Valley Railway and Peak Rail Twin Peaks Diesel Gala
12-14 Llangollen Railway Mixed Traction Branchline Gala
12-14 Kent and East Sussex Railway Diesel Gala
13-14 East Lancashire Railway Western Region Mixed Traction Weekend
20-21 Lavender Railway Double Thumper weekend
26-28 Great Central Railway Spring Diesel Gala

MAY
5 Midsomer Norton Railway Diesel Brake Van Rides
10-12 Swanage Railway Diesel Gala and Beer Festival
16-19 Severn Valley Railway Spring Diesel Festival
24-26 Bo'ness and Kinneil Railway Spring Diesel Gala
25-27 Mid-Norfolk Railway Spring Diesel Gala
28 Yeovil Railway Centre Diesel Train Day
29 Midsomer Norton Railway Wickham Wednesday

JUNE
1-2 Llangollen Railway Diesel and Industrial Heritage Gala



The new-build Class 23 'Baby Deltic' stands outside the main shed at Barrow Hill on March 7. BABY DELTIC PROJECT

'Baby Deltic' makes progress

ALTHOUGH an end date has yet to be announced, the team recreating a Class 23 'Baby Deltic' at Barrow Hill is preparing for the final stages of the project.

Work began on No. 5910 in 2011 using donor locomotive No. 37372 as a starting point, which was otherwise destined to be scrapped.

So far the underframe has been shortened at the centre and at both nose ends; the superstructure between above the frame has been completely replaced; and a new roof has been fitted. The Class 20 bogies, complete with traction motors and all auxiliary components, have been overhauled by a competent sub-contractor and fitted temporarily to allow the locomotive to be moved around the Roundhouse site.

The locomotive's auxiliary parts, control cubicle and cooler groups have been temporarily installed to allow the weight to be measured and to confirm that their proposed locations still allows them to be accessed for maintenance.

Still waiting to be completed are the installation of the air and vacuum pipework, power and control cabling, plus the air receivers. After that the cab needs fitting-out and then finally the loco needs painting into 'as-built' livery of green with a cream lower-body stripe and red stripe above the buffer beams.

125 Group revises engine swap plan

THE 125 Group has announced it is to fit power car No. 43048 *T.C.B Miller MBE* with an original 'Valenta' engine rather than the originally planned No. 43044 *Edward Paxman*.

Some issues have been discovered on No. 43048 – including a blocked cooler group, traction motor faults, and wiring problems – so the group decided to remove it from service and transfer its VP185 power unit into No. 43044 at Ruddington.

The group's main priorities are to restore Nos. 43025 *Exeter* and 43044 to traffic for mainline use for the first time since 2019 and 2021 respectively. Its other power cars Nos. 43089 and 43159 continue in use at the Midland Railway Centre-Butterley.



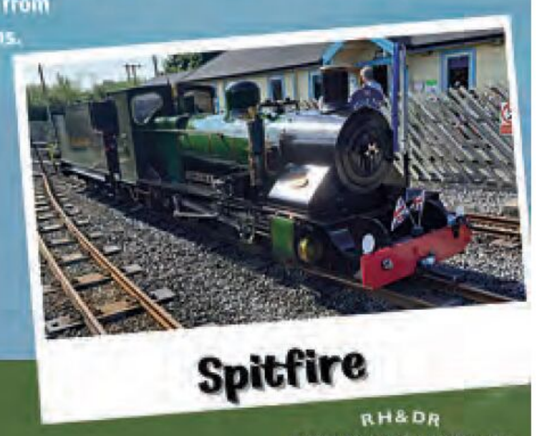
GWR 'TUG' MOVE: Lined-green Class 60 No. 60081, minus its *Isambard Kingdom Brunel* nameplates, is seen on an Allelys low loader shortly after departing Toton on March 18, the loco en route to Margate in Kent for static display at The One:One Collection. STEVE DONALD

RH&DR

Steam & Diesel Gala

Saturday 11th & Sunday 12th May

Celebrating its 30th birthday, "Spitfire", will be joining us from The Bure Valley Railway for this year's gala celebrations.



Spitfire

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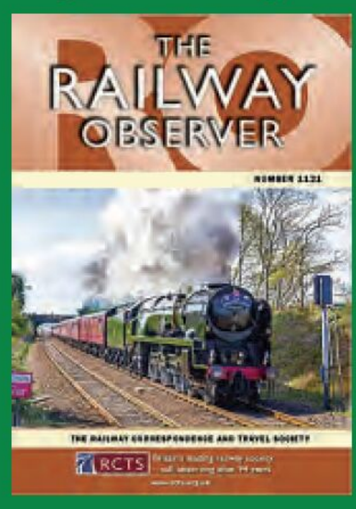
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Compiled by **Chris Milner**

Tornado's ETCS to be tested on Cambrian

'A1' to be put through its paces overnight between Shrewsbury and Newtown.

TESTING of the new ETCS (European Train Control System) in-cab signalling that has been fitted to 'A1' Pacific No. 60163 *Tornado* will take place on the Cambrian Main Line.

With the loco entering the final stages of a major overhaul which has included ETCS fitment to enable operation on sections of the East Coast Main Line, the original plan was for *Tornado* to undergo its testing at the Rail Innovation & Development Centre (RIDC) test track at Old Dalby, Melton Mowbray. Unfortunately, a serious landslip on the test track has curtailed this plan and indeed other RIDC operations.

Instead, *Tornado* is scheduled to undergo dynamic ETCS testing during an as-yet unspecified number of night-time possessions on the Cambrian Line between Shrewsbury, Welshpool and Newtown during April. The tests will not affect the line's passenger operations.

Explained Ed Akers, Network Rail's principal sponsor of the East Coast Digital Programme: "The pathfinder project is technically challenging and, as a world first in fitting ETCS to a steam locomotive, has required much innovation.

"The dynamic testing of *Tornado* is one of several important steps in determining the technical and commercial viability of the project.

"While most elements of ETCS dynamic testing will be undertaken on the Cambrian, some specific testing involving the use of multiple Radio Block Centres will still take place at RIDC later in the year."

An A1 Steam Locomotive Trust spokesperson said: "We are delighted to be partnering with the East Coast Digital Programme to make *Tornado* the first steam locomotive in the world to be fitted with ETCS digital signalling equipment.

"We are grateful to colleagues for making the eastern section of the Cambrian route available for testing and enabling *Tornado* to continue its journey towards full ETCS operations."

Work to complete the overhaul has been extremely complex and not without delays, and with static testing due to commence in March, plans for *Tornado* to visit the Nene Valley Railway at Easter have been forced to be put back. This visit will now take place between May 21-27 after running-in and ETCS testing on the Cambrian has been completed.

A new summer programme of 'Aberdonian' railtours for *Tornado* from Edinburgh or Glasgow has been announced – see story below.

HST MARKS GCR ANNIVERSARY:

A Retro Railtours charter to celebrate the 125th anniversary of London's Marylebone station ran on March 15 from Sheffield via Derby, Leicester and Leamington Spa, as the original route of the 'Master Cutler' is no longer available. Hauled by RailAdventure power cars Nos. 43480 and 43468, the trailer cars were those of the 125 Group and the train is seen passing the Tarmac site just north of Banbury station. A percentage of the proceeds from the train – which made an additional trip from Marylebone to Banbury before the return to Sheffield – are being donated to The Marylebone Project, a Central London charity which helps women to overcome homelessness. CHRIS MILNER





LUXURY STOCK IN THE BORO: **LS Group's 'Midland Pullman' passes through Middlesbrough station on March 5 forming a charter from Nantwich to Whitby and back, with power car No. 43049 leading and No. 43043 at the rear.** TONY WINWARD

New *Tornado* day excursion programme unveiled

A NEW programme of 'Aberdonian' tours for 'A1' Pacific No. 60163 *Tornado* has been released, the specials running from Edinburgh Waverley via the Forth Bridge to Aberdeen.

The 'Aberdonian' will run on three dates in July with a further three in September. The July dates are Thursdays the 18th and 25th along with a Saturday (27th). For September, the train will operate on Thursday 5 and 12, and then on a Saturday (14th). Departure time from Waverley is 09.25, with a projected return of 21.45.

Passengers will have off-train options of a distillery or castle visit at Aberdeen for an additional fee, or have time at leisure with possibly a self-guided tour.

Fares are £99 tourist class, £169 first class which will include hot drinks and a light breakfast served at seat, with premier dining class at £245 which includes breakfast and a four-course meal on the return journey.

Seats in premier at a table for two are available for a £50 supplement. In addition, there is a family ticket option in tourist class for two adults two children or one adult and three children at £249. No more than two adults can travel on a family ticket and children must be under 16 on the day of travel.

Full details with online booking are available at A1steam.com or by calling 01325 488215.

In addition, on September 7, the A1 Steam Locomotive Trust will operate the 'Clyde Aberdonian' from Glasgow Central to Aberdeen via Stirling, where the train will pick up and set down. Fares are as stated above.



'STREAK' AT SPEED: Steaming proudly through its hometown of Doncaster, 'A4' Pacific No. 60007 *Sir Nigel Gresley* works north with a Steam Dreams charter on March 2 from London King's Cross to York. GEOFF GRIFFITHS

BLS tour to use locos for North Norfolk Railway gala

A RIDE behind the movement of two diesel locomotives – a Class 33 and a Class 50 – which are billed to appear at the North Norfolk Railway's (NNR) 'Rails & Ales' weekend is being offered by the Branch Line Society as one-way tours.

The first move – the 'Holt Hoover' is on June 6 and will feature the Hanson & Hall Class 50 No. 50008 *Thunderer* operating in top 'n tail with the 71A Locomotive Group's Class 33 No. 33012 *Lt. Jenny Lewis RN*.

Hauling Mk 1 stock, the train is due to start at Eastleigh (08.30) and take a leisurely journey through the Chilterns and Midlands, picking up at Basingstoke, Reading, Slough, South Ruislip, High Wycombe, Haddenham & Thame Parkway, Banbury, Warwick Parkway, Coleshill Parkway, Leicester, Peterborough and Norwich, setting passengers down at Cromer and finally the NNR platform at Sheringham at around 20.20. The route has requested passage of the Wallers Ash Loop and Humberstone Road Goods loop.

The BLS said No. 50008 is planned to lead from Eastleigh but the locos will swap round at Leicester's Humberstone Road loop.

Fares are £99, with a from-Norwich option at £30. The fare for accompanied under 18s is reduced by £15.

For the weekend, the Rails & Ales event (June 7-9), six or more steam and diesel locomotives are expected to be in action along with heritage DMUs, with local ales and ciders at the line's three stations and on board selected trains.

On Sunday, June 9, Nos. 50008 and 33012 will head home as the 'Cromer Crompton'. With a departure time from Sheringham (NNR) at 17.05, the train will reverse at Cromer so the '33' then leads, calling at Norwich, Ely, Peterborough, Leicester, Nuneaton, Coleshill Parkway and Water Orton where the train terminates.

The requested route includes Trowse Up & Down Loop as well as March Down Goods.

The fares for this working are Standard Class £89 to Water Orton with local fares to Norwich at £30 and Ely £45. A fare reduction of £15 applies for accompanied under 18s.

For more full details of both of these tours, or to book, visit: www.branchline.uk

Details of the gala, which will include a visit from London Underground's 4TC set can be found at www.nnrailway.co.uk/rails-ales

LSL 'Peak' diesel poised for main line summer return

A RETURN to the main line for Class 45 'Peak' No. 45118 *The Royal Artilleryman* has been pencilled in for July 27 as an extensive restoration nears completion.

It had been hoped the loco would return to traffic last year but work on the generator delayed this.

LS Group sub-brand InterCity has announced the 'Diamond Jubilee Express' which will start at Bristol Temple Meads (07.00) and run over the SW/NE cross country route to Chesterfield, a route once the preserve of 'Peaks' in BR days.

The special will pick up at Bristol Parkway, Cheltenham Spa and Birmingham New Street before making a set down at Duffield in order to allow passengers to connect to Ecclesbourne Valley Railway (EVR) which is holding a '14s@60' event to mark the diamond jubilee of the Class 14 Diesel Hydraulic – hence the tour name.

The EVR expects to have six Class 14s hauling services over its eight-mile line, with one late afternoon train being a sextuple header.

There is the option for passengers not wanting to visit the heritage line to continue to Chesterfield for time at leisure.

Fares are £110 standard class or £150 in first class where there is an option of a guaranteed window table for two available at a supplement of £25 per person. The train will include a buffet bar serving hot and cold beverages, light refreshments and alcoholic drinks.

Book online at inter-city.co.uk or by calling 0800 038 5364, or by email to enquiries@inter-city.co.uk

SIDELINES

Blue Peter on course

AFTER more than 20 years off the main line, No. 60532 *Blue Peter* made its first tentative steps to a return to the national network on March 14 when the 'A2' shuttled in and out of LSL's Crewe depot.

Outshopped in experimental BR passenger blue, light and loaded test runs will be carried out before joining the LSL fleet. The Pacific moved to the Severn Valley Railway by road on March 18 for running-in tests (see photo on page 11).

Britannia is back!

REPAIRS to the motion of BR '7MT' No. 70000 *Britannia* following the failure of a crosshead near Chilworth in August 2023 have been completed. The 4-6-2 has rejoined the LS Group steam fleet for working Saphos Tours this year.

Souvenirs unveiled

LS Group has launched a range of Midland Pullman souvenirs including a branded tea mug, a recycled cotton tote bag or a boxed pen & keyring set. The souvenirs are only available on board to passengers.

STEAM TOURS: APRIL

Date	Name	Steam Section	Locos	Promoter
1-30	Jacobite	Fort William-Mallaig (mornings) *CANCELLED UFN (see page 9)*	TBC	WCRC
6	Worcester Steam Express	Norwich-Leicester-Worcester-Leicester	45596	RTC
6	Steam Dreams Excursion	Newcastle-York-King's Cross	60007	SD
13	Lakelander	Preston-Carlisle-Workington-Preston	LSL Pool	ST
17	White Rose	Crewe-Manchester-Sheffield-York	LSL Pool	ST
17	Kyle of Lochalsh	Inverness-Kyle of Lochalsh-Inverness	WCR Pool	RTC
20	Welsh Marches Express	B'ham New St-Wolverhampton-Craven Arms-Lydney-Snow Hill	5043 or 7029	VT
20	Steam Dreams Excursion	Horsham-Chichester-Bath-Bristol	61306	SD
27	Bath & Gloucester Steam Exp	Paddington-Newbury-Bath-Gloucester	WCR 'Black 5'	RTC
27	Clan Line 50th anniversary	London Victoria-Bath	35028	UKR
May				
1	S&C Fellsman	Blackpool-Blackburn-Hellifield-Carlisle	LSL Pool	ST

Notes: **WCRC Pool:** Locos from 44871/45596/45680/45699/46115/35018/34067 **LSL Pool:** Locos from 70000/60007/34046/61306/46100

DIESEL AND ELECTRIC TOURS: APRIL

Date	Name	Section	Locos	Promoter
4	Cambrian Coast Express	Reading-Banbury-Shrewsbury-Barmouth-Pwllheli	2 x Cl 37s	PT
5	North Wales Coast Pullman	Plymouth-Bristol-Chester-Llandudno	LSL Blue Pullman	MP
12-14	Cornish Riviera Pullman	Berwick-upon-Tweed-York-St Erth-Penzance	LSL Blue Pullman	MP
13	Torbay Express	Penzance-Truro-Bodmin Parkway-Newton Abbott-Kingswear	LSL Blue Pullman	MP
13	The Harbourmaster	Paddington-Swindon-Newport-Milford Haven	67 and GBRf 66s	UKR
14	One-way Wizzo	Paddington-Banbury-Tame Bridge Parkway (oneway)	D1015	PT
18	Cambrian Coast Express	East Midlands Parkway-Shrewsbury-Barmouth-Pwllheli	2 x Cl 37s	PT
18	S&C Coastal Pullman	Wolverhampton-Chester-Hellifield-Carlisle-Maryport-Wolverhampton	LSL Blue Pullman	MP
20	Neasden Nonsense	London Victoria-Princes Risborough-Aylesbury-Neasden-Acton	Hastings DEMU	UKR
23	Highland Clansman	Chester-Preston-Lockerbie-Aviemore	LSL Blue Pullman	MP
27	Blackpool Pullman	Dundee-Edinburgh-Carlisle-Hellifield-Blackpool	LSL Blue Pullman	MP

All tours listed above may be subject to cancellation due to industrial action – check with tour promoter.

Key: **BLS** Branch Line Society www.branchline.org.uk **IC** InterCity 0800 038 5364 **MP** Midland Pullman 0800 038 5360 **PT** Pathfinder Tours 01453 835414 **RET** Retro Railtours 0161 3309055 **RTC** Railway Touring Company 01553 661500 **SR** Statesman Rail 0345 3102458 **ST** Saphos Trains saphostrains.com **UKR** UK Railtours 01438 715050 **VT** Vintage Trains 0121 708 4960

Compiled by **Graeme Pickering**

Judicial review of Radlett land sale

High Court to rule on legality of council's site sale for rail freight development.

A DECISION by Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) to sell part of the former Radlett Aerodrome site to property investment firm SEGRO for the development of a Strategic Rail Freight Interchange (SRFI) will be challenged in the High Court.

The company purchased 1000 acres of land last summer, close to the Midland Main Line, M1, M25 and A1 (M) near St Albans, from HCC and Gorhambury Estates Company in a £120 million deal.

Campaign group Save St Albans: Fight the Freight, which is opposed to the scheme, applied to challenge the sale of the 300 acres of land which belonged to the council. It argues that the space was bought by the authority in 1984 for a nominal fee of £1.00, specifically so it could remain as open space, and believes that right is protected in law.

Case

In determining that there is a case to answer, High Court judge Mrs Justice Thornton considered written evidence from Fight the Freight, HCC and SEGRO. The High Court is expected to hear verbal argument this summer.

HCC says it is confident the sale was undertaken "in accordance with all due processes".

SEGRO said it would be pleased to contribute further evidence.

As well as building on open space, Fight the Freight says the interchange would lead to a major increase in lorry traffic and a rise in air pollution from road movements.

SEGRO, which has planning consent for the SRFI and 331,665 square metres (almost 363,000 square yards) of distribution units and a new relief road, says it would be within a screened, landscaped setting. It states that 20% of the land will be used for the interchange and warehouses, with most of the remainder becoming a country park, providing new footpaths, bridleways and improving wildlife habitats.

More business for Freightliner

OCEAN Network Express (ONE) and Freightliner have agreed a new five-year deal for intermodal movements from the freight operator's London Gateway and Southampton terminals.

The contract builds on a partnership between the two companies dating back to 2018.

Freightliner says it supports ONE's ambitions to decarbonise its operations through using alternative fuels including hydro-treated vegetable oil (a substitute for conventional diesel in locomotives).

ONE's head of UK operations Nick Reay added: "Freightliner's commitment to sustainability, including offering alternative fuel choices, aligns with our ambition to continue to decarbonise the supply chain and be one of the most sustainable shipping lines in the world."

■ Freightliner has launched a new service moving limestone between Merehead Quarry in Somerset and Langley in Berkshire, in partnership with Aggregate Industries UK and Brett Aggregates.



ALUMINA CONTRACT EXTENSION: GB Railfreight has agreed a five-year extension of its contract with Alvance to operate trains supplying powdered alumina to the company's Fort William aluminium manufacturing plant from the Port of Blyth. The deal marks the continuation of a 14-year relationship between the firms and will see the continuation of two loaded trains a week between Northumberland and the Scottish Highlands, equating to the movement of over 70,000 tonnes of the material annually to the factory. Diverted via the former Edinburgh & Glasgow Railway route on December 20 last year, GBRf Class 66 No. 66733 *Cambridge PSB* makes its way through Lenzie with empty wagons, returning from Fort William to North Blyth. AIDAN KEANE



AND THEN THERE WERE FIVE: Class 321 No. 321429 joined the Varamis Rail fleet at the end of February. The former Greater Anglia EMU is pictured in debranded National Express livery approaching Nortoft Lane at Kilsby while working between Wolverton Centre Sidings and the access line to Rugby depot on February 28. It joins Nos. 321407, 321419 and 321428 (also recent additions) and No. 321334. All were converted for parcels carriage as part of Eversholt Rail's aborted Swift Express Freight project, No. 321334 being the prototype. DEREK CARRUTHERS

£21.4m investment in Metrolink improvements

With weekday peak time ridership back to pre-pandemic levels, the focus is on improving reliability for the future.



Metrolink M5000 tram No. 3147 is seen at St Peter's Square with an East Didsbury-bound service on October 22, 2022. TREVOR HALL

GREATER Manchester Combined Authority's Bee Network Committee has approved the investment of £21.4 million to improve the Metrolink system over the next 12 months.

The money, from the Government's City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement, forms part of £147 million earmarked for maintenance, upgrades and improvements to the tram network up to 2027.

A summer scheme of track replacement is among what Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) describes as "immediate priorities". Piccadilly Gardens, London Road and parts of the Altrincham and Bury lines will be the focus of engineering attention.

The trams are to be fitted with sensors for use when two trams are coupled together, and speed warning devices. Additional substations are to be added to the Bury line, boosting the electricity supply so that the route can accommodate more double tram workings.

Overhead lines

Much of the communications network related to Metrolink's signalling and control systems is also due for renewal and TfGM is assessing potential for the replacement of overhead lines on older parts of the system. In the last year, the Bury route has been affected by disruption related to line issues.

Although there will be some disruption to passengers during the programme of improvements, TfGM says it will lead to greater long-term reliability. At weekday peak times, Metrolink ridership has returned to pre-pandemic levels and, on weekends, is even busier. Around 130,000 journeys are made on an average weekday.

"Metrolink is an integral part of the Bee Network and it is really important that we invest in it so that we can continue to provide a safe, reliable and positive experience for the thousands of people who travel with us every day," said TfGM's head of Metrolink Danny Vaughan.

"This is a coordinated package of planned works to maintain, renew and improve the network and help to keep Greater Manchester moving, and while we understand any disruption can be frustrating, we'll be doing everything we can to keep it to a minimum."

Sheffield Supertram operator changes

WITH effect from March 22, operation of Sheffield Supertram services transferred from Stagecoach to South Yorkshire Future Trams Ltd, a company established and wholly-owned by South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (SYMCA).

Although infrastructure remained in public hands, the tram services had been franchised to Stagecoach since 1997 as local authorities attempted to recoup money borrowed to help finance the construction of the system, the initial phases of which opened during 1994 and 1995.

A business plan for the new company, including investment in the renewal of infrastructure and replacement of trams, was approved by members of the SYMCA Board in January.

South Yorkshire Mayor Oliver Coppard described the move as a "down payment" on ambitions for a transport network "that puts the needs of our communities first".



'MASSIVE' RIDERSHIP BOOST: **More than 7 million journeys were made on the Edinburgh Trams system in the second half of 2023, compared with 3.4 million during the same period of the previous year. The company says there has been a "massive boost" in the popularity of services since the opening of the £207 million three-mile extension to Newhaven last June. Edinburgh CAF 'Urbos' Tram No. 272 is pictured at Princes Street, about to turn the corner into South Saint Andrew Street on its way to Newhaven on November 21, 2023.** TONY WINWARD

SIDELINES

Delta junction final phase underway

CONSTRUCTION of the delta junction for the Wednesbury to Brierley Hill West Midlands Metro extension is in its final phase.

West Midlands Metro services between Wednesbury and Birmingham city centre will be suspended until April 9, while connection to the existing network takes place.

Work on the extension has been split into two phases. It will initially be opened as far as Flood Street in Dudley.

TfL off-peak Fridays trial

TRANSPORT for London has begun a trial where 'pay as you go' contactless and Oyster fares for Tube and rail services will be off-peak on Fridays until May 31.

A £24 million subsidy has been allocated from the Mayor of London's budget. It follows an announcement of TfL fares being frozen until March 2025.

Metro renewals completed

DURING a seven-day closure of the Tyne & Wear Metro route between Airport and South Gosforth, 1400 metres (1531 yards) of overhead line and 1.5 kilometres (0.9 miles) of track were replaced.

Other tasks completed included track inspections, testing of signal cabling, work on lighting and CCTV, inspections on bridges and switchbox renewals. Ceiling repairs were carried out at Regent Centre station.

Fare evasion crackdown progress

TRANSPORT for Greater Manchester says fare evasion on the Metrolink system fell from over 16% in July last year to 10.6% in January this year. A plan to tackle fare evasion, which included increasing the penalty fare from £100 to £120, and recruiting 50 additional customer service representatives, was launched in October.

Meanwhile, Nottingham Express Transit's 'zero tolerance' crackdown led to 1127 penalty fare notices being issued in the first month alone, almost 50% more than in the month leading up to the start of the campaign.

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Compiled by **Chris Milner**

Once abandoned, now a community asset

Historic Henley-in-Arden railway station transformed by partnership working.

ONE of the most amazing transformations of a run-down station building into an asset which can be shared by its local community was unveiled formally on February 22.

It was back in 1994 that British Rail – having failed in attempts to close line between Birmingham Moor Street and Stratford-upon-Avon – closed the booking office and station facilities at Henley-in-Arden as part of cutbacks on the route.

Boarded up and unoccupied, the 1908-built GWR station soon became a magnet for local youths. In time, and with no maintenance, the building fabric began to deteriorate.

The re-signalling of the line in 2010 meant the end of any official presence in the station's signalbox which was demolished and consequently led to an increase in anti-social activities.

In 2020, the Shakespeare Line Rail Users Group (SLRUG) went to the local community along the line, seeking and recruiting volunteers to adopt the 18 stations along the 25 mile route. SLRUG now has around 90 volunteers and has formed a voluntary trust to look after and support them.

Known as Friends of the Shakespeare Line (FOSL), with SLRUG they have worked closely with local companies to supply materials, plants and shrubs to enhance the stations on the line.

Alongside FOSL to make representations to the parish council at Henley-in-Arden was another local community group, the Friends of Henley Railway Station (FHRS) – which has since become a Community Interest Company (CIC) – formed not least because of that it too had concerns about the deterioration of the building and the increase in anti-social behaviour.

With a target of bringing the station back into community use, FHRS the 'Friends' engaged with SLRUG and embarked on vegetation clearance, tidying up and the provision of garden planters and repainting.

However, the plans of the FHRS and FOSL groups were far more adventurous, with visions of repurposing the station for the benefit of the community and in 2020 began a lengthy period of negotiations with Network Rail, West Midlands Railway, Henley-in-Arden Parish Council and the Railway Heritage Trust.

The ambitious plans included a café, micro-brewery and bar, along with a community lounge which would provide a multi-functional community space with IT facilities which could be hired for small functions.

FHRS's status as a CIC ensures that all income and profits from the bar and community space will be invested back into the building, its facilities and station area.

With a 25-year lease signed at a peppercorn rent, the FHRS, led by Angela Okey, has spearheaded the restoration project. It successfully applied to West Midlands Railway and the Customer and Communities Investment Fund for £250,000 to refurbish the building. Funding was also provided by the Railway Heritage Trust (£150,000) and FHRS Patron Lord Digby Jones, as well as using crowdfunding.

With funding in place and plans approved, work began in April 2023 on the renovation and repurposing. To benefit the community, local tradesmen and suppliers were used, while volunteers undertook some of the labouring work. It's been a long project, and one not without a few problems on the way. The result, however, is immensely impressive.

Guest of honour to open the refurbished building was Network Rail chairman Lord Hendy. He said: "It's an absolute pleasure to officially open this brilliant new community space that has been created in the old station building. It is wonderful to see partners and volunteers coming together to put the railway at the heart of the local community."

Angela Okey, chair of FHRS said: "After living in Henley for several years and walking past the derelict station building every morning, it saddened me to see the state of disrepair of what was once an iconic and beautiful building.

"The aim was always to make this a community project and by involving local people with the same love of their town, it has been a delight to work on and watch the enthusiasm of everyone. We hope it will attract more footfall to our beautiful town of Henley-in-Arden, which in turn will support our local businesses and traders."

A worthy spin-off of the FOSL/SLRUG station adoption scheme has helped to facilitate the first railway-based vocational qualification anywhere in the UK and has involved the 1000-pupil Woodrush Academy at Wythall.

Groups of year 7-13 students have become volunteers on the line, landscaping the station site at Wythall and displaying student artwork. The academy now offers a City & Guilds vocational qualification, through an alternative curriculum of horticulture and sustainability to students engaged in this volunteer work.

Speaking at the academy, FOSL's Fraser Pithie said that the involvement of the students in activities at Wythall station was "treasured".

Another benefit is that more students at Woodrush have begun to consider a career in the rail industry through apprenticeships and other entry schemes, something Network Rail is actively supporting through its HR team working closely with the school.

Network Rail Central route director Denise Wetton said that given the success on the Shakespeare Line, her overall aim is "making the Central route and the communities it serves at the heart of the railways".

Since opening, 'The Station – Henley in Arden' as it is now known, the bar has proved very popular and is expected to increase in popularity as the warmer months approach, and regular steam specials return to North Warwickshire line.

There is also an expectation that the project will be submitted for the annual Railway Heritage Awards held in December.



Lord Hendy and Angela Okey cut the ribbon formally open Henley station after its refurbishment. PICTURES: FRASER PITHIE/JACK BOSKETT



The inside of Henley station after removal of stored debris and crumbling plaster on the walls. The volunteers also had to deal with collapsed ceilings, a rotten floor and bricked-up window apertures before refurbishment could begin.

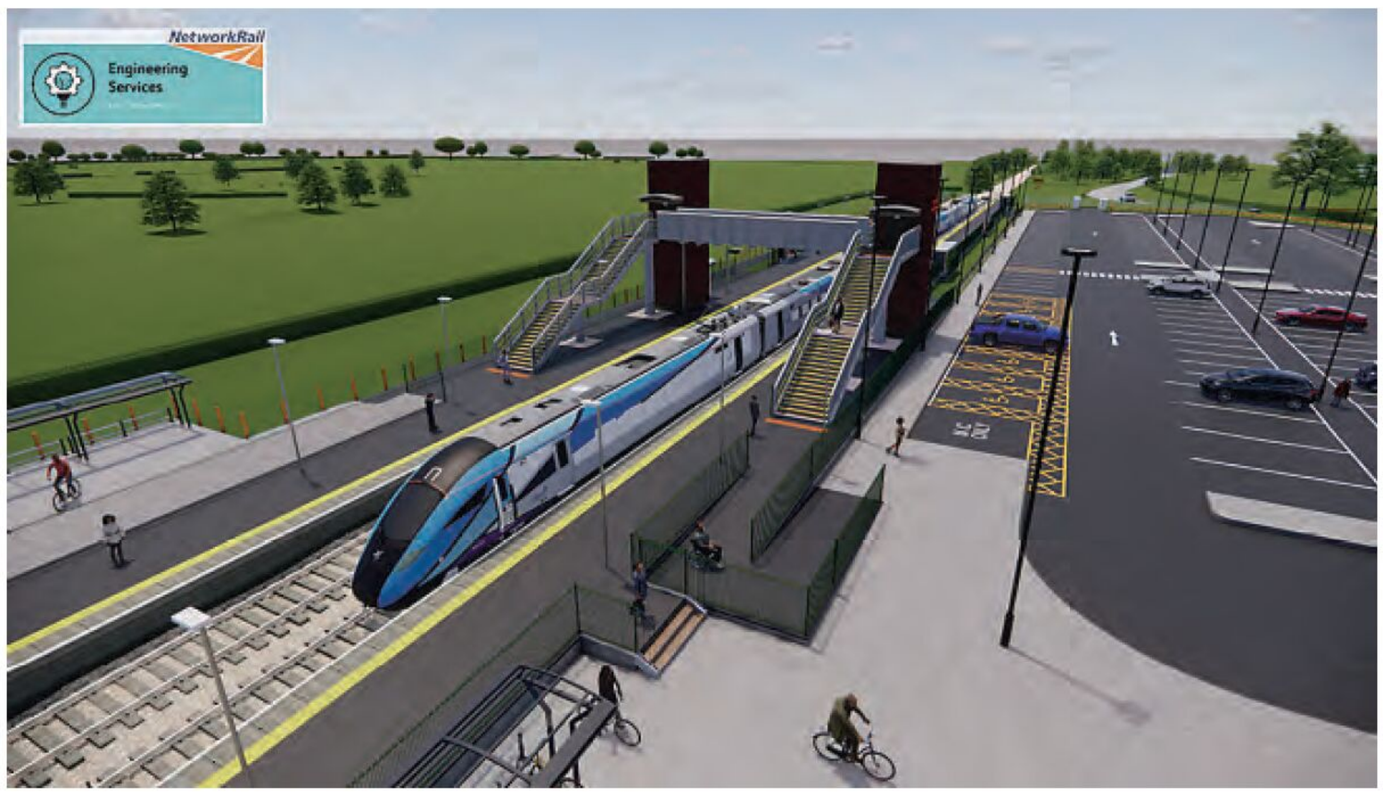


Looking warm and inviting, the finished station bar and lounge area complete with a herringbone pattern floor, wooden panelling, ceiling cornices, subtle lighting, roman blinds and a log burner.

Planning submitted for new station at Haxby

PLANNING permission for a new station at Haxby, north east of York, has been applied for by Network Rail in partnership with City of York Council and the Department for Transport.

The two-platform station will cost £24million and will be located on Towthorpe Road and served by York to Scarborough services. Located four miles from York station, plans for a station were first mooted in the 1980s but it was not until 2012 the idea was revived under several transport-related schemes. The previous station at Haxby closed in 1930. The location has not met with widespread approval, some preferring a site nearer the York ring road.



An impression of how Haxby station could look. NETWORK RAIL

The illustration shows the station will have fully accessible footbridge with lifts and steps, bike shelters, along with a 154-space car park (with EV charging), taxi rank and a bus stop. Shared-use paths will connect the station to residential areas of Haxby for those travelling to the station on foot or by bicycle.

Funding of £3.5m will be provided from the Restoring Your Railways fund, with other funding being provided by the various partners.

Subject to the final designs and planning permission being granted, construction could begin in spring 2025 with the station opening in 2026.

Plans move forward for station at Aldridge reopening

RESTORING rail services to Aldridge, which sits on the freight-only Sutton Park line in the West Midlands, has taken a step forward.

Network Rail is working with Transport for West Midlands (TfWM) and the West Midlands Rail Executive (WMRE) to build and open Aldridge station – returning passenger rail services to the town after a 60 year absence.

With the site being cleared and made secure by Network Rail teams, on February 20 Rob McIntosh, managing director for Network Rail's North West and Central region joined Andy Street, Mayor of the West Midlands and Kate Trevorrow, TfWM rail delivery director at the site to promote the development.

The £30 million project is for a single platform station built along with a 40 space car park. The funding has been allocated from the City Regional Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) funding awarded to TfWM,

There is a pending open access application for a new service from Wrexham to London Euston from the Wrexham, Shropshire and Midlands Railway Company (WSMR) via the Sutton Park Line and opportunities for the service to stop at Aldridge are being explored. Longer term electrification of the line might be possible with upgrading of the station and introduction of direct trains to Birmingham.

The station is expected to open in 2027.

Countdown commences for Levenmouth line opening

A 100-day countdown clock to the return of rail services to the Levenmouth line was set in motion on February 23 by Fiona Hyslop, Scotland's Transport Secretary. Countdown clocks were also unveiled at the new stations in Leven and Cameron Bridge.

The six-mile line from Thornton Junction will reopen on June 2, reconnecting communities in Fife for the first time in 55 years with trains running to/from Edinburgh. Driver training began in January.

Fiona Hyslop said: "The reopening of the line will bring real opportunities to communities, businesses, and visitors, in the Levenmouth and the wider Fife area. The two new stations will reduce the need for car travel and in doing so contribute to the wider decarbonisation of transport."

Engineering work to complete the line continues.

Witton station proposed for capacity enhancement

THE West Midlands Rail Executive (WMRE) has outlined new designs for Witton station, Birmingham as the result of a feasibility study.

The station serves the Villa Park stadium which will host Euro 2028 football fixtures.

The proposed improvements include new passenger ramps to both platforms to increase queuing capacity after matches, a new pedestrian and cyclist subway under the line at Station Road, wider and deeper platforms to allow more people to queue for longer trains and replacing platform shelters with open canopies.

A business case for the plans will now go forward. The work would also future proof the station should Aston Villa revisit its stadium expansion plans.

Around 7,700 fans currently travel to matches at the stadium by train using both Witton and Aston stations.

Southern to recast Coastway timetable from June

TRAIN operator Southern is to introduce an extensively redesigned and improved timetable for its Hampshire and West Sussex services in June.

The improvements to weekday and Saturday schedules include new and more frequent services with expanded capacity on busier routes, evenly spaced departures to cut waiting times.

The key changes are a half-hourly frequency between Brighton and Southampton. This will include a new hourly, all-stations Brighton to Littlehampton and Chichester service which will link Brighton and Littlehampton with an all-day service for the first time since 2007.

Additionally, London to Portsmouth services via Gatwick Airport will double in frequency from hourly to half-hourly and will be extended to Portsmouth Harbour for better connections to local ferry services and attractions.

To provide the improved services, the hourly Southampton to London Victoria service via Horsham and Gatwick Airport is withdrawn, as is the hourly Littlehampton-Bognor Regis and hourly Littlehampton-Portsmouth & Southsea, with passengers now having to change at Barnham.

The changes follow a three-month public engagement programme undertaken last summer.

SIDELINES

Belmont boost

AN allocation of £14.1million from the Government's Levelling Up Fund will be used to increase the number of trains from Belmont to London Victoria from two to four with the provision of a new turnback siding. The funding will also provide new step-free access, improved signage and walking and cycling routes to the London Cancer Hub which is planned to expand its services.

Mossley station to move?

PLANS within the Transpennine Route Upgrade include the relocation of Mossley station. The proposals would permit the construction of an accessible footbridge with lifts, extended platforms to support longer trains along with electrification. While the station is due to be moved 300 metres east, historical elements of the existing station building would retained. A public consultation will be held later in the year.

New station for St Athan?

FOLLOWING a visit to the Vale of Glamorgan line, Transport Secretary Mark Harper said his Department for Transport will work with both the local authority and Transport for Wales to develop a business case and funding for a new station at St Athan. If approved, the station would provide an additional transport option for hundreds of staff at the nearby Aston Martin manufacturing and development facility, and potentially attract more businesses to invest in the Cardiff Airport-St Athan Enterprise Zones. The original station closed on June 15, 1964.

Derbyshire crossing damaged in collision

HILTON level crossing in Derbyshire was closed for several days after a vehicle crashed into the metal gates on March 1, significantly damaging them. It meant the A5132 road between Hilton and Eggington was closed until emergency repairs were completed.

Footbridge for Carstairs

NETWORK Rail has announced plans for a new accessible footbridge at Carstairs station. The £1.85m investment funded by the Scottish Government, will see the bridge constructed north of the existing structure and will the island-platform to the village's Strawfrank Road. The project is due for completion by September.

Compiled by **Chris Milner**

SIDELINES

Plastic sleepers laid in tunnel

MORE than 3,690 new plastic sleepers, manufactured from recycled plastic, have been laid during a series of possessions in the 1000 yard Moncrieffe tunnel, south of Perth during February.

It is the first time that composite sleepers have been used at such volume anywhere on Scotland's railway. The sleepers have a 50-year life span and can be repurposed or recycled to make new sleepers or other composite products.

Bridge in-fill removal costs £350,000

National Highways criticised over use of resources for Cumbrian bridge work.

REMOVAL of the controversial in-filling of a bridge on a disused line at Great Musgrave bridge near Kirkby Stephen has cost the taxpayer £352,000.

Work to fill the cutting under the bridge with 1600 tonnes of aggregate and concrete occurred in June 2021, cost £124,000 and was undertaken by National Highways using emergency permitted development rights due to concerns over the bridge's weight limit and risk of collapse.

The in-filling would also prevent the possibility of a future connection with heritage railway operations by the Stainmore Railway Company at Kirkby Stephen East and the Eden Valley Railway at Warcop.

It was only after a vigorous public campaign by the Historical Railways Estate (HRE) group that Eden District Council refused retrospective planning permission and served National Highways with an enforcement notice to remove the in-fill by October 2023.

HRE has reported that some of the bridge masonry has been damaged during the removal and been poorly repaired.

The £476,000 total cost has been heavily criticised, with Mike Thompson, project manager for the Stainmore Railway Company calling it "an eyewatering figure" that would be "transformational" in the heritage sector.

Graeme Bickerdike, HRE group spokesman said: "Given the circumstances, it's disappointing to discover that National Highways has taken the cheap and easy approach to repairing the stonework it damaged.

"The work carried out to Great Musgrave bridge will ultimately require more public money to put right and they've already wasted almost half-a-million pounds on a structure that, prior to its in-filling, was fundamentally fine."

Funding found for Leamside business case

GOVERNMENT funding of £350,000 has been awarded to Transport North East and will be used to progress a new Strategic Outline Case (SOC) for the Leamside South project. This covers the disused section of the Leamside line from Washington to Ferryhill, Co Durham.

Additionally, this project will run alongside the ongoing business case for the development of the Washington Metro Loop – a proposed extension of the Tyne and Wear Metro. The 21-mile Leamside line closed to passengers in 1964.

Reopening the route would provide a boost to local transport in the North East and many new journey opportunities would be possible. Another positive would be that the line could be used for the diversion of freight traffic from the East Coast Main Line, which is mainly double track through County Durham between Newcastle and Darlington.

Coun Martin Gannon, chairman of the North East Joint Transport Committee, said: "I'm pleased that, after much procrastination, the government has finally decided to show some support for the work we are doing to reopen the Leamside Line. The line is one of the most important pieces of transport infrastructure in the North East and its reopening will deliver enormous economic, social and environmental benefits to the region."



An aerial view looking east of work on the sliding bridge with it in the retracted position, and the LNER signalbox which controls rail and bridge movements. NETWORK RAIL

Repairs at unique sliding bridge

NINE days of engineering work at the UK rail network's only sliding canal bridge at Keadby, near Scunthorpe was completed on February 26.

The original bridge dates from the 1860s and was converted into a sliding bridge in 1925. Both rail and bridge movements are controlled by a 1926 LNER type 11a signalbox.

A possession of the line between Thorne South and Scunthorpe allowed the engineering teams to strengthen one of the walls of the Keadby Canal underneath the bridge.

With the bridge open, engineers using a limpet dam to create a water-tight seal by the wall to be strengthened allowing teams to complete repairs in a safe and dry environment.

The work also provided the opportunity to replace the wooden beams on the bridge deck with metal supports along with 200metres of new rails covered in a special coating and painted white to absorb less heat in summer.

The line is a busy freight route and during the repairs, trains were diverted over the Brigg line and via Gainsborough Central to Doncaster. Rail replacement buses operated for passengers between Scunthorpe and Doncaster.

During the nine-day programme, at nearby Althorpe station, the structure of the platforms was repaired and a temporary footbridge was installed. The existing 108-year-old footbridge will be replaced with a modern-style structure, which is expected to open in April.

Several landslips disrupt services

AN exceptionally wet February has resulted in a number of landslips which have disrupted services.

An issue with some trees in a cutting at Sonning between Twyford and Reading where an unstable area of surrounding earth has been noted, caused considerable disruption on the Great Western Main Line on February 26, rendering the fast lines out of commission for several hours lines until the offending tree had been removed.

A further closure of the fast lines was required to clear up the spoil.

The line between Rainham and Sittingbourne was closed from February 23 to March 4 to allow Network Rail engineers to stabilise a substantial landslip with a 40 metre crack at Newington.

Remedial work involved regrading of the embankment before creating a new profile for the embankment, with steps cut into the slope before being backfilled with 3,000 tonnes of stone which will help reduce the gradient and strengthen the embankment. A limited bus service operated between Sittingbourne and Gillingham while the line was closed.

On February 27, just north of Stoke Mandeville between Aylesbury and Amersham the line was closed after 5,000 tonnes of material slipped along a 20 metre section of embankment. Both lines were closed from March 1-4 to allow 120 nine-metre 'soil nails' to be driven into the embankment to stabilise the affected area as part of the repair process.

In Yorkshire, a slip at Baildon between Shipley and Guisley on February 5 closed the single line until further notice as engineers battle to remove 2,500 tonnes of soil from the land next to the line after cracks appeared on an embankment side. Services between Bradford Forster Square and Ilkley have been suspended until work is complete.



The landslip near Twyford with debris on the Great Western down fast line. NETWORK RAIL

Local authority commissions Cowley branch passenger train study

OXFORD City Council has commissioned consultancy SLC Rail to undertake a review of the infrastructure as part of the process towards the reintroduction of passenger trains to the Cowley branch in Oxford.

The report will identify any bridges and paths needed from the surrounding residential and commercial areas to access two proposed stations at Oxford Littlemore and Oxford Cowley.

This process runs parallel to Network Rail's engineering designs and costings which will lead to a full business case being submitted to the Government.

Passenger services on the line ceased in 1963 – it was part of the Oxford and Princes Risborough route – but it has remained open to serve the BMW/Mini factory at Cowley from where cars are moved by rail to Southampton for export.

There have been previous efforts by Chiltern to reopen the line in 2000 and 2014, and in 2017, then Chancellor of the Exchequer Philip Hammond allocated £300,000 to develop a study to look at how new routes, services and stations could be built in Oxfordshire.

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Compiled by **Graeme Pickering**

SIDELINES

Class 60s for sale

SIXTEEN locos are included in DB Cargo's latest list of Class 60s for disposal. They are: 60001, 60007, 60010/015/019, 60020, 60039, 60040/044, 60059, 60063/065/066, 60079, 60092 and 60100. March 22 was the closing date for registering an interest in the locos. DBC said a "significant" number of spares were also available under a separate agreement. It stated that it would also be willing to discuss any requirement for ongoing maintenance or reinstatement services.

New centre for Siemens

ON March 7, Siemens Mobility unveiled its new distribution and logistics centre at Kettering. It will support Siemens operations at Bedford, Northampton, Hornsey, Three Bridges, Temple Mills, Slade Green and Southampton depots, supplying them with items ranging from nuts and bolts to bogies, braking systems, wheelsets and traction motors.

New ground for DMUs

FEBRUARY saw the introduction of Class 197s on Maesteg-Cheltenham Spa diagrams after they were cleared to operate services via Bridgend, Cardiff Central, Newport and Chepstow. Their Class 175 predecessors have also covered new ground, Nos. 175004/009 working from Landore depot in Swansea to Ely Papworth sidings on February 22 – the first Class 175s to be returned to Angel Trains via the sidings since the units were gauge cleared for the movement.

Seven to go

AVANTI West Coast Class 390 'Pendolino' set Nos. 390047 and 390049 are the latest to emerge from refurbishment being carried out by Alstom at Widnes. This leaves seven units to go through the programme. These are (in expected order): Nos. 390008, 390042, 390046, 390002, 390020, 390010 and 390013. The fleet is also receiving bogies overhauled at Alstom's Crewe facility.

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Class 484 wheel wear rate leads to reduced timetable

Island Line train frequency reduced to one train per hour while the issue is addressed.



On the mainland, SWR says there are no plans as yet to reintroduce the Class 458s which have so far been refurbished. Undergoing refit, SWR Class 458 No. 458425 is pictured at Alstom in Widnes on October 10. PAUL BICKERDYKE

A HIGHER than expected rate of wheel wear to South Western Railway's Class 484 electric multiple unit fleet has prompted the operator to halve its Island Line timetable while the problem is addressed.

An hourly service was introduced between Ryde Pier Head and Shanklin on the Isle of Wight at the beginning of March, although SWR expected to temporarily reinstate half-hourly trains for the Easter holidays.

Unknown cause

SWR told *The RM* that the reduction in services would cut down wheel wear while the problem was investigated. A spokesman added that the company's engineering team was working with a "range of experts" to understand the cause. It will then assess whether measures are needed to prevent the problem occurring again. In the meantime, more wheel sets have been ordered for the units.

How long it will take to resolve the issue and permanently resume a normal timetable is unclear, but SWR's Island Line manager Mark Dunn said the company wanted to do all it could to ensure a full service for Easter and the May Bank Holiday and school summer break.

On the mainland, SWR said there were "no plans" as yet to reintroduce the Class 458 units which have so far been refurbished at Alstom's Widnes plant.

Previously used for suburban workings with a maximum speed of 75 miles per hour, the Class 458s are being returned to four-car formations with reconfigured interiors and re-geared for a top speed of 100mph for long-distance south coast diagrams.

By the second week of March, 10 units had been completed and nine accepted by SWR.

'Arterio' progress

There has, however, been slight progress regarding further duties for the Class 701 'Arterio' electric multiple units.

Having finally entered public service in January between London Waterloo and Windsor & Eton Riverside, one unit working the 10.25 ex-Waterloo and corresponding return working on weekdays, the 12.53 is also now booked for Class 701 operation.

During their first nine weeks in use, four Class 701/0 10-car units were used and were said to have performed consistently well.

SWR says it is working closely with unions to progress the full training programme for drivers and guards.



BACK IN ACTION: Grand Central Class 180 'Coradia' unit No. 180105 has spent a prolonged period of time at Alstom's depot at Ilford for bogie changes. It returned home to Crofton depot in West Yorkshire on March 4 and is captured passing through Stratford station in east London on its way north. IAN SINCLAIR

Class 455 goes back to blue and grey livery

SOUTH Western Railway Class 455 No. 455868 has become the latest third-rail electric multiple unit to be given an adaptation of its original blue and grey livery.

With the long-delayed introduction of Class 701 'Arterio' units having finally begun in January, withdrawal of the 82 Class 455s is drawing closer and the repaint marks their 42 years of hard work on suburban services radiating from London Waterloo and award-winning reliability under the care of staff at Wimbledon depot.

It follows similar 'makeovers' for fellow British Rail-era units nearing the end of their lives in service, including Merseyrail Class 507 No. 507001 (which emerged in blue and grey late last year) and now-preserved Class 313 No. 313201, the first second-generation EMU to enter service, returned to close to original livery in 2017.



March 6 saw Class 455 No. 455868 pass through Basingstoke station on its way back to Wimbledon depot following its repaint at Bournemouth. MATTHEW PARKINSON/SWR

The colours were applied to No. 455868 at SWR's Bournemouth depot. As well as being SWR branded, other slight changes have been made to the livery it would have carried in 1982, including an all-over coat of Minerva grey to the passenger doors (originally blue, with grey around the window areas) to comply with accessibility standards.

SWR managing director Claire Mann said the unveiling was a "special moment" for the team at Wimbledon.

£1.5m Grove Park Centre of Excellence to enhance fleet cleanliness

GROVE Park depot is the base for Southeastern's first Centre of Excellence for Train Presentation.

A figure of £1.5 million has been invested in the creation of the dedicated facility within the existing depot site in south-east London. There will be focus on training and best practice, which will be passed on to the company's other train cleaning operations.

Two platform-level walkways, each running the length of a 12-car train, have been installed to make it easier for cleaning teams to get on and off vehicles. Southeastern says staff having to climb on board trains and off again from ground level and lifting heavy equipment in the process previously accounted for almost 28 hours each week.

Improvements

Making it safer to clean vehicles within the shed, power isolation has been fitted to another of the six berthing roads, bringing the number where the current can be switched off to three.

Drainage improvements have been made to remain compliant with water discharge limits.

Southeastern has a fleet of just under 400 trains. It says Grove Park performs around 10,000 vehicle cleans a week, accounting for about a quarter of the company total.

Operations have been reorganised to allow more time for interior repairs and heavy cleaning and additional units to be dealt with there.

A mobile response team will be based at the depot to sort out issues with onboard toilets.

CLASS 69 UNVEILINGS

BELOW: Classmate No. 69008 was named in honour of Network Rail train controller Richard Howe at London Victoria station on February 28. Mr Howe was joined at the event by family and friends including Nigel Hutchinson and Ian Kapur. The three of them ran Badger Railtours in the 1990s. IAN KAPUR





ABOVE: Initially released into traffic in primer last October, GBRf classmate No. 69009 was unveiled on February 23 after painting by Arlington Fleet Services at Eastleigh Works into maroon livery, reminiscent of that carried by most of the Class 52s during the 1960s. In keeping with the popular diesel hydraulics, it has also been given cast number and name plates. It bears the name *Western Consort*, carried by D1065, GBRf chief executive John Smith's favourite 'Western' when he was a young enthusiast. GBRF



'AURORA' INTERIORS: East Midlands Railway has released images of the seating which will be installed in its 33 new Hitachi-built Class 810 bi-mode 'Aurora' units, due for introduction on intercity services next year. EMR worked with Derby-based DGDESIGN to refine Italian supplier Fisa's 'Lean' seat, producing a specification which it says offers enhanced comfort and support and improved appearance. A designer's impression of a First Class saloon is pictured (above) with Standard Class seating (below). EMR



Porterbrook adds to its business portfolio with two new deals

Rolling stock leasing firm agrees purchase of Long Marston Rail Innovation Centre and takes stake in Brodie Engineering.

AFTER almost three years of operating the site and having invested £13 million in the improvement of facilities, rolling stock leasing company Porterbrook has agreed to buy the Long Marston Rail Innovation Centre in Warwickshire from current owner St Modwen Properties Ltd.

Formerly a supply depot for the Royal Engineers, the site was acquired from the Ministry of Defence by St Modwen in 2004, much of it becoming part of the Meon Vale residential and business development.

Porterbrook took over operation of the 135-acre rail facility in June 2021. One of its biggest upgrades has been the creation of an Asset Management Facility (AMF).

Opened last year, the £3 million AMF includes three pitted roads able to accommodate six-car multiple units and can be used for inspections, testing and commissioning as well as on-train and underframe maintenance. Training and office facilities have been modernised. The site has a new security system and improved lighting and road surfaces and has gained ISO 14001 certification for its approach to environmental management.

Porterbrook chief executive Mary Grant said that the takeover provided clarity for the rail industry regarding the centre's long-term future.

A fortnight earlier, Porterbook confirmed a deal for a 49% stake in Kilmarnock-based Brodie Engineering, which it says will allow it to better support its train fleets in Scotland and across the UK.

Founded in 1996, Brodie specialises in rail vehicle heavy maintenance, refurbishment and overhauls. Operating from Bonnyton Works, in 2020 it also took on the nearby former Andrew Barclay (latterly Wabtec Rail) premises.

Wagon Report

Compiled by **Steven Fredrick Lappage**

PRIVATE owner wagon fleets are now, somewhat ironically, mostly owned and operated by government agencies. They include the Ministry of Defence, Army (MODA), British Nuclear Fuels (BNFL) and Network Rail (NLU/NR). Most major private firms tend to focus on their core activities, and therefore rely on freight operators to supply the stock. There are also others that hire wagons from leasing companies such as Beacon Rail, Touax and VTG Rail UK.

Looking back half a century to 1974, the private-owner fleet totalled more than 18,000 wagons compared with just over 3000 today. One significant development was the passing of the Transport Act 1974, which for the first time provided state support for railfreight in the form of Section 8 Grants. For the next 25 years, these grants were to be a major influence on the procurement of new wagons, the installation of private sidings, silos and hopper discharge equipment.

Large orders were placed with private builders for new stock – but also benefiting were BREL Works, such as Doncaster (which built the PCA cement tanks for Blue Circle and Tiger Leasing Group); Ashford (which constructed covered limestone hoppers for British Steel); Glasgow and Shildon (which outshopped aggregate hoppers for Tilling Construction and ironstone tipplers for British Steel, Scunthorpe).

Leasing companies gained a renewed importance during this period, as British Rail built new wagons only for coal, general merchandise and steel traffic. However, private-owner stock from this era is still active today, albeit usually heavily rebuilt. This includes JNA bogie aggregate/scrap opens and JSA open steel coil carriers.

■ LORAM UK has completed more than 80% of the contract to produce JNA-Y 'Hawk' gondola ballast opens for Network Rail. The latest conversions released from Derby RTC workshops are Nos. 81705831199-1 to 81705831224-7. Conversely, more MRA side-tipper wagons now delisted from rolling stock records are Nos. 501003/062/124/132/138/301/307/321/327/341-343/359-361.

■ NEW to stock is Plasser & Theurer 09-4x4/4s Dynamic Tamper No. DR 75016 (alternative EVN No. 99 70 9123 016-6). This new-generation machine owned by Colas Rail UK can tamp plain line, switches and crossings, and also features an onboard dynamic track stabilisation function.



Leased HYA aggregate hopper No. 37 70 6791 057-2 in the Tarmac sidings at Washwood Heath on February 10.

■ OFF-lease VTG Rail UK open box wagons earmarked for delivery to dismantlers' yards are: JXA scrap carriers Nos. VTG 3145/146; JNA aggregate opens Nos. VTG 3162/166/168; KEA concrete segment opens Nos. VTG 3194/199/200/210/211/214/216/225/245; JNA aggregate opens Nos. VTG 3259/404-406/408/410/411/414/415/419/421-425/428/430/431/437/439/443-445/ 447/448/450/452-457/459/461-464/466/467/469/ 472/474/477/484/489/490/498/513-515.

■ PRIVATE owner disposals by Touax at EMR Liverpool have been: TDA bogie petroleum tanks Nos. TIPH 78204/207/213/ 220/221/226/231/237/243/247/258-260/262.

DB Cargo UK wagons conveyed to scrapyards have been CDA china clay hoppers Nos. 375019/054/072/076-078/082/094/095/108/114; MEA box opens Nos. 391120/147/208/254/281/286/365/376/394/468/491/499/543/548/560/576/582/612/641/672/675/693; BAA/BCA/BZA 40ft steel flats Nos. 900005/016/021/024/030/046/053/075/085/102/109/113/114/132/134/138/148/163/173/186/221/258/266/283/305; BLA 50ft steel coil carriers Nos. 910025/035/202/230/259/309/444/481/566; BDA/BEA bogie bolster flats Nos. 950002/010/026/204/232/260/287/342/403/473/517/549/568/576/673/783/796/888/932/963/968 and Nos. 951022/029/032/066/133/137/188/192/246.



KFA concrete sleeper carrier No. TIPH 93321 was noted passing Tyseley on February 16.

STOCK UPDATE

Compiled by **Ashley Butlin**

Destined for use on the West Coast Main Line with Avanti, bi-mode No. 805001 shunts around the Hitachi factory at Newton Aycliffe on March 6. TONY WINWARD

STOCK CHANGES CORRECT AS OF MARCH 21.

LOCOMOTIVES

Allocations
20901, 20905 HNRL-BBXX
60001 WQBA-WQDA
60007 WQBA-WQDA
60010 WQBA-WQDA
60015 WQBA-WQDA
60019 WQBA-WQDA
60020 WQBA-WQDA
60039 WQBA-WQDA
60040 WQBA-WQDA
60044 WQBA-WQDA
60059 WQBA-WQDA
60063 WQBA-WQDA
60065 WQBA-WQDA
60066 WQBA-WQDA
60079 WQBA-WQDA
60092 WQBA-WQDA
60100 WQBA-WQDA
66105 WBBT-WBAT
66164 WBAT-WBHT
66174 WBHT-WBAT

Liveries
DB Cargo red: 66174
GBRf: 66311
Railfreight: 20132

Renumbered
37608 – 37508
66221 – 66651

Named
60095 *Whernside*
69008 *Richard Howe*

Renamed
66526 *Driver Steve Dunn (George)/Maszynista Steve Dunn (George)*

Names removed
37407 *Blackpool Tower*
37419 *Driver Tony Kay 1974-2019*
37422 *Victorious*
37425 *Sir Robert McAlpine/Concrete Bob*

Sold
Land Recovery: 60012/32/36/37/48/52/68/77/78/84/89/93

For Sale
60001/07/10/15/19/20/39/40/44/59/63/65/66/79/92, 60100

Preserved
One:One Collection, Margate: 60081

Stored/stopped locations
Brodies, Kilmarnock: 43129/50
Great Yarmouth: 43029
Falcon Works, Loughborough: 43128/69, 43305/67

Operational
66306/07/08

MULTIPLE UNITS

Allocations
175004/05/09 CH/HLHQ-HQ/SCEC
175104 CH/HLHQ-HQ/SCEC
180110 HT/ECGC-HQ/SCEC
197050 HQ-CH
197116/18/22 HQ-CH
197125 newly delivered HQ/HLHQ
321214 sent for disposal
321337 sent for disposal
321429 HQ/SAXU-GW/VRMU
507002/30 sent for disposal
701036 HQ-WD
710270 HQ-WN
720139/40/41 newly delivered HQ/EBHQ
730001/03/30/31/32/47 HQ-BY
730220 newly delivered HQ/EJHQ
777027/32/33 HQ-KD
777038/51/53 newly delivered HQ/HEHQ

Liveries
SWR: 444040, 450116, 458420

Renumbered
458520 – 458420

Now in passenger traffic
197050
197116/18/22
701036, 710270
730001/03/30/31/32/47
777027/32/33

Stored/stopped locations
Belmont Yard: 730038
Central Rivers: 175105/12
Derby: 701012, 720140/42/43, 720503/19
Eastleigh: 701005/16
Ely: 175005, 175104, 180110
Landore: 150236, 175109
Long Marston: 777053
Northampton: 321440
Old Dalby: 730015
Oxley: 730217/20, 805010
Walton Old Junc.: 777038/39/41/51
Worksop: 720139/41, 730217

Disposals
Sims Metals, Newport: Arrival dates: February 27: 62904; February 28: 77316; February 29: 71785; March 7: 77317 (all 319214); March 11: 507002/30; March 21: 321337



Still carrying EWS maroon and yellow livery, No. 67011 (which has been up for sale since December 2023) stands in the stored line at Crewe Electric Depot on February 26 sandwiched between Nos. 92031 and 92016, with grey-liveried No. 92007 at the far end of the line. MARTIN TURNER

HAULED COACHING STOCK

Liveries
TPE branding removed: TP04

Formations
HD05: 12224+12326+10321+11320+12477+82200
HD06: 12222+12323+10330+11321+12461+82227
HD07: 12210+12316+10301+11322+12452+82230

Stored/stopped locations
Castle Donnington: 10237
Long Marston: TP09
Longsight: TP04

Compiled by **Ashley Butlin**

The network's notable moves

Avanti West Coast

Services in and out of London Euston on February 11 were severely disrupted with cancellations in place as train crew and rolling stock were out of position due to a land slip between Rugby and Coventry – plus a broken rail. The 18.31 with No. 390124 departed Euston at 19.05 and by the time Crewe was reached the service was some 50 minutes behind schedule.

A signal failure between Lockerbie and Carlisle on Tuesday, February 13, meant that the Glasgow Central (1M20/20.06) to Birmingham, worked by Class 390 No. 390044, was held at Lockerbie and then Gretna Junction to arrive in Carlisle 176 minutes late at 00.20 in the early hours of the following morning; later the service was terminated at Preston. Northbound, the 9S67/17.46 from London Euston worked by No. 390002, was held at platform 3 at Carlisle until the line was clear and arrived in Glasgow 190 minutes behind schedule at 02.27.

On Friday, February 16, new Class 805 No. 805008, in Avanti livery, was seen alongside platform 15 at Euston. According to Realtime Trains it left Euston as empty stock 5Q84, at 12.05 to Crewe.

There were delays to down trains on the West Coast Main Line on Saturday, February 17, when the 4S43/06.40 Daventry IRFT (Victa) to Mossend Euroterminal, reportedly hauled by Class 88 No. 88010, had problems between Beattock North GSP and Beattock summit during heavy rain. The train was running nine minutes late passing Beattock and passed the summit some 64 minutes late.

The following trains, including 1S48/09.30 London Euston to Glasgow Central, lost 55 minutes waiting for the line to clear. The 9S54/08.40 London Euston to Edinburgh operated with No. 390001 was held at Lockerbie and left there some 52 minutes late. The 1S51/12.04 Preston to Glasgow Central was also held in the Lockerbie area and passed Thankerton approximately 40 minutes late. The 1S52/10.30 London Euston to Glasgow Central was held at Carlisle, passing Thankerton about 20 minutes down. The delays on the down impacted on up services as the 1M15/14.34 Glasgow to Euston was about 35 minutes late leaving Central.

Class 390 empty stock workings are not a regular operation. However, on Tuesday, February 27, No. 390136 ran from Polmadie Depot 5Z05/11.21 to London Euston. From there it ran (5Q23) to Wembley InterCity Depot.

Testing of new Class 805 units has increased in recent weeks, with four units reported out on March 5. No. 805004 was working Euston and Lancaster, and Euston and Preston. No. 805005 was on test between Euston and Crewe while No. 805006 was on similar moves. Finally, No. 805008 worked from Holyhead to Stafford and Crewe before returning to Holyhead.

LNER

Passengers on Monday, February 19, boarding the 07.52 Aberdeen-King's Cross service from intermediate stations to Edinburgh, heard the recorded announcement that the train was bound 'for Peterborough'. There was no reason given for this, nor explanation offered as to how London-bound passengers might continue their journeys onward from Peterborough.

It was an enterprising member of catering staff in First Class who explained that engineering works during the previous weekend, Saturday and Sunday, February 17/18, had overrun, hence the short journey.

Great Western Railway

On Friday, February 16, GWR announced that battery train No. 230001 completed a 70-mile move from Long Marston to Reading Train Care Depot. Without publicity, it is reported, on Tuesday, February 27, that the unit, running under Rail Adventure's operator licence, formed empty stock train 5Q23 from Reading Traincare Depot to West Ealing EMU Sidings. Test running on the Greenford Loop was expected in March.

Also on February 16, GWR chartered a train to explore the options for running services to Euston while Paddington is closed for HS2 works at Old Oak Common. Running as 2Z01/10.08 from Hayes & Harlington, it was seen arriving by platform 14 at Euston. On arrival it was formed of Class 57 No. 57009 *G.J. Churchward*, inspection saloon No. 999506, and at the rear Class 47 No. 47815 *Great Western*. The two locomotives were in BR two-tone green livery, which looked good with the maroon inspection saloon. After a few minutes, during which the passengers, including Mark Hopwood, Great Western managing director, were able to stretch their legs, the train left as the 2Z02/11.05 departure to North Pole International.

Greater Anglia

While no new Class 720s have entered service recently, examples are still being moved between Worksop and Derby as the early deliveries stored at Worksop are being completed and readied for traffic. Movements reported include No. 720102 being taken to Derby on February 8 by Class 69 No. 69008, followed on February 15 by No. 720138. The next reported move was on February 21 by No. 720502 behind No. 69010. No. 720101 was moved on February 23 by an unknown loco.

Class 69 No. 69010, along with Class 47 No. 47727 then moved No.720503 on February 28. Running solo, the following day the Class 69 moved Nos. 720143 and 720519.

Greater Anglia has always used Harwich Parkeston Quay yard for short-time storage at weekends, more so in the Class 321 era than now, but a regular weekday feature is an empty-coaching-stock move 5A96 from Colchester at 11.30 reaching the yard 40 minutes later. This stock then becomes the 1A95/07.28 Harwich International to London Liverpool Street (Boat train) service the following day. Noted on this run on February 21 was pairing Nos. 720108+720111; February 22 – Nos. 720135+720106; February 23 – Nos. 720501+720513; February 28 – Nos. 720517+720106; and March 1 – Nos. 720558+720118.

ScotRail

Following many months out of service, Class 334 No. 334040 was reported back in traffic on February 20, working the 2H06/07.25 Helensburgh to Edinburgh Waverley service.

Increasing numbers of services on premier routes such as Glasgow/Edinburgh to Aberdeen/Inverness which had been composed of HST 125s are being replaced by Classes 170 and 158, much to passenger annoyance. A considerable number of '125s' have been seen laid up in Haymarket Depot. One ScotRail source stated that the '125s' were built for long continuous running, and do not take well to some of the stop-start services on which they have been used.

Passenger inconvenience continued on March 1, the Aberdeen-Glasgow service out of the Granite City and calling at Stonehaven at 11.56 was a two-car Class 158 rather than a five-coach '125'. By the time Stirling was reached, the train was absolutely packed with passengers and luggage.

Northern Rail

An unusual event at Carlisle on January 31 was Class 156 No. 156444 which, having arrived on a Cumbrian Coast service then worked 1N72/15.52 Carlisle to Newcastle from platform 2, as part of a set swap movement, with Class 156 No. 156483 working in first to Platform 2 as 2N21/1355 Morpeth to Carlisle to take up Cumbrian Coast duties. It was the first time this correspondent had departed for the Tyne Valley from Platform 2 rather than the more usual platform 5 or 6.



Scotland is now the main place to be to see HSTs in action, and on March 16, an Inter7City set with power Nos. 43136/43127 calls at Aberdour with 1A79, the 09.30 Edinburgh to Aberdeen. PAUL BIGGS

Most Northern services between South Cumbria and Manchester Airport are worked by single Class195 units. However, on Friday, February 9, consecutively numbered Nos. 195115+195116 ran from Barrow on the 1Y14/05:50 to Manchester Airport, then 1C70 to Windermere, next back to Manchester Airport with 1Y81, with the duo making a return to Barrow with 1C58. After refuelling, No. 195116 left Barrow at 18.56 with IP90 to Preston. From there it ran empty (5N00) to Blackpool North.

Finally, that evening this Class 195 completed its day's diagram with a Blackpool North (1B00/22.02) service to Leeds via Bradford. This gave a total of 532 miles in one day with all but 17 being revenue earning.

TransPennine Express

The Mk.5 sets continue to be moved to Long Marston where the TPE branding is being removed. On February 8, Class 68 No. 68026 moved set TP07 from Longsight to Long Marston. In the opposite direction debranded TP03 was returned to Manchester by No. 68026 on February 22.

First Hull Trains

Hull Trains services were back along the Midland Main Line on the weekend of January 6/7. On the Sunday, the workings were the 1A91/08.30 Hull to London St Pancras and 1H03/12.30 London St Pancras to Hull with No. 802304 *William Wilberforce*, and 1A94/14.12 Hull to London St Pancras and 1H06/18.50 London St Pancras to Hull with No. 802301 *Amy Johnson*.

Hull Trains services were again worked into St Pancras on several weekends including on February 11, when Class 802 No. 802301 formed the 1A94/14.12 Hull to London St Pancras and 1H06/18.50 return. No. 802302 was also out working 1A91/08:30 Hull to St Pancras and 1H03/12.30 return.

Transport for Wales

Class 67 No. 67025 was seen working 1V18 TfW loco hauled set No. HD04 through Heaton Chapel to Swansea on February 25, with DVT No. 82201.

A correspondent sampled a Valley Lines Day Explorer Rover ticket on Saturday, March 2, which gives a good picture of the present situation for enthusiasts. The journey began at Abergavenny on Class 197 No. 197046 taken to Cardiff Central using 1V89/06.10 (Shrewsbury - Cardiff Central). Visits were subsequently made to Treherbert (on No. 150254), Merthyr Tydfil (No. 150245) and Aberdare (No. 150237).



The latest EMU to receive retro British Rail blue and grey livery is South Western Railway's No. 455868, the fleet now being around 40 years old. The unit is pictured on March 14, with classmate No. 455901 at Wimbledon West Junction working 2G31, the 12.33 Waterloo to Guildford via Cobham. WILLIAM A CLARK

There were seven TfW staff at Treorchy which seemed rather extravagant and unnecessary for a one platform station at 09.35 in the morning. These lines out of Cardiff were dominated by Class 150s with Nos. 150208/13/17/27/31/35/37/45/50/52/55/58/60/62/67/78/82 all being noted in service.

After lunch, a journey was taken from Cardiff Central up to Ebbw Vale Town on 2N17 and return with Class 153 Nos. 153303 and 153926 in charge. Except for one Class 158 noted heading from Ebbw Vale to Newport, the route was dominated by pairs of Class 153s.

The final valley line trip of the day, to Maesteg from Cardiff was visited, using Class 158 No. 158841 on 2L61 (Cheltenham-Maesteg) and return. A delay just outside Cardiff led to an 11-minute late arrival in Maesteg.

Whilst travelling around, plenty of new TfW stock was noted in service or at Cardiff Canton depot. Class 197s seen included Nos. 197013/17/21/42/46/49/50/51, 197105/07/08/20. In addition, Class 231 Nos. 231001/03/06/08/09 were also seen at Canton.

From a loco hauled perspective, Class 67 Nos. 67010 and 67014 were both working between Cardiff Central and Manchester, while No. 67007 in Coronation purple was seen at Canton. The day ended by taking No. 67010 on 1W65/18.55 (Cardiff Central - Manchester Piccadilly) back to Abergavenny.



CAF-built Class 197s are sharing Transport for Wales's Borderlands Line services with Vivarail-built Class 230s – one of the former, No. 197013, is pictured at Hawarden on March 6, with the 17.06 Bidston to Wrexham Central. The unstaffed station retains a foot crossing for passengers unable to use the traditional lattice footbridge. PAUL BICKERDYKE

West Midlands Railway

Movements of the new Class 730 units attract much attention from correspondents, with the following moves being reported. On February 9, No. 730212 was moved from Derby to Oxley by Class 37 No. 37510, with the Class 37 taking No. 730206 from Oxley to the Falcon Works at Loughborough on February 14. Two days later it moved No. 730217 from Derby to Oxley.

West Midlands Railway announced a full service would resume on the Marston Vale Line between Bedford and Bletchley from Monday, February 19. To celebrate the return of the full service, a single journey between any two stations on the Marston Vale Line will cost £1 for the first three months.

Chiltern Railways

Class 165 units are passing through Bristol Barton Hill depot for TPWS attention on a regular basis, with Hanson & Hall providing the move. On February 2 Nos. 165018+165033 ran as 5C65 from Banbury to Bristol Barton Hill. In a move on February 7, Nos. 165020+165034 were returned to Banbury.

A further move on February 21 found Nos. 165032+165005 run from Wembley-Barton Hill with Nos. 165033+165018 going from Barton Hill-Wembley. On March 6 Nos. 165028+165031 were moved from Banbury-Bristol with Nos. 165032+165005 going in the opposite direction.

London Overground

London Overground's Class 710 have all have entered service except for No. 710374. On Friday, February 23, No. 710374 was seen leaving from beside platform 11 at Euston as empty stock train 5Q33/14.58 departure to Rugby. This train was worked under Rail Operations Group's operator licence.

A correspondent reported on a planned journey on Monday, February 12, on the 2Y84/12.21 Kensington Olympia to Clapham Junction. However, plans were thwarted when according to the information screens the train was cancelled. Class 378 ▶

No. 378209 was seen passing platform 3 at Kensington Olympia four minutes later than 2Y84's booked time. According to Realtime Trains, 2Y84 had arrived at Willesden Junction seven minutes late and then ran nonstop to Clapham Junction where it arrived on time. It is not clear if any passengers had been allowed to remain on board at Willesden Junction to enjoy the nonstop run.

Southern Railways

The 17.33 London Bridge to Littlehampton on February 9, was formed of Class 387 No. 387220 only, instead of the more usual eight carriages, as No. 387217 was removed from service at Selhurst Depot due to an AWS fault.

The 05.42 Littlehampton to Victoria was short-formed on February 10 with unit No. 377139, but on arrival at Victoria No. 377403 was attached to make the correct formation before departing the return trip 07.46 to Littlehampton.

The Arun Valley services were disrupted on February 23, when an incident happened in the Crawley area involving the 13.05 ex-Victoria. The Bognor Regis to London and return services were diverted via Hove for the rest of the day, whilst the Southampton and Portsmouth portions which would attach at Horsham, ran as booked, to continue a half hourly shuttle between Horsham and Barnham.

The incident also caused mayhem with train crew being displaced, especially for the 21.13 Littlehampton to London formed of Nos. 377129+377440 departing some 25 minutes late and ran nonstop to Three Bridges via the Arun Valley, the first train through after the incident.

Weekend engineering work between Brighton and Three Bridges on February 24/25 saw mainline services diverted via Littlehampton and the Arun Valley. In connection with the work GBRf Class 66 Nos. 66794 *Steve Hannam* and 66796 *The Green Progressor* were noted at Haywards Heath in top-and-tail formation all weekend.

There were major issues to Southern, Gatwick Express and Thameslink services on February 26, when there was a power surge affecting signals and points causing cancellations to many services, and with only a very restricted service on the Main Line. Services from Littlehampton and Eastbourne were all diverted into Brighton with the formations being eight cars.

Brighton station itself was overwhelmed with passengers for the morning rush hour. Services were almost running as normal by 16.00 but still with delays as train crew were displaced. The following day, Portsmouth and Southampton to Brighton services were terminating and starting from Littlehampton pending on train crew as they were displaced. Local bus services ferried the passengers between Brighton and Littlehampton.

Among the reports, the 12.30 Brighton to Southampton terminated at Fareham with door issues in unit No. 377119 resulting in the 14.28 return working being cancelled. Unit No. 377119 was taken out of service and returned to Brighton ECS. Unit No. 377321 worked the 16.30 to Southampton and by the time it reached Barnham it was some 25 minutes behind schedule as a result of the signalling issues at West Worthing. By 21.00 only two trains were trapped, the 17.43 Littlehampton to London being held at Durrington and the 17.30 Brighton to Southampton at Lancing, which arrived in Littlehampton at 21.30 some three-and-a-half hours late.





Colas 'Grids' Nos. 56105+56049 emerge from Blea Moor Tunnel's southern portal on March 8 with 6J37, the 12.46 Carlisle Yard to Chirk log train – which is now a regular diagram for a single or pair of Class 56s.
CHRIS GEE

South Western Railway

New Class 701 'Aventra' units continue to be moved around. On February 2, Class 69 No. 69008 hauled No. 701002 as the 5Q20/09.12 Derby Litchurch Lane to Eastleigh TMD, then a week later, on February 9 the same loco worked No. 701529 on the 5Q20. This was followed on February 16, when No. 69008 was out again on 5Q20, this time hauling No. 701530.

Between times No. 701010 was moved from Worksop to Wembley by No. 69008 on February 6, with the same loco moving Nos. 701521+701527 from Eastleigh to Bicester on February 14. On March 1, No. 701012 was returned to Derby from Eastleigh by Class 47 No. 47727.

The pattern established during January, in which there are two extra Windsor return trains worked by the Class 701, has continued through February. Those trains are the 2U91/10.25 and 2U93/12.53 from London Waterloo to Windsor & Eton Riverside, and the 2U92/11.30 and 2U94/14.00 return.

By the end of February only four units had been used on these trains, namely Nos. 701028, 701037, 701039; and 701043.

The two five-car Class 707 Nos. 707024+707030 are likely to remain with SWR until the new Class 701s start taking over regular timetabled services.

A journey was made by a correspondent on Monday, February 5, from Waterloo to Wimbledon using the 2H43/15.42 from Waterloo to Shepperton, which was formed of both units. Unusually, this started from platform 18 at Waterloo and checking on Realtime Trains shows there were no times for the inbound working, the 2H44/14.41 from Shepperton, between Fulwell Junction and Clapham Junction, where it used platform 4. This suggests that it was routed via Richmond rather than Kingston.

After departure from Waterloo the train was held at a signal by International Junction, and when it restarted it used the crossovers so it could call at platform 8 at Vauxhall station. Our correspondent made a further journey on the pair on Thursday, February 15, from Clapham Junction to Kingston on the 2H51/17.42 from London Waterloo to Shepperton.

DB Cargo

Class 66 66158, still in EWS livery, worked 6K27/14.50 Carlisle New Yard to Crewe Basford Hall via Shap on January 30.

The regular Cardiff Tidal-Burton-Cardiff Tidal steel trains reported included No. 66197 on February 9, and No. 66128 on February 20.

Scrap metal trains reported included on February 12, No. 66130 on a Cardiff Tidal-Saltley-Cardiff Tidal diagram and No. 66179 on a regular Tidal-Sunderland-Tidal run on February 16. No. 66129 was reported on a Tidal-Kingsbury-Tidal diagram on February 20.

The 6X11 from Toton North Yard to Dollands Moor sidings, carrying new cars for export, was seen passing Kensington



Heavy rains in February led to flooded fields across the country – including at Pymoor (Cambridgeshire), where on February 26 DBC's No. 66107 crosses the Ouse Washes with 6L43, the 08.45 Mountsorrel to Kennett Redland stone train. AUBREY EVANS

Olympia station on February 12, double-headed by Nos. 66093 and 66056, both looking smart in DB red livery. On the same day, No. 66078, in DB red livery, was seen passing Kensington Olympia station light engine 0Z66 from Stewarts Lane T&RSMD to Acton Terminal Complex.

From February 20-23 there was a driver training/route learning light engine diagram slotted into the GEML timetable as 0Z10/10.22 Bow Depot to Ipswich with 0Z11/12.59 Ipswich to Bow return with Class 66 No. 66176 noted on all four days.

Class 66 No. 66103 was seen passing through Heaton Chapel on February 25, with 6L40 loaded Network Rail Autoballaster Wagons to Ordsall Lane Junction for the weekend engineering works.

The afternoon Seaforth (Liverpool) to Mossend (6S38) container service is normally fully loaded. However, when observed on Thursday, February 29, it comprised of just four containers hauled by Class 66 No. 66121.

Freightliner

Observations of the 09.11 Westbury to Crawley New Yard ballast train and 18.31 return working produced the following: on February 9 and 19, Class 59 No. 59005 *Kenneth J Painter*; February 22, No. 59104 *Village of Great Elm*; and February 27, No. 59102 *Village of Chantry,* which on return was diverted by the Arun Valley due to signalling problems at West Worthing. The latter was a big issue as the line was blocked from 17.30 until the end of service, causing many cancellations and diversions such as the Littlehampton to London services routed via the Arun Valley.

It was back to normal on March 4, when Class 59 No. 59001 *Yeoman Endeavour* was observed passing Worthing on the return trip.

On Monday, February 12, the 6M56 from Purley Yard Day Aggregates to Wembley Receptions 1-7 was seen passing Kensington Olympia station behind Class 66 No. 66589. A little later, on the same day, Class 59 No. 59001 was seen hauling the 7O45, from Hanwell Bridge loop to Tolworth Day Aggregates, away from platform 17 at Clapham Junction.

Freightliner still seems to be keen on Class 90s with staff being route trained. On Monday, February 12, Class 90 No. 90007 ran light from Crewe (0Z80/07.49) to Carlisle and back (0Z81/11.06). The same loco operated on this footplate training diagram for the following four days.

Observed at Heaton Chapel on February 25, was Class 66 No. 66532 seen passing through while working 6Y50 Ordsall Lane to Bescot Up Engineers Sidings Network Rail Engineers. Also seen was No. 66546 working 6Y51 on a similar diagram.

Class 66 No. 66602 failed while working 6E84 at Watford Junction on February 24, and was rescued by No. 66416. The pair were seen passing through Stockport on February 25 while working 6Z84 from Northampton to Tunstead Sidings empty stone.

The Freightliner depot at Ipswich has the NR shunting duties in Harwich Parkeston Quay yard and, while again during February little activity has been evident, on February 26, No. 66569 was noted on site, and that same day the 6Y91/15.35 Whitemoor to Parkeston arrived in the yard and returned overnight from Manningtree to the Cambridgeshire depot.

Class 70 No. 70001 ran from Crewe Basford Hall to Carlisle and back on a route learning trip on March 3, the Class not seen very often on this stretch of the WCML.

On Tuesday, March 5, Freightliner's orange and black liveried Class 66 No. 66503 pulled a train of empty container flats from Crewe (4S54/15.53) to Mossend.

DRS

Passing through Carlisle on January 30, at 12.57, was DRS Class 66 No. 66423 with 6K05/12.29 Carlisle to Crewe Basford Hall via the S&C.

Class 68 Nos. 68005 *Defiant* + 68007 *Vigilant* + Class 66 No. 66427 ran, on Wednesday, February 7, as a light engine trio from Carlisle Kingmoor depot (0Z03/06.52) to Crewe. Later on that same day, Chiltern Railways' 'Greener Future' liveried Class 68 No. 68014 ran light from Kingmoor Depot (0Z68/10.51) to Crewe (arr 13.36) where, after a quick turnaround, No. 68014 headed back north to Carlisle (arr 15.38). Also, on February 7, blue liveried Class 57s Nos 57304+57308 ran as a light engine duo from Crewe (0Z57/15.02) to Carlisle Kingmoor Depot.

On Thursday, February 8, Class 68 No. 68014, together with DRS large logo Class 37 No. 37558, were pulled by an unidentified DRS Class 68 from Carlisle Kingmoor Depot (0K75/06.59) to Crewe.

Class 68 No. 68014 ran light again on Wednesday, February 14, from Crewe (0Z14/11.22) to Carlisle Kingmoor depot.

A trio of TP liveried and consecutively numbered Class 68s, Nos. 68020+68021+68022 ran light on Thursday, February 22, from Crewe (0Z68/14.40) to Kingmoor depot Carlisle.

On Wednesday, February 28, Class 68 Nos. 68005 *Defiant* + 68007 *Valiant* hauled a single FNA flask from Crewe (6C53/06.25) via Ulverston to Sellafield. This is not a very regular working.

Class 68 No. 68017 *Hornet* ran light on Wednesday, February 28, from Crewe (0Z17/11.17) to Carlisle Kingmoor.

On Friday, March 1, Class 57 No. 57309 *Pride of Crewe* ran light from Crewe (0Z09/11.12 to Carlisle Kingmoor.

GBRF

Class 66 No. 66751 arrived at Carlisle Station on January 30, on 0G66/09.32 Tuebrook Sidings GBRf to Carlisle New Yard. This service terminated short at Carlisle station and the locomotive unusually remained on one of the centre roads at Carlisle for the afternoon.

Observed on Thursday, February 1, the 6M10 from Crawley New Yard to Wellingborough Up Terminal Complex was seen passing platform 3 at Barnes station behind No. 66752 *The Hoosier State*. On the same day, No. 66797, in Beacon Rail blue, was seen passing Wandsworth Town station on 4Y19 from Mountfield Sidings to Southampton Western Docks.

The Harwich Refinery to North Walsham diagram was not worked at all during the week commencing February 5. However, on February 12, No. 66778 *Cambois Depot 25 years* worked 0L41 from Ipswich and handled two complete runs on February 12/13, and 14/15 before taking 0E06 over to Whitemoor.

On February 21, the blue-liveried No. 66727 *Maritime* ▶

One worked 0L41 from Peterborough MPD for a single run down to North Walsham and back the following day before exiting back to that same depot later in the evening. Secondly, on February 28, No. 66777 *Annette* worked 4L30/03.43 London Gateway to Harwich Parkeston Quay yard and brought another consist of new GBRf FEA-G intermodal flats (five were identified as FEA-G 4463 300-1, 299-3, 297-9, 298-7 and 287-0) arriving around 08.00. It was then immediately allocated to the Harwich Refinery to North Walsham diagram. The new wagons were still in Harwich Parkeston Quay over the weekend of March 2/3.

On Friday, March 1, No. 66726 *Sheffield Wednesday* brought 4E53 (Felixstowe GBRf to Tinsley diagram) round from Felixstowe into Harwich Parkeston Quay yard as daylight dawned and took out 4E53/05.53 Parkeston to Tinsley the next day via the North London Orbital route with the cross-country route via Ely closed for the weekend for engineering work.

The demise of Harwich Parkeston Quay as a site for weekend stopover intermodal traffic continued during February, with only No. 66718 working 4A28 over from Felixstowe on February 10, before leaving as 4M22/11.30 for Trafford Park on February 12.

The rest of the month was blank, although a couple of interesting movements into the yard occurred during weekdays. Firstly, on Monday, February 19, No. 66713 *Forest City* handled 4E00 from London Gateway with a rake of four or five new GBRf FEA-G intermodal flats (obscured from view by a row of empty NR flats), arriving to hitch onto a weekend stopover 4R02 in the hands of No. 66748 *West Burton 50*, both then proceeding onto Felixstowe. Those new wagons did not linger long in the yard, with No. 66756 *Royal Corps of Signals* working over from Whitemoor as 0L00 in the evening of February 20, and strangely working 4L00/23.00 back to London Gateway, before working 4E00/04.40 from there to Doncaster iPort.

A very grubby No. 66744 *Crossrail* was seen passing Kensington Olympia station on Monday, February 12, working 6O65 from Ferme Park Reception Line to Tonbridge West Yard.

MoD traffic reported includes Class 66 No. 66739 working on February 6, from Doncaster to Longtown and then to Carlisle yard before making a return to trip to Glen Douglas the following day. The next day it worked a train south to London Gateway and then through to Kineton. It was next reported on Tuesday, February 13, hauling a train of 19 small olive-green containers from London Gateway, (4M05/02.01) to Carlisle. This service was scheduled to be held for 30 minutes in Warrington but ran on to pass through Lancaster 51 minutes early at 09.52 and finally arrived in Carlisle (New Yard) 130 minutes early at 11.43.

The next reported move was on February 19, when No. 66766 worked from Kineton to Bicester and back before heading north to Kineton, returning to Kineton the following day.

Class 66 No. 66767 worked a regular Liverpool-Saltley-Liverpool scrap metal diagram on February 6 and 7. The next day it powered a Liverpool-Swindon-Liverpool turn. A change of power a week later on February 14 found No. 66731 on the Liverpool-Saltley-Liverpool diagram, with the service in the hands of No. 66736 on February 21. Two days later, the Class 66 had charge of a Liverpool-Kingsbury-Liverpool diagram. A further change on February 26, found No. 66742 work from Small Heath yard to Swindon and back loaded to Liverpool, and two days later on the Liverpool-Saltley-Liverpool diagram.

On many occasions, the Hams Hall (4S57) daytime container service to Mossend has been very lightly loaded. However, on Thursday, February 8, when seen passing through Lancaster at 15.30, the service pulled by Class 66 No. 66716 did appear to be fully loaded without a single empty space.

The 6Y48 from Eastleigh East Yard to Hoo Junction Up Yard was seen on Monday, February 12, between Barnes and Putney, headed by Class 69 No. 69005 *Eastleigh*, in BR green livery. Returning to the footbridge between Barnes and Putney on Friday, February 23, the 6Y48 service was observed triple-headed, with No. 69005 leading Freightliner Nos. 66559 and 66562, the BR green livery of No. 69005 contrasting with the Freightliner green of the other two locomotives.

Monday, February 12, proved bright and sunny with a temperature that was quite pleasant for the time of year, but Network Rail deemed it necessary to operate a Snow and Ice Treatment Train.

A visit to London Bridge station found the 3Y90 from Tonbridge West Yard to Purley Down Siding stabled by the country end of platform 15, having arrived early. After a short stay at London Bridge, it left to continue its duties almost exactly an hour early. On departure from London Bridge the train was formed of Class 73 No. 73201 *Broadlands,* in BR blue, YXA sleeper wagons Nos. 90 70 9594 018-2 and 90 70 9594 013-3 and at the rear No. 73213 *Rhodalyn*.

Observed on the afternoon of February 13, stabled in the GBRf sidings at Edge Hill were Class 69 Nos. 69003 and 69007. Also present was Class 66 No. 66302 on a biomass train to Drax.

A nocturnal vigil is needed to see the only scheduled GBRf Class 60 working on the north of England section of the WCML. This is the 'runs-as-required' 6C66 Tuebrook Sidings in Liverpool to Shap. On Monday, February 26, No. 60087 was seen passing Lancaster at 22.56 pulling 12 empty mineral wagons. Our correspondent did not stay up to see the returning 6F66 as this departed from Shap at 03.18 to arrive back at Tuebrook at 05.51.

Class 66 No. 66738 *Huddersfield Town* had a day out to its own on February 28, when it formed the following light engine moves: 0Z33/07.00 Wellingborough to Toton North Yard via Oakham, 0Z34/09.04 Toton North Yard to Wellingborough via Market Harborough, 0Z35/12.22 Wellingborough to Toton Centre via Market Harborough, 0Z36/14.35 Toton Centre to Wellingborough via Oakham.



Re-engineered Class 69 No. 69009 seems to suit its 'Western'-style maroon livery, the newly outshopped loco seen at Barton-under-Needwood (just north of Central Rivers depot) being hauled by No. 66711 and with No. 66311 from Doncaster Roberts Road to EMD Longport on March 5. No. 69009 has been named *Western Consort* – perhaps a nod to 'Western' No. D1065 of the same name, as the '69' was originally meant to be rebuilt from No. 56065, but in the end No. 56060 was the donor (No. 56065 has become No. 69010 instead). PAUL KEIGHTLEY



EMR units Nos. 158854+158773 depart Alfreton on February 29, with 1L12, the 12.51 Liverpool Lime Street to Nottingham. Work has begun here adding lifts to the existing footbridge. This station opened in May 1973 (as Alfreton and Mansfield Parkway), replacing an earlier one which had closed in January 1967 as part of the 1960s Beeching cuts. GEOFF GRIFFITHS

A visit to London Victoria station on Wednesday, February 28, found Class 69 No. 69008 alongside platform 2, where it was being named *Richard Howe*. It was then seen leaving light engine as the 0Z71 to Leicester LIP.

Colas Rail

Observed at Carlisle on January 30, just after midday, the sidings between Platform 1 and the Grade II listed retaining wall unusually had four locomotives. Colas Rail Class 37 Nos. 37219 and 37421 stabled on a Network Rail infrastructure inspection train which that night would head for Mossend Yard and then onto Oban. At 13.05, two further Colas Rail locomotives made a brief appearance in the form of Class 56 Nos. 56105+56049 with 6J37/12.52 Carlisle Yard to Chirk via the S&C.

The Carlisle to Chirk loaded log train (6J37) ran to Preston via Shap rather than via Settle on Thursday, February 8, being pulled by Colas Rail Class 56 No. 56049.

On Friday, February 9, HNRC's orange and black liveried Class 37 No. 37405 ran light from Carlisle (0Z37/09.34) to Coleham sidings Shrewsbury.

Colas Rail Tamper No. DR73922 *John Snowdon* was moved on Friday, February 9, from Carnforth (6J48/11.00) to Guide Bridge. The following Monday, February 12, it returned north from Guide Bridge (6J48/10.35) to Ulverston.

Observed on Saturday, February 10, was Class 70 No. 70802 dragging Class 56 No. 56105 from Carlisle (0Z21/09.45) to Crewe.

Colas Rail Class 56 No. 56049 ran light on Wednesday, February 28 from Colwick (0C01/08.51) to Carlisle New Yard.

Class 56 No. 56049 passed Thankerton on Tuesday, March 5, whilst working 0C01/07.01 Grangemouth Oil Terminal to Carlisle New Yard.

West Coast Railway Co.

West Coast Railway's Class 37 No. 37516 was stabled at Carlisle on January 30, and would be later joined by Class 37 No. 37685 working in from Newcastle on 0Z37/12.34 Newcastle to Carnforth Steamtown which would take both locomotives south from Carlisle but only after running No. 37685 around to be lead locomotive as there appeared to be some connection issues.

WCR's maroon liveried Class 47 No. 47812 ran light on Tuesday, February 13, from Carnforth (0Z47/09.45) to Newark Northgate.

Retro green liveried Class 47 No. 47815 pulled on Wednesday, February 14, an empty rake of maroon Mk.2 coaches from Carnforth (5V42/12.58) to Southall via Crewe and Northampton.

A rake of Pullman liveried coaches was top-and-tailed on Wednesday, February 21, by Class 57s Nos. 57315+57601 from Carnforth (1Z50/06.20) via Settle and Preston to return back at Carnforth at 10.10.

Hanson & Hall

Class 50 No. 50008 *Thunderer* was employed on February 22, to move Mobile Maintenance Train Nos. DR97801+ DR97601+DR97501 from Darlington to York for repair.

Eversholt Rail

Class 321 No. 321443, currently in store at Gascoigne Wood, was sold to MCL Solutions on February 1. The unit will be scrapped as a disposal exercise at Gascoigne Wood.

Beacon Rail Leasing

Class 18 No. 18003 has been hired by Beacon Rail Leasing to British Steel, Scunthorpe, where it will be evaluated to see if the hybrid shunting locomotive meets the company's demands for a lower carbon footprint and the potential to reduce maintenance costs.

Locomotive Services Ltd

Class 40 No. D213 (40013) *Andania* passed Thankerton with the 1Z14/09.00 Inverness to Crewe on Sunday, February 25, with stock Nos. 11082+11070+1666+ 11076+11091+ 10411+11098+ 11075+11068+ 9513 and Class 47 No. 47805 on the rear.

Great Yarmouth

Further Class 43 power cars have been moved by road from Ely to Great Yarmouth pending the next export of stock from the harbour. Nos. 43206 and 43312 on February 15, and Nos. 43238 and 43319 on February 16, were moved by road.

Sims Metals, Newport

Arrivals in recent weeks included Class 319 No. 319369 by rail behind Class 37 No. 37800 from Allerton on February 6. This was followed by No. 37884 delivering Nos. 319386+319379 from Allerton on February 14.

The same Class 37 brought Class 507 Nos. 507013+507032 south from Birkenhead on February 19.

Loram

Making a change to the usual EMUs at Littlehampton, Class 37 No. 37057 *Barbara Arbon* visited the seaside town twice in the early hours of February 9, working a Hither Green to Hither Green Network Rail Train which also visited other areas of Sussex. Also present working an unknown diagram was Class 153 No. 153311, the unit later being seen in the bay platform at Barnham.

On Tuesday, February 13, Colas Rail Class 43 Nos. 43257 and 43277 top-and-tailed a set of Network Rail yellow liveried Overhead Line Inspection coaching stock from Derby (1Q18/10.50) via Whitehaven to Carlisle.

Observed arriving at platform 8 at King's Cross on Friday, February 16, was the 2Q51 from Derby RTC to Ferme Park formed of Visual Inspection Unit Class 153 Nos. 153379+153384, both in East Midlands Railway livery. No. 153384 also carries VIU 4, whilst No. 153379 carries VIU 5. After only a few minutes at the buffer stop they departed north on their journey to Ferme Park.

GPV unit Nos. DR98928+ DR98978 working a Horsham to Horsham Snow and Ice Treatment Train via Littlehampton and various other locations on February 22, developed a fault on entering Littlehampton, fouling the points preventing any train movements out of the station. It was eventually able to enter the station where it was possible to fix the fault.

After a delay of around 20 minutes, it departed for Bognor Regis but failed completely between Ford and Barnham needing rescuing by another GPV sent from Horsham. In the meantime, Arun Valley services and some west bound services were diverted into Littlehampton. Normal service was resumed by 22.30.

Rail Grinding Train No. DR79241-47 was present in Field sidings in Harwich PQ yard on February 22, and worked several trips overnight on the GEML before it worked out on February 26, with 6Z02/23.23 Parkeston Tip Sidings to Bishops Stortford Reception. It returned to Harwich Parkeston Quay yard overnight on March 1/2 from Reading Triangle Sidings.

Network Rail DBSO No. 9702 top-and-tailed with Class 37 No. 37057 was seen passing through Stockport with 5Z10 Derby St Andrews Siding to Derby RTC Network Rail Test Train on February 25.

Colas Rail Tamper No. DR73942 was moved on Monday, February 26, from Shap (6J87/11.15) to Guide Bridge.

The four-weekly engineers' train, 1Q18/10.50 Ferme Park to Clacton-on-Sea was noted passing through Harwich International on February 28, with Colas Rail Class 37 Nos. 37175 leading and 37612 at the rear, with a consist in between of Generator Van No. 6263, Plain Line Pattern Recognition Coach No. 72631, Overhead Line Equipment Test Coach (MENTOR) No. 975091 and lastly Test Train Brake Force Runner No. 72612.

Class 73 Nos. 73961 *Alison* + 73963 *Janice* powered a Network Rail Train from Brighton to Littlehampton and return twice on March 4, then up the Main Line to cover the Metro area before returning to Tonbridge West Yard.



Type 3s Nos. 37175 and 37612 top-and-tail a Network Rail test train from Cambridge towards Norwich past the disused, but Grade II-listed, signalbox at Thetford on February 29. KEITH PARTLOW

Our thanks

THE Railway Magazine's thanks for information go to: Paul Atkinson, Gordon Casely, Gene Collins, Mike Cooper, Barry Knock, Sean Morris, Richard Moxon, Andrew Norton, Mark Reynolds, R.D.Richardson, Chris Sanders, Craig Wellum and Chris West. ■

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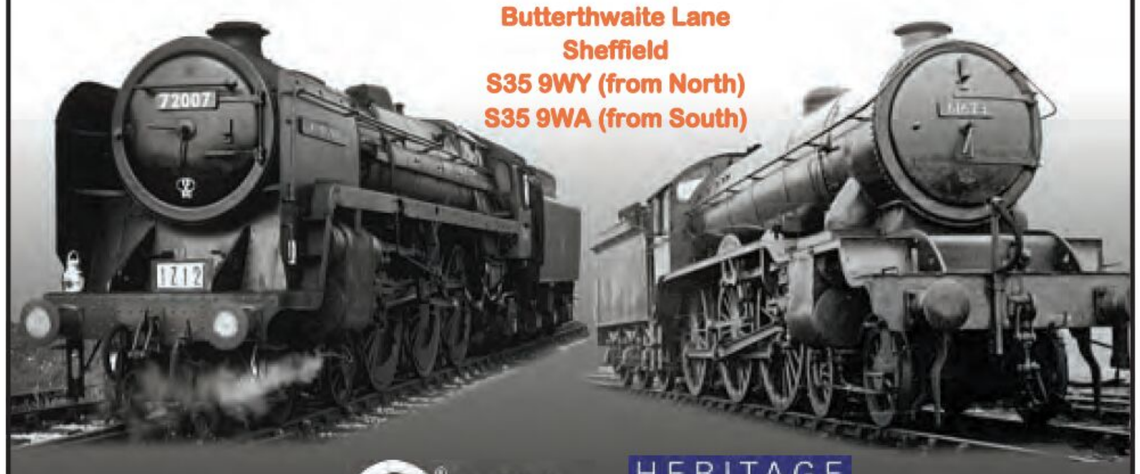
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Compiled by **Hassard Stacpoole**

Enterprise set to go hourly in late 2024

Hopes for end-to-end journey time of under two hours.

THE Enterprise Service between Dublin and Belfast, operated jointly by Iarnród Éireann and Translink has moved a step closer to going hourly. The Irish Government has announced €12.5m funding to double the existing frequency.

Announcing funding following the restoration of the Northern Ireland Executive on February 20, Irish Transport Minister Eamon Ryan said: "New funding for an hourly-frequency rail service between the two largest cities on the island will significantly improve public transport connectivity along the Dublin-Belfast economic corridor, and is in keeping with the vision of the All-Island Strategic Rail Review."

It is anticipated that the funding will allow both railway companies to modify their existing rolling stock allocations to allow an hourly service by the end of the year.

The current service is operated by the jointly owned de Detrich fleet introduced in 1997, which provides three operational daily trains sets. To allow the service to go hourly, the extra investment will see the allocation of existing IÉ ICR Class 22000 and Translink's CAF built CK3 which will operate as six cars.

Earlier departures will help meet the demand for arrivals into Belfast and Dublin first thing in the morning – and work is under way to improve onward connections to and from Londonderry. The IÉ timetable has an existing path for hourly Enterprise services to pass through the congested track into Dublin, even though it has remained unused to date.

It is expected that some additional services will be delivered by the next timetable change due early in the summer. It is hoped that it will be possible to operate a fully hourly service when the new eight platform Grand Central Station next to Great Victoria Street opens later this year, and services are diverted from Lanyon Place.

It is expected that the invitation to tender for the new Enterprise fleet for up to eight train sets will be issued in the coming months, with IÉ and Translink intending to enter into an eight-year framework agreement, and includes a maintenance contract covering technical support services and supply of spare parts over a term of up to 15 years. The estimated total value is €650m.

The new trainsets will be a maximum of 200m in length.

IÉ and Translink plan to have the entire fleet in service in 2028-29, to operate an hourly service between Dublin and Belfast and deliver an end-to-end journey time of under two hours.



Over the weekend of March 2/3, Dublin to Belfast services were diverted from Belfast's Lanyon Place to Great Victoria Street due to engineering works. On March 2, Nos. 9001+8208 *River Lagan* are seen at platform 2 prior to departing with the 08.00 Enterprise service to Dublin Connolly. On the left is the new eight platform station Belfast Grand Central, which is due to replace Great Victoria Street in May. FINBARR O'NEILL

Slieve Gullion moves closer to mainline return

THE Railway Preservation Society of Ireland (RPSI) overhaul of GNR S Class 4-4-0 No. 171 *Slieve Gullion* took another big step forward to returning to mainline running on February 14, when the boiler was lifted back into the frames.

No. 171 last ran in 2002 and the current overhaul has had a chequered history, with a long hiatus after the locomotive had to be recovered from a bankrupt contractor in the Northeast of England in 2014. Work restarted in earnest in 2019 but was delayed by the Covid-19 restrictions.

The lift was carried out entirely in-house with the RPSI's shear leg cranes. The locomotive was then shunted back into the Dunleath workshop for reassembly to continue. Once the engine was back in the workshop, the injectors and other boiler fittings were refitted, and the smokebox bolted down.

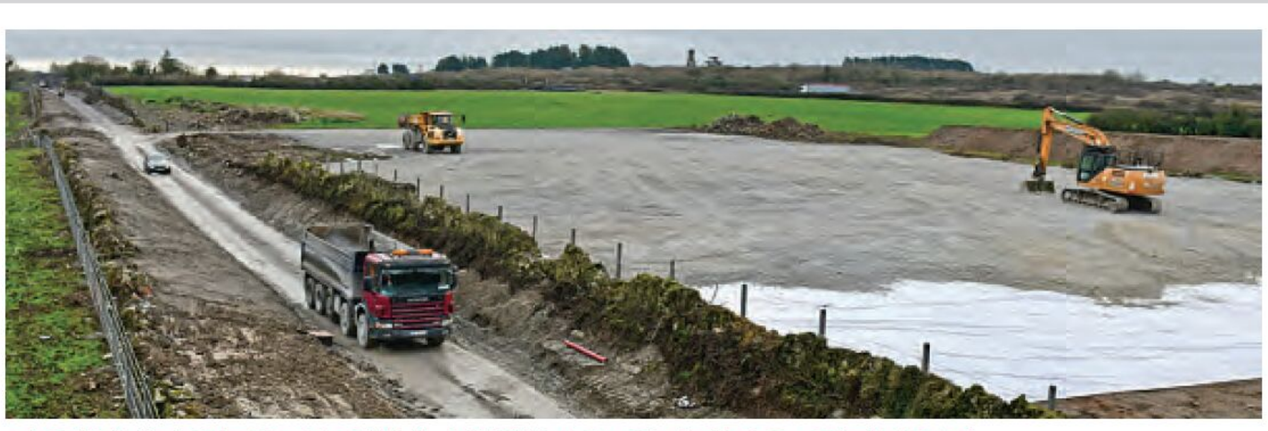
The next stages will be the insulation, cladding and cab, along with a new wooden footplate – the previous version of which was removed when the engine was first dismantled for overhaul in 2011.

It is planned to have No. 171 in steam for testing in the yard by the late spring, before work moves towards painting, lining and fitting of the electrical safety systems.

Once this is completed, it is expected to be transferred by road to the RPSI base in Connolly shed to be swapped with GNR V Class 4-4-0 No. 85 *Merlin* which is now out of ticket and will return to Whitehead for overhaul. No. 85's tender will be paired with No. 171 which will allow it to enter mainline service later in 2024 after running in trials.



GNR 4-4-0 S Class No. 171 *Slieve Gullion* moved a step closer to mainline running condition when its overhauled boiler was reunited with its frames on February 14, at the Railway Preservation Society of Ireland's Whitehead base. It is seen being shunted into the Dunleath Workshop by former B Class GM No. 142. ADAM LOHOFF



FOYNES TRACK LAYING SET TO START

Work continues on the rebuilding of the Foynes line, with preparations being made to begin track laying. A new compound has been established by MP 24 at Glenbane West for contractors who are expected to start tracklaying from there towards Limerick by the end of April. In advance of tracklaying, electrical and signalling ducting has been installed on a substantial section between the compound and Adare, significant stretches of the track bed receiving an initial layer of ballast in advance of tracklaying. On February 13, looking towards Limerick, work was ongoing to establish the new compound. HASSARD STACPOOLE

Planning hearing for Metro North starts

A NEW An Bord Pleanála planning hearing for the planned Metro North opened on February 20.

The occasion came 15 years after the last planning hearing into the proposed line; 14 years since it was granted permission; 13 years since the Government shelved it; nine years since it announced it was back on track; five years since the preferred route was confirmed; and a year-and-a-half since Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) lodged its application for the line.

The €9.5 billion, 18.8km long line would run from north of Swords to Dublin Airport, then on to Ballymun, Glasnevin, O'Connell Street and St Stephen's Green before terminating at Charlemont Street, connecting into the Luas Green Line, with 16 stations in all.

The planning hearing is scheduled to last about six weeks. More than 120 of the 318 parties who made submissions on the application intend to address the hearing.

These include residents and businesses affected by the route, politicians, campaign groups, heritage bodies and state agencies.

Compiled by **Keith Fender**

Chinese built trains for Europe

Chinese built passenger trains and locomotives are now in use or planned in multiple European countries



Chinese built Class 665 EMU number 665 002 seen at Ústí nad Labem hl.n on February 17 with service R1305, the 08.36 to Kolín. SHAUN WALLACE

THE inaugural Chinese-built passenger train to enter service in the European Union made its first trip on February 5.

The train, built by Chinese railway engineering conglomerate CRRC and operated by private company Regiojet, is one of the two Chinese built 'Sirius' EMUs which are in the Czech Republic as a result of a now cancelled contract from the other major Czech private operator Leo Express.

Initially only one train was used, on a trial basis for three to four months, to operate some semi fast regional trains on the Ústí nad Labem to Kolín route where Regiojet holds a Czech government contract to operate trains.

The 160kph (99mph) dual voltage (3kV DC/25kV AC) Class 665 trains were ordered from CRRC Zhuzhou by Leo Express in 2016 with three trains initially planned plus options for 30 more. While the first train arrived in the Czech Republic in 2019 and was put through its paces at the Velim test centre, approval testing was delayed and Leo Express cancelled the contract in 2022. CRRC wanted to continue the approval process in order to facilitate further sales of the 'Sirius' model so has been continuing with the approval work.

These are not the first Chinese-built passenger trains in Europe; that distinction goes to the Balkan country of North Macedonia which has two three-car EMUs and four three-car DMUs built by CRRC in 2015/16. In addition, Austrian private operator Westbahn has previously announced plans to lease four new six-car double-deck EMUs also built by CRRC Zhuzhou. One of these trains has been tested extensively in Europe and was undergoing tests on the German network in December; Westbahn plan to use them for Vienna – Munich services in the future.



The first of the RCH battery-electric locos, No. 461 001 seen at Budapest Kelenföld on July 10, 2023. RCH has agreed to lease the two locos for four years and may then extend the lease or buy them. Options for 20 more locos have been agreed too. ANDY DAVIS

200kph order

Serbian Railways agreed a €54 million contract with CRRC in 2023 to buy five 200kph four car EMUs for future use on the Budapest to Belgrade route which is being extensively modernised. The trains will be built by CRRC subsidiary CRRC Changchun. The first of the Serbian trains, which CRRC says will meet all European standards, is due for delivery in early 2025 in time for the re-opening of the rebuilt Belgrade to Subotica section of the line. The new trains should be able to reduce journey times between Belgrade and Subotica from around four hours to an hour and 10 minutes.

Freight locos

CRRC has delivered several types of electric locomotive to European operators and now owns the former Vossloh Locomotives business in Kiel, Germany. In the Balkan region, North Macedonia has two four axle electric locos and in nearby Serbia the national electricity company which operates a substantial private rail network obtained two six axle locos from CRRC Zhuzhou, designated Class 463, in 2017.

In the EU countries several types of Chinese-built locomotives are already in use in Hungary with Austrian Railways owned subsidiary Rail Cargo Hungary (RCH) using two 140kph 'Bison' dual voltage (15kV/25kV AC) locos (see RM November 2022 p104) and two hybrid battery – electric four axle shunting/trip locos classified as Class 461 in Hungary; in both cases leased from CRRC until 2027, with options to buy more.

In Germany national infrastructure manager DB InfraGO has several hybrid battery/diesel four axle shunting locos imported from China and plans exist for more locos for DB and its subsidiaries to be built by CRRC in Germany at Kiel.

Classic diesel locos overhauled for Chilean tourist train

CHILEAN state railway EFE has restored two 70 year old GE 'Shovelnose' diesel locos and is using them for tourist trains from and near the capital Santiago.

EFE bought 17 single-ended, GE built, Alco-engined 'shovel nose diesels in two batches in 1954 and 1956 to replace steam. By the mid-1990s, eight of the locos were withdrawn or stored but the remainder had a variety of work including a few passenger trains, although this dwindled to almost nothing by 2005.

Further, several locos were used by private freight operator Fepasa following partial privatisation of Chile's railways.

The two locos retained for special trains are Nos. 16005 and 16011. Both locos were delivered in the original batch of 12 locos in 1954, then numbered as 7005 and 7011 (and renumbered to the current numbers as long ago as 1961). The original Alco 244-G diesel engines were replaced by Alco 251-C engines in 1982.

The special trains run from Santiago, west to San Antonio, south to Rancagua and also since 2024 between Rancagua and San Antonio. Information can be found at this website (in Spanish) www.entren.cl

Our thanks to Miika Nicholson for some of the information in this item.



Loco No. 16005 leads sister loco No. 16011 through the small station of San Francisco about 20km north of Rancagua with the inaugural Rancagua to San Antonio journey on January 27. MIIKA NICHOLSON

Mixed-traffic Smartron electric locomotives multiply in Bulgaria

THE 'low cost' version of the Siemens Vectron electric locomotive is gaining popularity in parts of continental Europe.

Launched in 2018 and known as the Smartron, it is an off-the-shelf AC electric loco approved for use in some – but not all – central European countries. Unlike the Vectron model which can be customised by purchasers in multiple ways, the Smartron is delivered to a standard specification and each loco leaves the Siemens Munich factory in a blue livery.

While many Smartrons are used in Germany and Austria, the biggest concentration of the type is in Bulgaria where three major operators use at least 34 locos, numbered as Bulgarian Class 80, with national passenger company BDZ using 15, with another 10 on order for delivery in 2025.

The latest user in Bulgaria is Austrian freight operator LTE Logistics, which has taken leases on locos Nos. 80 064 and 80 065 owned by European Loco Leasing and which now regularly operate freight across Bulgaria between Dragoman, near the Serbian border, and Kapikule on the border with Turkey.



LTE Smartron No. 80 064 is seen heading east through Voluyak on October 11, 2023, with wagons belonging to Turkish national rail company TCDD. STEPHEN GINN

Italian narrow gauge rolling stock modernisation

OPERATORS of two Italian narrow gauge networks are investing in new rolling stock – which even includes hydrogen power.

Six Stadler Class SRDe112 DMUs delivered in 2022/23 for the Monserrato (Cagliari) - Mandas - Isili line operated by Azienda Regionale Sarda Trasporti (ARST) have now started entering service. This follows the delivery of 15 950mm gauge DMUs by Stadler in recent years.

In mid-2023, the Sardinian ARST placed an order with Stadler for 10 hydrogen powered regional trains. At the same time, southern Italian mainland 950mm gauge operator Ferrovie della Calabria also ordered 15 similar trains.



The latest Stadler DMUs to be delivered in 2022/23 and now entering service are six Class SRDe112 DMUs. One of the new trains, No. 112 006 seen at Mandas on October 14, 2023, with a train to Isili passing 1996 Breda built single car unit No. ADE95. KEVIN HOGGETT

Railway to Sunshine Coast

THE State government in Queensland, Australia has agreed to fund the first phase of a planned new 38km railway from Beerwah on the 1,067mm gauge main line between Brisbane and Cairns, to Caloundra on the Sunshine Coast. A planned 18.9km extension will later take the line north to Maroochydore.

The initial line to Caloundra is planned to be open in time for the 2032 Olympic Games which will be held in Brisbane.

Battery electric traction for Chicago area

STADLER has won an order to build 16 Battery Electric Multiple Units (BEMU) for Chicago area commuter rail operator Metra.

These will be the first battery powered units in mainline use in the USA. Unlike battery powered trains in Europe, which often serve electrified stations enroute (where they can recharge), Metra plans to use the new trains on the completely non-electrified Beverly Branch of the Rock Island network. This short 17 mile route, from Chicago La Salle St station to Vermont St Blue Island, is entirely within the city's built-up area and is currently served by diesel-hauled double deck push-pull sets, although outside peak hours these are much larger than the number of passengers.

Metra has initially ordered eight two-car trains which will have an articulated centre power unit (similar to Stadler's bi-mode trains built for the UK). The contract allows Metra to order more coaches in the future to extend the trains to three or four coaches; an option for eight more trains has also been agreed.

Stadler has previously won a contract to supply a single prototype battery equipped double deck EMU for Californian operator Caltrain which is electrifying its main route.



The new Stadler BEMUs will replace the Metra diesel-hauled push-pull trains currently used on the Beverly branch. Metra MP36PH-3S No. 410 is seen rounding the curve off the branch into Vermont St, Blue Island on June 6, 2022 arriving from Chicago. KEITH FENDER

$16 billion tunnel under Hudson River

CONTRACTS for the long-planned second Hudson rail tunnel linking Manhattan with New Jersey have finally been agreed after decades of discussion and political obstruction.

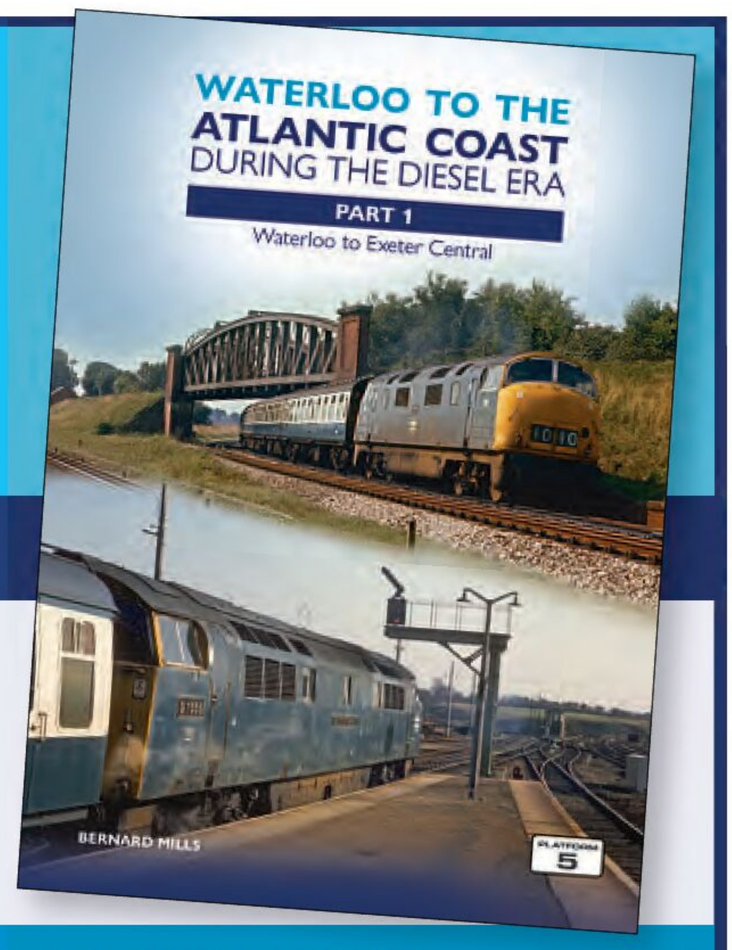
A joint venture of three major construction firms – Parsons, Mace and Arcadis – will build the new 4km long twin-bore tunnel which should be complete by 2035. Once it opens, the original North River Tunnels will close for refurbishment taking three years – after which there will be a four track railway south from New York City.

PLATFORM 5

www.platform5.com

WATERLOO TO THE ATLANTIC COAST DURING THE DIESEL ERA

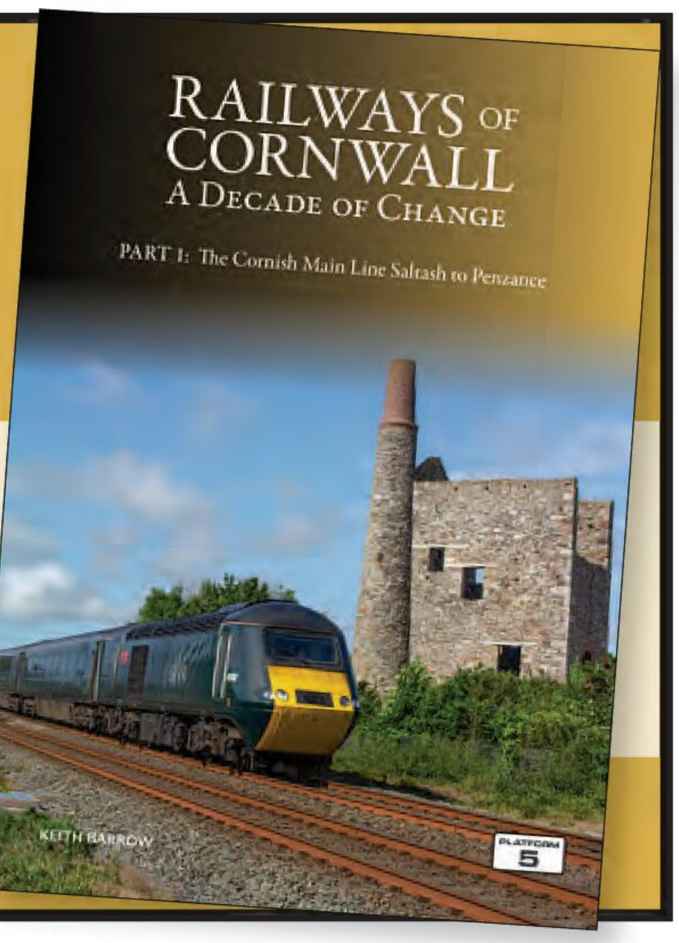
Part 1: Waterloo to Exeter Central



Prolific railway photographer and author, Bernard Mills, presents a wonderful selection of colour images dating back as far as the mid-1960s. Part one in this two-part series explores the former London & South Western Railway's line from Waterloo to Exeter Central. Through very detailed captions the author outlines the history of the route with a focus on the 1960s to the 1990s, when diesel-hauled trains were the order of the day. **96 pages. A4 size.**

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RAILWAYS OF CORNWALL:
A Decade of Change
Part 1: The Cornish Main Line: Saltash to Penzance



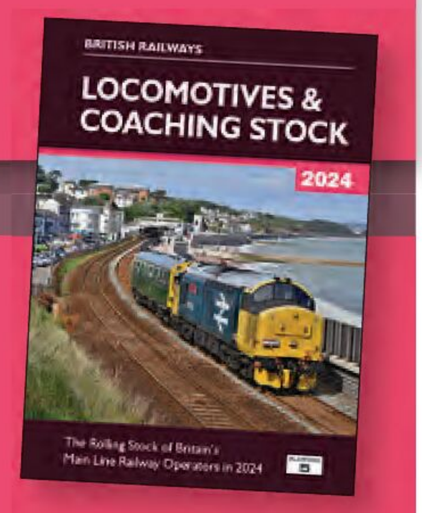
In this new book by Keith barrow he explores The Cornish Main Line, through more than 70 miles of diverse and picturesque landscapes, overcoming challenging terrain by means of numerous tunnels and viaducts. The book records the railway during a time of great transition, capturing classic and modern traction types in a breathtaking railway landscape. Contains over 150 top quality images, all with extended captions telling the story of Cornwall's Main Line and its trains. **96 pages. A4 size.**

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North Wales Rail Scene 1970s-1990s

By Garry Stroud

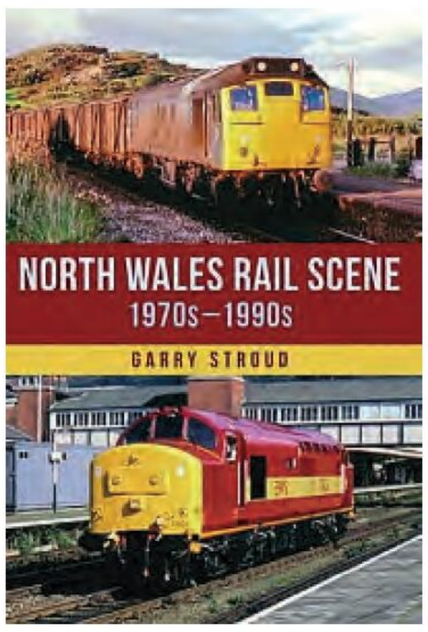
THIS collection of photographs covers two decades of the changing scene along the coastal route to Holyhead (including the breakwater Class 01s), documenting the locomotives and units that worked in the area during the second half of the BR period.

The images have been organised into geographical order from the Holyhead end, taking in the branches to Llandudno and Blaenau Ffestiniog, and finishing around Wrexham. The northern section of the Cambrian line to Pwllheli is also included.

Much of the period was in the BR Blue era, and Classes 37, 40 and 47 dominate the locomotive action. Picture quality is good, and each is backed up by detailed captions. The book follows the publisher's standard format of one or two images per page, with most taken from station platforms, plus a few at the lineside and during depot visits.

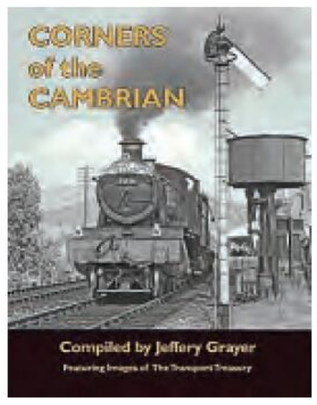
A great reminder of times now sadly gone.

Published by Amberley
www.amberley-books.com
96 pages, softback. £15.99



Corners of the Cambrian

By Jeffery Grayer



THIS new volume from the Transport Treasury is a collection of images taken on the network of the former Cambrian Railways, but in the days before control passed from British Railways' Western to London Midland Region and widespread route and station closures took place.

It includes a wide variety of classes and workings including ex-GWR 'Manor', 'Prairie', 'Dukedog', 'Dean Goods' and 1400 Class tanks on everything from local workings to the prestigious 'Cambrian Coast Express'. Ex-LMS Ivatt '2MT' 2-6-0s, and Standard tender and tank locomotives are also featured.

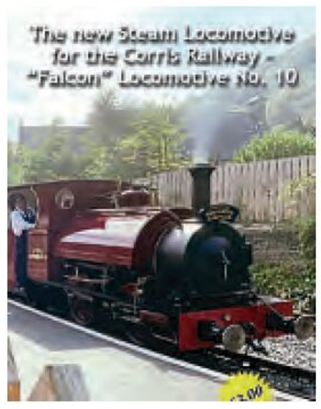
Published by Transport Treasury
ttpublishing.co.uk
112 pages, softback. £14.95

The New Steam Locomotive for the Corris Railway Falcon Locomotive No. 10

By John Simms

THIS is the story of the Corris Railway's latest project to reach completion, 0-4-2 saddle tank No. 10. Covering the entire near two decades from the loco's inception through to its debut last September, this informative booklet is packed with details and images showing almost every step of the Falcon locomotive's construction.

The text covers some of the differences and reasons between the Falcon as built and its predecessors (the CR's modified No. 3 and original trio built in the 19th century), providing a concise overview of this new-build locomotive.



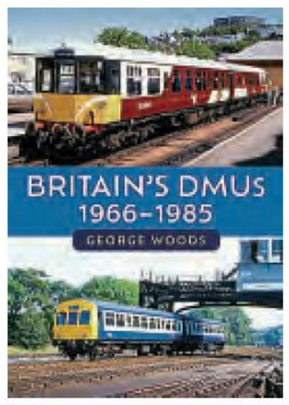
All proceeds go towards the ongoing Falcon Locomotive Appeal Fund for No. 10's continued upkeep.

Published by Corris Railway
www. corris.co.uk
36 pages, softback. £3

Britain's DMUs: 1966-1985

By George Woods

BRITISH Rail's first generation DMUs were part of the modernisation of the railways in the 1950 and 60s, replacing steam on local and branch line routes across the country, and contributing to the survival of many lines and stations.



They were never widely regarded by enthusiasts however, or at least not at first when there were still many 'more interesting' loco-hauled trains in operation. So this book of images covering two decades from the mid-1960s to the mid-80s is a useful reminder of an everyday railway now gone.

There are no chapters as such, just a series of images and captions presented in chronological order, with up to four pages per double-page spread. The selection includes some nice early photos in colour which, considering their age, have been well reproduced and printed.

There is also a good geographical representation from across the country, although many of the captions lack in-depth detail.

Some second generation DMUs make an appearance towards the end of the book.

For DMU fans, this would make a worthy addition to their bookshelves.

Published by Amberley
www.amberley-books.com
96 pages, softback. £15.99

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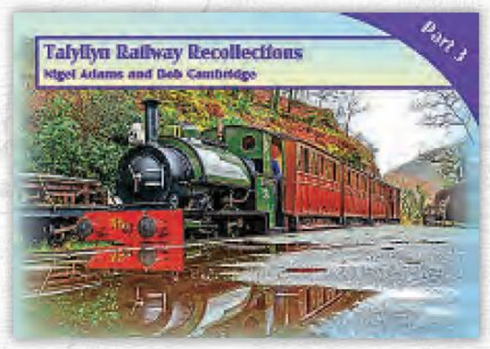
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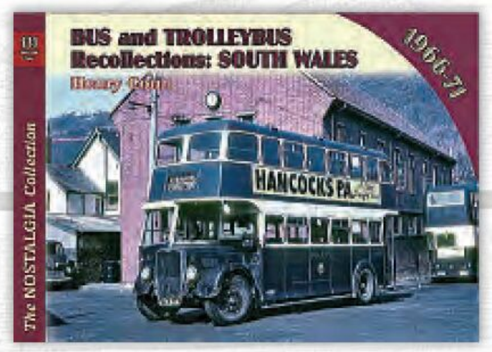
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It's goodbye from them, but not from him

CARNFORTH Model Shop closed its doors for the last time on March 2 after almost 10 years. However, although the shop is closing, the website **www.carnforthmodels.co.uk** will stay active and models can still be picked up at the shop until the end of March.

Last year, owner Mike Lowe opened another shop in Grantown-on-Spey, which is to stay open, meaning he is still available to his many customers. The phone number 01524 730101 will stay active and have calls redirected.

Digitrains expands

LINCOLN-based Digitrains has opened another room just in time for a 10-year anniversary at the current location. The extension sees the introduction of a dedicated track room.

Digitrains will be celebrating 20 years of business next February and, with continued growth, is becoming a major player in the railway model world.

Models take over at Severn Valley Railway

ON Saturday and Sunday, May 4/5, the Severn Valley Railway is hosting a model railway weekend.

After travelling to Highley station by heritage train on the 16-mile, standard gauge line, prepare yourself for a feast of everything scaled down. More than 30 of the UK's most popular displays and layouts will be on show at the adjacent visitor centre. Whether you like O gauge, OO gauge, N gauge or something even smaller, there will be something for you.

Entry to The Engine House is included in the price of your travel ticket. Prices start at £25 for adults, £16.50 for under-18s, with family tickets also available. These prices will increase if tickets are not purchased by May 1.

Rails to take over Hattons Model Railways brand

Website database and directory to live on with new owner.



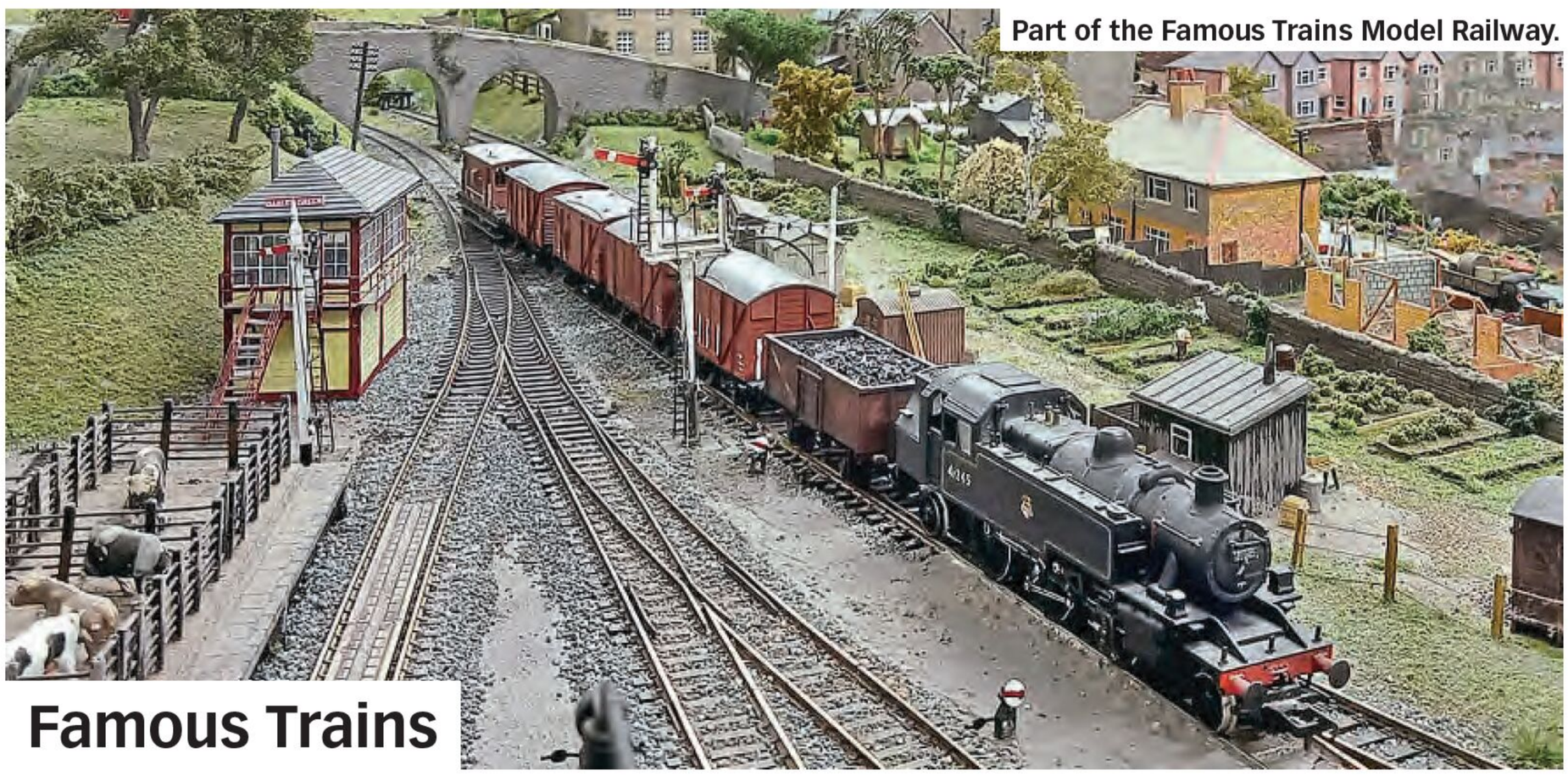
IT was a shock to the modelling world at the start of this year when stalwart of the industry, Hattons, announced it was to close.

But Rails of Sheffield has now brought the Hattons brand into the Rails family rather than let the legacy of this esteemed brand disappear.

Many customers reached out dismayed that the valuable resources on the Hattons website, such as the product database and expansive 'Directory' system, could be lost forever.

Rails will soon relaunch these services and will continue to update them with new information. While the original Hattons store and business will remain closed, the brand will live on.

Please visit **railsofsheffield.com** and **hattons.co.uk** for more information.



Part of the Famous Trains Model Railway.

Famous Trains

THIS year is the 10th anniversary of the opening of Famous Trains Model Railway based in Markeaton Park, Derby.

Model trains run every Saturday, Sunday and Monday from 11am to 4pm. Entry for adults is £3, £1.50 per child and admission for a family (up to two adults with children) is just £6.

The centrepiece of the exhibition area is a large OO-scale model railway based on Chinley station in Derbyshire in the 1950s/60s when it was a major junction station. Members run a mixture of trains, most being typical BR trains of the area – including express and local passenger trains, limestone trains and heavy coal trains.

See **www.famoustrains.org.uk** for more information.

Celebrating Cornish model-making talent

THE Helston & Falmouth Model Railway Club is presenting The Great Cornish Model Show on April 13/14 at Pool Academy, Pool, near Redruth.

Features will include: 15 working model train layouts; model aircraft (radio controlled and miniature); model boats and ships; radio controlled trucks and cars; military modelling; plastic kit modelling; Wargamers; miniature room sets and dolls' houses; modelling demonstrations and full trade support.

Entry costs £7 for adults, £4 for under 16s with a family ticket available at just £14. Parking is free with sat navs needing to follow postcode TR15 3PZ.

Kent shop on the move

KENT-based model shop Dream Steam was due to move to new premises over the Easter weekend.

The new unit off Lake Road in Aylesford (postcode ME20 7TQ) should be open from Tuesday, April 2.

Opening times will not change. Please see the model map in this issue for more details.

Statfold Barn Model Railway Exhibition

RETURNING for its third year, Statfold Barn Railway's Model Railway Exhibition will take place on April 13/14, sponsored by Tony's Trains of Rugby and Hornby Magazine. Alongside more than 25 visiting model layouts and 25 traders, the railway will be operating with more than five locomotives in steam. Little ones can enjoy children's activities, from Toby's Barn Soft Play to vintage swing chair rides. The Transport Museum Wythall will be providing a free bus service between Statfold Country Park, Tamworth Railway Station and Tamworth town centre.



Prices for over-14s start at £16, £8 for children aged 2-14 years, with under 2s free, and a family day ticket is available at £39.50 (two adults and two children). A senior ticket is £13.50 and a carer's ticket is also £13.50. Please visit **www.statfold.com/modelrailwayexhibition** for more details.

Do you want to be featured here in Model News?
Please call Craig Amess on **01507 529537** or email **CAmess@Mortons.co.uk**

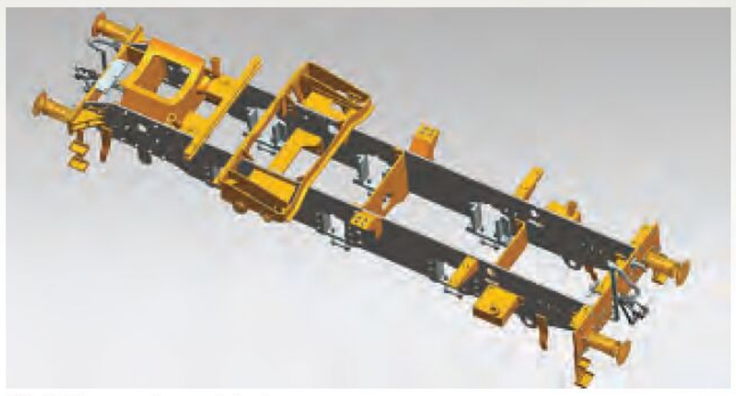
SILVER CREST
models

MARKET LEADER IN LARGE SCALE, READY-TO-RUN, LIVE STEAM

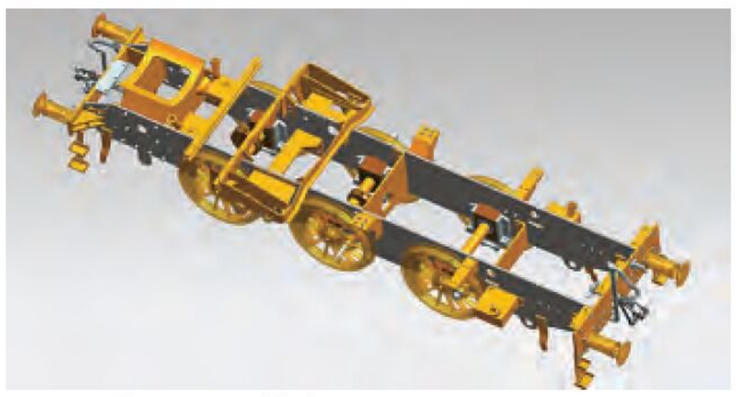
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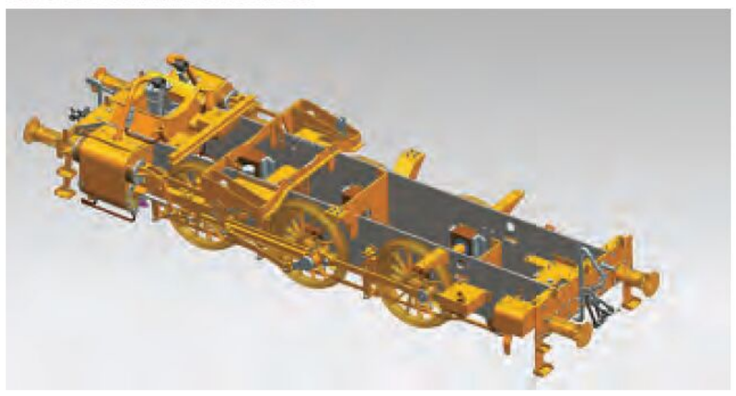
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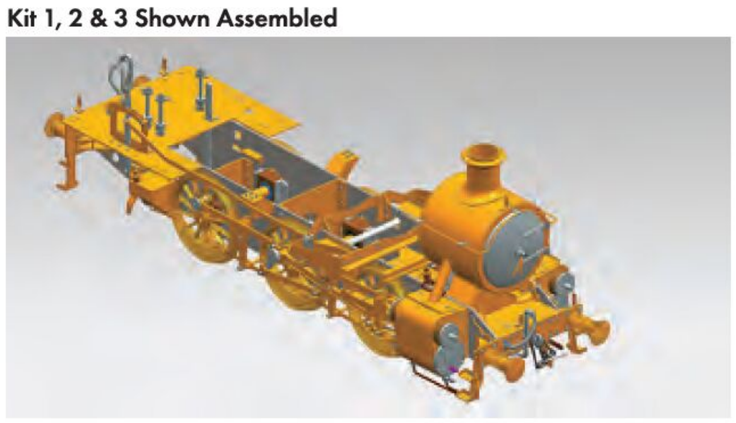
Kit 1 Shown Assembled



Kit 1 & 2 Shown Assembled



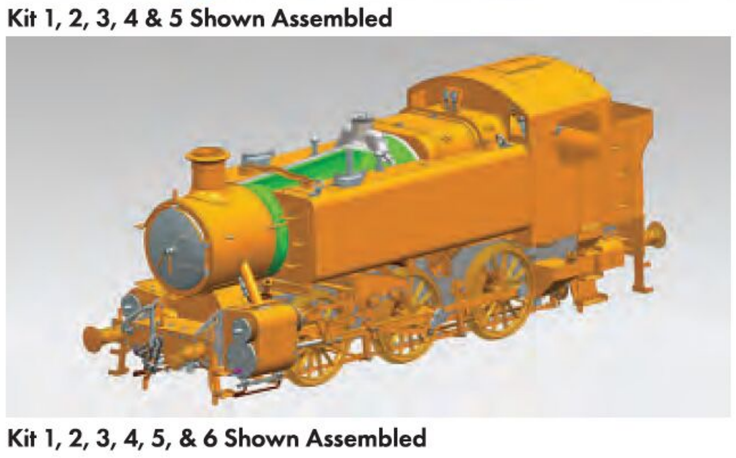
Kit 1, 2 & 3 Shown Assembled



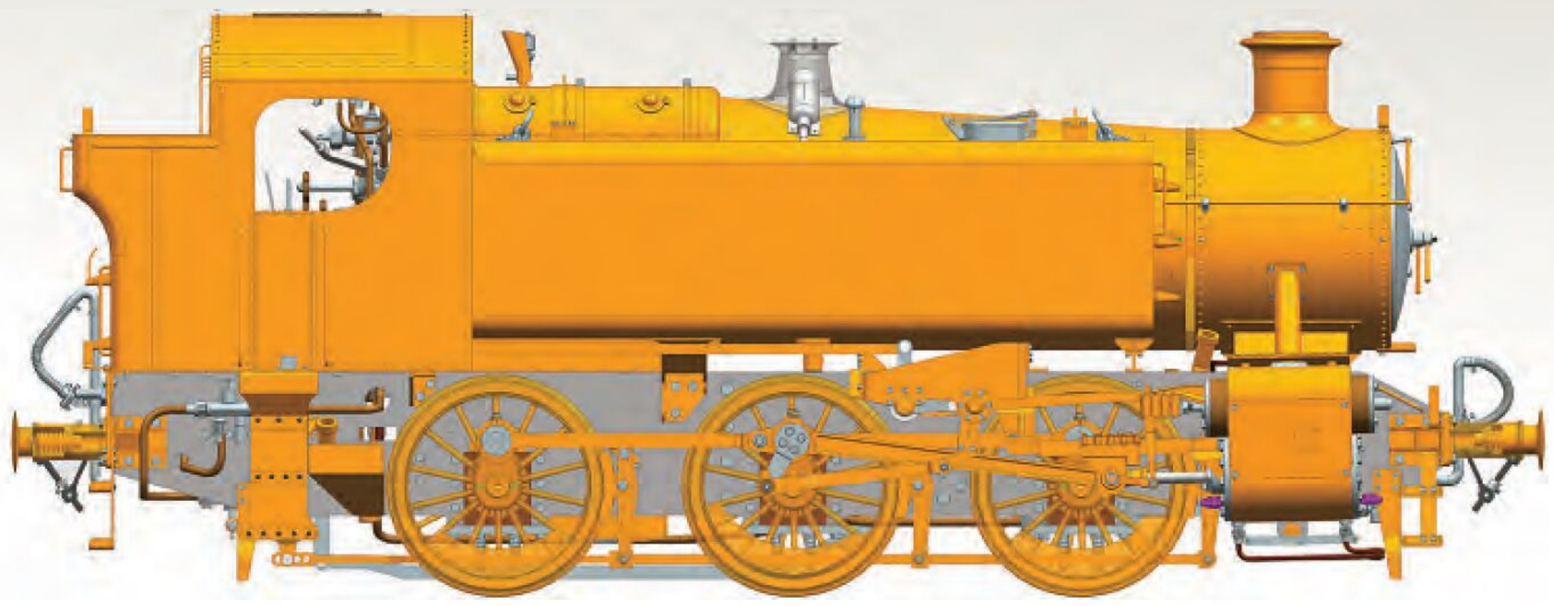
Kit 1, 2, 3 & 4 Shown Assembled



Kit 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5 Shown Assembled



Kit 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, & 6 Shown Assembled



The GWR 15xx Class

All ten locomotives of the class were constructed in 1949 at Swindon and entered service on the Western Region of British Railways. They were employed on heavy shunting duties at London Paddington. Numbers 1501/2/9 were later sold to the National Coal Board for use in collieries. The 15xx was turned out in different liveries including lined black and NCB maroon.

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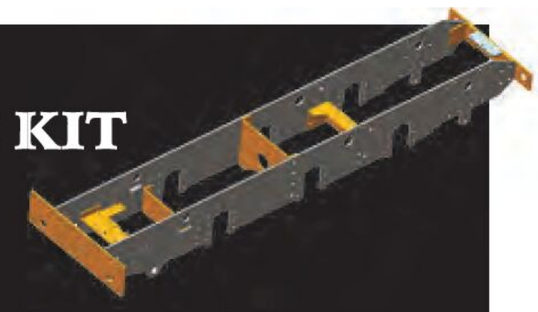
Summary Specification

- 5" Gauge, coal-fired, live steam
- 2 outside cylinders
- Outside Walschaerts valve gear
- Stainless steel motion
- Silver soldered copper boiler
- Boiler feed by axle pump, injector and hand-pump
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- Drain cocks
- Safety valve
- Etched brass body
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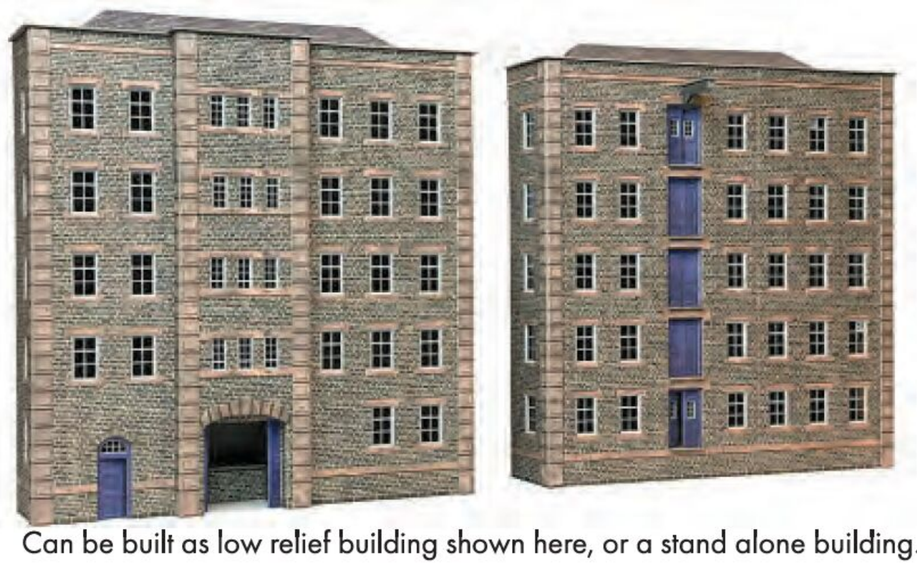
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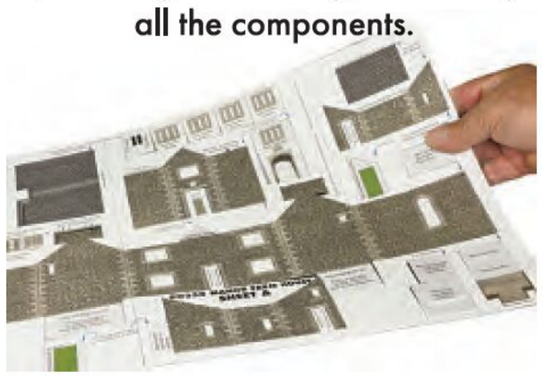
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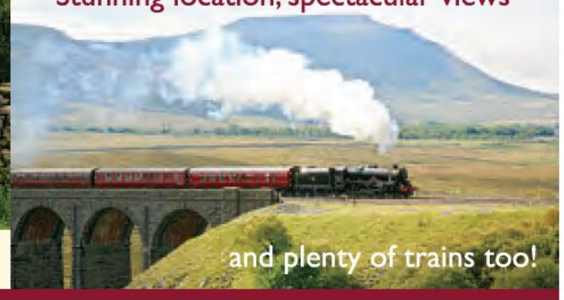
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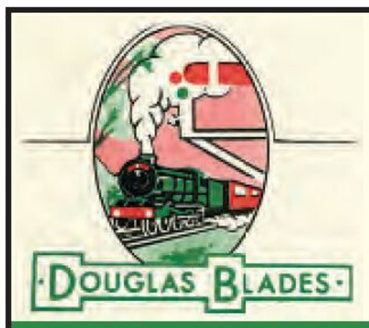
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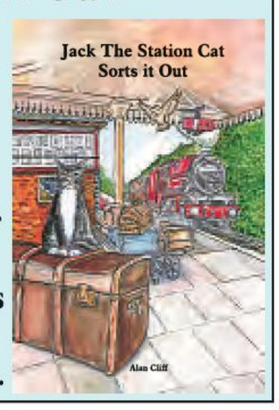
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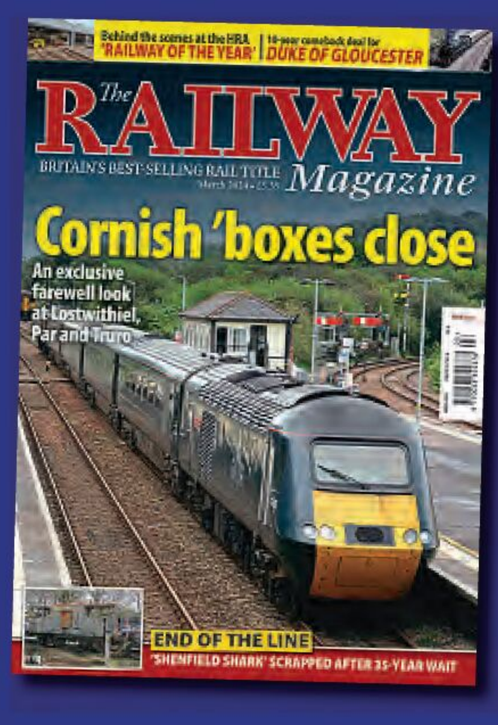
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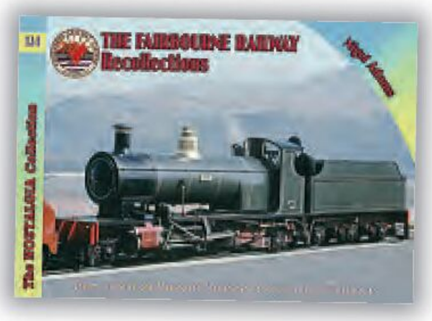
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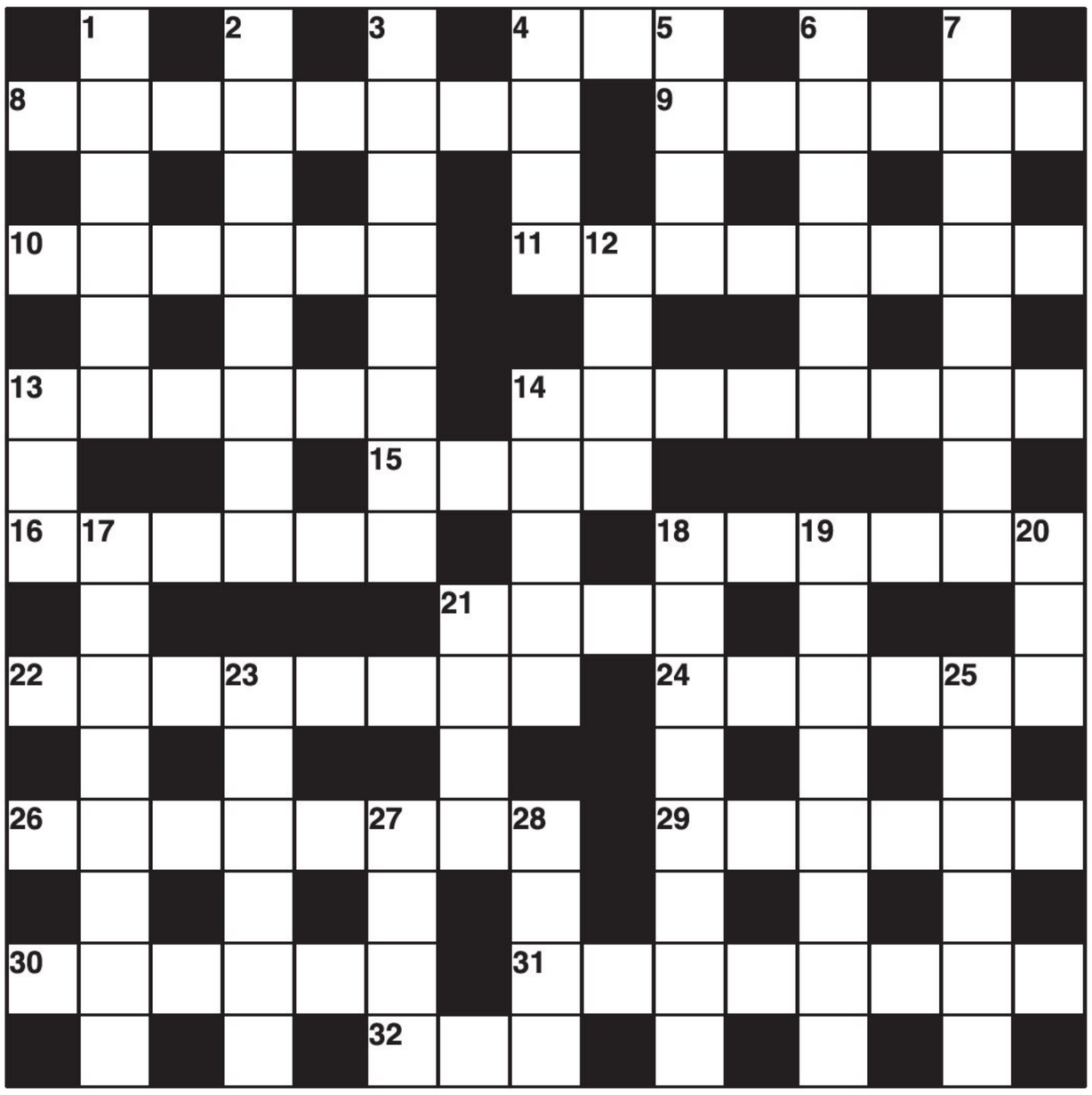
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Across

4 6 down and 18 down: Civil engineer after whom Class 37 No. 37425 was named (3,6,8)
8 ___ *Manor*, preserved No. 7821 (8)
9 Nickname for a Class 50 locomotive (6)
10 *The Lovat* ___, 'Royal Scot' No. 46128 (6)
11 ___ *Hall*, No 5964 – and a make of car! (8)
13 ___ Road, former 'Waverley Route' station (6)
14 Former GWR station, junction for the Malmesbury branch (8)
15 and 29 across Saviour of *Flying Scotsman* (4,6)
16 Former Meon Valley line station (6)
18 Steam locomotive with a 2-8-2 wheel arrangement (6)
21 Ground signal with a circular face (4)
22 Airport 'Express' operated by Abellio East Anglia (8)
24 *The Red* ___, Class 91 No. 91004 (6)
26 GWR station between Wellington and Market Drayton (4,4)
29 See 15 across
30 'A3' No. 60101 (6)
31 Former East Somerset Railway station east of Cranmore (8)
32 Initials of the company that used London's Broad Street terminus (1,1,1)

Down

1 Railway Centre, home of the Great Western Society (6)
2 Composer after whom Class 92 No. 92007 was named (8)
3 ___ & Four Marks, Watercress Line station (8)
4 Borders Railway station (4)
5 North Wales station, and 'Patriot' No. 45521 (4)
6 See 4 across
7 Class 56 No. 56031, and the rail depot serving Torr Head quarry (8)
12 Callander & ___ Railway (4)
13 'B ___', GWR two-coach train mainly used on branch lines (3)
14 *Saint* ___, GWR 'Saint' No. 2920, and Class 47 No. 47790 (5)
17 'Warship' No. D825 (8)
18 See 4 across
19 Wakefield station opened by the Manchester & Leeds Railway in 1840 (8)
20 Bulleid's forename initials (1,1,1)
21 Station between Minster and Dover (4)
23 ___ *Castle*, preserved No. 5029 (6)
25 Former WCML station, junction for a 28 down branch to Leamington (6)
27 ___ *Duke*, Broad Gauge replica locomotive on display at 1 down (4)
28 Initials of the 'Premier Line' (1,1,1,1)

April crossword entry form

Name .....

Address .....

.....

Postcode .....

Tel Email .....

Send completed form (photocopies are accepted) to: April 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 June 2024 issue. The winners will be the senders of the first all-correct solutions opened in our office. **You can email entries to RMcomp@mortons.co.uk Please list the answers to the clues for across, then down.** There are no cash alternatives available. The winners will be the first names drawn at random from the people who answered correctly. Terms and conditions apply. To view the privacy policy of MMG Ltd (publisher of *The Railway Magazine*) please visit www.mortons.co.uk/privacy

Solution to the February issue

Across: 1 Lechlade 5 Superb 9 Woodcock 10 Thorpe 12 Cary 13 Allport 17 Lord Street 19 DLR 21 RES 22 Cathedrals 24 Chicago 25 Shed 28 Margam 30 Toulouse 31 Eltham 32 Maryport
Down: 1 Lawn 2 Cook 3 Lochalsh 4 Duchy 6 Uphill 7 ELR 8 Brent Cross 11 Gareth 14 Oldham 15 Ilfracombe 16 Crosti 18 Ruabon 20 Adderley 23 Canada 25 Skoda 26 Juno 27 West 29 Rat
February winner: B A Wheeler, Bedford
Runners-up: Andy Mountjoy, Yoxall; Adrian Anton, Stockton on Tees
The closing date for this month's crossword is Friday, May 3, 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...

TO mark the 50th anniversary of BR's first ever all-line timetable, Dr Joseph Brennan looks back over the history of railway timetables from the earliest Bradshaw's to today's digital offerings. PLUS: A superb BR steam DVD worth £19.95 that is FREE for all UK readers – don't miss out!

- Please note, the article about the Bodmin Railway advertised last month has been held over to the May issue.



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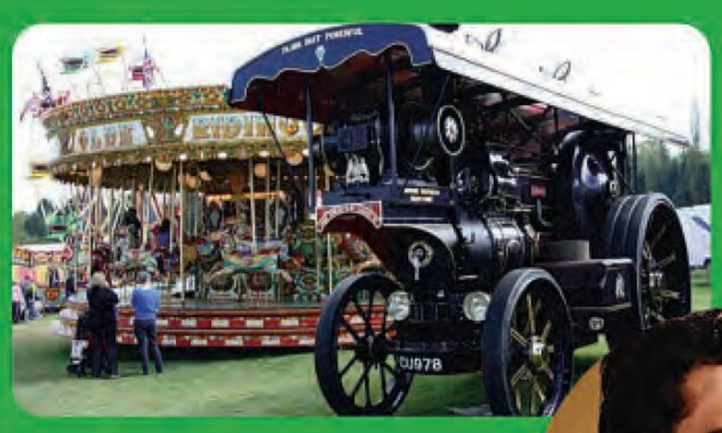
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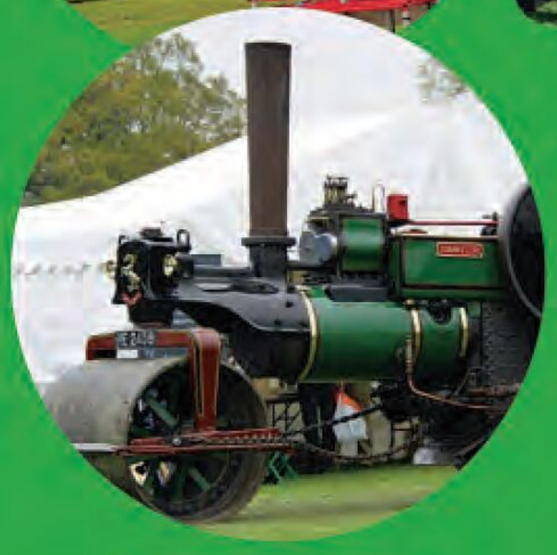












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Ben Portsmouth legendary "Elvis" on stage on Saturday night

VIP packages available for Saturday - the list of bands and performers is growing so entertainment for all

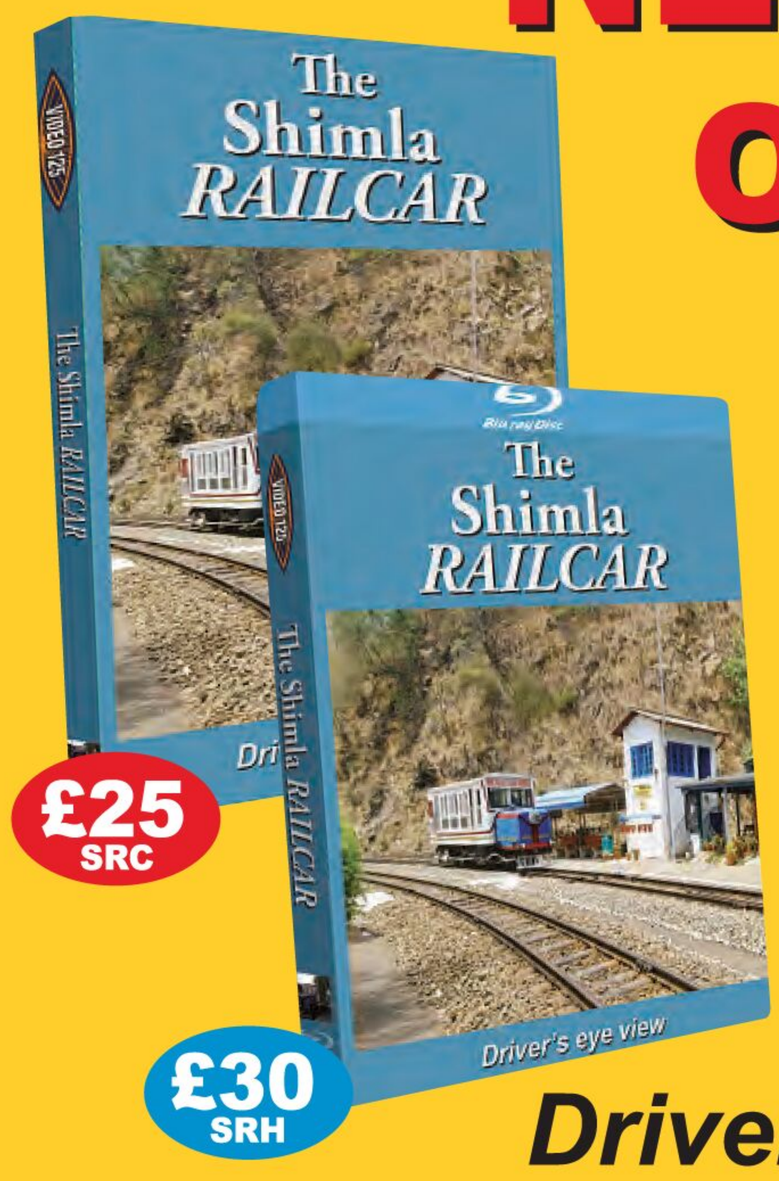
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Driver's eye view Kalka to Shimla.

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This 2ft 6inch (762mm) narrow gauge line is equally spectacular, being known for dramatic views of the Himalayan foothills and surrounding villages. There's no better way of seeing this engineering marvel than from the driver's viewpoint. We ride aboard a specially chartered railcar to capture some great images of the line. Our journey is not for the faint-hearted, as for mile after mile we traverse narrow ledges carved out of the hillside. Rising over four and a half thousand feet with a punishing ruling gradient of 1 in 33, we encounter a number of spirals that were necessary to lift the line over otherwise insurmountable obstacles.

The 59½ mile or 95.6 km long line has no less than 102 tunnels and 969 bridges and culverts whilst climbing over the Himalayan foothills to the former British Raj summer capital of Simla (as it was originally called). There are 20 classic stations on the route, all with British-built lower-quadrant semaphore signals, controlled by Neal's single line token-block system. The fascinating history of the line is related in Jonathan Kydd's commentary and as usual, there's a commentary off option in the disc menus.

The journey time has been subtly edited down from 5 hours to just over 2 (no features lost) and is available now on DVD, Blu-ray and download.

So come and ride the Shimla railcar and see this spectacular line as never before.



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