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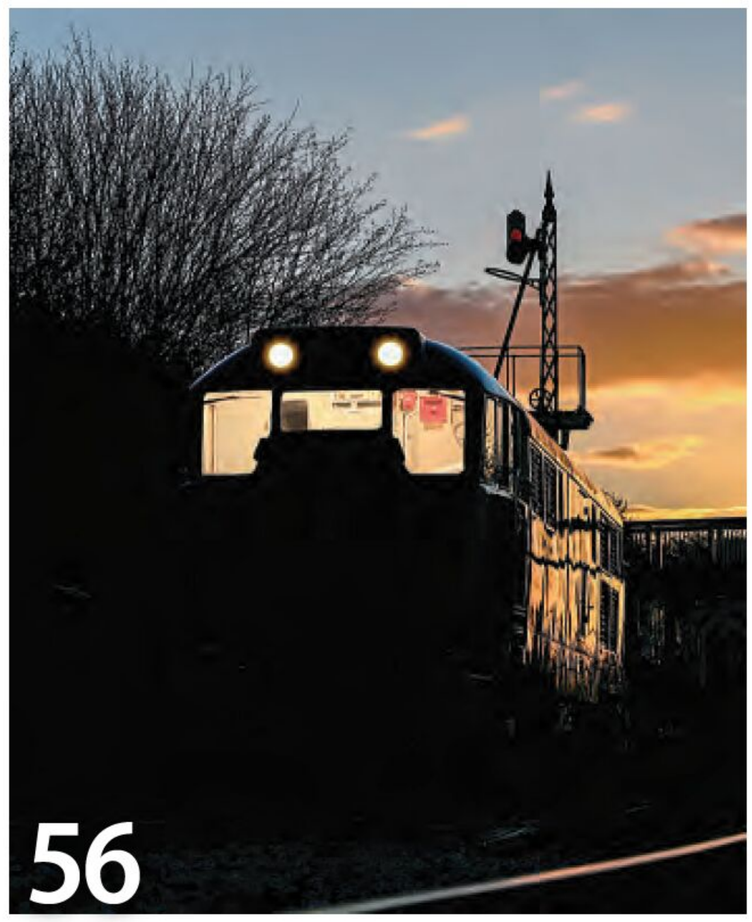
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■ **COVER:** Back on main line passenger duties after more than six years, the DTG's Class 52 No. D1015 *Western Champion* is seen at Banbury on April 14 . CHRIS MILNER

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'Jacobite' jostling

THERE have been some fun and games on the railways around Fort William this month as, in answer to the question we posed last month about who would blink first in the 'Jacobite' saga, it appears the answer was West Coast Railway (WCR).

Readers will recall that back on March 20, just days before the 'Jacobite' season was due to begin, WCR announced it was pulling the hugely popular steam workings to Mallaig in a row over fitting central door locking (CDL) to its Mk.1 carriages. The Office of Rail and Road (ORR) had said it was time for WCR to fall in line with other operators and fit CDL, but WCR said this would take time to enact, and in the meantime wanted to carry on running the trains with non-CDL coaches – as it has done for almost 30 years now.

So we were left with a stand-off, but stuck in between were disappointed tourists and the many traders in the area that depend on the tourist pound. Some argued WCR was effectively holding Scottish tourism to ransom, hoping that the ORR would cave in, and even some prominent Westminster MPs were persuaded to back WCR's cause (see page 8).

But then WCR's rival, Locomotive Services Ltd (LSL), stepped into the fray, although it is not clear whether this was intentional or just coincidence. LSL plans to run a series of charters on the West Highland Line later this year, so sent its CDL-fitted Mk.3 push-pull set to Mallaig for crew training purposes. With the 'Jacobite' out of action, it then decided to turn these empty training runs into impromptu 'pay on the day' charter workings, top-and-tailed by Class 37 diesels.

WCR quickly responded by dispatching locos and a rake of stock from Carnforth to Fort William to run empty in the timetabled path of the 'Jacobite' on the same day as the LSL trip on April 8. Then, just a week later on April 15, the 'Jacobite' itself made a surprise return, carrying fare-paying passengers on a hybrid rake comprising CDL-fitted Mk.2s and non-CDL Mk.1s with their doors locked out of use.

It is welcome progress. But the dispute continues, as the second daily 'Jacobite' working – which runs in the peak holiday season – is still currently cancelled while WCR makes its case for another exemption to carry on using non-CDL stock.

If nothing else, however, LSL has at least proved there is a case for running regular charters with classic diesels rather than just the steam locos that the 'Jacobite' has traditionally used.



Paul Bickerdyke,
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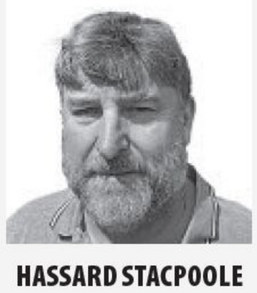
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POETRY IN MOTION: The Severn Valley Railway's Stanier Mogul has been repainted into LMS black livery with original number No. 13268, a combination the SVR says has not been carried in more than 80 years. Looking superb, the locomotive took part in the SVR's Spring Steam Gala on April 18-21, being pictured on the first day powering up Eardington Bank with the 14.30 Kidderminster to Bridgnorth (see also page 64). GRAHAM NUTTALL

‘Jacobite’ resumes – but steam loco stalls on first trip of the year

West Coast’s operation is back – but rival Locomotive Services Group runs crew training trips available to the public on a ‘turn up and go’ basis over two days.

Words by Chris Milner, Photos by Gordon Kirkby

JUST three weeks after the West Coast Railway Company (WCR) announced it was indefinitely suspending operation of the annual ‘Jacobite’ steam train came an announcement that the popular service would resume on April 15.

No trains ran from March 28 to April 14. However, the first train of the reconvened programme got off to an inauspicious start when ‘Black Five’ No. 45212 – which was running tender-first – stalled leaving Glenfinnan and was unable to restart, despite the crew hand-sanding the rails. The train was later rescued by Class 37 diesel No. 37676, sent from Fort William, and passengers were refunded. The incident also led to the cancellation of two ScotRail trains between Fort William and Mallaig, with replacement buses ordered.

With WCR having prepared four Mk.2 carriages fitted with central door locking (CDL) for the ‘Jacobite’, a stock move from Carnforth to Scotland took place on April 13. Class 47 No. 47245 hauled the empty coaching stock move north as far as Crianlarich, along with No. 45212 and carriages Nos. 35486, 6000, 6022, 6103, 1860 and 3360. The onward move to Fort William was completed the next day, but the steam loco was not turned to face Mallaig. West Coast said its Carnforth staff did an exceptional job at short notice to prepare a fleet of carriages ready start the 2024 season.

The saga of whether the ‘Jacobite’ would run or not this season hinged on whether the carriages would be fitted with CDL, thereby complying with a directive from the regulator, the Office of Rail and Road (ORR).

Announcing the suspension of the ‘Jacobite’ on March 21, West Coast confirmed it had submitted a fresh application to the ORR for a temporary exemption to use non-CDL Mk.1s on the same basis it had received previously while the full application is considered. This long-term Regulation 5 exemption was submitted on March 8; however, the ORR said it could take up to four months to decide, sometimes longer.

A previous exemption was revoked in January after a judicial review instigated by WCR failed, meaning Mk.1 carriages could not be used without some form of CDL. West Coast has maintained the cost of about £7m to fit CDL to its 125 Mk.1 carriages is unaffordable. This equates to roughly £54,000 per carriage, a figure double to the £26,250 suggested by the ORR in the recent judicial review.

About a week after news of the ‘Jacobite’ suspension, Crewe-based Locomotive Services Group (LSG) announced it would be running a pay-on-the-day ‘West Highlander’ train on April 8 and 9 with seats at £40 return, some £25 less than the ‘Jacobite’, using Class 37s Nos. 37409 and 37667. The train also ran again on April 19. Coincidentally, LSG chairman Jeremy Hosking owns a substantial country house near Arisaig set in 18 acres of land with views over Loch Nan Uamh.

Within days of the LSG’s decision to operate its own trains, April 5 saw West Coast dispatch two Class 37s and a rake of non-CDL Mk.1s to Fort William, which were used for crew refresher training on April 8/9, the two rival trains passing at Arisaig.



After a poor start away from the scheduled stop at Glenfinnan station on April 15, ‘Black Five’ No. 45212 was unable to tackle the gradient going up the glen and stalled (pictured). No. 37676 had to be dispatched by West Coast from Fort William to rescue the train, but not before two ScotRail services were cancelled.

Carriage mix

Although the first of the restarted ‘Jacobite’ trains failed, the remainder of the first week passed incident-free. Interestingly, the carriage formation included a Mk.1 BCK and RMB placed alternately between the Mk.2s, but with the external doors on the Mk.1s locked out of use.

To add weight to West Coast’s case for a speedy exemption, eight Westminster MPs co-signed a letter of support for West Coast that was sent to Rail Minister Huw Merriman, asking him to intervene in the dispute with the ORR. The MPs were David Morris (Morecambe and Lunesdale), Tim Farron (Westmorland and Lonsdale), Sarah Dines (Derbyshire Dales), Jamie Stone (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross), James Wild (North West Norfolk), Sir Graham Brady (Altrincham and Sale West), Robbie Moore (Keighley) and Cat Smith (Lancaster and Fleetwood).

A point raised in the letter was that “other operators run carriages without central door locking, so there should be no safety reason to justify the refusal of the temporary exemption”.

However, this point completely failed to distinguish the fact that the other operators have either fitted CDL or have committed to fit CDL to a timescale agreed and approved with the ORR. The letter also said the exemption should be based on a safety assessment and “the ORR’s approach should not be clouded by the fact that WCR has not to date made an application to fit CDL,” even though every operator had been given plenty of advance warning by the ORR of the need to fit CDL (or obtain an exemption) by March 31, 2023.

Some commentators have expressed surprise that these MPs could appear to have been taken in and appear to be naïve over exactly what the issue is, with the letter, in effect, calling



RIGHT: Class 37s from rival operators came face to face at Arisaig on April 8. LSG was operating its inaugural 1Z37 Fort William to Mallaig ‘The West Highlander’, top and tailed by Nos. 37409 and 37667/D6851, technically on a driver training run, but carrying fare-paying passengers in coaches fitted with Central Door Locking (CDL) equipment. Meanwhile West Coast dispatched two of its own Class 37s, Nos. 37685 and 37676, from Carnforth with a rake of Mk.1 coaches (not fitted with CDL). West Coast ran a driver training trip from Fort William to Mallaig utilising the pathing time normally reserved for the ‘Jacobite’, the 2Y61 10.15 ex-Fort William to Mallaig.



ABOVE: A comparison between the Mk.2 No. 6022 with CDL (left) and the Mk.1 No. 4951 without CDL (right). The notice in the Mk.1’s window reads: “Not for passenger use.”

for existing safety regulations to be compromised. The letter also raises the fact that the spring and summer is a busy period and will impact third-party supplies and hospitality and retail business.

It also stated WCR and its main customer, Railway Touring Company, would be unable to withstand the financial costs of cancelling trains while the new application is considered.

Local reaction

The impact of no 'Jacobite' train has also resulted in some polarised opinions in and around Fort William.

Many local traders are angry with West Coast at the combination of the short notice decision to suspend the train, which they claim has had the effect of deterring visitors to the region, and now worried traders and businesses face a potentially difficult season. Meanwhile another group has organised a petition to try and speed up the decision on the new exemption application. As *The Railway Magazine* closed for press, the petition had gathered almost 7000 signatures.

An interesting perspective was offered by Joe Blower, who runs Western Isles Cruises from Mallaig, taking visitors to the Knoydart peninsula. His trips fit in with the steam train schedule. Mr Blower – who also transports children from Muck, Eigg and Rum to a school in Mallaig – was critical of just a week's notice that the trains would not run, adding he had little sympathy for the 'Jacobite' operators.

He said: "As an operator involved in public transport, we are governed by the maritime agency. We have inspections out of the water, in the water every year. If they don't like something you have to put it right, otherwise they will just tie the boat up. West Coast has brought us a lot of business and we are grateful. However, on the same score, it needs to comply with the regulations just like I do with my boats."

At present with a shorter train and reduced capacity, only the morning train (10.15 ex-Fort William) is running, and West Coast has been liaising with passengers to reinstate or cancel original bookings, which has meant there may be some pay-on-the -day seats available.

The current situation is that until additional compliant carriages are available, or a new temporary exemption granted, the afternoon train which is due to begin on May 6 (12.50 from Fort William) is cancelled.

Any change will be updated on West Coast's website at https://westcoastrailways.co.uk.



LEFT: For the first time since 1965, a 'Grange' can now be seen in operation – another missing link having been filled in the ranks of Western Region motive power. No. 6880 *Betton Grange* is seen at Tyseley Locomotive Works on the afternoon of April 11. ROBIN JONES

Betton Grange steams into action

BRITAIN'S latest new-build standard gauge steam locomotive moved under its own power on April 11 at Tyseley Locomotive Works.

GWR 4-6-0 No. 6880 *Betton Grange* ran for the first time in the yard in the afternoon, watched by a small group of invited guests comprising officials and volunteers of the 6880 Betton Grange Society.

Sporting its lined Brunswick green livery, No. 6880 was coupled to a tender hired from WR 'Manor' No. 7822 *Foxcote Manor*, which is under overhaul at Tyseley.

Following the completion of final adjustments, *Betton Grange* was due to move by low loader to the Severn Valley Railway. Subject to a gauging run and other tests, No. 6880 is expected to operate on the Severn Valley line this month.

As reported last month, *Betton Grange* is booked to spend three months at the North Norfolk Railway from August. It is expected to 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.

NEW-BUILD LOCOS TAKE SHAPE



Members of the public were invited to view the latest developments on the construction of two standard gauge steam locomotives in Sheffield on April 13. BR 'Clan' No. 72010 *Hengist* (left) and LNER 'B17' No. 61673 *Spirit of Sandringham* (right) are being built at the premises of CTL Seal in Ecclesfield on behalf of The Standard Steam Locomotive Company Ltd and the B17 Steam Locomotive Trust respectively. BOB KNELL

BRUSH TYPE 4 MAKES HISTORY



No. 47712 *Lady Diana Spencer* is believed to have become the first Class 47 to reach Oban on a passenger train when it arrived at the western Scottish port with a charter from Edinburgh on March 30. Operated by Locomotive Service Group-owned InterCity, the 1Z62 08.23 Edinburgh-Oban trip formed part of the three-day 'West of Scotland Push-Pull' excursion. The 47/7 is seen with its train of Mk.3 carriages at Oban station on March 30. MICHAEL WARRENDER

New train order reprieves Derby factory at the eleventh hour

Additional trains for the Elizabeth Line give Litchurch Lane hope for the future.

By 'Industry Update'

THE immediate threat of closure facing train builders at Derby Litchurch Lane has been reprieved with an order from Transport for London. A further 90 Class 345 'Aventra' vehicles will be built to expand Elizabeth Line services after receiving financial support from the Government.

There is also said to be a requirement for rectification work, and it can be assumed this refers to the fleet of Class 701 'Arterio' EMUs, of which 750 vehicles have been built but most are in store more than two years after they were first planned to enter service.

The crisis at Derby first emerged as planned construction of HS2 trainsets, to be built by a consortium made up of Alstom and Hitachi, was put on hold given uncertainties about the future of the high speed line. The specification for these is also likely to change given increased future running on conventional lines north of Birmingham, which will also restrict the planned length of the trains.

Low cost finance

The gap in the orders pipeline follows a surge in new rolling stock over the past decade that resulted from low financing costs. More than 7000 vehicles for use in Britain were built between 2012 and 2017 by a number of manufacturers, including Siemens, CAF/Stadler, Hitachi and Bombardier (prior to the takeover by Alstom). These displaced many vehicles that were not yet life expired, this trend being accentuated by the lower passenger demand in the post-pandemic period.

Some older vehicles have even been scrapped prematurely, such as the Class 365 'Networker Express' EMUs, which were barely 30 years old when discarded. Newer vehicles that are looking for redeployment include elements of the Class 323 and Class 350 EMU fleets, as well as the Class 175 DMUs and the soon to be displaced Class 221 'Super Voyager' and Class 222 'Meridian' types. The availability of these trains clearly acts to suppress orders for new vehicles.

The manufacturers and supply chain companies represented by the Railway Industry Association have called for plans to replace Second Generation 'Sprinter' DMUs, but these are not yet life expired and were well designed by British Rail for robust service and a good journey experience. This was unlike the now withdrawn 'Pacer' sets that were built as a low cost replacement for First Generation DMUs often operating on heavy loss making services.

Given the Government's climate change objectives, it is also premature to replace diesel units until a future traction strategy to reduce emissions comes into focus. A Network Rail plan that suggested there would be wholesale electrification of all but the quietest rural routes has not been supported by the Government, which leaves unanswered questions about the use of alternative technologies such as hydrogen and battery power.

It has also been suggested that early 'Electrostar' EMU vehicles should be replaced, but this seems fanciful given their comparative youth – the first sets entering service from 1999 on c2c and Southeastern routes. It has previously been a part of the business case that this type of unit can be expected to have a 40-year service life and, although maintenance costs rise over time, replacements will have a significantly higher capital cost given the effect of inflation on the manufacturing industry. At best there can only be justification if financing costs are low, and that is not the current position given the lending rate set by the Bank of England.

Market growth hope

A more realistic driver for building new rolling stock is market growth, and there is very good news in that respect as the traffic figures for the three months to the end of December 2023 reveal that there had been a 20% year-on-year rise in both passenger numbers and revenue.

Passengers journeys totalled 417 million, which is 90% of the pre-pandemic figure of 461 million recorded four years ago. The reduction in capacity following the pandemic is now being restored step by step, with stored rolling stock being returned to service.

An example of this is the decision to strengthen the CrossCountry fleet by 12 Class 221 sets displaced from Avanti West Coast, and the commitment to bring back into use the stored Class 379 EMUs on longer distance Great Northern services. New open access operations are also likely to absorb a number of spare 125mph-capable DMUs.



The Derby-built Class 730 EMU fleet entered service on the Birmingham Cross City Line on April 15, Nos. 730009+730008 pictured at Bromsgrove two days later with the 14.29 to Lichfield Trent Valley. The fleet will be phased in over the coming months to replace the incumbent Class 323 units. STEVE WIDDOWSON

Funding confirmed to build new cross-border 'Enterprise' fleet

By Hassard Stacpoole

PLANS to replace the cross-border 'Enterprise' fleet and deliver a sub two-hour journey between Dublin and Belfast have moved a step closer, with confirmation on April 9 of the €165 million funding.

The 'Enterprise' programme has been funded as part of the wider €1.14bn (£980m) Special EU Programme Body (SEUPB) PeacePlus initiative, which is a cross-border funding scheme between the European Union, the UK Government, the Government of Ireland and the Northern Ireland Executive.

PeacePlus said in a statement that the new trains would support the electrification of the railway on both sides of the border, and would offer "improved accessibility and passenger experience, with an hourly service and journey times reduced to at least 1 hour 55 minutes between Dublin and Belfast".

The procurement process is expected to finish within "the coming year", and it is hoped the new trains will be operating from 2029. *The RM* understands that three manufacturers have made the final tender shortlist.

"The flagship 'Enterprise' service represents a great opportunity for growth," said Chris Conway, CEO of Translink which runs Northern Ireland Railways.

"Approximately 3.3 million people live within a 40-mile commute distance from the Belfast to Dublin railway corridor. This is projected to grow to over four million by 2030 and represents around half of the island's population."

Iarnród Éireann's CEO Jim Meade added: "Iarnród Éireann and Translink are hugely ambitious to grow and develop the Enterprise service. That ambition is now supported by this significant investment from SEUPB to help deliver a transformative new fleet. This will enable more people than ever to travel sustainably along the Enterprise route and contribute to our economy, society, and environment."

As part of the upgrade, the 'Enterprise' service will be diverted from Belfast Lanyon Place to the new Grand Central Station when it opens in August. The 'Enterprise' is then expected to become an hourly service in the autumn.

More Class 153s readied for Heart of Wales line

'Active Travel' units will be attached to standard classmates on previously single-car services, boosting capacity on the scenic Shrewsbury-Swansea route.



Modified to provide more bicycle and luggage space, the Class 153/5s will be paired with Class 153/3s, which currently operate on Heart of Wales services as single cars. Class 153/3 No. 153369 is pictured at Bayston Hill on a Shrewsbury to Swansea service via the Heart of Wales route on February 19 this year. STEWART GRAHAM

By Graeme Pickering

THE first of six Transport for Wales Class 153 single-car diesel units converted for 'Active Travel' use is expected to be released for testing from Chrysalis Rail's Landore depot in Swansea within weeks, and could enter service during July.

To be given the Class 153/5 designation, the units will be paired with conventional Class 153/3s, increasing capacity on the Heart of Wales route between Shrewsbury and Swansea, with the aim of making the train more appealing to people planning to walk or cycle in the area. TfW says the majority (83%) of visitors currently travel to the area by car.

Design work for the refit, based loosely on the five ScotRail 'Highland Explorer' Class 153s (refitted for use with Class 156s on the West Highland Line) has been undertaken by Derby-based DG8 following consultation with organisations including the Heart of Wales Line Community Rail Partnership, the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee, Sustrans, local councils and representatives from the leisure industry.

The Class 153/5s will feature 10 bicycle spaces (which can double as space for pushchairs), along with greater capacity for luggage. Six of the bicycle spaces will be available for reservation. TfW says the vehicles will have more tables than a unit of standard configuration and many seats with better legroom.

More viable than new

According to TfW, the conversion programme represents the "most cost-effective way of quickly improving the service" on a line which at the moment is "not economically significant" but is deemed an important community asset. It believes the units will encourage leisure travel and increase income for the route and the local economy. It adds that new trains would be "economically unviable" and delay service improvements "by several years".

As Class 153s already operate on the route, using '153/5s' coupled to '153/3s' to form two-car trains is said to present less of an issue than cascading other types of unit to the line, negating a potential need for the lengthening of short platforms and infrastructure changes to ensure route clearance.

The Class 153/5s will, however, be less compliant with persons of reduced mobility (PRM) specifications than their classmates, differences including a lack of wheelchair spaces and a smaller area for the toilet. Their operation in passenger service will be subject to a separate dispensation and conditional upon them being paired at all times with a Class 153/3, which has provision for two wheelchairs and a universal accessible toilet. Both units will have priority seating.

Route readiness

Stop markers have been moved at three locations on the route to ensure that the PRM accessible door remains in a usable position within two-car formations and the Class 153/5s will carry a distinctive livery for easy identification by station staff and passengers.

The first unit due to emerge from Landore is No. 153531, to be followed (in order) by Nos. 153552/528/507 (formerly Nos. 153331/352/328/307). Following the release of the first two units, Nos. 153968/972, which are still in service at the moment with TfW, will enter the programme and emerge as Nos. 153568/153572.

Due to sharing a number of components with other British Rail 'Sprinter' types and the availability of stored units previously with other operators (which could be a source of spares if necessary), TfW believes that, despite their age, the Class 153s should be able to operate reliably enough to sustain the HoW service for around another six years.

CAF-built Class 197s could then be cascaded to replace them, possibly also modified for active travel needs. TfW says this is not, however, a firm plan as yet. It is understood the operator may consider a more innovative solution should a suitable one be available by the turn of the decade.

First daylight electric run to Pontypridd

Class 756 test movement is another step towards completion of major modernisation on the 'Core Valley Lines'.



A tri-mode Class 756 on test at Radyr. TFW

TRANSPORT for Wales Class 756 No. 756108 made the first daylight electric-powered test trip to Pontypridd on April 3, running from Cardiff Canton depot via the City Line and Radyr.

Previous testing, including the very first electric run over that stretch of route (in the early hours of September 23 last year) took place under cover of darkness.

Electrification of the 'Core Valley Lines' (CVL) from Cardiff to Treherbert, Aberdare, Merthyr Tydfil, Coryton and Rhymney is being completed as part of the £1 billion South Wales Metro project. It has also included modernisation of stations to cope with longer trains and the installation of new signalling equipment. Passing loops and sections of double track have been created in preparation for the increased frequency of trains from this summer.

'Fantastic moment'

The inaugural daylight electric movement was described as a "fantastic moment" by project manager Alex Cochrane, who said it was testimony to the hard work of teams from TfW and its partners, but, regarding the trains, added: "There is still plenty of work to do before they can enter passenger service, but we know customers will really appreciate the huge benefits they will bring."

Those tasks include testing on other parts of the CVL and crew training. The Class 756s are expected to be introduced later this year. Part of the Stadler 'Flirt' range of multiple units (which also includes the TfW Class 231s), the Class 756 order comprises 24 sets, seven of them three-car (designated '756/0') and the remainder four-car (part of the '756/1' subclass). They can run on overhead electric, battery or diesel/battery hybrid power.

Ordered from the same manufacturer, the Class 398 'Citylink' tram-trains will also be involved in route testing. Based at the new £100 million Taff's Well depot, which is also the site of the Metro Control Centre, the first of the fleet of 36 sets is due to enter service on the CVL before the end of the year.

SIDELINES

Class 18 to Freightliner

CLASS 18 No. 18006 was delivered to Freightliner at Crewe Basford Hall on April 9. It was dispatched from Wolverton by Beacon Rail, which owns all 15 members of the class of battery-diesel hybrid shunting locos, built for it by Clayton Equipment Ltd. No. 18003 arrived at Scunthorpe steel works in February for evaluation on internal rail movements. British Steel, which is seeking a fleet of new shunters, is assessing the loco's battery power capabilities. It is understood that further Class 18s could be sent out to Beacon Rail clients between now and June.

DRS open day

DIRECT Rail Services is holding a charity open day at its Carlisle depot on July 6. Tickets, which must be booked in advance, cost £7.13 (including booking fee) for adults, with under 16s free. Visit www.directrailservices.com/drs-charity-open-day-returns/ for details. The event will be held at Kingmoor Depot, Etterby Road, Carlisle, CA3 9NZ, 10.00-16.00.

A sound move?

CLASSICAL music will continue to be played at 35 stations across Northern's network after trials found it can be used to deter anti-social behaviour. The train operator orchestrated a plan to play music inspired by the likes of Beethoven and Handel at nine stations in 2022 and it was then introduced at another 26 stations last year.

Far North event

THE 150th anniversary of the Far North Line (FNL is being marked on June 21. The FNL Community Rail Partnership and the Friends of the FNL Line are holding an event at the RSPB's Forsinard reserve. Speakers will cover the history and the future prospects of both the line and landscape.

LNER removals container unearthed – in Antwerp!

Pre-Nationalisation Conflat rail-road box discovered buried in earth bank.

By Gareth Evans

MYSTERY surrounds how a pre-Nationalisation LNER Conflat container ended up buried beneath a recreation ground in Antwerp, leaving archaeologists, historians and members of the public intrigued.

Archaeologists working on the Oosterweel Link road project uncovered a structure in the Noordkasteelwal (North Castle wall) and found some old ammunition – before discovering a metal structure dug into the embankment. This turned out to be a Conflat type – with the surviving signwriting including "...NITURE REMOVAL TO HOUSE", "Enquire at any station", "BK 1820" and "LNER".

The BK container was designed to carry furniture – it could be transported by rail and by road, a precursor to the modern shipping containers.

It remains a mystery how a container from a British railway company ended up in Belgium and why it was buried. It may have been used as a storage space when the North Castle became a recreational spot.

The fragile state of the container posed significant challenges during recovery. Attempts to extract it from the soil resulted in it falling apart.

The discovery was made public with a press release issued by the road construction project on March 8. The news was picked up by modern-day East Coast Mainline train operating company, LNER, which in turn issued a press release two weeks later and the story captured the interest of the UK mainstream media.

Research by *The RM* has found that container No. BK 1820 has been offered in model form by two manufacturers – with Peco producing it in N gauge and Hornby in OO. Both models were available in blue – yet the prototype lay buried across the English Channel in a shade of red.



Research by *The RM* indicates the container, found buried in an earth bank, is likely to have left Britain before 1932. STADANTWERPEN

Nick Pigott, consultant editor of *The RM*, said: "Until 1932, there was no standard livery for LNER goods road vehicles and containers as the constituent companies continued to use their own liveries, including pale red. In 1932, a deep shade of blue was adopted as standard across the company, referred to by some sources as Oxford blue and by others as Royal ultramarine blue."

Nick's information would therefore point to the container having been in Belgium since before 1932 but after the Grouping.



'THE CARMYLLIE PILOT' IS BACK:

The return to steam of BR '2MT' 2-6-0 No. 46464 reached a key milestone on April 16, at the Strathspey Railway's Aviemore shed (pictured). The Mogul passed its in-frames steam test, allowing the loco dubbed 'The Carmyllie Pilot' to return to operation after an absence of around 44 years. Ian Smith, from the loco's owning group, 46464 The Carmyllie Pilot Company Ltd, said: "It's one of the most important days in the history of No. 46464. We wish to thank all who have helped over the last 24 years." Details for the loco's entry into traffic remained to be confirmed as this issue went to press. GORDON KIRKBY

Signalling a digital future with £4 billion investment in control systems

NETWORK Rail says its 10-year signalling plan will change the face of Britain's railway, with modern equipment bringing greater reliability through a mixture of traditional signalling and digital control.

In terms of the budget, £3bn will be allocated for digital signalling, while £1bn will go on conventional signalling.

Six companies have been awarded contracts for the provision of conventional and digital signalling services under its Train Control Systems Framework. The framework is expected to cover over 100 projects across Control Periods 7 and 8, running until 2034 and includes resignalling, relocking, renewals, recontrols and conversions to European Train Control System (ETCS) Level 2 digital signalling.

The contracts have been awarded over two lots – the first of which covers conventional signalling. It will be supplied by Alstom, AtkinsRealis, Hitachi and Siemens Mobility. Lot 2 comprises digital signalling using European Train Control System technology, which will be implemented by Alstom, Siemens Mobility and a joint venture of AtkinsRealis and CAF – plus a consortium of Thales and VolkerRail.

The Train Control Systems framework replaces the previous major signalling frameworks. Network Rail says it has been designed to implement what it calls 'new ways of working' with its signalling delivery partners – including greater collaboration.

Another change is the way partners will be awarded work. The new Network Rail Allocation Group will match partners to signalling projects based on a range of factors. It is hoped this approach will help to reduce peaks and troughs of workloads for the partners.

Among the initial signalling projects set to be delivered under the framework are the Midlands Rail Hub, digital signalling for the TransPennine Route Upgrade and digital signalling for the TriLink Programme. The latter is part of a major renewals programme on the West Coast Main Line focussed on modernising the railway between Warrington and Carlisle.

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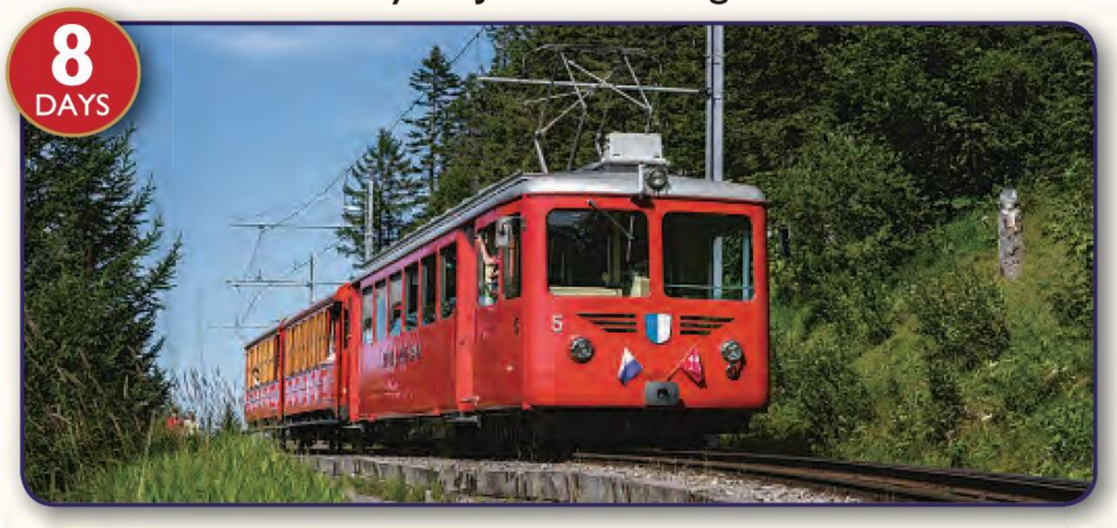
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- ★ Return rail journey up the spectacular Schynige Platte
- ★ Steam along the turquoise waters of Lake Brienz on the Brünig Steam Railway
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Landslip watch

A round-up of disruption across the network caused by problems with cuttings and embankments.

NETWORK Rail is to spend £22 million improving drainage across its East Coast route, to help prevent major disruption brought to passengers by landslips and heavy rain.

There have been multiple incidents of landslips and flooding over the past year across the East Coast route, including at Aycliffe (near Darlington) and between Newark and Grantham.

Elsewhere in Yorkshire and the North East, where there have been 35 landslips in the past year, a further £60 million will be spent on major drainage schemes at Rotherham, Goole, Immingham, and Horsforth. The money will also allow investment in remote condition monitoring technology and CCTV.

Similar schemes will benefit the East Midlands network, where £27 million has been allocated to improve drainage. There have been multiple incidents over the past year, including at Braybrooke (near Market Harborough) and Draycott (near Derby).

Old Dalby trouble

NR teams have started work at the13-mile Old Dalby test track in Leicestershire, to repair and futureproof the site after it was hit by a landslip back in December 2023 near Old Dalby village.

However, adverse weather conditions and limited access has meant work has only recently been able to start and the estimated completion date is summer 2024.

Work is under way removing 17,000 tonnes of soil and other vegetation from the landslip site, and then preparing for 19,500 tonnes of material which will be needed to reconstruct the full embankment.

Over the coming months, a new 370 metre drainage system will be put in place to help prevent future landslips at the site, and 265 metres of track will be removed and replaced, as well as the installation of new overhead line equipment.

Unavailability of the test track has had some impact on new train and equipment testing, notably on 'A1' Pacific No. 60163 *Tornado*. Now fitted with ETCS (European Train Control System), this was to be tested at Old Dalby but will now be tested on the Cambrian main line with a visit to the test track once repairs have been completed.

Edenbridge closure

Movement of an embankment on a section of line at Bough Beech near Edenbridge, between Tonbridge and Redhill, led to the line being closed for two weeks from March 29 until April 15. Temporary repairs were undertaken at Easter, but more substantial works was needed. Extreme levels of rain, said to have resulted in the wettest February in the area for 200 years, are partly to blame.

Network Rail's director of engineering and asset management Mark Killick said there were a number of sites across the Southern region with "similar challenges", but this particular embankment was in a "remote location where there are other ecological issues".



The landslip on the Old Dalby test track. Note the overhead wires plus the third and fourth-rails. NR



The movement of an embankment at Bough Beech, on the Tonbridge to Redhill line near Edenbridge, at the end of March. NR

New Mills repairs

Passengers travelling between New Mills Central and Manchester Piccadilly faced disruption during the first week of April as emergency repair work was carried out at two locations at Hague Fold, between New Mills and Strines.

Single line operation was in force between Marple and New Mills Central until repairs had been completed, resulting in service alterations.



Heritage line landslip

THE Ecclesbourne Valley Railway has reached its £30,000 fundraising target to restore services to Duffield after a landslip. The target was reached with hundreds of donations from the public and one anonymous gift of £10,000.

The railway has only been able to run south from Wirksworth as far as Shottle since October 2023, following a landslip at the southern end of the line. The landslip began about a year ago, but Storm Babet worsened the situation, and the slip was encroaching on the line.

Track will be now slewed by three metres to avoid the landslip and make it safe for trains to run again. Work has begun and the line should reopen by June.

LEFT: The side of a cutting that slipped just north of Duffield on the Ecclesbourne Valley Railway. EVR

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Memorial Day celebrates the life of *RM* writer Peter Nicholson

Preservationist and long-time *Railway Magazine* writer remembered at Somerset museum tribute.

By Cliff Thomas

WESTONZOYLAND Pumping Station Museum hosted a Memorial Day for the family and friends of the late Peter Nicholson on March 24.

Peter, who made a significant contribution to railway preservation (standard and narrow gauge) as owner of a collection of historic narrow gauge internal combustion locomotives and rolling stock, and also contributed to *The Railway Magazine* for almost a quarter of a century, died on October 30, 2023.

The funeral had been a private affair, this memorial day being organised by his family as an occasion for many of his friends from the preservation world to pay their respects to Peter's memory and his lifelong passion for railways. Following readings and eulogies by friends and family, those present watched the unveiling of a bench dedicated to Peter's memory, and rode on the 2ft gauge running line at the Pumping Station site.

Three of the locomotives owned by Peter Nicholson are based at Westonzoyland. The two in operating order, F.C. Hibberd 'Planet' No. 1830/1933 *Boothby* (purchased by Peter in 1968 from the Boothby Peat Company in Cumbria, which he sold to Westonzoyland trustee Jason Keswick in 2017) and Lister Railtruck No. 6299/1935 (now passed to the ownership of his grandson Josh Brinsford), worked passenger rides. As each took their turn hauling trains, they carried a '1948-2023 The Peter Nicholson Memorial Special' headboard.



Two of the late Peter Nicholson's loco collection lined up in the sun. Left is F.C. Hibberd 'Planet' No. 1830/1933 *Boothby* (the oldest surviving petrol engine Hibberd), right is Lister Railtruck No. 6299/1935, now owned by Peter's grandson Josh Brinsford. CLIFF THOMAS



A passenger train, hauled by Lister Railtruck No. 6299/1935, driven by Jason Keswick, carrying the '1948-2023 The Peter Nicholson Memorial Special' headboard. CLIFF THOMAS

Ruston & Hornsby 20DL 235711/1945, which Peter owned between 1976 and 1998 and was recently purchased by Jason Keswick from Jeremy Martin and brought to Westonzoyland, was displayed in the loco shed.

The day also featured a mid-afternoon flypast by two vintage aircraft flown by volunteers from the nearby Middlezoy Aerodrome, which included laying a smoke trail.

Railways in Parliament Compiled by **Jon Longman**

Combatting strikes

LORD Taylor of Warwick asked what steps the Government has been taking to implement contingency plans to manage the impact of the ASLEF strikes in April across many rail companies.

Transport Minister Lord Davies of Gower said: "On March 20, ASLEF announced a further rolling programme of one-day strikes and [other] action short of strike action on the national network. The rail industry is working on contingency planning and will do all it can to minimise the impacts for passengers.

"During periods of strike action, rail operators deploy measures such as implementing amended timetables to ensure services can be delivered reliably and safely. To minimise impacts and keep passengers informed during periods of strike action, the rail industry uses widespread passenger messaging to publicise disruption and the latest travel information in stations, through websites and on social media channels.

"The Government has also put in place legislation to enable train operators to plan for a 40% minimum level of service during strikes. It is a decision for individual employers whether to use this new tool to mitigate the impact of strikes, but we expect operators to be ready and able to do so, and to make that decision in the best interests of passengers."

Darlington funding

AHEAD of the celebrations to mark the 200th Anniversary of the Railways in 2025, Darlington MP Peter Gibson wanted to know if the Department of Transport (DfT) will assess the potential impact on the economy of investment in Darlington station.

Mr Merriman said: "The decision to provide £105 million of Rail Network Enhancements Pipeline (RNEP) funding to deliver the Darlington Station Enhancements scheme was taken not only due to the direct journey time and reliability improvements it will provide to rail users, but also the result of the wider economic benefits it will generate for Darlington and the region, resulting from increased productivity.

"These benefits will be further enhanced through complementary investment from Tees Valley Combined Authority, who are utilising a number of funding streams – including the Active Travel England Fund – to improve the public realm surrounding the station."

Fares feedback

NEWCASTLE upon Tyne Central MP Chi Onwurah wanted to know what steps the DfT is taking to respond to feedback from passengers on London North Eastern Railway's (LNER) Simpler Fares pilot scheme.

Mr Merriman said: "The Department supported LNER to introduce its Simpler Fares trial and officials regularly meet with LNER to discuss progress. During the trial, the majority of passengers will find fixed or semi flexible fares to be the same or cheaper than the old super off-peak fare, and there will be more fixed fares available than before..

"LNER estimate as of February 6 that 55% of semi-flexible tickets sold were cheaper than the old super off peak ticket. The trial will be evaluated to understand its impact on passengers and gather passenger feedback. The evaluation will be published in due course."

Shrewsbury axe

NORTH Shropshire MP Helen Morgan asked whether the DfT has had recent discussions with Avanti West Coast on the withdrawal of the direct Euston to Shrewsbury service next month.

Transport Minister Huw Merriman replied: "Department officials routinely engage with Avanti and its owning group over many areas, including timetabling decisions. The Department specifies the train services to be operated by train companies including Avanti West Coast through National Rail Contracts.

"As part of industry-wide efforts to align timetables to changing demand patterns and restore the financial stability of the railway, the Government asked all operators to present cost-saving options. Due to very low passenger numbers, the service between Shrewsbury and London is currently operating at a loss of £1.4 million per year.

"We cannot ask taxpayers to maintain the historically high level of financial support for the industry indefinitely, so the service will be withdrawn from June. West Midlands Railway (WMR) and Transport for Wales provide sufficient capacity for passengers between Shrewsbury and Birmingham, and the Department has agreed that WMR will introduce a second hourly Birmingham to Shrewsbury semi-fast service in June 2024 to operate via the Stour Valley and provide quicker journey time between Shropshire towns and Birmingham."

Compiled by **Graeme Pickering**

SIDELINES

Interest sought for people mover deal

BUSINESSES interested in tendering for the infrastructure contract for the automated people mover (APM), which will link HS2's Interchange station (north-east of Solihull) with the National Exhibition Centre, Birmingham International station and Birmingham Airport, were invited to find out more in April.

Formal procurement is expected to begin in 2026. The winner will be responsible for the detailed design and delivery of the piers, viaducts, stops and the APM maintenance facility. The route will consist of stretches of single and double track. Interchange (the only one of the stops at ground level) and Birmingham Airport will each have a single platform face. The intermediate stops will have two platform faces.

TBM *Anne* launched

TUNNEL boring machine *Anne* has begun excavation of the second bore for the eastern section of HS2's Northolt Tunnel.

Launched in April from Ealing, it will complete the same 3.4 mile journey to Greenpark Way in Greenford as TBM *Emily* which started work on the adjacent bore in February.

1000 training places

FUNDING secured by HS2 subcontractor Flannery Plant Hire is expected to create 1000 training opportunities in construction for people living close to the route.

The places are being offered at training centres at Iver in Buckinghamshire, Brackley and Sutton Coldfield.

Balsall Common feedback

FOLLOWING a public consultation exercise, HS2 Ltd says the majority of respondents favoured a polished concrete parapet for Balsall Common Viaduct, north-west of Kenilworth.

The finish will reflect its surroundings. A weave pattern, representing the history of textile production in the area will also be incorporated into the design, having gained 55% of votes, as opposed to 17% for the next most popular choice, a ram's horn motif.

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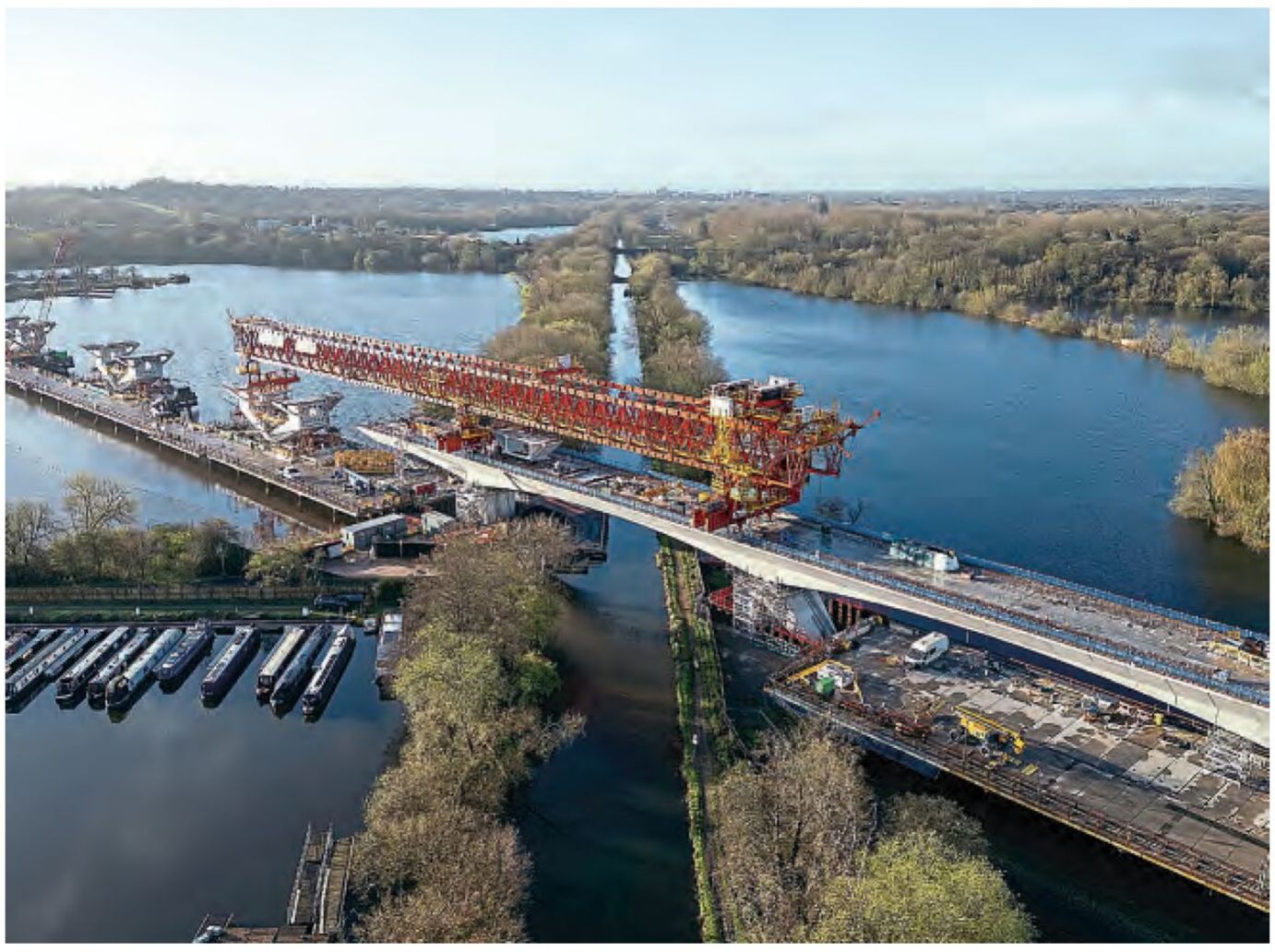
Colne Valley Viaduct crosses the Grand Union Canal

Just over half-a-mile more of high-speed route structure to assemble as it strides out over historic waterway.

DECK construction work for HS2's 2.1-mile long Colne Valley Viaduct has just over half-a-mile to go after it reached the point where the structure crosses the Grand Union Canal at the end of March.

By the time of it bridging the waterway near Denham in Buckinghamshire, 1.5 miles of its deck had been completed and 755 of a total of 1000 deck segments had been moved into position, creating 39 spans. Fifty-six piers, all of which have been completed, will support the entire length of the viaduct.

Unlike the canal, which was also an extensive civil engineering effort and covers a similar distance on its way between Birmingham and London, the high-speed route has been designed for a journey time of 49 minutes between the cities.



The 700-tonne launching girder, which moves concrete deck segments into place, is seen on the span of the Colne Valley Viaduct which crosses the Grand Union Canal. It will continue its journey northwards for just over half-a-mile to complete the remainder of the spans, piers for which are already in place. As can be seen in this image, the structure also crosses a series of lakes. Its 2.1 mile total length will also take it over the River Colne and local roads. HS2

Across river and road

The Colne Valley Viaduct will also take the route across the River Colne, local roads and a series of lakes. Foundations up to 60 metres (197 feet) deep were built into the lake beds to support concrete piers, which were cast in situ.

The first piles were sunk in early 2021, and a launching girder to lift the segments forming the viaduct arches was brought into use the following spring. Construction work passed the halfway point in November last year.

Align Joint Venture (comprising Bouygues Travaux Publics, Sir Robert McAlpine and VolkerFitzpatrick) is leading the viaduct project.

HS2 senior project manager Billy Ahluwalia said: "Our work to install the viaduct's remaining deck segments continues at pace, followed by the installation of the deck edge parapets and noise barriers, before we hand over to Rail Systems for the next major phase of the build programme."

■ A four-day closure over the Easter weekend allowed engineers to work on two piers which will carry Small Dean Viaduct over the London Marylebone-Aylesbury line south of Wendover in Buckinghamshire.

A bus link for rail passengers was provided between Aylesbury Vale Parkway and Beaconsfield stations during the work which included the construction of 49 metre-deep (160 feet) piled foundations for the pier east of the existing line, and lifting a 42 tonne 'Y'-shaped segment onto the pier to its west. A total of six piers will be required to support the 345 metre-long (377 yards) viaduct which will also cross the A413.





SPECIFICATIONS APPROVED: **Designs for two viaducts on HS2's approach to Birmingham have received local authority approval. Consent was given to the plans for the 475 metre-long (519 yards) River Blythe Viaduct (left), south of HS2's Interchange station, by Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council. HS2 Ltd says local feedback regarding tree planting and protection of the environment close to the river has been incorporated. Running a length of 225 metres (246 yards), Saltley Viaduct (right) will take the B4144 road over the HS2 route, the Birmingham and Warwick Junction Canal, the Birmingham-Derby railway line and the River Rea. Birmingham City Council approved a revised proposal, including a wider pathway, additional lighting and perforated side panels. The viaducts were the final major structures on the route into the city requiring approval. HS2**

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Back in the ring

After a gap of more than seven years, the DTG's 'Western' No. D1015 successfully defended its title as the sole main line diesel-hydraulic, as John Heaton FCILT reports.



Above: No. D1015 waits – and cools down – at Banbury during the booked break. JOHN HEATON

Main: Blue-liveried 'Western' No. D1015 *Western Champion* passes Southall on April 14 with 1Z55, the 13.52 'One way Wizzo' railtour from Paddington to Tame Bridge Parkway. IAN LYALL

THE Champion is back. After being sidelined by a technical knockout at the end of 2016, April 14 saw Class 52 C-C No. D1015 *Western Champion* make its main line passenger train return on its native Western Region main line out of Paddington, punching its full 111 tonne weight.

In an audacious move, as risky as it was inspired, Pathfinder Railtours, UK Railtours and the Diesel Traction Group (DTG) decided to box clever with a test run open to public scrutiny over a 140 mile journey from London to Bescot via Reading, Oxford, Banbury, Leamington Spa and Coventry.

This was to be no featherweight sparring session, but a tasty 13-coach bout with every seat sold to the enthusiastic following that this class commands. Call them 'Westerns', 'Thousands' or, yes, even 'Wizzos' and the name conjures the power and sound of their two Maybach MD655 engines packing 2700hp.

Judging from overheard conversations, the 'One Way Wizzo' name given to the single-leg special train had gelled with its clientele as they boarded the train at Paddington's Platform 1, the perfect setting for the locomotive's main line return. The load comprised 10 Mk.2f air-conditioned coaches, two Mk.1 RBRs (restaurant buffets) and the Mk.2b support/generator coach. Standing on the buffers and coupled to the rear of the train was the 117 tonne No. 57303, which provided prudent insurance against unexpected events.

A combination of hermetically sealed coaches, the incalculable contributions of our assistant loco (formerly named *Alan Tracy*, whose 'Thunderbird 3' in the 1960s TV show could travel to within range of the sun in 65 hours using its atomic fusion reactor), and timings based on a 75mph ceiling did not present an initially attractive proposition. However, viewed from the perspective of the return to traffic of No. D1015 hauling a basic 467 tonne load, around 500 tonnes tare,

"Even though the train was well supported, the lineside interest was generally less than I had expected and 'normals' scarcely registered they were observing a rarity"

617 tonnes if No. 57303 was not powering, and around 728 tonnes all up including the train loco, the trip reached its sell-out potential.

The conservative timings did not reflect any specific restriction being applied, it was simply being a matter of easing the repaired loco back into action. If time had been lost, higher speeds could have been employed to recover time.

Seconds away

Although the temptation was therefore to hope for some delay, timekeeping was admirable throughout the journey. After a signal check through Westbourne Park, sure but steady acceleration occurred up to 75mph at Hayes & Harlington, when brakes were applied to sidle past engineering work. After crossing to the down relief line as scheduled, there was a brief emergency stop causing Maidenhead to be passed 4½min late, the largest deficit before Coventry.

Even though the train was well supported, the lineside interest was generally less than I had expected, and 'normals' scarcely registered they were observing a rarity.

After passing Reading at 22mph, steady progress was made before settling to a consistent 74mph with a brief dip to 69mph at Didcot East Junction. The average speed for the 27.56 miles from Goring to Tackley, taking 17min 7sec, was 73.4mph before progress was once again interrupted by an automatic brake application, said to be related to cab noise. This did not prevent Heyford being passed on time and a resumption of 74mph before entering Platform 1 at Banbury station 1½min early, in 97min 51sec on a 100min schedule from Paddington.

There was plenty of time to crowd safely round the loco, while normal traffic went past, and pause to take stock of the remarkable situation. Forty-seven years after the final withdrawal of Class 52s by British Rail, a pristine specimen was working a 13-coach train to Birmingham, making its start from Banbury on a route where they had first been despised for displacing the beloved Great Western 'King' 4-6-0 steam locos.

No. D1015 eased its long train onto the down main line at the regulation 15mph, taking a quarter mile and 72sec to reach 20mph. The DTG's website (www.westernchampion.co.uk) states that acceleration from a period of engine 'shut down' is taken cautiously to prevent loss of coolant through a pressure release valve. Speed then increased slowly but surely to 60mph in 5½ miles and 8min. Not much sign of Class 57 assistance there then, and indeed the YouTube footage I have seen of the 'One Way Wizzo' whizzing along at 75mph does nothing to alter this impression. If any reader has extra information to add, it will be welcome.

Top speed on the section to Leamington Spa of 79mph came down the 1-in-187 (new Network Rail info: 1-in-165 to 195) gradient through Fosse Road before negotiating the junction station via the middle road. It was a disappointment that *Western Champion* could not be pitted against Hatton bank (on the line to Birmingham via Warwick), as the Railway Performance Society electronic archive contains a run by member Alan Varley on April 3, 1963 when No. D1015 took the 1-in-110 section at 53mph with 11 bogies grossing 410 tons. Instead, the 'One Way Wizzo' turned right for the Kenilworth line to Coventry, where a booked signal stop was due to provide a clear path for Avanti 'Pendolino' No. 390117 on the 16.09 Euston-Birmingham New Street. The express was running 6min late, which rebounded on the charter train as it started away 5min in arrears.

Crawl not brawl

The 25-50mph exit from Platform 4 was easier than leaving Banbury, and the engines were warm, in terms of the coolant control, so 60mph was reached more quickly in 5.37 miles and 7min 7sec – but the 76mph top speed was then reduced to a crawl through Birmingham International to Stechford, and then via Perry Barr to my Tame Bridge Parkway alighting point. This slow progress was no surprise as the schedule contained 14min pathing, 1min recovery time and a booked 4min signal stop in a 48min allowance for the 18 miles between Berkswell and the set-down stop, which was reached just 50sec late.

Western Champion took its train half-a-mile further to Bescot Down Loop, where No. 57303 then led the coaches back via Soho South Junction into Birmingham New Street, 1min late according to Realtime Trains.

Full credit must be given to those involved in getting No. D1015 back on the main line, and the tour organisers, for daring to let 'Wizzo' fans take part in its proving trial rather than arranging some clandestine journey open only to an inner circle. ■

LONDON PADDINGTON TO TAME BRIDGE PARKWAY

Loco	No. D1015 *Western Champion*			
Load*	13+loco No. 57303/584/617/728			
Train	13.52 Paddington -Birmingham New Street			
Date	April 14, 2024			
Recorder/ Position	J Heaton 13th of 15			
Miles	**Location**	**Sch**	**M S**	**MPH**
0.00	PADDINGTON d	0	0 00	1L 33 / sigs 6
1.66	Ladbroke Grove	5	5 07	ML
5.01	Acton West	8	9 08	63
7.20	Hanwell		11 05	70
8.93	Southall	12	12 32	73
10.78	Hayes & H	13.5	14 02	75/76
13.08	West Drayton		15 58	sigs 53
14.56	Iver	(1)xRL	17 51	sigs 41/20 xRL
18.29	Slough	23	25 22	50
		[3]	emerg stop 26.11 -28.26	
24.11	Maidenhead	32 (1)	35 44	62/58
30.88	Twyford	39(1)[1]	42 35	61
35.83	READING	47	48 35	22
38.50	Tilehurst		52 24	57
41.39	Pangbourne		55 10	67
44.60	Goring	56	57 53	74/76
48.31	Cholsey	[1]	60 51	74
52.60	Didcot E Jct	65	64 23	69
53.68	Didcot N Jct	66	65 18	72
54.94	Appleford		66 19	75
55.98	Culham		67 09	73
58.19	Radley		68 57	74
60.79	Kennington Jct RR	73 [1]	71 00	77
63.24	OXFORD	76	73 01	72
66.11	Wolvercot N Jct	79	75 21	74
67.05	Yarnton		76 07	73
68.86	Kidlington		77 36	74
70.88	Bletchington		79 13	76
72.36	Tackley		80 24	74/79
			emergency stop 82.33-84.26	
74.99	Heyford	87	86 03	30
77.88	Fritwell		89 28	67/74
80.91	Aynho Jct	93	92 00	71
82.40	King's Sutton		93 15	73/74
85.94	BANBURY a	100	97 51	pfm 1
0.00	d	153	152 21	
1.66	M40 ob		3 41	45
3.51	Cropredy		5 49	55
6.11	Claydon		8 30	62
8.77	Fenny Compton RR	11	10 51	76
14.41	Harbury TSP	[1]	15 22	74
16.39	Fosse Rd SB		16 53	79
19.87	LEAMINGTON SPA	22 (1)	21 43	19/15
20.87	Milverton Jct	25	25 00	30
25.27	Kenilworth Jct	32	29 50	59/61
29.54	COVENTRY pfm 4 a	39	36 55	
29.54	(pathing stop) d	45	49 44	
31.01	Canley		53 03	45
33.1	Tile Hill		55 31	56
35.06	Berkswell	51 (3)	57 29	66/76
38.32	Hampton-in-Arden	56	60 11	74/25
40.24	BIRMINGHAM INT	59	63 21	28
		(11) [1]**		
53.35	Tame Bridge P a	99	99 44	

*vehicles/tare/gross tonnes/including train engine. 10Mk 2f, 2Mk 1, 1Mk 2b
[x}= recovery mins (x) pathing mins
** as shown plus a scheduled 4min signal stop
Power applied by No. 57303 unknown

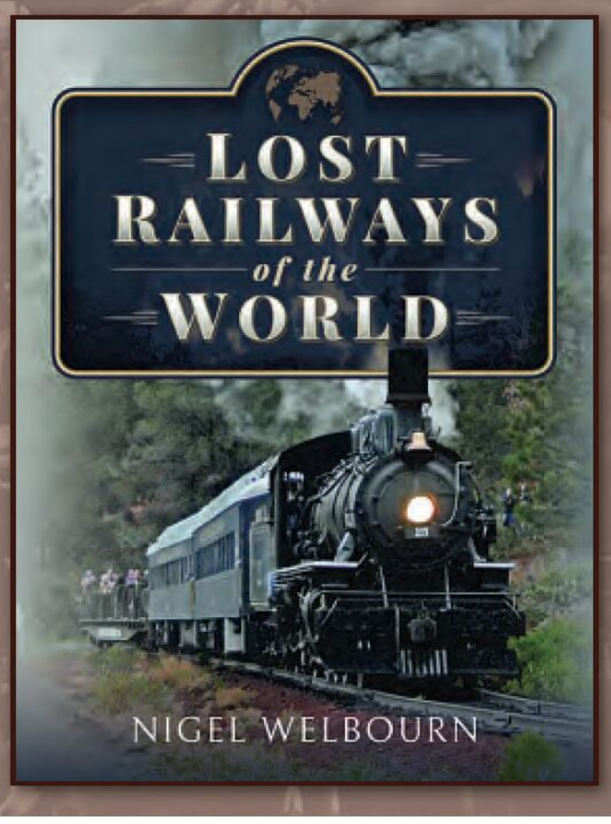
GEE WIZZ

A SEARCH of *The Railway Magazine's* digital archive (see **www.railwaymagazine.co.uk/archive** for more details) finds we have used the soubriquet 'Wizzo' and alternative 'Whizzo' a total of just 10 times over the years, even including the announcement of the 'One Way Wizzo' tour.

The first mention was during their final service days, in February 1977, followed by a 20-year gap. The 'Back in the ring' article adds another six occasions and this explanation a further three.

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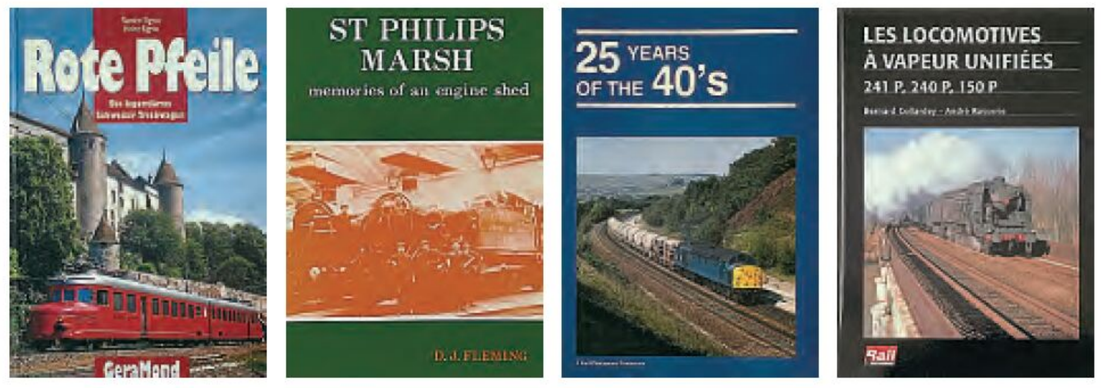
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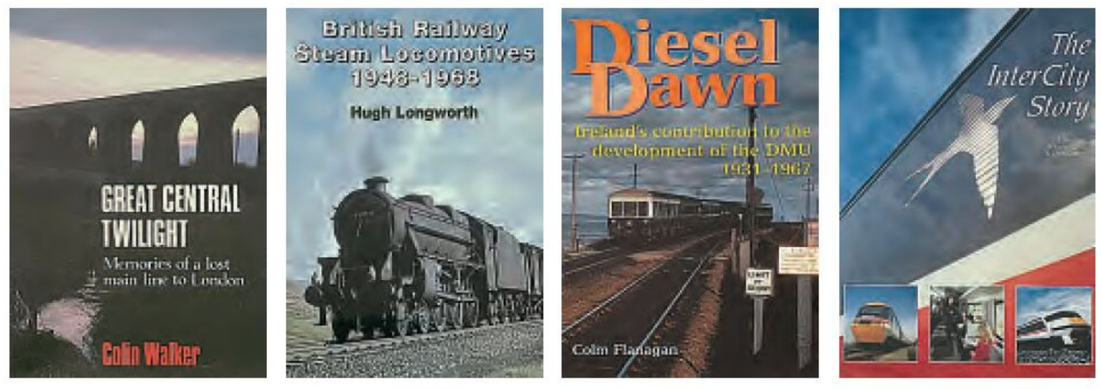
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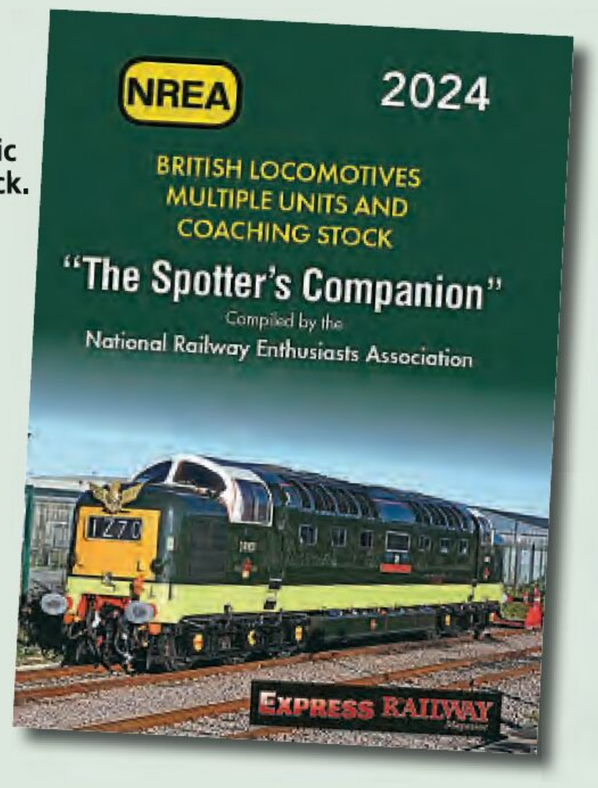
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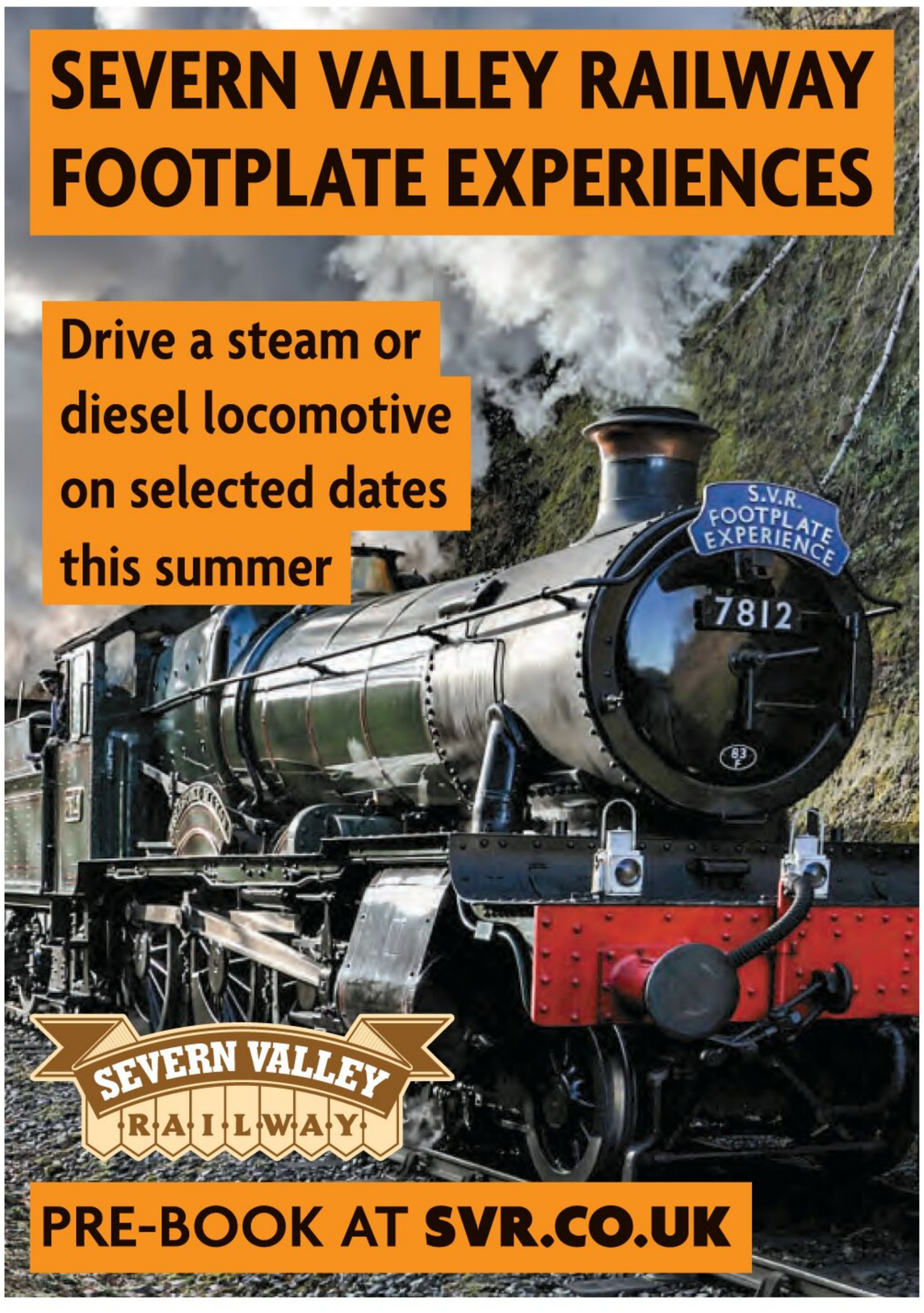
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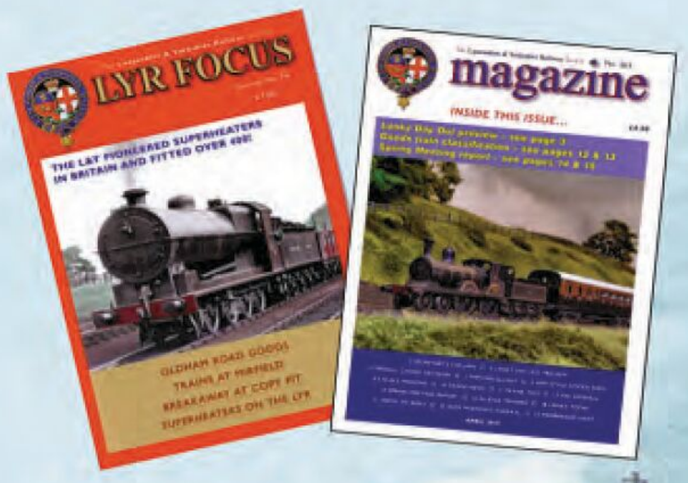
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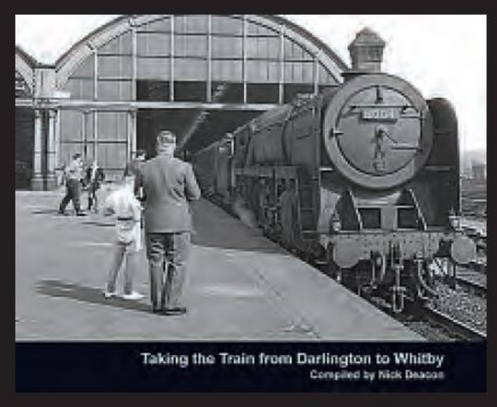
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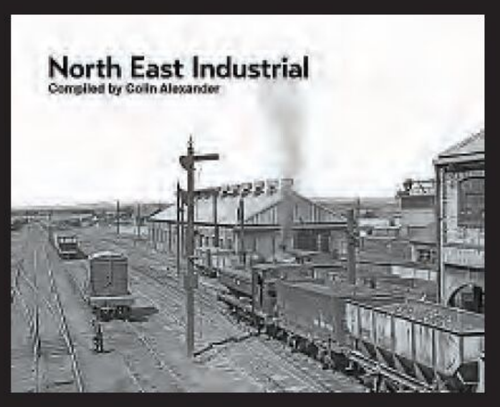
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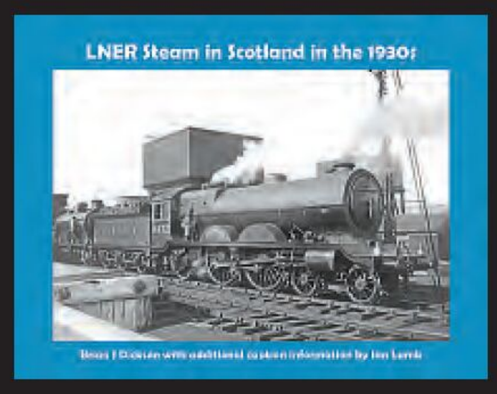
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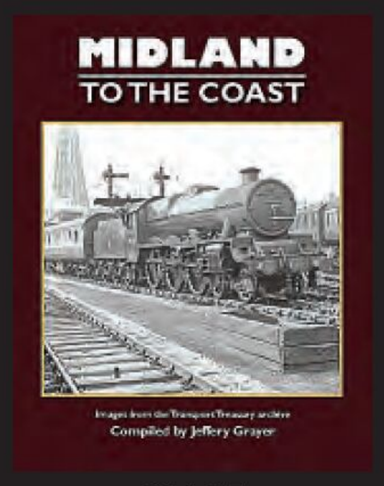
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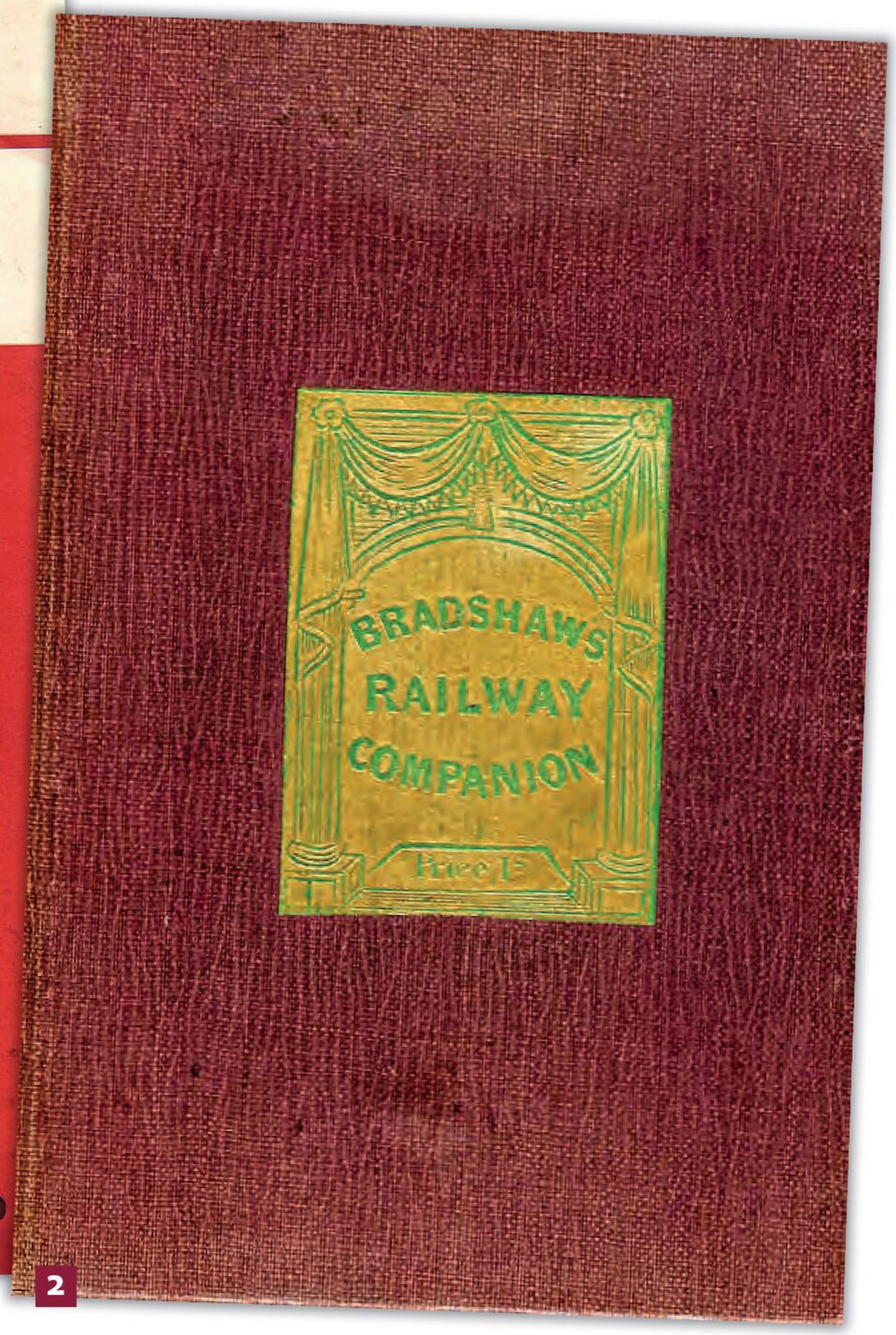
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Remembering the all-line timetable

To mark the 50th anniversary of British Rail's first all-line timetable, Dr Joseph Brennan looks back over the history of such guides to services from the earliest Bradshaws to today's digital offerings.

"FOR the first time since the demise of the *Bradshaw's Guide*, Britain once again has a single comprehensive rail timetable – only this time it is the official book issued by the operator," reported *The Railway Magazine* 50 years ago. Known internally at British Rail as the "All-System Timetable," the book in question was the 1974 *Passenger Timetable*, which marked the first all-line (all in one) national timetable since the *Bradshaw's Guide* series ceased publishing in 1961.

Though timetables had been published before and after Bradshaw, on a regional or individual company basis, BR's all-in-one marked something long overdue and ushered in a renaissance of a love for an all-line timetable.

This looks at the shifting fortunes of all-line volumes, from the very early days of Bradshaw to the usurping omnipresence of the digital age. But given the focus is on printed all-liners, it is a 'rise and fall' tale tempered by the changing needs of passengers, given that very few today would look for (or indeed would be willing to print out for themselves) a timetable in physical form.

Today, we generally punch our journey details into apps. But that is not to say the charm of the physical all-in-one has been lost, nor our desire to remember and catalogue the all-liners of the past. For all-liners spoke volumes about much more than just train times.

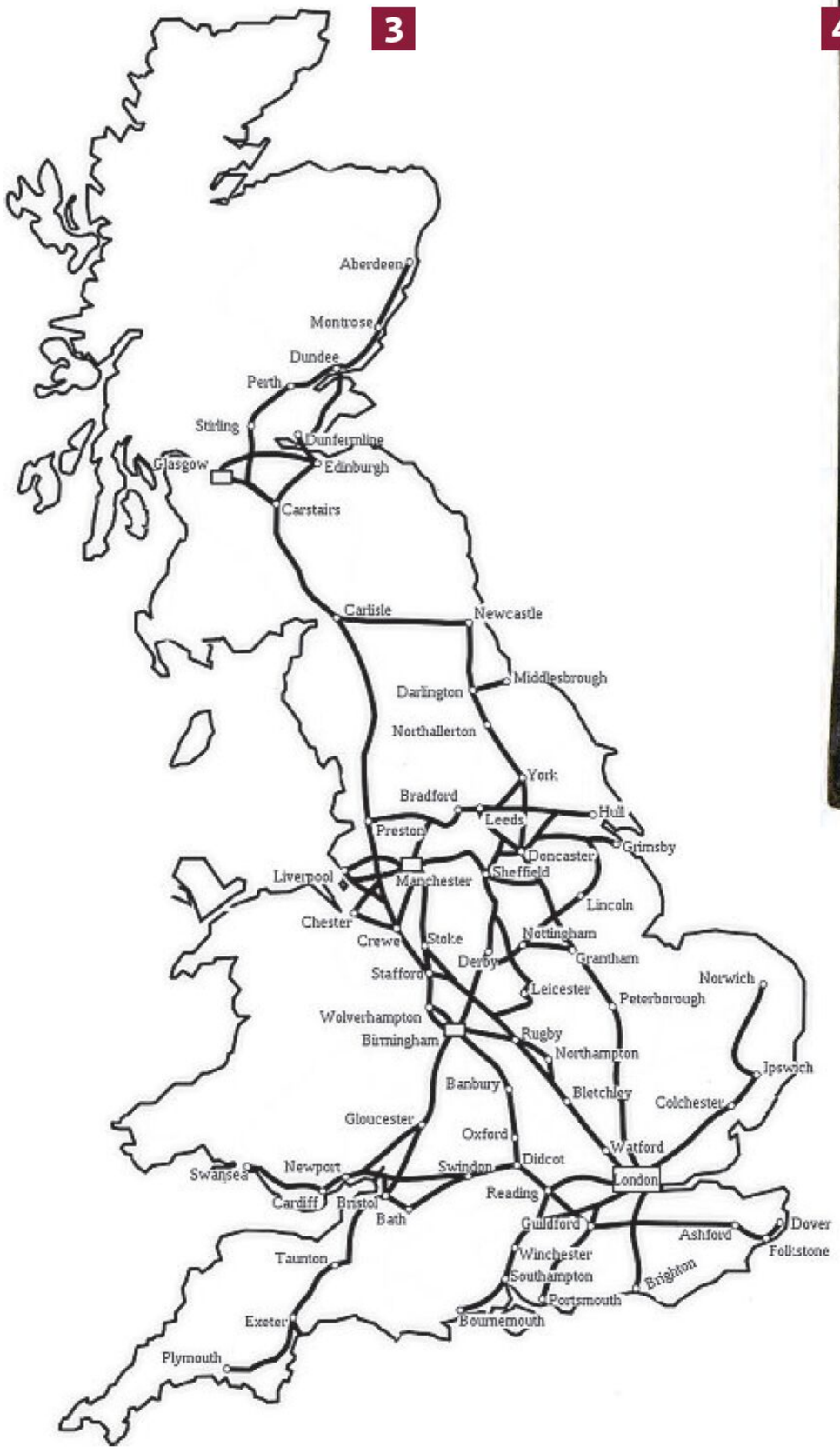
1: The inaugural issue of British Rail's *Passenger Timetable* covering May 6, 1974 to May 4, 1975. It marked the first time since the demise of *Bradshaw's Guide* in 1961 that passengers had a national all-line timetable. LUKE DAVID O'ROURKE (CC BY-ND 2.0)

2: The cover of an 1839 issue of *Bradshaw's Railway Companion*, priced at 1s. WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

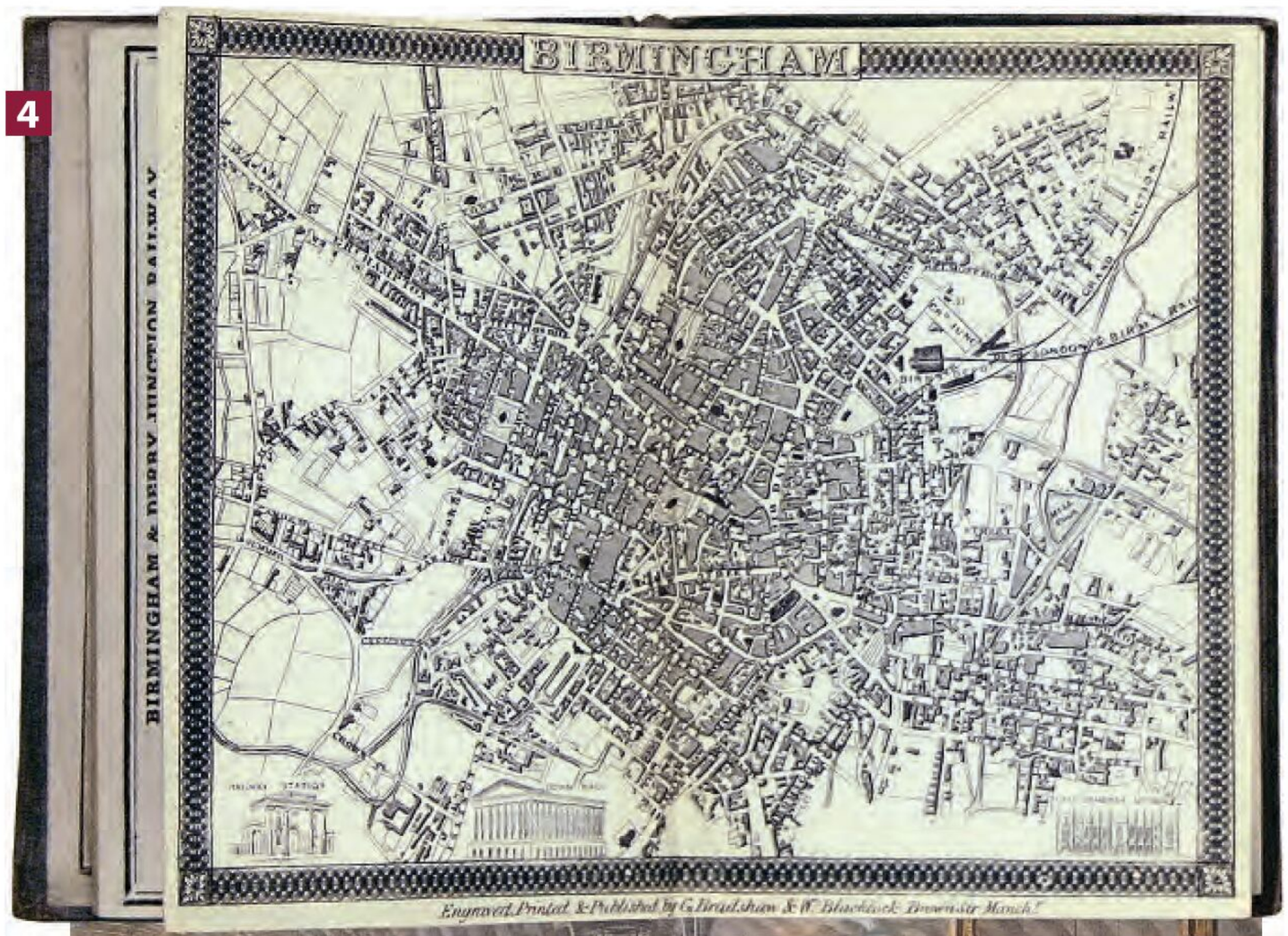
Origins of a legend

George Bradshaw is known as the originator of the all-line companion, offering travellers their first all-in-one railway timetable from the launch issue dated October 19, 1839.

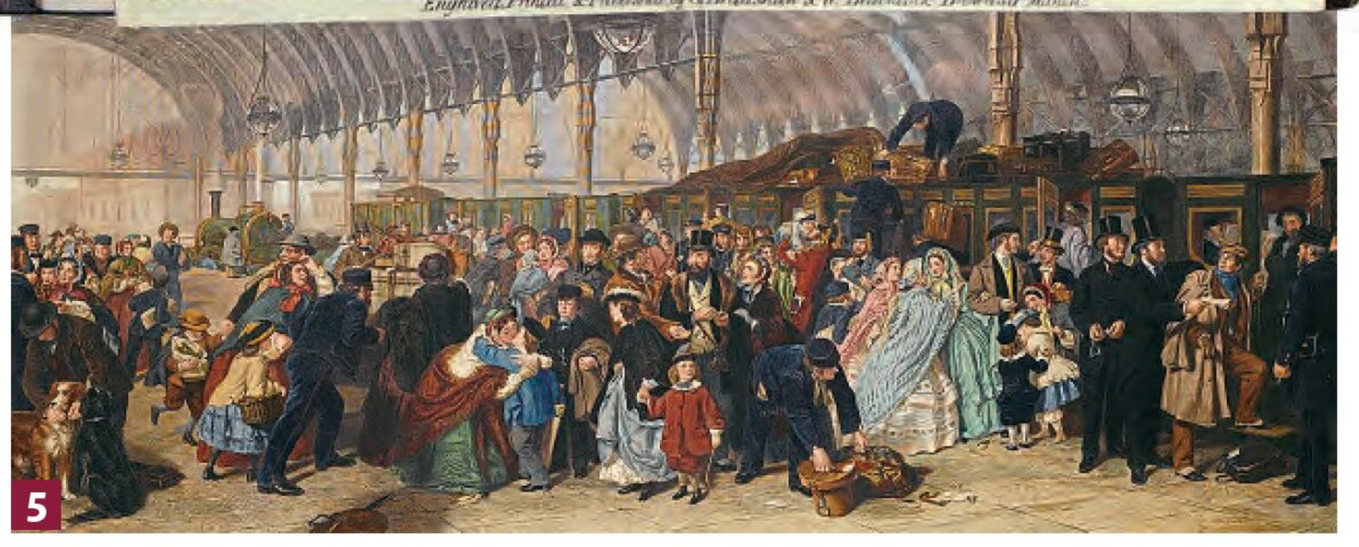
Strictly speaking, Bradshaw's early timetables were in two parts, covering northern and southern companies. Bradshaw's 'No. 1' was titled *Bradshaw's Railway Time Tables, and Assistant to Railway Travelling, with Illustrative Maps & Plans* and was devoted to services between Liverpool, Manchester, York, Leeds, Selby, Sheffield, Preston and Bolton. These timetables were soon combined as *Bradshaw's Railway Companion*.



3



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"All-liners spoke volumes about much more than just train times"

It is difficult to overstate the significance of Bradshaw's contribution, which rose to prominence at a time when the railways were a myriad of private company enterprise, and then evolved into a household name that did much to stay relevant over a 120-year period from 1839 to 1961.

"As the railway network spread with hundreds of new railway lines, many operated by different companies, *Bradshaw's* quickly became a household name and an essential item for any regular long-distance traveller," says Peter Thorpe, Library & Archive Assistant at the National Railway Museum. "They were initially reasonably pocket-sized, but by the end of the 19th century had expanded to nearly 1000 pages, so you required a rather large pocket!"

A 1921 article titled 'Early Railway Time Tables,' written by E H Dring in *The Library*, said: "Like the grain of mustard seed which, from the least of seeds, became a tree in which the birds of the air lodged, so has this humble production of 19 October 1839 grown up into a national institution of large volume and value."

Bradshaw the genius

George Bradshaw was a map maker and engraver by trade, making his first map of his native Lancashire in 1827. In 1830 he turned to mapping canals of his home county, followed by his most ambitious project to that date – a railway map of Great Britain, which was published in 1838. But his true calling came the following year with the publication of his first railway timetable.

The originality of Bradshaw's timetable came in the form of its collection of extant timetables from various companies into one portable volume – for, as many of his guides would state, "the convenience of merchants and others."

Prior to Bradshaw's guide, individual companies announced their times by pasting posters in stations and booking offices. Timetables also appeared in "Railway Companions" and "Travellers' Guides," where local routes and sights of scenic and civic interest ran alongside. Dring points to *Feeling's Liverpool and Manchester Railway Companion and Guide to both Towns* as a pre-Bradshaw example of this type (published 1836).

The inspired nature of Bradshaw's concept must have been readily apparent, for imitators and challengers to its inception were quick to follow. Among the hottest on Bradshaw's coattails were the Osbornes (E C and W) of Birmingham, whose table of the Grand Junction, London & Birmingham & Derby Railways was available to the public at 6d before November 18, 1839 – a date that places it as a rival to Bradshaw's No. 2 guide.

The Osbornes' effort, however, was pale in comparison to Bradshaw's original guide. Osbornes' had two small skeleton maps that could have been produced rather quickly, while Bradshaw's boasted two engraved maps of the Lancashire and Yorkshire railroads and three engraved plans of Leeds, Liverpool and Manchester, over which the man must have laboured for some time.

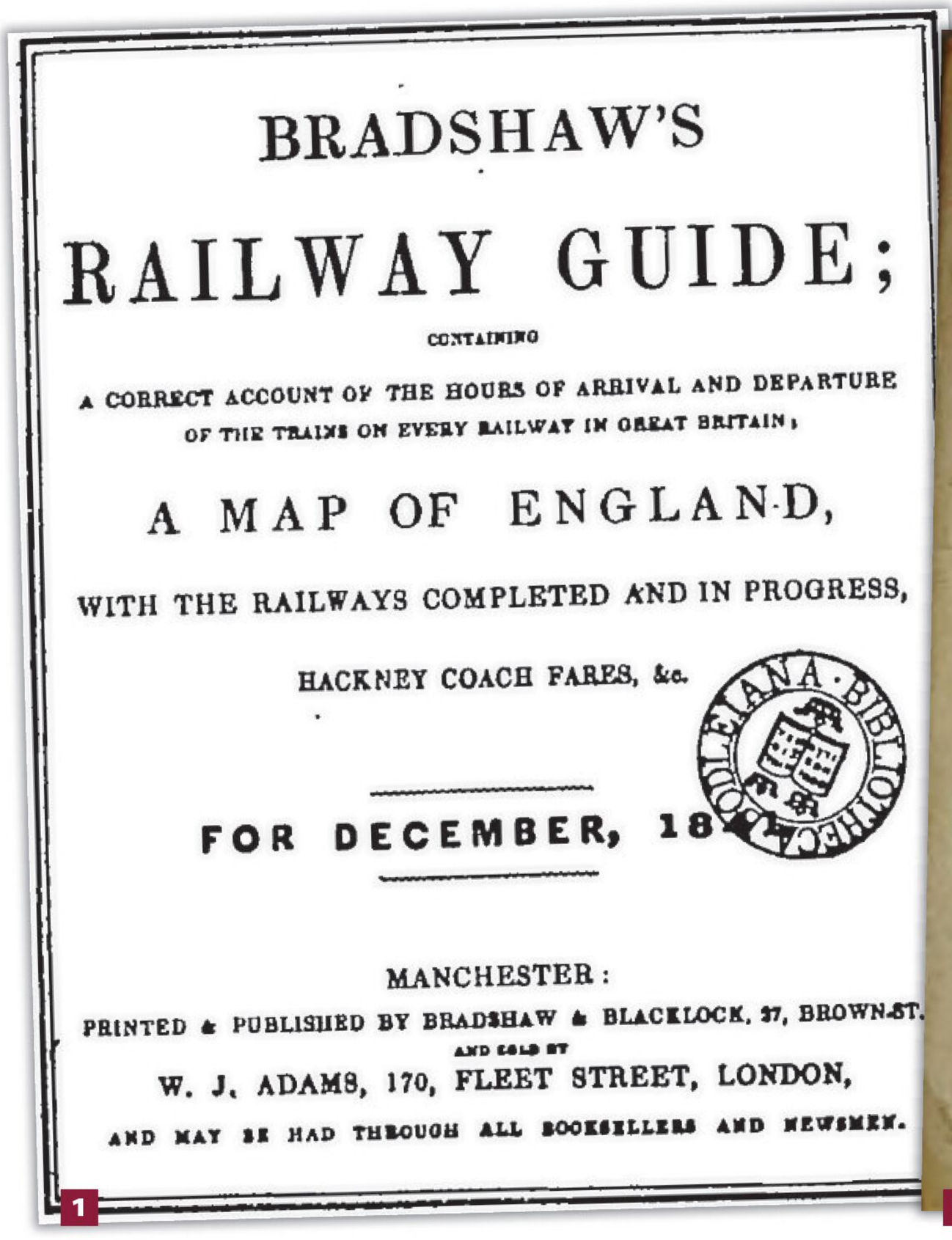
Bradshaw's aptitude for making maps gave him a definite edge in the marketplace. In fact, Bradshaw's map-making prowess was of the pedigree that, even before embarking on the project that would make him famous, he already enjoyed the testimonial support of such titans of the age as Thomas Telford, who had found great use for his canal maps.

In addition to its finely detailed maps, another part of the novelty of Bradshaw's railway guide from its inception was its method of production, with a printing and division of sheets set-up that allowed for any particular page or double page to be easily replaced by pasting over a corrected section. *Bradshaw's Railway Companion* issue of January 1, 1840 included a plea to railway companies to inform him "of any change in fares or times of departure, on any of the lines, in order that the correction may be immediately made in ▶

3: Britain's railway network grew rapidly, as shown by this map of lines in the early 1850s, which was just over two decades on from the opening of the world's first inter-city line, the Liverpool & Manchester Railway.

4: Bradshaw was an enthusiastic and gifted engraver, whose maps – such as this one of Birmingham from an 1840 issue of *Bradshaw's Railway Companion* – gave his guides every chance of becoming a household name. WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

5: Railway travel in mid-Victorian times could be chaotic, as this 1862 depiction of Paddington station by artist William Powell Frith conveys, meaning access to reliable timetable information was essential.



BRADSHAW'S

RAILWAY GUIDE;

CONTAINING

A CORRECT ACCOUNT OF THE HOURS OF ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE OF THE TRAINS ON EVERY RAILWAY IN GREAT BRITAIN;

A MAP OF ENGLAND,

WITH THE RAILWAYS COMPLETED AND IN PROGRESS,

HACKNEY COACH FARES, &c.

FOR DECEMBER, 18

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PRINTED & PUBLISHED BY BRADSHAW & BLACKLOCK, 27, BROWN-ST.

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W. J. ADAMS, 170, FLEET STREET, LONDON,

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BODLEIANA · BIBLIOTHECA

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the work." It was on such a reputation for correctness that Bradshaw would reap his fortune.

Other challengers to the title of the originator of pocket timetables include W J Adams and John Gadsby. Gadsby campaigned most passionately that Bradshaw had stolen the idea from his own *Gadsby's Monthly Railway Guide*, claimed to have been published in 1839 also. It is a topic that promises a fascinating comb through of the archives. Granted, most accept Bradshaw's claim; but perhaps the more salient point is that none came close to Bradshaw's cut-through or work ethic to evolve. Gadsby concedes as much himself, writing: "I was made printer and publisher to the Anti-Corn Law League. This so filled my hands and head too, that I gave up to Bradshaw."

Bradshaw imitations

The famous monthly *Bradshaw's* format was started in the 1840s, establishing it as a genius addition to the age. Dring places the first monthly issue of *Bradshaw's* at December 1841, titled *Bradshaw's Railway Guide*, at 6d (concurrently Bradshaw also released his *Time Tables* at 3d and *Companion* at 1s).

Regarding this most recognisable format for the Bradshaw guide, historian Mike Esbester writes: "It was widely imitated, to the extent that after the 1840s 'Bradshaw' would have needed no explanation to most people, to whom the word meant not only 'timetable' but also fiendish complexity."

Indeed, Bradshaw's success was built on a dogged determination to be the best, with a willingness to adapt and expand through aligned timetabling enterprise. Percy Fitzgerald acknowledges this in the 1890 publication *The Story of Bradshaw's Guide*. Though quick to gain recognition, Bradshaw's long-form reputation was built up over decades of refinement; from "the infant *Bradshaw's Railway Time Tables* of 1839" to "the fully matured, flourishing, rather corpulent *Bradshaw's Guide* of 1889" that, at the time of Fitzgerald's story, no practised railway traveller could be without.

Bradshaw's evolutionary enterprise extended to overflow publications such as *Bradshaw's Continental Railway, Steam Navigation & Conveyance Guide*, and *Traveller's Manual for the Whole Continent of Europe*, which was first issued in June 1847. Yes, 'Bradshaw's' had ensured its place as the best-known guide, though that is not to say it is a reign that went unchecked.

In 1862, *Bradshaw's London Railway Guide* showed departure and arrival times between London and various towns. But, unlike what you might expect from a Bradshaw, another guide had beaten him to it, and with better cut-through. That key challenger entered the market in October 1853 with a guide promising much-needed relief to confusion. It was the *The A.B.C.* (as in "simple as ABC") and probably the best-known alternative to *Bradshaw's*.

1: The title page from the first monthly issue of *Bradshaw's Railway Guide* dated December 1841, the format that would become Bradshaw's most famous.

2: A 1961 issue of *Bradshaw's Guide*, just two short of the final ever one published in May that year. The guide met the British traveller's all-line needs monthly, by appointment to the late King George VI, with this particular example covering March 6 to April 2. After the final issue, passengers would have to wait some 13 years for another all-line timetable.

DONNANZ (CC BY-SA 4.0)

A simple alternative

In a 1905 love letter to the timetable, John Pendleton captures both the brilliance and bane of a *Bradshaw's Guide* in the Victorian and early Edwardian period. The author writes: "the aid of the key [means … t]he mathematic problems that crowd the thousand pages of this railway guide to Great Britain are quickly solved, if seriously tackled; but the man on business or pleasure who puts the question, "Have you a Bradshaw?" to a waiter in an English or Scotch hotel has seldom enough patience to engineer through it, and possibly flings the careful compilation away in disgust, angry, perplexed, unsatisfied, and with a mean idea of his own mental capacity."

Enter the *The A.B.C.* or *Alphabetical Railway Guide*, a reaction to that "quintessence of puzzledom," a *Bradshaw's Guide*. *The A.B.C.* sought to show "at a glance" how and when you could go from London to the different stations in

"Prior to Bradshaw, individual companies announced their times by pasting posters in stations and booking offices"



Great Britain and return. It enjoyed a level of success that *Bradshaw's London* could never counter. The Bradshaw version only publishing nine monthly issues, and attempts to revive it in 1867 also proved fruitless, it being transformed into *London and Provincial Bradshaw* from 1868, which carried on until 1887.

The magic formula of *The A.B.C.* was its simplicity, its information being organised around an alphabetical destination, as in a directory or catalogue. Admittedly this was something easier to achieve, given that it gave the times only from London, leaving it to Bradshaw to tackle the much trickier task of tabling a national timetable that could be counted on as being correct. That said, *The A.B.C.* is a deserved branch line to the all-line timetable, for the special place it held among passengers and in the popular image of the timetable – something certainly helped in the twentieth century when Agatha Christie made it a plot point in her 1936 Hercule Poirot mystery *The A B C Murders*.

The end for *Bradshaw's*

The 'Big Four' Grouping of 1923 brought with it combined public timetables being put out by each of the four companies for their respective lines. This was a convenience, but public demand for a complete national timetable remained, and *Bradshaw's Guide* continued to publish until issue 1521 in May 1961.

The 1960s are remembered for committing to memory many historic railway landmarks. As to the demise of *Bradshaw's* in particular, the NRM's Peter Thorpe sets out an interesting culprit for the 1961 loss. After the 1923 Grouping, the guide's publisher Henry Blacklock & Co also began printing timetables for the Big Four (excluding the Great Western Railway). Then after the Transport Act 1947, during the British Railways era, Blacklock & Co became the printer of combined timetables of each BR region, for a time.

"With the price of a *Bradshaw's Guide* at 12s 6d (the equivalent today of around £13) and the individual regional BR timetables being available to purchase at just one shilling each, the *Bradshaw's Guide* became unviable for the publisher," Thorpe explained.

Come 1961, BR's six regional timetables continued, as did *The A.B.C.* (which became the *OAG Rail Guide* in 1996 but ceased publishing in 2007), but *Bradshaw's Guide* was gone. It was the end of an era. And a loss keenly felt.

Interestingly, a comb through Parliamentary Papers from 1961 puts on the record "the desirability of a British Railways Guide being published... in substitution not only for 'Bradshaw', but for the existing six somewhat cumbersome regional guides".

BR steps in

Desirable or not, the British public needed to endure a 13-year wilderness period where travellers were left without an all-line national timetable. That was until, finally, this was redressed 50 years ago in May 1974 with BR's first all-system timetable replacing the existing regional timetables.

"After what seems an age, British Rail has got round to producing a single volume all-system timetable," *European Railways* reported under a heading 'One Book, Not A Library'.

It is difficult to overstate how extraordinary it was to be without such a single volume for the 13-year period between *Bradshaw's* and BR's all-system efforts. For, to quote from the address in Bradshaw's very first guide: "The necessity of such a work is so obvious as to need no apology; and the merits of it can be best ascertained by a reference to the execution both as regards the style and correctness of the maps and plans with which it is illustrated."

BR's *Passenger Timetable* covered the entire year in 1350 pages (dated May 6, 1974-May 4, 1975) and was priced at 50p (around £10 today). It received a warm welcome from Parliament and many passengers too, for it made sense to have a single, direct-from-the-source volume.

To pick up on Bradshaw's point about 'style,' such as the evolution from *Bradshaw's Time Tables* to *Companion* to *Guide*, BR were similarly unafraid to freshen up its publication over the years.

The National Railway Museum has in its Timetables Collection more than 7500 individual documents. Thanks to a recent audit and cataloguing of this collection, we now have a clear record of the changes to the all-system over time, a great resource for those interested in genealogy.

After launching as an annual offering to much fanfare as *Passenger Timetable* in 1974, the volume was retitled *British Rail Passenger Timetable* in the 1982-1983 issue, which was also the first issue of its new 'handy' size. Travellers using a rover ticket would find the national timetable to be an indispensable resource, and probably quite appreciated the split-year offering. Today, smartphones arguably bring more spontaneity to rail travel, making alternate routes and connection-checking possible in the traveller's own hands with a few simple taps. But back then this was only achieved by a thumb-through the BR *Passenger Timetable*.

BR started releasing biannual issues (summer/winter) in 1986, then in 1994 – with Privatisation underway – it became the *Great Britain Passenger Railway Timetable*, renamed again in the 2000s under Network Rail as the *National Rail Timetable*.

But the days of an all-in-one printed volume were numbered. Ultimately, it would be digitisation that would suppress any operator's appetite for offering it in physical form. Reacting to the changing demands of our digital future, NR made its timetable freely available online in 2006, then discontinued the printed edition entirely the following year.

Resisting the digital age

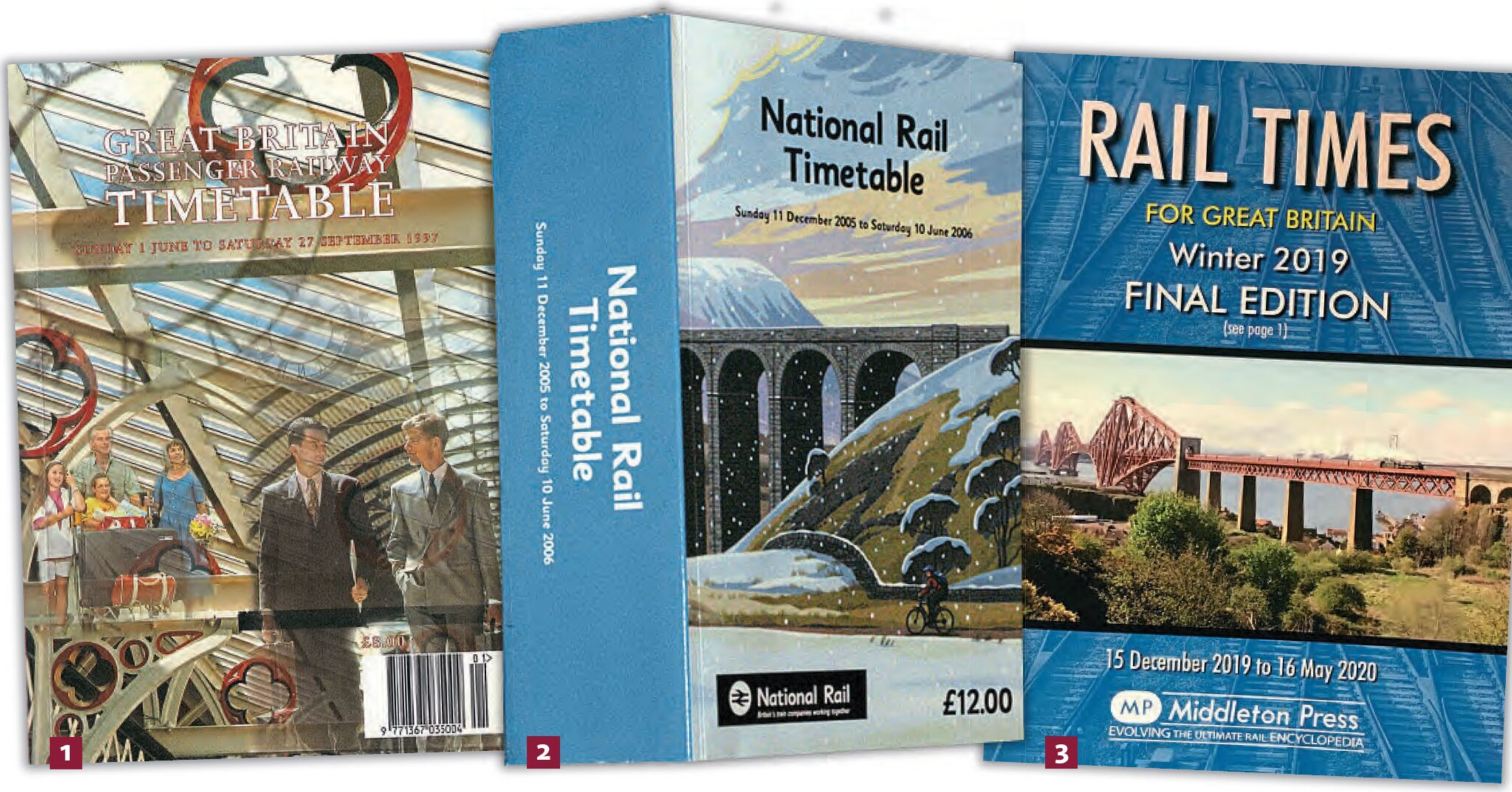
"The National Railway Timetable Board, an industry body, has taken the decision that the May 2007 edition of the *National Rail Timetable* will be the last printed version," announced Network Rail in December 2006. "The decision has been made following the large decline in demand ▶

3: A 1958 edition of Agatha Christie's *The A B C Murders*. First published in 1936, the famous Bradshaw's alternative formed a key plot point in this Poirot mystery. The A.B.C. guides were not an all-line timetable, but were popular among Londoners for their simplicity.
JEREMY CRAWSHAW (CC BY 2.0)

4: British Rail's Passenger Services regional timetables continued in the wake of Bradshaw, with a total of six when the *Bradshaw's Guide* ceased in 1961. This one for the London Midland Region is for June 14, 1965 to April 17, 1966 and was priced at 2s 6d.
LUKE DAVID O'ROURKE (CC BY-ND 2.0)

5: The rather modern 1977-1978 edition of BR's *Passenger Timetable*, now priced at £1.60. LUKE DAVID O'ROURKE (CC BY-ND 2.0)

6: No longer covering a full year (running May 15-October 1), this 1989 BR edition is styled as *British Rail Passenger Timetable* and priced at £3.50. Its new title was adopted for the 1982-1983 edition, which was also the first issue of its new 'handy' size. BR started splitting its all-line timetable into summer and winter editions in 1986.
LUKE DAVID O'ROURKE (CC BY-ND 2.0)



1: A summer 1997 issue of the all-line timetable, now called *Great Britain Passenger Railway Timetable* (which was adopted in 1994), and with a heftier cover price of £8.
LUKE DAVID O'ROURKE (CC BY-ND 2.0)

2: A mighty tome from National Rail – Britain's all-line timetable for December 11, 2005 to June 10, 2006 in its then-styling as the *National Rail Timetable*. It is priced at £12.
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3: The Middleton Press and The Stationery Office stepped in when Network Rail stopped publishing a printed version of the all-line timetable at the end of 2007. But the TSO stopped publishing in 2014 and MP held out until this last-ever winter 2019 edition.

4: The all-line timetables are still available today online, and can be downloaded and printed out if required. However most modern passengers are more likely to use dedicated websites and apps to discover train times.
RAWPIXEL/FREERANGE STOCK

from 134,000 copies in 1994 to just 20,000 currently, of which around two-thirds are sold to the public. The timetable will now be available on Network Rail's website, which is accessible to all in the UK via the free internet access in public libraries."

How could a large, printed version compete with the easy access and compact screens of the internet age? Yes, the odds were against print, but those with a passion for a printed national timetable were still visible.

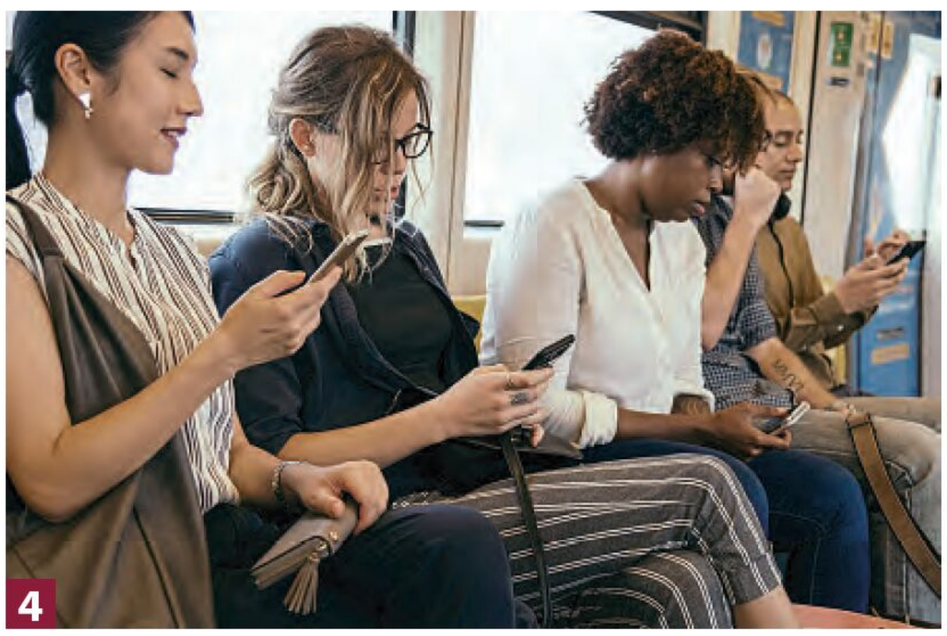
Having the timetable freely available online and able to be published under licence, publishers such as The Stationery Office (another product of 1990s Privatisation) and Middleton Press saw the potential to meet this passion. These publishers would prolong a printed volume for another decade, with the TSO's version best known under the title *GB Rail Timetable* and MP's best known as *Rail Times for Great Britain*.

The ebb of change was against them, however, and passion could only go so far in the face of rising print costs and a growing network. As services grew, growing with them was the timetable's spine width and the inconvenience of lugging around a printed tome, together with the power of the 21st Century's free digital publishing ethos.

TSO called it quits in 2014, while MP held out until almost the present decade and its final *Rail Times* was the winter 2019 edition. At more than 1000 pages and weighing 2kg, it marked 180 years since Bradshaw's very first 1839 guide.

Today, the electronic *National Rail Timetable* publishes twice yearly, in December (principal) and May (subsidiary), but those wanting a physical copy need to hit the print button themselves (see the website at www.networkrail.co.uk/running-the-railway/the-timetable/electronic-national-rail-timetable).

"Today those wanting a physical copy need to hit the print button themselves"



Lasting romance

Inevitable or not, this condition of our digital present has not diminished collector enjoyment of physical all-line timetables, nor the value of these volumes in historical terms.

If anything, being permanently 'out of print' has increased the novelty, while the nostalgia that comes with thumbing through an old all-line – perhaps one from a holiday way back – is brought back by a quick visit to one's bookshelf. Turning pages back in time, perhaps, to a simpler era of travel without digital technology – as so aptly demonstrated by Michael Portillo's wildly popular TV show 'Great British Railway Journeys', in which he carries a trusty *Bradshaw's* in hand.

There is a tactility to print that is also thrilling for professional and enthusiast visitors to railway archives, from modellers to historical novelists (myself among them) who gain some tangible texture from the past through all-line timetables.

Learning something about the railway system and its moving parts, as well as the culture of Britain's railways across time – especially those lucky enough to land an annotated copy, or one with tickets slipped in (what a find these are!). These volumes show the ingenuity that was often called upon in the intrepid traveller when armed with one.

Pendleton's 1905 article published in historical periodical *Good Words* draws out the above threads in speaking to the "romance" of those timetables of olde – of which *Bradshaw's Guide* remains best known, and the 1974 *Passenger Timetable* in its various iterations its successor.

"The popular notion is that *Bradshaw's Railway Guide*, with its endless list of stations, maze of figures, and whimsical array of dots, asterisks, daggers, and double daggers, has nothing romantic about it," Pendleton starts. "Yet with a little study… the process by which this blessing has gradually come to mankind has in it all the elements of romance, for the beginnings of the *Time Table*, *Companion*, and *Guide* – as it was successively styled – were humble and interesting, and happened at a time when this country was in a very different condition of travel from that which now obtains."

As historian Tina Young Choi observed in 2015: "Like a pocket watch, umbrella, and a good coat, a railway guide was an indispensable accoutrement of middle-class travel in Victorian Britain, a universal companion on journeys both mundane and exceptional."

It is a view echoed across the ages, to times when something as unassuming as a railway timetable carried some essence of the world into which it was published; when "Look in Bradshaw!" was as common parlance as "Google it!" is today. ■



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Pakistan Railways: Only thanks to the scarcity of financial resources the British infrastructure has survived to this day. British semaphores, riveted steel lattice bridges, brick tunnel portals, station buildings, mechanical signal boxes, depots and even the tracks are classic relics of a railway era long gone elsewhere. This railway has not yet experienced a modernisation push, with the emphasis on the word „still". So it's high noon for another visit to this interesting country with its wonderful friendly people.

The railway facilities in Attock and all the lines leading to Attock are still completely British and allow wonderful photo opportunities with the imposing Indus Bridge, the mountains and tunnels. The railway facilities are very well maintained and kept in working order, thanks to the numerous railway workers still employed on the railways. Pakistan Railways still uses two-axle freight wagons, which are perfect for a photo goods train.

We have had 5 coaches and around 30 freight wagons restored to pre their 1995 condition – perfect for authentic looking trains!

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South Africa: The Big Five: Kruger National Park	Jul 27th – Aug 2nd
Austria: From Carinthia to the Waldviertel	Oct 11th - Oct 18th
Bosnia-H.: 80 Years and no End in Sight: ‚Kriegsloks'	Oct 18th - Oct 24th
Pakistan: Broad Gauge Steam over the Indus	Nov 27th – Dec 8th
Pakistan: Bolan Pass Diesel	Dec 7th – Dec 12th

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West Coast wires

Mike Jones reflects on the fortunes of the West Coast Main Line over the five decades since electrified services began running through to Glasgow in May 1974.

MAY 6 marks 50 years since electrified services were introduced to the full 401-mile West Coast Main Line from London Euston to Glasgow Central, but its fortunes as a key Anglo-Scottish artery since then have not always been rosy.

Electrification of main line routes had been the ambition of British Railways since the 1955 Modernisation Plan, but the goals were later scaled back – in part because of declining freight traffic, which had been a key factor in the justification for investment. WCML electrification did get the go-ahead, but only on the southern half from Euston to Birmingham, Manchester and Liverpool, which was completed in 1966.

Electrification of the northern half, from just south of Warrington at Weaver Junction (approximately 174 miles from Euston) to Glasgow would have to wait until 1970 for authorisation at a cost of £74 million (equivalent to just under £1 billion today). Its completion in 1974 saw an immediate benefit, with journey times in the new timetable being reduced by an average of 100 minutes from Euston to Glasgow.

Main: The powerful EE Class 50s allowed the first real post-steam acceleration of services on the northern half of the West Coast Main Line when they were introduced in the late 1960s until electrification. No. D412 (later 50012) heads north through Tebay at the foot of the climb to Shap in July 1971 with a working from Liverpool/ Manchester to Glasgow/ Edinburgh.
HAWTHORNE COLLECTION

Back in the late 1950s, the London Midland Region had chosen English Electric's 2000hp Type 4 (Class 40) as its principal diesel to replace steam. But, although the fleet proved to be a generally robust design, the power output was less than the Pacific steam locomotives they were replacing.

This unsatisfactory outcome was recognised by the British Transport Commission in the early 1960s when it asked manufacturers to develop a more powerful Type 4 diesel-electric with a rating of at least 2500hp. EE's response was DP2 (Diesel Prototype 2), a loco that combined a 'Deltic' bodyshell with a 2700hp version of the Class 40 engine, Co-Co bogies and a top speed of 100mph.

Despite the operational success of this EE prototype, it was not chosen for mass production – that honour going to the Sulzer-engined Brush Type 4 (Class 47), of which 512 were eventually built. However, pressure to enhance the fleet as a result of BR's 1965 traction plan resulted in 50 locos being ordered from English Electric based on DP2 in a revised bodyshell. In an innovation for the time, these would be leased from EE over a 10-year period, after which BR would purchase the fleet.

"Its completion in 1974 saw an immediate benefit, with journey times in the new timetable being reduced by an average of 100 minutes from Euston to Glasgow.

EE Type 4s (Class 40s) were British Railways' first fleet diesel to replace steam on the WCML, although they were less powerful than the Pacifics they replaced. No. D298 departs Preston in 1959 with the 'Mid-day Scot' from Glasgow to Euston.

The 50 locos were to become Class 50s, with deliveries taking place between October 1967 and November 1968. Their introduction was timely, as they allowed journey times on the non-electrified WCML services north of Crewe to be reduced. By May 1970, the quest for even faster timings saw a number of diagrams being rostered for multiple working – a throw-back to the days of the prototype LMS main line diesel 'Twins' Nos. 10000 and 10001, which had a combined output of 3200hp.

New locos and stock

Once the extension of wiring through to Glasgow had been agreed, designs were needed for electric locomotives to replace the Class 50 fleet (which was transferred to the Western Region to replace the diesel-hydraulic Class 52 'Westerns').

Three Class 86s were upgraded and given new bogies for trials, renumbered as Nos. 86101-86103, offering 5000hp and a maximum speed of 110mph. Success with these led to an order for 36 Class 87 locomotives to be built at Crewe Works from 1973 to 1975, with the final loco No. 87101 including an experimental thyristor power control system. The '87s' were equipped with multiple working equipment compatible with the earlier '86s', and later they were fitted with time-division multiplexing (TDM) to allow push-pull use with Driving Van Trailers (DVTs) – something that vastly simplified operations at terminal stations.

The original fleet of 200 electric locomotives (Classes 81-86) built for WCML electrification to Birmingham, Liverpool and Manchester remained in service – but improved fleet productivity, and a relaxation of the policy that passenger and freight trains had to use electric traction 'under the wires', meant that the 10 unsatisfactory Class 84 North British machines had been withdrawn by 1980, with 10 Metropolitan Vickers Class 82 and 15 English Electric Class 83 locomotives withdrawn by 1983 (although a small number were used for short distance empty coaching working until 1993).

Below: After electrification through to Glasgow was completed in 1974, Class 87s provided a step change in journey times, made even better by the introduction of Mk.3 stock later in the decade. InterCity Executive-liveried No. 87027 *Wolf of Badenoch* is pictured at Glasgow Central on February 20, 1988 having just arrived with a working from Euston.

Then, as the more effective Class 81 and 85 types became life expired in the 1980s, there was a proposal to build a further 50 Class 87s (as '87/2's). As a result of design changes since the 1970s, however, these became known as Class 90s when introduced in 1988.

No new passenger stock was ordered for the Glasgow extension – although the route had benefited from the introduction of Mk.2 coaches from the mid-1960s, with an order for 241 vehicles (of which 29 were Pullman cars).

The success of these Mk.2s led to authorisation for a further 400 in 1967, which included a number that were fully air-conditioned. The appetite for air-con stock brought about two further orders for 600 vehicles in both 1969 and 1971, leading to a number of design derivatives that culminated in the Mk.2f, of which a final 25 were authorised in 1973. ▶



The LMR received the lion's share of these orders, with 866 being allocated immediately prior to the launch of BR's InterCity brand. However, a policy decision at the end of 1968 to gradually increase line speeds to 125mph led to the development of Mk.3 rolling stock for the prototype diesel High Speed Train.

Locomotive-hauled versions of the Mk.3 were then built at the same time as those for the production HST fleet, totalling 253 Mk.3a coaches (including 28 RFB catering vehicles) and 41 of the Mk.3b type, as well as 52 DVTs.

Performance up, market down

Once the WCML's fully-electrified timetable was launched in 1974 (and see also page 24), it became apparent the '87s' were more than equal to the task of hauling a typical train of 12 coaches (430 tonnes) at a constant speed over even the steepest parts of the route – although adhesion issues could occur in poor weather, given the locos' relatively low weight of 81 tonnes.

Despite this success, the WCML would soon fall under the shadow of the rival East Coast Main Line's Anglo-Scottish route, when HSTs and their 125mph capability brought much reduced journey times from 1977. There was also a shift in the passenger market, in that the heavy industry associated with Glasgow on the West Coast was in decline, whereas leisure-based users travelling to Edinburgh on the East Coast were in the ascendancy.

The tilting Advanced Passenger Train was conceived as a result of plans to further reduce journey times on the WCML's more curvy route. A prototype set demonstrated its capability by reaching 162mph in 1979, and service introduction was scheduled to start in September 1981. But reliability proved to be elusive and, faced with a need for greater investment in its technical development, the project was abandoned.

The WCML was left with an inferior service to that offered on the ECML by HSTs, where a number of services had even been extended through from Edinburgh to Glasgow Queen Street. Rail's market share was also being attacked by domestic air services for business journeys and by coach services for leisure travel. This lower demand in turn led to fewer services running, many therefore having to make more intermediate stops, and thus overall journey times also increased.

The decline was such that in 1987, BR's InterCity sector considered cutting back express services to Preston, with only a stopping service going north from there as part of Regional Railways.

The primacy of the East Coast route was confirmed when its electrification was authorised in the mid-1980s and completed in 1991, including wiring from Edinburgh to Glasgow via Carstairs. New Class 91 locos (to power Mk.4 carriages) featured a number of technical innovations derived from the APT traction system, but were not provided with any tilt mechanism given the characteristics of the generally 'straighter' East Coast route.

However, the advent of Sectorisation from the late 1980s brought renewed focus on the markets served by the West Coast route and led to the InterCity 250 project being developed at an estimated cost of £380 million. A Class 93 locomotive, developed from the Class 91 design, was proposed with new coaching stock designated as Mk.5. BR issued a tender in March 1991 to construct the locomotives and rolling stock, with introduction planned for 1995. Using in-cab signalling, the maximum speed was to be raised to 155mph (although limited to 125mph in normal service), but the Government did not authorise the investment and the project was cancelled.

Privatisation turnaround

With the advent of Privatisation in the mid-1990s, the Invitation to Tender document revealed that the WCML fleet comprised 48 push-pull trainsets made up of Mk.2 and Mk.3 vehicles powered by 35 Class 87, 15 Class 90, and 16 Class 86 locomotives, plus associated DVTs. Sufficient HST sets were available to cover diagrams between Euston and North Wales, but sleeping car services were not included as responsibility for these was transferred to ScotRail.

1: Class 90s were a 1980s development of the Class 87s, No. 90003 *The Herald* seen in Virgin Trains livery at Carlisle on February 23, 2002 topping DVT No. 82114 and a Mk.3 set bound for Euston.

2: The tilt-capable Class 390 'Pendolinos' revolutionised the WCML timetable from their introduction in 2002 – No. 390046 is seen with a southbound working in original Virgin Trains livery on July 3, 2004.

3: The soon-to-be introduced Hitachi-built Class 805 bi-mode and Class 807 EMUs are the latest newcomers to the WCML, at least until the first trains for HS2 are built at the end of the decade. No. 805010 is seen on test at Crewe on April 15. PAUL BICKERDYKE





2

The first WCML franchise was awarded to Virgin Trains and included annual revenue support of £77 million. But the plan to renew the entire fleet with 'Pendolino' trainsets (equipped with tilt and capable of 140mph) would convert this loss into a premium that would hit £220 million by the end of the 15-year contract in 2011/12.

A fleet of 53 'Pendolinos' was delivered from July 2002, which was meant to correspond with upgraded infrastructure that would eliminate lineside signals and reduce the journey time between Euston and Glasgow to just four hours, while 40 minutes would be cut from timings between London and Manchester.

It quickly became clear that Railtrack (the privatised predecessor to Network Rail) had grossly understated the cost for the route and signalling upgrade with its estimate of £2 billion. By the time that Virgin was able to implement its 'Very High Frequency' timetable in 2009, the cost of the line upgrade had reached £8.8 billion – despite conventional lineside signals being retained and the maximum speed downgraded to 125mph.

The benefits remained substantial, however, with 11 services per hour operating out of Euston at peak times, the journey time between London and Glasgow reduced to 4 hours 10 minutes, and Manchester reached in 2 hours 10 minutes. 'Pendolino' sets were used on the North Wales Coast Line from 2004, hauled by Class 57/3 'Thunderbird' locos adapted with Dellner couplings. But Class 221 'Super Voyager' units with tilt capability became available for these services in 2007 as a result of changes to the CrossCountry network.

SLEEPING CAR TRAINS

ONE consequence of the faster daytime services was a sharp fall in demand for overnight sleeping car trains.

Data published in 1983 revealed that, between 1969 and 1981, the annual number of sleeper journeys between Liverpool and Euston fell 65% from 20,000 to 6900, with a similar percentage fall between Manchester and Euston from 21,000 to 7900.

Twice as many people were also found to use southbound sleepers as compared to travelling north.

This fall led to BR deciding to rationalise the sleeper network in 1988, and the availability of an electrified route resulted in overnight Anglo-Scottish operations being concentrated on the WCML.

This ended the long-established ECML services from King's Cross, with no financial case to continue providing overnight services at intermediate East Coast stations.

"BR's InterCity sector considered cutting back express services to Preston, with only a stopping service going north from there"



3

Further 'Pendolino' vehicles were built in 2012 to cater for traffic growth, with four new complete 11-car sets plus 62 coaches to lengthen 31 of the existing trains to 11-cars, leaving 21 sets running in their original nine-car formations.

Virgin continued to operate the WCML franchise until December 2019, when the contract changed to become the West Coast Partnership in anticipation of providing a transition of services to HS2, which it was felt required expertise in the operation of high speed lines.

A consortium of FirstGroup and Trenitalia was awarded the new franchise under the brand of Avanti West Coast, which has since been beset by difficulty because the rising cost of HS2 has seen the high-speed project cut back, plus there has been a slow recovery from the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic.

However, a mid-life refurbishment of the 'Pendolino' fleet has been successful, which should see them continue to operate into the next decade. ■



Bodmin bouncing back

There is much that is authentically Cornish to discover at the Bodmin Railway, as Paul Bickerdyke finds out.

THERE'S a very friendly feel to the Bodmin Railway – from the ticket office to the cafe and on-train staff, you are sure to receive a warm welcome and a great day out. The BR is not alone in this amongst heritage railways, but what does add up to make it a unique offering is the combination of a main line connection, 'Y'-shaped layout, testing 1-in-40 gradients in both directions, a quintessential GWR branch line terminus, the collection of authentic Cornish locomotives and wagons, and – last but not least – the stunning scenery it passes through. Or, as the line's publicity officer Jimmy James succinctly puts it: "We're not like other railways."

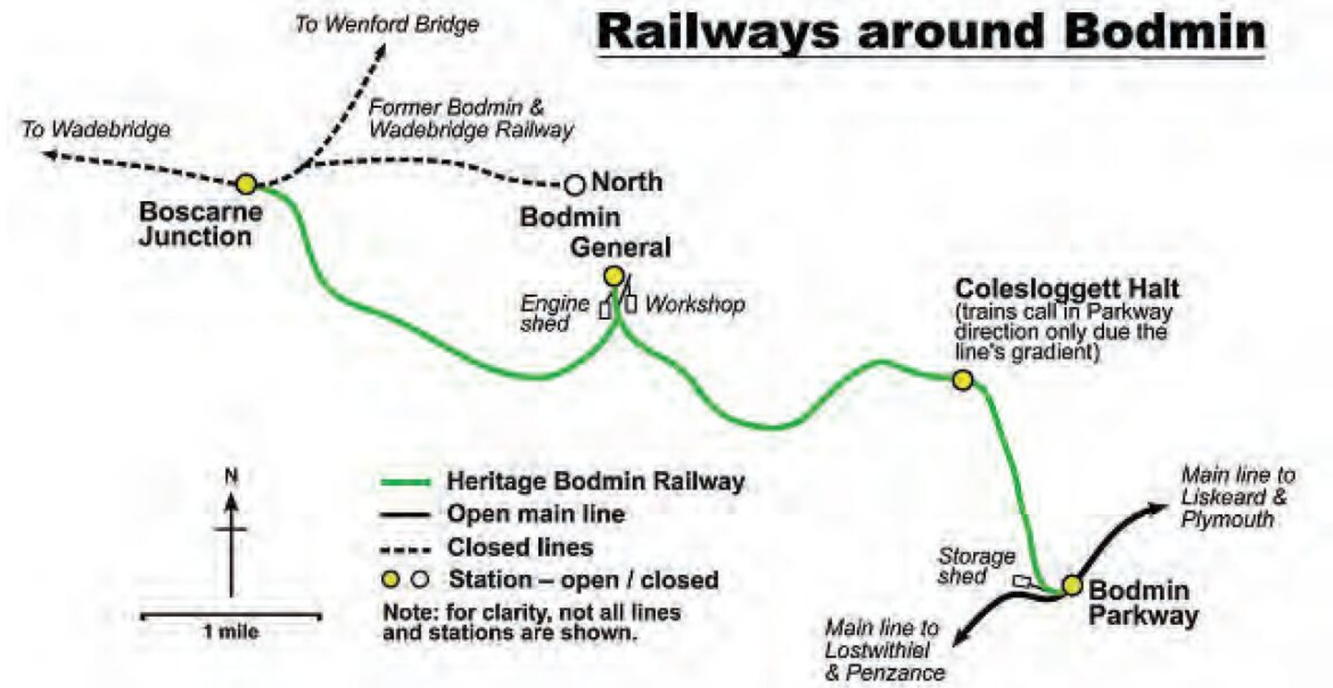
There is a rich railway history in this part of Cornwall. First to open in 1834 was the Bodmin & Wadebridge Railway, an initially isolated system that linked the quays at Wadebridge to Bodmin (with the station known later as Bodmin North in the British Railways era) and the quarries at Wenford Bridge. The LSWR acquired the B&WR in 1847, but it remained isolated until the LWSR extended the North Cornwall line to Wadebridge in 1895 (then later to Padstow in 1899).

Main: A view looking south from the bufferstops at Bodmin General on September 1, 2023 showing the 'quintessential' GWR branch line terminus layout. The line's 'Small Prairie' No. 5552 is in the main platform about to run round its train. The rebuilt signalbox is at the far end, with the two-road engine shed beyond that on the right, while the workshops are to the left of the water tower. PAUL BICKERDYKE

Meanwhile, when today's Cornish Main Line was built in the 1850s, the route chosen bypassed Bodmin, and it was not until 1887 that the Great Western Railway built a branch line from Bodmin Road (renamed Bodmin Parkway in 1983) to a terminus in the town (renamed Bodmin General in the British Railways era).

The GWR terminus became a junction station in 1888 when a new line was built to connect it the B&WR at Boscarne Junction, with through trains from Bodmin Road to Boscarne Junction thus having to reverse at Bodmin General. Despite this, however, General only ever had one platform for passenger use, plus a run round loop, cattle dock, goods shed, engine shed and various sidings.

Gradual decline set in from the late 1950s as branch lines generally came under greater road competition. The engine shed at General closed in April 1962, passenger services were withdrawn on January 30, 1967, and the end of freight at General followed soon after on May 1, 1967.







Above right: No. 50042 *Triumph* inside the engine shed on September 1, 2023.

Left: Inside the workshops on September 1, 2023 with permanent way coach No. DB975033 in the latter stages of its overhaul.

Right: Track work at Bodmin General on February 3, 2024 as part of the project to bring the second platform into regular passenger use. JIMMY JAMES



But the line from Bodmin Road to Boscarne Junction remained open until October 3, 1983 for china clay traffic from Wenford to Fowey.

The Bodmin Railway Preservation Society formed soon after in 1984, with the aim of reopening the whole of the ex-GWR line from Bodmin Parkway to Boscarne Junction. After five years of planning and fundraising, a Light Railway Order was granted in 1989 and heritage services began running on June 17, 1990 between Bodmin General and Parkway, with the line to Boscarne Junction reopening six years later on August 14, 1996.

Operations today

Despite its very useful main line connection at Parkway, the heart of operations is at General station, from where most journeys begin. This gives it a 'Y'-shaped pattern of services, with trains first heading out to Parkway and back, then Boscarne Junction and back, or vice versa.

The basic layout at General has been frozen in time, a quintessential GWR branch line terminus that will have been replicated many times over by railway modellers. The main platform has the station building at the town end, with a replica of the original signalbox opening at the country end in 1997 (the original having been removed after closure 30 years earlier). A workshop was erected on the east side of the station in 1987, and a two-road engine shed was built on the west side in 1999 on the site of the original single-road shed.

A second platform was added in early 2020, but this is not currently in regular passenger use apart from allowing short wagon rides in the station area. Before the pandemic, there was a plan sponsored by main line operator GWR and Cornwall Council to run a regular connecting service from Parkway to General, which would have made use of the new second platform. However, a number of operating difficulties were identified that would need overcoming, but then Covid-19 hit and the idea was dropped.

Nevertheless, the Bodmin Railway is pushing ahead with bringing this second platform into regular use, providing greater operational flexibility and allowing more services to run. To achieve this, changes are required to the track layout and signalling at the country end of the station, with a start being made to this over the recent winter break in services.

The railway has the long-term ambition of reaching Wadebridge which, as Mr James puts it, would "allow the railway to become a 'somewhere to somewhere' line."

The 4½ mile trackbed from Boscarne Junction to Wadebridge is currently used by the Camel Trail path and cycleway. While a solution could be found for the trail and railway to coexist, the price tag to rebuild the railway of around £1 million per mile – even at pre-Covid costings – is a greater barrier to overcome.

Authentic locos

One of the biggest draws for enthusiasts is the authentic collection of Cornish locomotives and stock.

Currently, the railway has two of its own operational steam locos, GWR 'Small Prairie' No. 5552 (formerly based at Truro in the 1950s) and 1937-built W G Bagnall 0-4-0ST *Judy*. The latter is one of a pair of similar locomotives built for use at nearby Par Docks; the other is the 1953-built *Alfred*, which is currently out of use at Bodmin. The ▶

Below: Back on home territory, the NRM's Beattie well tank No. 30857 is offloaded at Bodmin on December 7, 2023. The workshops are behind, with the nose of Type 3 No. 37142 poking out. JIMMY JAMES



distinctive *Judy* and *Alfred* were built with a much-reduced height to go under a low bridge at the Port of Par.

Pete Waterman's 'Small Prairie' No. 5553 was based at the line in 2023 and has returned again for the 2024 season as back-up to its classmate. No. 5553 (withdrawn from St Blazey in 1961) is normally used when No. 5552 requires servicing or maintenance. Its hire is kept to a minimum, however, as the fees for regular use would take from the line's income.

Home fleet steam locos awaiting overhaul are GWR 8750 Class pannier tank No. 4612 (built in 1942 and acquired by the Bodmin Railway Trust in 2000) and Bagnall 'J94'-type 0-6-0ST No. 2766 (built 1944 and brought to Bodmin in 1997). The first steam loco to run at the Bodmin Railway in 1986, Bagnall 0-4-0ST 'No. 19' (No. 2962 of 1950) has recently been sold and will leave in due course.

A recent welcome returnee has been LSWR 0298 Class (Beattie well tank) 2-4-0 No. 30587 (LSWR No. 298). This NRM-owned engine is one of only two survivors from the 85 built along with No. 314/30585 at Buckinghamshire Railway Centre, both locos dating back to 1874. These two and classmate No. 329/30586 were transferred to the Bodmin and Wadebridge Railway in 1895 as they were ideal for use hauling china clay trains on the tightly curved freight branch to Wenford Bridge, hence why they survived in service through to 1962.

No. 30587 is currently out of action, but will be on display through the 2024 season. The BR wants to give it a full inspection with a view to restoring it to working condition as funding allows. It is a relatively low powered locomotive, however, and would struggle to haul more than two coaches by itself on the line's stiff gradients.

Diesel fleet

On the diesel front, Type 4s Nos. 47306 *The Sapper* and 50042 *Triumph* are operational and see use at galas and on other occasions. The '47' was part of the EWS heritage fleet until acquired from store at St Blazey in 2007. The '50' was withdrawn at Plymouth's Laira depot in 1990, being restored at Bodmin and entering service in 1993.

There is another main line diesel, Type 3 No. 37142, which was famously the first of the class to be based in Cornwall in the late 1970s. This was bought from the Harry Needle Railroad Company, but has been stopped for overhaul since 2019.



Above: A view of Boscarne Junction looking towards Bodmin on March 16, 2024, with No. 47306 *The Sapper* just arrived with the rake of preserved CDA wagons – a first for the type. The trackbed of the former line to Bodmin North and Wenford Bridge is to the left of the platform. JON HIRD

Below: Pete Waterman's 'Small Prairie' No. 5553 at Bodmin Parkway on February 19, 2023, ready to depart back to General. The main line station is behind. JIMMY JAMES

Operational diesel shunters include 1960-built Sentinel No. 10029 (P403D), which latterly worked for English China Clay at Rocks Drier near Bugle, but was donated to the Bodmin Railway in 2014.

A recent arrival is hired-in Class 10 No. D3489 *Colonel Tomline*, which replaced the also hired-in No. 08359, these covering for the Bodmin's out of action Class 08 No. D3359/08444 and Class 10 No. D3452 (a former English China Clays loco at Fowey docks).

Other notable vehicles include Class 121 'Bubble Car' No. 121020, which had been considered for sale but will now stay at the line. It was acquired from Chiltern Railways in 2018, but in its past carried GWR chocolate and cream livery for the GWR 150 celebrations in 1985.

Another recent arrival, authentic for the region, is the rake of eight preserved CDAs china clay wagons that were rescued from St Blazey at the end of 2023. CDA wagons served Cornwall from the late 1980s, but they arrived after clay traffic from Wenford Bridge had ended, and thus are new to the Bodmin line.

The Bodmin Railway also has a rake of OOV/UCV 'Clay Hoods', which were the wooden-bodied wagons used for clay traffic before the CDAs. One of these has been converted with bench seating, and are used for short passenger trips within the station area at Bodmin on special occasions.



Permanent way coach No. DB975033 has recently been stunningly restored at a cost of more than £10,000. It includes restoration of a 'driving' position that was added by British Rail at St Blazey depot during its conversion from Brake Standard Open No. 9214 for use in a rerailing train. This 'driving' position is used in propelling moves, and allows a guard to operate a brake, or radio the driver in the locomotive.

Innovation rewarded

Like almost every other heritage line across the country, the Bodmin Railway struggled through the Covid-19 lockdowns and the impact these had on income. But recovery since then has not been easy either.

"Visitor numbers are now back to much the same level as they were before the pandemic," says Mr James. But the fact is that costs are now much higher than before, which is why he adds that: "Coal prices mean we run a more limited steam service now."

Such financial constraints mean the railway has not been able to complete its planned programme of overhauls as quickly as desired. "Before Covid, fares covered the running costs," says Mr James. "But not so now," meaning that other sources of income are required.

A great example of this is the Cornish Rail Coffee Company, set up by the railway at the end of 2021 and winning the Heritage Railway Association's Award for Business Innovation in 2023. The company runs a cafe in the former signalbox at Parkway station, with other outlets at Liskeard, Penzance (since December 2023) and soon St Erth too – all just another aspect of the Bodmin Railway's unique offering to visitors. ■

Above: A view from Parkway station as the diminutive 0-4-0ST *Judy* comes down the gradient from General with a brake van on October 14, 2023. Sentinel No. 10029 (P403D) is on the left outside the Bodmin Railway's 2007-built rolling stock storage shed. JON HIRD

"The basic layout at Bodmin General has been frozen in time as a quintessential GWR branch line terminus"



Left: Bodmin Parkway station's former signalbox on September 1, 2023, which is now a cafe run by the railway's award-winning Cornish Rail Coffee Company subsidiary.

Right: 'Clay Hood' wagon No. B743635 – seen on September 1, 2023 –has been fitted with bench seats for passenger rides in the station area at Bodmin General.





Yellow Submarines

John Heaton FCILT visits Merseyside to sample the new Class 777 EMUs on third-rail and battery power, whilst looking back to the outgoing Class 507 and earlier Class 502 sets.

IF you want to cross the Mersey from Birkenhead to Liverpool, you can catch one of the famous ferries or drive through the fume-filled road tunnel, but the Merseyrail electric trains will probably be the quickest. If the scenery does not match the river trip, it will be at least warm and dry.

Some years had passed since I had last taken a Merseyrail trip from Chester to Southport, partly owing to the wait for squadron service of the new Stadler four-car Class 777 units. Their introduction had been beset by a plethora of setbacks, and not a few excuses. There had been technical problems, labour disputes and training issues. Reports surfaced of bitter exchanges between Liverpool City Region and the Swiss manufacturers questioning the slow introduction of the new trains into traffic – and who could blame the custodians of the public purse, who had paid outright for the sets rather than relying on convoluted leasing arrangements through go-betweens?

For my part, this would be my third generation of units in the area. Family visits to Southport in the 1950s and 1960s had featured the ex-LMS, Derby-built units that became Class 502. I was less familiar with the slightly smaller Wirral Class 503 units, but the Liverpool-Southport sets were the first EMUs I had encountered. My impression was that they were smooth, spacious, fast and clean – but I still preferred the Southport to Preston steam-hauled trains and the East Lancashire excursions to Southport Flower Show that punctuated the Crossens electric service I viewed from a footbridge in Churchtown.

All was swept away in September 1964 by a genuine Beeching cut that had a silver lining, at least for my cousin, who has reclaimed part of the trackbed as a duck pond in an extended garden. Sacrilege.

Not so mellow yellow

The Class 507s and 508s that replaced the '502s' were prosaic British Rail York utilitarian



Right: The LMS-built Class 502 EMUs were in service on the electrified lines north of Liverpool from 1939-1980. A five-car set (2+3 cars) led by Driving Motor Brake Second No. M28347M is pictured at Formby on February 20, 1976, with a service from Southport to Liverpool Exchange. HAWTHORNE COLLECTION



Left: Stadler four-car set No. 777049 calls at Rice Lane on March 22, 2023 with 2K49, the 18.50 Liverpool Central to Kirkby. The station was known as Preston Road until May 1984. TOM MCATEE.

"Pragmatic and cash-strapped British Rail has been replaced by a safety authority with no direct responsibility for income and expenditure"



Right: The '502s' (and the Wirral Line's Class 503s) were replaced from 1978 by new Class 507s (supplemented later with similar Class 508s), which have operated though to the arrival of the '777s'. No. 507001 was repainted in a retro livery of BR blue and grey in December 2023, and is pictured here at Lime Street on January 3 with a 'circular' service from and to New Brighton. PHIL WALLIS

affairs with little in the way of sophistication, but having the advantage of rugged simplicity. Whether they were an improvement in anything more than maintenance costs is debatable.

So what would my reaction be to the Class 777 imports? Setting aside what might otherwise appear as a default reaction against most new train designs, these new sets were impressive. It helped that No. 777012, forming the 12.45 from Chester to Chester (via the Wirral Line's Liverpool Lime Street loop and back), was spotlessly clean both outside and inside.

It was a bold decision of the Merseyside transport authority to use bright yellow for publicity, information and both internal and external train decor. The success of doing so depends on cleanliness. The chosen shade seems to be officially termed as a number, but free-range hen egg yolk would be more evocative. Or, with Merseyside's Beatles connection, how about submarine yellow?

A modernistic tail and headlight display cluster lends a certain panache, and the extended bodyside step gives a genuine step-free level access between platform and train. It is a pity the same cannot be said of the internal floor, which suffers from the height difference necessary to climb over the articulated bogies that link a set's carriages. At least these are not the accident-inducing steps of some other Stadler products, but there is still a 'Lickey-esque' incline.

Where to sit? It is a surprise to find so many bays of four – no more than on a Class 507, but the Class 777 ones match the window spacing. The public address displays on all the Class 777s I used had their own unique version of Merseyrail geography, which rarely mirrored the view from the window. And even if it did coincide, the loudspeaker announcements of the next station on the Class 507s were easier to understand for most passengers. Still no toilets though, and some of the main traffic flows require 45 minute journeys. ▶

There was a degree of irony involved with the first leg of my third-rail journey being from Chester, as this direct-current supply system was provided here as late as 1993, compared with the original 1904 developments of the Liverpool area electrification. The 1993 extension from Rock Ferry to Chester is also in marked contrast to the recent refusal by safety authorities to countenance third-rail for the 0.83-mile extension of Merseyrail trains from Kirkby to the buffers at the new Headbolt Lane terminus on the line towards Wigan.

What has changed since 1993? For one thing, pragmatic and cash-strapped British Rail has been replaced by a safety authority with no direct responsibility for income and expenditure, so the investment in a seven-strong Class 777/1 battery-powered sub-fleet for Headbolt Lane services has arguably failed to result in the most effective solution. Perhaps the safety record of 1993's 13½ mile extension on 60/70mph track covering 10 extra stations has caused the reappraisal? But, if so, I do not recall a spate of third-rail incidents in that time.

The four-car EMU leaves Chester westbound before easing round the sharp curve onto the former main line used by Paddington steam expresses to Birkenhead, now reduced to a vestige of its former self – although the service frequency of four passenger trains an hour each way is probably a best ever.

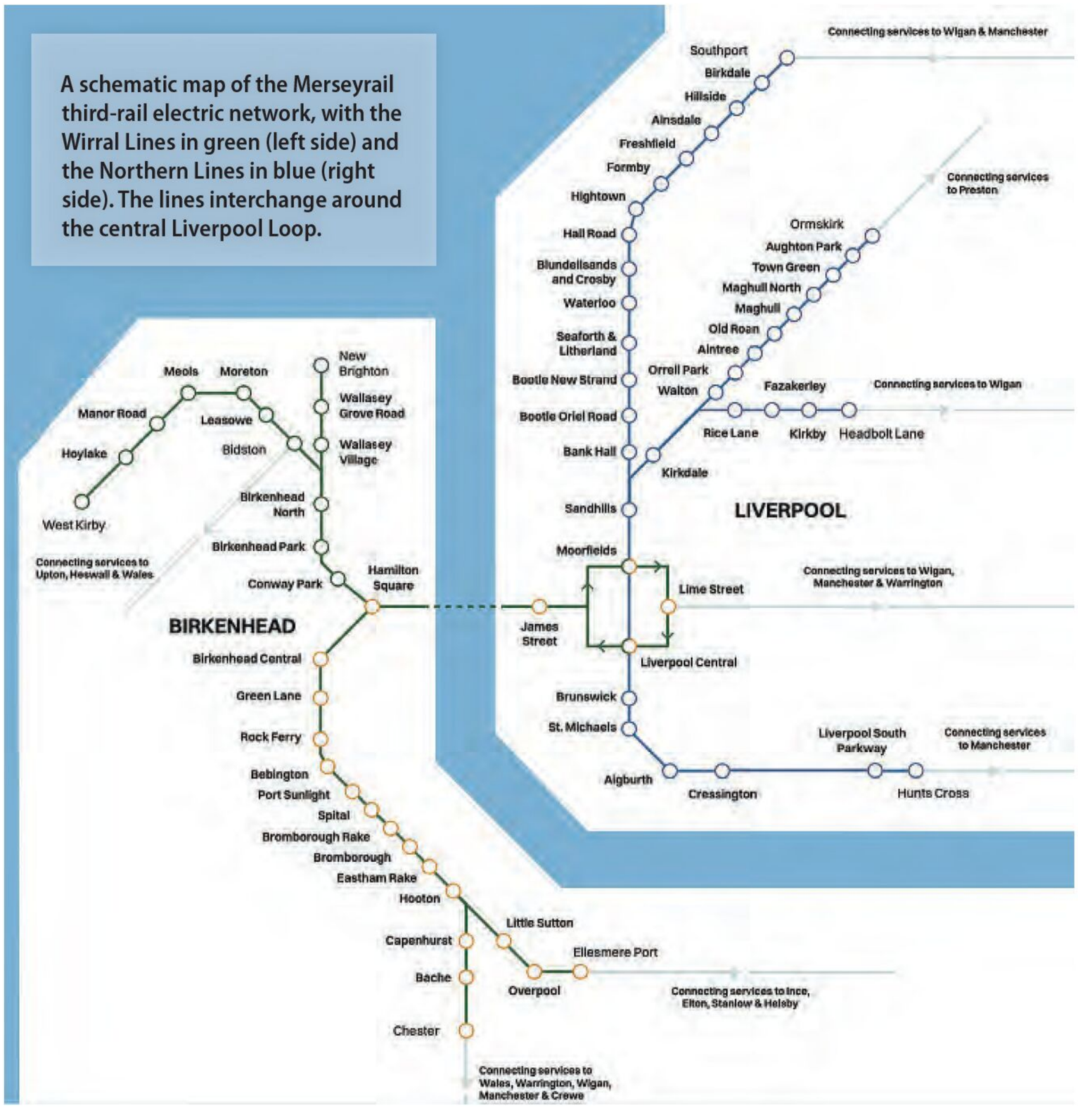
The line was an early opening, in 1840, reflecting the status of Liverpool as a prime seaport in those early Victorian times. Three minutes out, we stop at Bache, which opened in 1984. Accelerating hard before reaching the 1-in-330 gradient through the remains of Mollington's platforms (opened 1840, closed 1960), No. 777012 reaches 50mph in 350 yards, but cruises gently to 59mph and coasts to the 70mph board before accelerating to this new maximum permissible speed on the stretch through Capenhurst. The top speed of the unit is 75mph, so there is a little in hand, the figure probably reflecting aspirations to run the sets elsewhere using their 25kV overhead capability, which is fitted (apart from the pantographs) but not activated.

Capenhurst is served only by alternate trains, and it is not by chance that I have selected a stopper because the departure towards Hooton has the distinction of being both level and authorised for 70mph – unlike the 60mph ceiling that applies on most of the system. Our unit is quickly into full power, reaching 10mph in under six seconds, 50mph in 23.87 sec and 0.18 miles, then 60mph in 30.66 sec and 0.3 miles, going on to 69mph before coasting.

I have to pinch myself. This is a third-rail, 750V direct-current power supply and we have reached 60mph in 31sec (allowing for the false accuracy implied by using unrounded stopwatch readings from GPS observations). That is 4sec faster than any other train I have timed in the UK – a 25kV AC overhead 'tie' between a Class 345 and three-car Class 331/0. And no, the Class 777 has not welded itself to the third-rail.

Having taken 3min 51sec start to stop for the 2.96 miles from Capenhurst to Hooton, we have clipped 39sec off the current working time, although surprisingly just 19 sec off my last Class 507 run on this line. However, that older unit had taken 73sec and 0.8 miles to reach 60mph.

"I have to pinch myself: this is a third-rail, 750V DC power and we have reached 60mph in 31sec"



A schematic map of the Merseyrail third-rail electric network, with the Wirral Lines in green (left side) and the Northern Lines in blue (right side). The lines interchange around the central Liverpool Loop.

Power and control

Despite my operator's hat being firmly in place, I decided to venture into the murky Mersey waters of energy consumption versus journey time. Surely these muscular 2820hp, 99 tonne units must be consuming ludicrous amounts of expensive electricity to give me such an exciting run, yet saving only around half a minute – even on this longer and faster-than-average section? Admittedly, a typical round trip from Chester to Liverpool and back has 31 starts, so the time benefits quickly add up, even on the many short sections with lower gains. But were the Class 507s not a good old British Rail compromise, with 880hp for their three-car 103 tons?

I consulted the Railway Performance Society's (RPS) technical officer Dr David Stannard – now retired from the Jodrell Bank Observatory in Cheshire. How much extra energy is expended in feeding the athletic prowess of a Class 777? The good doctor's answer was succinct: "We don't know."

When pressed further, he explained that it is not straightforward to calculate energy usage because of the many uncertainties. How, for instance, does the resistance of a four-car set with articulated bogies compare with that of a three-car set with conventional bogies? And what are the set-ups of the traction control packages?

From simplistic 'work done' considerations – and assuming linear acceleration rates followed by running at a constant line speed – then the Class 777s would be faster, but expected to consume more energy, than the Class 507s.

If, however, on reaching line speed the Class 777s were to begin coasting, with a consequent modest declining speed and slight increase in run time, then continued traction energy would not need applying to overcome the running resistance. In this case both the power consumed and overall time are thus likely to be less than that of the Class 507s.

The best compromise could be to observe the maxim about the energy consumption/cost/journey time balance: accelerate hard to the maximum permissible speed, cruise until the scheduled time is attainable by coasting, and then brake as sharply as possible within the modern parameters of acceptability. Observation suggests this method is regularly applied, although there is also evidence of some final 'cruising' towards the top speed and then using 'speed-set' to maintain the speed rather than 'coasting' from the maximum. Cruising like that would use more energy, but give a shorter journey time than coasting. Why not simply cut the schedules and exploit the traction's capabilities to the full?

Going loopy

After a full round trip with No. 777012, I went back to Liverpool on No. 777013 as the 14.45 from Chester, as shown in Table 1, to do a spot of genealogy near Lime Street. No. 777013 improved on the working times by 3½min on



A rear view of No. 777024 at Chester on February 13, forming the 13.31 'circular' to Liverpool Lime Street and back. JOHN HEATON



No. 777001 on arrival at Hooton on February 13, with the 13.45 Chester to Chester via Liverpool Lime Street. Hooton is the junction for Merseyrail services to Helsby and Chester. JOHN HEATON

Table 1: Chester to Liverpool Lime Street

Unit			777013			507027		
Vehicles/tare tonnes			4/99			3/103		
Train			14.45 Chester-Liverpool LS			09.15 Chester-Liverpool LS		
Date			February 13, 2024			July 23, 2023		
Recorder			J Heaton			D Ashley		
Miles	**Location**	**Sch**	**M S**	**Ave MPH**	**Dwell (S)**	**M S**	**Ave MPH**	**Dwell (S)**
0.00	Chester d	0	0 00	T		0 00	T	
0.99	Bache a	3	2 53	20.5		3 07	19.0	
0.00	d	3½	3 26		33	3 35		28
4.14	Capenhurst a	5½	4 29	55.4		4 57	50.2	
0.00	d	6	5 30		61	5 24		27
2.96	Hooton a	4	3 51	46.2		4 19	41.2	
0.00	d	4½	5 03		72	5 00		41
0.79	Eastham Rake a	1½	1 29	31.9		1 48	26.3	
0.00	d	2	2 02		33	2 15		27
0.99	Bromborough a	2	1 44	34.2		1 55	30.9	
0.00	d	2	2 15		31	2 18		23
0.63	Bromborough Rake a	1½	1 16	29.6		1 32	24.5	
0.00	d	2½	1 43		27	2 00		28
0.69	Spital a	1½	1 23	29.8		1 40	24.8	
0.00	d	2	1 59		36	2 07		27
0.61	Port Sunlight a	1½	1 18	28.3		1 37	22.7	
0.00	d	2	1 53		35	2 00		23
0.66	Bebington a	1½	1 19	30.2		1 31	26.2	
0.00	d	2	1 59		40	2 08		37
1.08	Rock Ferry a	2½	1 47	36.2		1 54	33.9	
0.00	d	3	3 08		81	2 25		31
0.74	Green Lane a	2	2 14	19.8		2 11	20.3	
0.00	d	2½	2 56		42	2 42		31
0.44	Birkenhead C a	1½	1 30	17.5		1 34	16.8	
0.00	d	2½	2 15		45	2 28		54
0.53	Hamilton Square a	1½	1 54	16.6		1 58	16.0	
0.00	d	2	2 33		39	2 33		35
1.18	Liv. James Street a	2½	2 34	27.5		2 31	28.0	
0.00	d	3	3 17		43	3 09		38
0.29	Moorfields a	1	0 55	18.8		1 02	16.7	
0.00	d	1½	1 42		47	1 29		27
0.59	Liverpool Lime St a	1½	1 31	23.2		1 45	20.1	
	Time moving	34 30	32 07			35 21		
	Time stationary	8 00	11 05			7 57		
	Journey time	42 30	43 12			43 18		

the 16 sections, taking 31.28sec from 0 to 60mph leaving Capenhurst, 0.62sec longer (unrounded and including method inadequacies) than No. 777012, the time having been lost by taking full power marginally later.

After Rock Ferry, the pattern of working time improvements is broken, but overall time was kept with the exception of a ½min station loss at Liverpool James Street, which was not regained before Lime Street. With that single – and minor – exception, all other station arrivals and departures were on time or early.

Table 1 also shows a run with a Class 507 on the same schedule. The Class 777 beat most sectional running times, but had to 'wait time' at several stations. The objective of 10% shorter journey times from the Class 777 investment is feasible on this leg of the Wirral Line, but it is possible that the modern tendency of hedging the spare time against delays might instead prevail.

The layout of the Wirral and Northern Lines around the Lime Street loop sometimes foxes even experienced rail travellers (see the network map). Wirral Line trains operate at their sub-Mersey level through Liverpool James Street, then run in a clockwise direction only, via Moorfields, Lime Street and Central stations to arrive back at James Street, ready to pass below the Mersey once again and head for their original starting points at New Brighton, West Kirby, Ellesmere Port or Chester.

On the other hand, the Northern Line's Hunt's Cross to Southport trains run at a higher level – but still underground – through Liverpool Central (where they are joined by Ormskirk and Kirkby starters), and then call at Moorfields.

Therefore, passengers from Lime Street to Southport use the clockwise Wirral Line trains and change at Central, while passengers returning from Southport to Lime Street change onto Wirral Line trains at Moorfields.

Strained capacity

'Southport overnight' was my target using the 15.51 from Hunt's Cross, leaving Liverpool Central 1½min late on its 16.08 booking. Again, there were 16 station stops, but there was a different story in terms of timekeeping. Although time was lost on only two sections (having excluded 1min pathing and 2min performance allowances), it was gained on only four. However, set No. 777005 was hindered by a defective offside rear door that extended dwell times at this peak time. I wonder if this showed up as a traction defect delay for reliability calculation?

It was disappointing that, even in the post-pandemic era of reduced commuting, the train was soon uncomfortably full. The lack of transverse seating with its resultant wide standing room, is generally appreciated but proved a mixed blessing on this working. A Class 777 has 184 seats compared with the 192 of a Class 507 – but the Class 777 has standing quoted as 302 passengers. Platform lengths at present preclude Class 777s doubling up, whereas two Class 507s remained a fixture at busy times during my visit. Going back to my ex-LMS Class 502s, 2+3-car formations were commonplace in the peaks, with around 460 seats depending on the composition. Forget counting standees.

This peak train weighed at least 20 tons more at maximum loading compared with the mid-afternoon train from Chester I had used, so it was understandably slighty slower off the mark, but still managed 0-60mph in 35½sec in the 1.94 miles (and only 2min 36sec) between Hall Road and Hightown. Between Liverpool Central and Hall Road, there was only one of the nine sections that took more than two minutes (Moorfields to Sandhills), but speeds in the high 50s – and even 60mph – were achieved.

Once into the land of sandy suburbs and championship golf courses, the distance between stations increased and it was possible to achieve 0-60mph in 32sec on two occasions between Freshfield and Ainsdale alone: on starting and after an abrupt intermediate stop. The headline time of 47min gross for the 19 miles belies the effort needed to keep time on this deceptively entertaining trip, but arrival was still a disappointing 2½min late. ▶



One of the seven battery-fitted Class 777/1 sets, No. 777148, waits at the Headbolt Lane terminus on February 19, to form the 13.41 to Liverpool Central. JOHN HEATON

"One cannot help but reflect on the Class 502 figures and wonder exactly what the achievements have been during the 90 years between their original Derby design and the introduction of the Class 777s"

Table 2: Southport to Moorfields/Liverpool Exchange

Units/Motored vehicles			777036			507010+507007			28360/28322			
Vehicles/tare tonnes			4/99			6/206			5/159			
Train			16.27 Southport-Hunt's Cross			07.42 Southport-Hunt's Cross			2.45pm Southport-Liverpool Exchange			
Date			January 29, 2024			February 14, 2024			July 15, 1962			
Recorder			D Ashley			J Heaton			B. Price			
Miles	Location	Sch	M S	Ave MPH	Dwell (S)	M S	Ave MPH	Dwell (S)	Sch	M S	Ave MPH	Dwell (S)
0.00	Southport d	0	0 00	T		0 00	T		0	0 00		
1.13	Birkdale a	3½	3 59	16.9		3 39	18.5		3	2 20	28.9	
0.00	d	4	4 44		45	4 11		32	3½	2 53		33
0.95	Hillside a	2	1 46	32.3		1 54	30.0		1½	1 36	35.6	
0.00	d	2½	2 21		35	2 19		25	2	1 55		19
1.55	Ainsdale a	2½	2 18	40.4		2 24	38.8		2	2 06	44.3	
0.00	d	3	2 54		36	2 52		28	2½	2 31		25
2.74	Freshfield a	3½	3 32	46.5		3 39	45.0		3½	3 18	49.8	
0.00	d	4	4 23		61	4 08		29	4	3 37		19
0.86	Formby a	1½	1 42	30.4		1 46	29.3		1½	1 32	33.8	
0.00	d	2	2 40		58	2 18		32	2	1 53		21
2.06	Hightown a	3	2 46	44.7		2 47	44.5		2½	2 45	45.0	
0.00	d	3½	3 23		37	3 09		22	3	3 05		20
1.94	Hall Road a	3	2 39	43.9		2 46	42.0		2½	2 38	44.1	
0.00	d	3½	3 25		44	3 16		30	3	2 55		17
0.83	Blundellsands & C a	1½	1 43	28.8		1 36	30.9		1½	1 25	34.9	
0.00	d	2	2 20		37	2 11		35	2	1 54		29
1.10	Waterloo (M'side) a	2	2 07	31.2		2 03	32.2		2½	1 51	35.7	
0.00	d	2½	3 01		51	2 35		32	3	2 15		24
1.08	Seaforth & L a	2	1 53	34.2		1 58	32.8		1½	1 57	tsr 33.1	
0.00	d	2½	2 31		38	2 35		37	2	2 15		18
0.99	Bootle New Strand a	2	1 53	31.5		1 45	33.9		1½	1 37	36.6	
0.00	d	2½	2 43		50	2 15		30	2	1 57		20
0.43	Bootle Oriel Road a	1	1 09	22.2		1 11	21.5		1	0 56	27.3	
0.00	d	1½	1 52		43	1 39		28	1½	1 17		21
0.70	Bank Hall a	1½	1 37	26.0		1 41	25.0		2	1 26	29.3	
0.00	d	2	2 18		41	2 57		76	2½	1 46		20
0.65	Sandhills a	2½	1 49	21.5		2 00	19.5		1½	1 31	25.7	
0.00	d	3	2 38		49	2 31		31	2	1 49		18
1.37	Liverpool Ex a								3	3 08	26.2	
1.53	Moorfields a	3	3 02	30.2		3 21	27.3					
	Time moving		35 00	33 50		34 30			31 00	30 06		
	Time stationary		7 30	10 25		7 47			7 00	5 04		
	Journey time		42 30	44 15		42 17			38 00	35 10		

tsr= temporary speed restriction
Bootle New Strand was known as Marsh Lane & Strand Road in 1962

My southbound departure the following day was unplanned, but it was no surprise to find two consecutive departures featuring the declining Class 507s on a 45min timing to Liverpool Central that included just one ½min performance allowance. Although acceleration was obviously slower than with the Class 777s, the top speeds were a shade higher, with 62mph being reached three times.

The train was ½min late away and it proved impossible to recoup this despite the speeds reached. Running time was lost only on one section, from Freshfield to Formby, and that was only 16sec. Even more impressive was station timekeeping, which registered just two losses, 1min each at Hall Road and Bank Hall on allowances of only half a minute everywhere except a full minute at Sandhills and Moorfields. Arrival at Liverpool Central was 1min late. Allowing for the fact the run used stock introduced in 1978, this was an excellent run.

Table 2 shows three southbound runs from Southport, one with each of the last three generations of stock employed. The Class 502 run was recorded by Bevan Price in 1962, and is far quicker than both the Class 507 and Class 777 – although the former above ground Exchange terminus was 0.16 miles nearer Southport than its underground Moorfields replacement. Nevertheless, arriving into Liverpool only 35min after leaving Southport is a target beyond our swish new trains.

The Class 502s had high power/weight ratios: a five-car formation with 1880hp for 155 tons tare offered 12.13hp/ton. Much of the time gain is down to what would now be called aggressive driving, but they knew how to stop a train in those days.

New terminus

Finally, Table 3 shows two journeys from the new Headbolt Lane station to Liverpool Central. To place the run in context, the refusal of the Office of Rail and Road to countenance a 0.83 mile third-rail extension from Kirkby to the buffer stops at the new park & ride dual terminus is bewildering. Of course, the expense of batteries might be part of a grand plan, such as a future extension of Merseyrail to the cramped Wigan Wallgate or Wrexham. But in the meantime, through passengers from Wigan have to alight from their DMU at Headbolt Lane, hope it is not raining, and follow the locals to find their forward connection.

Previously, when the interchange was at Kirkby, it was possible to see the train you were aiming to catch, but there is a huge screen to prevent this at Headbolt Lane. There were a staggering four buffer-stop collisions at Kirkby in 35 years from 1987, and the approach optics of a single through-line (as part of the former Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway's main line between Manchester Victoria and Liverpool Exchange) might have contributed to this record – although the 2021, most recent, crash was caused by the driver being distracted by using his mobile phone.

On my journey, No. 777148 eased out of the platform to reach 10mph in 21sec, then accelerated to 33mph during a further 17sec, and cruised gently to the maximum permissible line speed of 40mph 37sec later (62mph is the stated maximum vehicle speed on battery operation). The unit coasted into Kirkby for a journey time of 2min 3sec, losing 30sec on schedule then another ½min at the station.



There was a further surprise in store as we departed Kirkby still on battery power, with the brief and quiet hiss of the pick-up shoes being lowered onto the third-rail taking place after about 160 yards and 20sec at 30mph. On the Headbolt Lane-bound down run, drivers are informed by a balise as they approach Fazakerley that battery power is about to start, and this is then used through to Headbolt Lane. In all, that makes 3.5 miles on battery power compared to a claimed 34 mile range. The result is that the extension of Merseyrail trains to Headbolt Lane has not only frustrated the opportunity to extend the third-rail, it has effectively foreshortened the existing installation.

No official reason for the new arrangement has emerged, but it has been suggested that it prevents any possibility of third-rail return current getting beyond the insulated block joint (IBJ) if a down electric train were to overshoot Kirkby. Presumably the Liverpool-bound (up) starts from Kirkby on battery power are in case the unit has stopped with the rear coach on the Headbolt Lane side of the IBJ. It may be that readers know the true answer?

As for the progress of my train, the run remained in deficit throughout to Moorfields, despite 1½min in performance allowances and only ½min more in lost time at stations. On the short seven-mile run from Kirkby to Moorfields, it was not possible to determine the effect of carrying around the redundant extra 5 tonnes of the two batteries from other factors affecting journey times, such as passenger load or driving techniques. Nevertheless, the lighter set achieved quicker times on four of the five sections in Table 3.

The stations are too close together to reach 60mph, but three accelerations from station stops to 40mph each took 22sec, compared with an average of 19sec for a small random batch of Wirral Line non-battery Class 777/0 starts, and 32sec for Class 507s on a selection of southbound Southport train sections. These figures lack a solid comparative base, but they do indicate an area for future exploration.

Table3: Headbolt Lane to Moorfields

Unit		777148				777049			
Vehicles/tare tonnes		4/104				4/99			
Train		13.41 Headbolt Lane-Liverpool C				11.28 Kirkby-Liverpool C			
Date		February 19, 2024				February 20, 2023			
Recorder		J Heaton				I Umpleby			
Miles	Location	Sch	M S	MPH	Ave MPH	Sch	M S	MPH	Ave MPH
0.00	Headbolt Lane d	0	0 00	½L-/40	T				
0.81	Kirkby a	1½	2 03		23.8				
0.00	d	2	2 49	-/55		0	0 00	T-/57	
1.83	Fazakerley a	<½>3	2 57		37.1	3	2 38		44.4
0.00	d	3½	3 28	-/55		½	3 21	-/60	
1.36	Rice Lane a	2	2 04		39.6	2	2 00		40.9
0.00	d	2½	2 36	-/51		2½	2 34	-/51	
1.43	Kirkdale a	2	2 14		38.3	2½	2 08		40.1
0.00	d	3	3 15	-/42		3½	2 44	-/sigs/ 42	
0.86	Sandhills a	<1>2½	1 40		31.1	2	2 00		25.9
0.00	d	3	2 19	-/44		2½	3 04	-/46	
1.53	Moorfields a	3	3 08		29.2	3	3 02		30.2

777148 Battery power Headbolt Lane to Kirkby then starting from Kirkby
<x>= minutes performance allowance

Above: New and Old Merseyrail units meet underground at Liverpool Central on June 30, 2023, with (left) No. 777012 waiting to depart with the last train of the day to Ormskirk No. 507023 calls with a service from Southport to Hunt's Cross. PHIL WALLIS

Below: Nos. 777008 (left) and 777049 cross at Kirkdale on April 22, 2023 with services to Kirkby and Liverpool Central respectively. ALEX AYRE



The Merseyrail Class 777s merit a trip to experience the new generation of Liverpool suburban rail transport, although one cannot help but reflect on those Class 502 figures and wonder exactly what the achievements have been during the 90 years that have elapsed between their original Derby design and the introduction of the Class 777s, built in an ostensibly high-wage country short of raw materials other than hydro-electric power. ■

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PAUL BICKERDYKE, EDITOR

Freightliner's No. 66588 approaches Blisworth with 4M63, the 09.12 Felixstowe North-Trafford Park on September 7, 2023. The train's usual route via Northampton was closed for 10 days while crossovers were installed at the new Northampton Gateway freight terminal.
CHRIS MILNER

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An aerial view looking east over Neville Hill on March 18. From the left are the wheel lathe building (blue roof); Intercity maintenance shed (long building) and power car bay (short building); heavy repair shed (pointed roof); DMU/EMU maintenance shed (blue front); and Intercity servicing shed (long white and blue buildings). Just visible at the bottom is the east end of the through DMU/EMU servicing shed, while in the centre is a working turntable, and on the far right is the main line from Leeds to York and Selby. RICHARD GENNIS



Looking west, Class 158 DMUs Nos. 158755 and 158868 are in the unit servicing shed, while to the right classmates Nos. 158906 and 158910 flank Class 150 No. 150001. Even the youngest of the '15x' series DMUs have now completed well over 30 years of service, and it is anticipated that the buildings at the Leeds site will have to be extended to accommodate whatever trains are ordered to succeed them. UNLESS STATED, ALL PHOTOS TAKEN ON JANUARY 10 BY GRAEME PICKERING

Neville Hill

125 years old and still evolving

Two miles east of Leeds station, Northern's biggest train care centre has played a pivotal role in maintenance since 1899. But, as Graeme Pickering discovered, it is preparing for a period of major transformation.

As the 19th century drew to a close, the North Eastern Railway concluded that it needed another depot in Leeds to augment capacity. Accommodation at the former Leeds and Thirsk Railway's Holbeck depot (about half-a-mile north of the ex-North Midland Railway's shed of the same name, which remains in rail use today) was considered inadequate, so in 1899 facilities were opened on the other side of the city at Neville Hill.

Costing £132,971 and occupying an 11-acre site on the northern side of the route used by trains to and from York and Selby, the engine shed, coal stage, washing shed and sidings were among the initial steps in developing what has been a key piece in the jigsaw of Yorkshire's railway operations ever since. But things have never really stood still.

Neville Hill had 96 locomotives on its books by 1904 and facilities were extended.

At grouping, the depot passed to the London & North Eastern Railway. During the 1930s, a wide variety of locomotives could be found on shed, ranging from NER Classes G5, N8, N10, A6, A7, A8, J71, J72 and J77 to Classes B13, B15, B16, C7, D17, D20, D21, D49, as well as J21, J25, J27, Q6 and steam railcars. In addition to the 'D49s', bigger locomotives within its allocation in the 1950s included LNER 'A3s' (or later, A1s), LMS 'Ivatt' Class 4s and War Department (WD) 2-8-0s.

In 1960, with steam in decline, modifications were made to accommodate a running shed and repair shop for diesel multiple units. By the end of the decade, it provided what was regarded at the time as a comprehensive facility for the maintenance, servicing, cleaning and stabling of DMUs, locomotives and carriages. It took on work previously done at Leeds Central, City, and Bradford Forster Square stations, Manningham depot, the former Great Northern and London & North Western sheds at Copley Hill and Waterloo Sidings. Further changes were made in the 1970s for High Speed Train sets, and Neville ▶

"It is Northern's biggest Traincare Centre and lays claim to being the biggest rail maintenance operation in the North of England"

Hill continued to maintain HSTs until they were withdrawn by East Midlands Railway in May 2021.

Today, it is Northern's biggest Traincare Centre and lays claim to being the biggest rail maintenance operation in the North of England, with over 400 staff. Under a direct contract with the present day train operating company London North Eastern Railway, its remaining Class 91s and Mk.4 InterCity 225 sets were reallocated to Neville Hill, filling the gap left by the HSTs and thereby retaining work for the depot.

Once upon a time, discussion about locomotive performance would have relied on reports directly from the engine crew. Today, the team can access real-time information and even advise drivers on how to resolve faults while in service. On the day of *The RM's* visit, we were shown into an office where a screen at the far end of the room displayed live information on the speed of a Class 91 accelerating on the East Coast Main Line: 1980s engineering coupled with 21st century diagnostics software and the mobile internet.



Above: Named after the traincare centre in August last year, No. 91127 *Neville Hill* is one of 12 Class 91s that are still part of the LNER fleet, between them operating the eight remaining 'Intercity 225' Mk.4 sets on the East Coast Main Line. The rakes of coaches and locomotives were transferred there in 2021.

Below: A view looking east of the five-road DMU/EMU maintenance shed on January 10. Shunter No. 08405 (in worn EWS livery) is one of five Class 08s allocated to work the site, while Class 333 No. 333013 and Class 331 No. 331008 are stabled behind it. A combination of electrified and non-electrified sidings means that stabling for EMUs is at a premium. The situation will be eased with the construction of a new depot at Shipley which will be the base for units operating on the Airedale and Wharfedale routes (see last issue). PAUL BICKERDYKE

Award winning

Of the 31 locomotives and IC225 sets built, 12 locos and eight rakes of coaches remain in use with LNER. Despite the fleet's advancing years, as this issue of *The RM* went to press, the Neville Hill team was celebrating the achievement of 37,545 miles per technical incident – a measure of reliability more than three times higher than the target.

Industry awards for the IC225s, and the way that the vehicles and locomotives are presented, are a further reflection of the pride the team takes in its work. In a return to the old British Rail custom of adding depot logos and codes to rolling stock and locomotives, No. 91127 now bears the 'NL' badge (incorporating the owl from the Leeds coat of arms and the white rose of Yorkshire) in addition to carrying the logo on its *Neville Hill* nameplates, which were unveiled in August last year by Paul Corrie, a few weeks before his retirement after 50 years of railway service. *Neville Hill* is also still carried by HST power car No. 43049, named there in 1984 but now part of the Locomotive Services Ltd (LSL) fleet.

"If a train's in service, you know where it's been maintained," says Northern's fleet director Iain Burnett, explaining the resurrection of badges is happening across the company. "Everybody on-site has a Neville Hill badge. We harness that pride of working for Northern, working for Neville Hill. Working for Northern, working for Allerton etc."

With the '225s' nearing the end of their careers (withdrawals are expected in 2027), the future of intercity train fleet maintenance at the depot was cemented for the longer term with last year's announcement that LNER's fleet of 10 yet-to-be-built CAF 10-car, long-distance tri-mode trains will be based there.

"There's a flexibility here that I don't think is necessarily at every other rail site," Mr Burnett continues. "For us, we can give it a go and we can work with multiple customers. Neville Hill's worked like that since Privatisation. We don't want to lose that. It's a unique point of the site as well commercially. We will be contracted with CAF to provide maintenance for an LNER-operated train. That is a change for us because at the moment with IC225s, our agreement is directly with LNER."

Investment in change

The CAF deal brings more investment in Neville Hill. Equipping it with lifting gear for 10-car trains and a component drop, making it easier to remove parts from underneath the units, are among the things that have already been discussed with the manufacturer.

"We've 'agreed to agree' because we were pushed for timescales," he explains. "We couldn't nail down everything, because you've got to go and do surveys and things, but there are some massive infrastructure improvements needed to the capability of Neville Hill to do maintenance on a fixed formation 10-car train."

When the HSTs finally left, an opportunity existed to take work on CrossCountry's 'Voyager' units. Unlike the CAF sets though, the time frame for making preparations to accommodate the 'Voyagers' proved too tight to accept the contract. Mr Burnett reels off a list of considerations, ranging from depot driver training to pipes and connections for fuelling and extraction fans – which are currently positioned to deal with the exhaust





Two LNER 'Azumas' stabled alongside the inter-city servicing shed on January 10. Note the fuel wagons on the right – diesel is still delivered to the depot by rail due to problems with road access, although in much lower quantities since the end of HSTs at the depot. PAUL BICKERDYKE

from HST power cars rather than from five diesel engines on a multiple unit.

At a site that has even seen Colas locomotives and LSL's Midland Pullman HST set turn up for attention, he is, however, keen not to rule out CrossCountry units being stabled there in the future.

"We continue to work with them to say by a point in time, once we've installed some extractors, which we're doing later this year, then that work could come back," he comments. "We're always looking to utilise the capacity that the site has got."

Northern is preparing for a period of wider physical transformation at Neville Hill, but the last three years have already borne witness to significant organisational changes.

When HSTs were still based there, the depot was home to separately staffed and managed operations for both EMR and Northern. Withdrawal of the sets marked the end of EMR trains being maintained in Leeds, and the company's staff were subsequently transferred to Northern, which took complete control of the depot in October 2021.

Mr Burnett says that bringing the teams together has been a "complex journey", given that working as two separate depots was long-ingrained, dating back to the creation of separate business units under British Rail's Sectorisation process.

"From a maintenance perspective, a lot of that is starting to filter out, but from an operations perspective, we've still got quite a bit to go," he explains. "East Midlands Railway was the depot facility operator. Northern had its own movements team for moving the trains on site and EMR had the whole movements control of the site and the interface with Network Rail. They are all integrated, but they are dispersed. One of our strategies is to have operations control centralised within the site that pulls all of these dispersed people together."

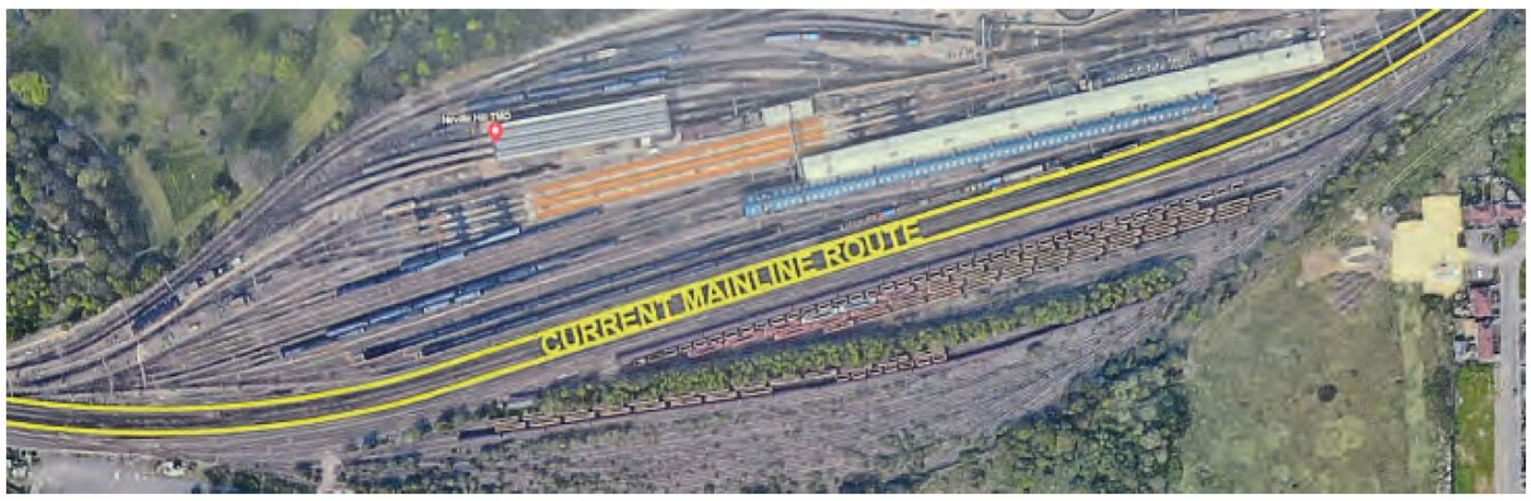
He admits this will be a difficult task, not least because it will require the relocation of equipment – including the west end signalling console, which controls movements to and from the main line.

Progress is, however, being made with the removal of one of the most visible reminders of BR's InterCity and Provincial sectors. Since the 1980s, portable buildings, which he describes as "symbolic" of the divide between businesses, have been dotted around the Neville Hill site, but they are gradually being vacated and removed as staff transfer to permanent accommodation.

"We were training our technicians in cabins. It's not inspiring, is it? When we came up with the vision for Neville Hill, a big chunk of us thought 'how do we make this a more pleasant experience for our people'. That's what we've done and we continue on that journey."

It does not stop there though. The WOSA (Workshop Office Staff Accommodation) project should eventually include demolition of the building that faces the site entrance at Osmondthorpe Lane and the creation of a smaller open-plan office structure.

> "We're trying to get to that point where we're like a main dealership where you take your car"



A satellite image showing how the current Leeds to York/Selby main line runs between the depot (upper) and freight/disused carriage sidings (lower).



Plans in the Trans-Pennine Route Upgrade Programme (TRU) will see the main line moved south to allow a more sweeping and higher-speed curve built over the site of the former freight sidings. This is turn would create space for Neville Hill depot to expand.

Consideration is being given to installing a siding to help facilitate the transfer of rail vehicles to lorries when needed, as the additional outdoor space left by the changes would make it easier to manoeuvre trailers.

Total train care

As well as its own five resident Class 08 shunters and, at the other end of the traction scale, LNER 'Azuma' units and Class 91s/InterCity 225 sets, Neville Hill also maintains Northern Classes 150, 155, 158 and 170 DMUs and Classes 331 and 333 EMUs (the latter supported by on-site Siemens engineers).

In an *RM* article in July 1915, observing the relationship between Neville Hill and ▶



Above: The power cars and HST sets may have gone, but the shed still plays a role in preparing intercity trains for their duties. Class 91s and Intercity 225 sets currently reside here, and the building will be equipped in the next few years to deal with the 10 new CAF tri-mode trains that will be built for LNER.



Right: Mk.4 'Intercity 225' rakes now occupy space at Neville Hill previously used by HSTs (note the positions of the extractor units). Standard Open End (SOE) coaches Nos. 12205 and 12213 form the locomotive ends of sets NL08 and NL16 respectively.



As well as maintaining locomotives and units for passenger services, the team at Neville Hill also has to ensure availability of sufficient motive power for internal movements. Nos. 08525 *Duncan Bedford* and 08908 are pictured back-to-back in the heavy repair shop on January 10.



Quite a way from its usual surroundings of the North East, Class 156 No. 156486 is pictured on the wheel lathe at Neville Hill. The absence of wheel lathe facilities at Northern's Heaton Train Care Centre means that units such as this one, which are allocated to the Newcastle site, have to make the journey to Yorkshire for reprofiling work.

the then Leeds New station (subsequently amalgamated with Wellington station in 1938 to form Leeds City on the current station site), correspondent SP Thompson remarked "at busy times there is something approaching a continuous stream of rolling stock passing between the two places."

On-site activity at 'NL' remains intense these days, particularly so during the evening. Train presentation is a big task, employing 180 people and 36 trains a night are cleaned there.

"We're here to look after the entire train. That's why we've shifted away from Neville Hill as a depot to Neville Hill as a traincare centre," explains Iain Burnett. "It's a very deliberate choice to change the terminology and change the language. The way that we're trying to provide the service with one of our other transformation initiatives – we call it a plan-led approach – is that you bring a train in for maintenance. It goes out defect-free, fully-cleaned and effectively valeted. We hand wash the outside of the train. So we're trying to get to that point where we're like a main dealership where you take your car. Again, that's symbolic. As a train care centre we're here to care for it."

But the site has limitations. Stretching for half-a-mile alongside the railway, its layout means that trains arriving for servicing and cleaning will have covered double that distance by the time they are ready to leave.

"Neville Hill is a massive site, but it's constrained as well, not necessarily just physically, but by the number of arrivals and departures you can feed down into Leeds. There's a two-line viaduct, so you're always battling passenger flows," he observes.

Rare opportunity

Although the limitations posed by the viaduct will not change, the Trans-Pennine Route Upgrade will see Neville Hill closed to traffic for 12 weeks while the main line that runs alongside it is modernised and realigned to allow for higher speeds. Mr Burnett says this will present a golden opportunity for the depot site to be remodelled.

"We can look at whether there's more stabling that can go in there, whether we can simplify the depot flow. The trains come in and go back out of the west end, but they've got to go all the way up to the train wash in the east and shunt back, into the service shed, out of the service shed and into departure sidings. That's every train, every night, so if we could simplify the depot flow, we could stop having to shunt that amount of trains.

"If we can stop having to shunt that amount of trains, we can do more work on them. We can probably stable more and we can be more flexible in the approach that we've got.

"It's an operational site. It never stops, but TRU gives us that opportunity because there's going to be a main line blockade for 12 weeks. We're going to be wheels-free. We will not have trains here. If we can do all the pre-work in advance of that blockade, which is anticipated to be in 2026/7, all of that gives us greater opportunities for the future.

"I've worked in the railway my entire career and I would struggle to look myself in the mirror if I didn't take the opportunity to do something in those 12 weeks. We're getting all the right support from Network Rail, from Northern. Even the Department for Transport are looking at how we can support Neville Hill for the future."

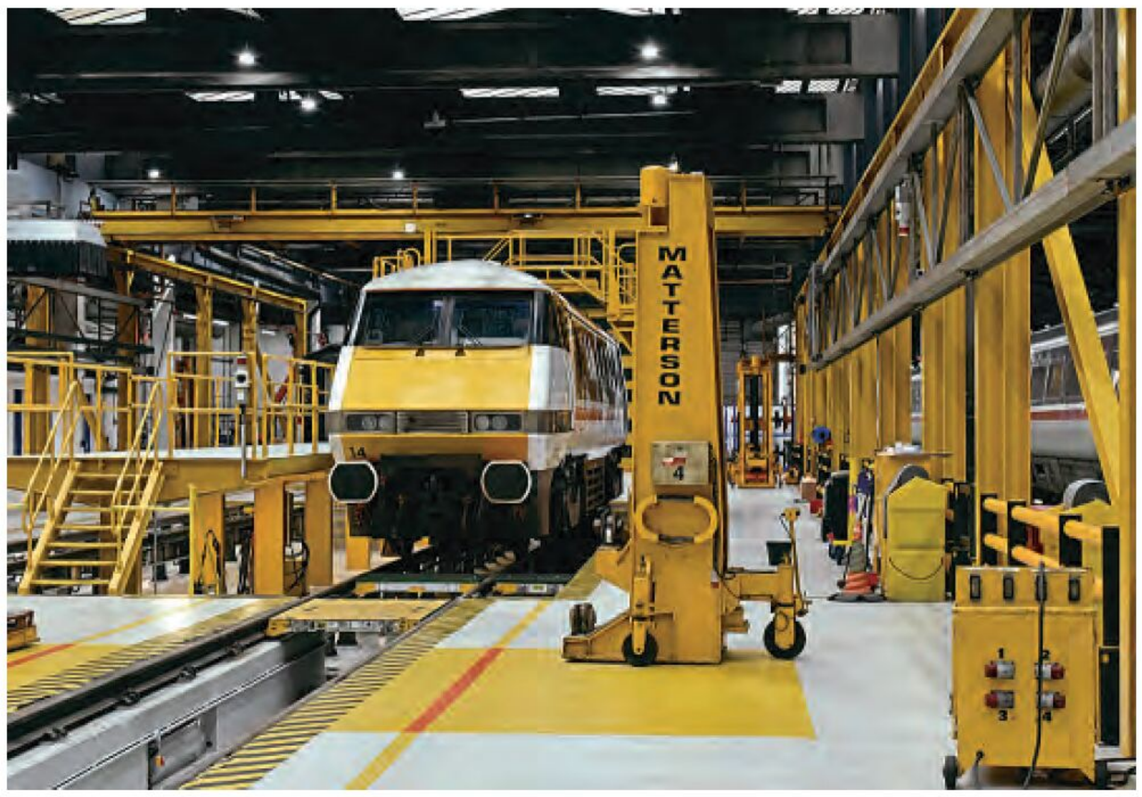
With a tender notice process having already been launched to find an eventual replacement for Northern's older trains (Classes 150, 155 and 158 DMUs – along with Class 156s, although these are not allocated to Neville Hill), in time, there will also need to be scope to accommodate new ones.

"We don't know what the future holds, but what we do know is that at some point the '15xs' will be gone and they'll be replaced by something and that 'something' will be longer than a '15x' and that gives us restrictions. In the repair sheds, you can see that we're not going to be able to maintain a modern train in there. It's going to have been lengthened, it's going to have to be widened, so there's quite a piece of work we're doing on that maintenance facility for the future," he comments.

Other locations were considered for a new maintenance operation. These included land formerly occupied by the Vickers tank factory a few miles east at Crossgates, and sites at



No. 91124 in the heavy repair shop, minus its bogies and wheelsets. Leeds has only been home to the Class 91s for the last three years, but utilising the knowledge of colleagues who had previously worked on the class, the team quickly proved it could cope with the heavier tasks involved in keeping these veterans of the East Coast Main Line in service.



Contrast the shot of No. 91124 in the heavy repair shop with this one of classmate No. 91114 *Durham Cathedral* in the recently refurbished former HST power car bay. Originally numbered 91014, this locomotive was introduced in June 1990. It has previously carried the names *Northern Electric* and *St Mungo Cathedral*. The spotless surroundings are a reminder of how depots have changed.

Healey Mills and Wakefield. Building from scratch, rather than unpicking and adding to what is already at Neville Hill, might seem an attractive option, but its proximity to Leeds station and size – bringing together both maintenance and stabling – makes it what Iain Burnett calls a great bolthole: "Everything about Neville Hill puts it in the place that we believe is the right place to serve the railway the best, and that's why we feel that enhancing this site is the better answer rather than trying to build elsewhere."

That said, even if the 2026/7 works do unlock additional stabling space, the more immediate need for additional capacity cannot be overlooked, especially where electric multiple units are concerned. Remarkably, only seven EMUs can be accommodated at any one time and, as things stand, Class 331 and 333 EMUs come to Neville Hill for attention.

Construction of a new depot, south of Shipley station (on the site of the former goods sidings, occupied most recently by scrap merchants Crossley Evans Ltd – see last month's issue) will alleviate the situation. Given the need for alternative stabling and maintenance arrangements during the 12 weeks that Neville Hill will be out of action, it has been commissioned as part of TRU.

"Shipley gives us that additional electric capacity. It's something like 30-odd vehicles. It's a four-car, four-road maintenance shed, plus a load of stabling as well," he says.

New challenges

The boundaries regarding what kind of work is undertaken at Neville Hill have also moved somewhat in recent years. In becoming what will be the last home in LNER service for the Class 91s and Intercity 225 sets, it has prepared itself for jobs that would previously have been undertaken elsewhere.

"We never anticipated changing wheelsets or changing traction motors," adds Mr Burnett. "Whatever challenge is thrown at Neville Hill, it rises to it."

He explains how, around 18 months ago, a Class 333 cab was changed on-site following accident damage. "Typically you would have sent that vehicle away. We had to get some specialist help in, but we changed the cab on it here and we reduced the down time on that. It was just shy of 100 days."

If it had been sent away, Northern would have expected it to be out of service for six months. Previously, a contractor would have handled tasks such as interior paint retouches, but these are now being brought 'in-house'.

The way in which maintenance details are recorded is changing. A satellite of Neville Hill is Hull Botanic Gardens depot, which has become a proving ground for using electronic tablets for this purpose. After trials there, the next step will be its introduction at the Leeds site. The ultimate aim is for vehicle maintenance instructions, information on resolving defects, details of parts and material supplies to all be accessible from devices carried around by the members of the maintenance team.

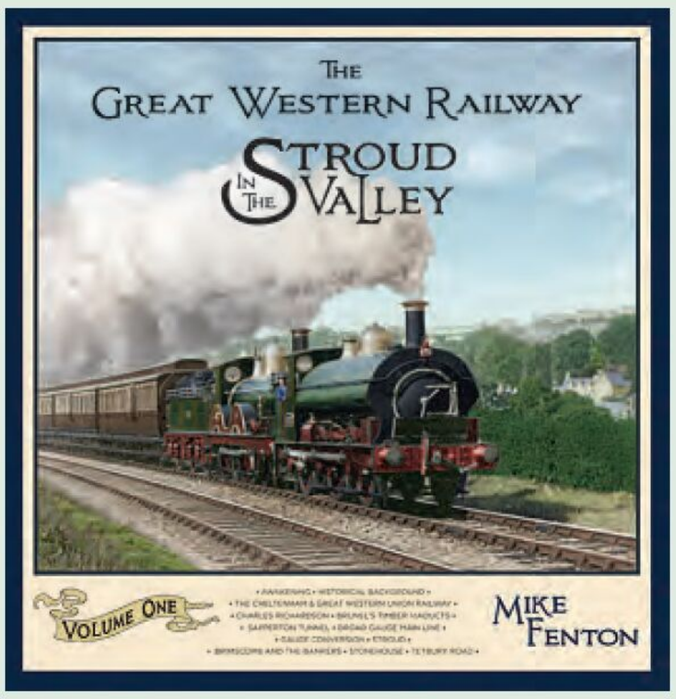
From the site and trains looked after here to methods of working and culture, the scale of transformation expected before the end of the decade at Neville Hill is immense. Although this includes one of the biggest phases of change in its 125-year history, there seems little doubt it will be embraced with the same level of pride and enthusiasm which has been prevalent here for so long. ■

"The scale of transformation expected before the end of the decade at Neville Hill is immense"



Class 150/2 No. 150228 (left) is one of three members of the class pictured receiving attention in the maintenance shed, while No. 150270 is nearest the camera on the right. Northern is trialling computer technology which should ultimately allow staff to log repairs on a hand-held device and also give access to stocks of parts and maintenance manuals.

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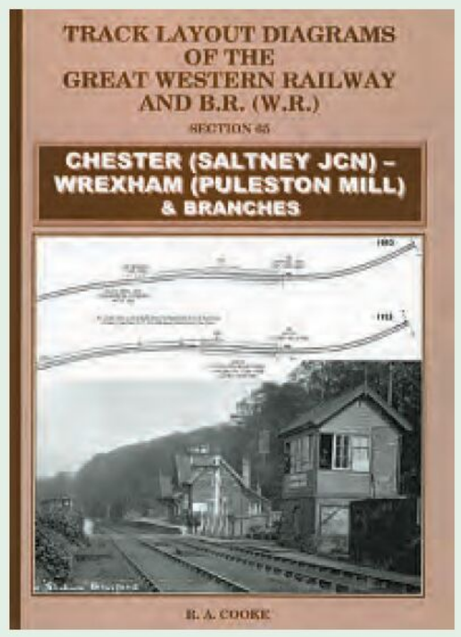
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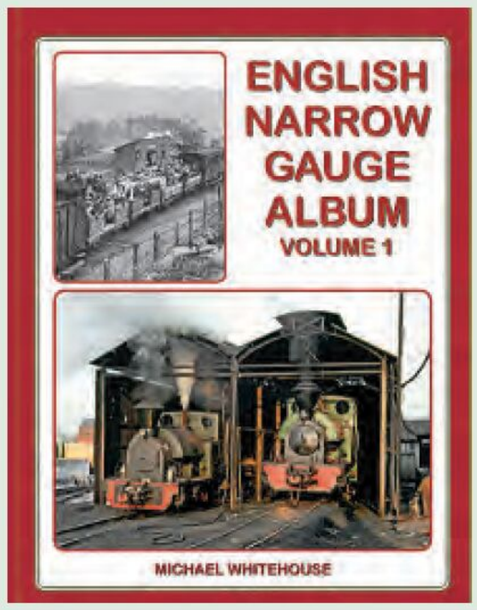
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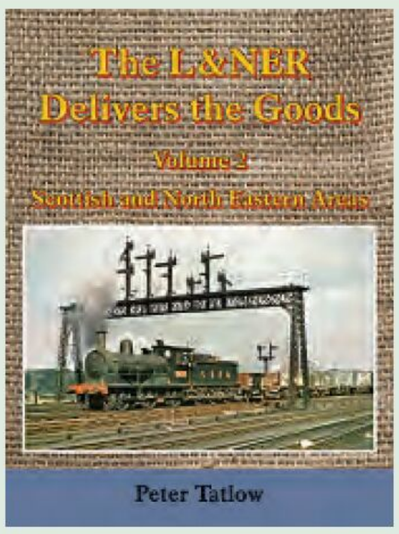
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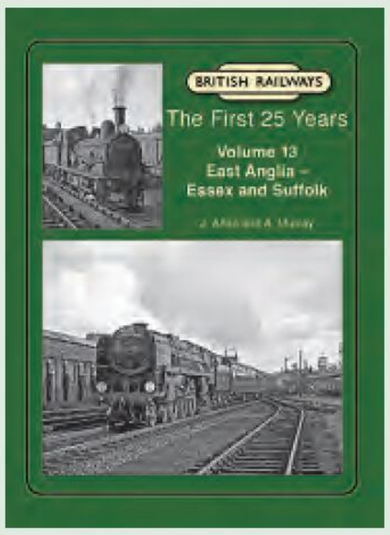
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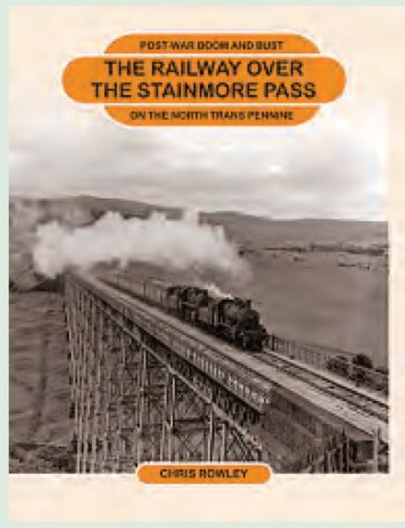


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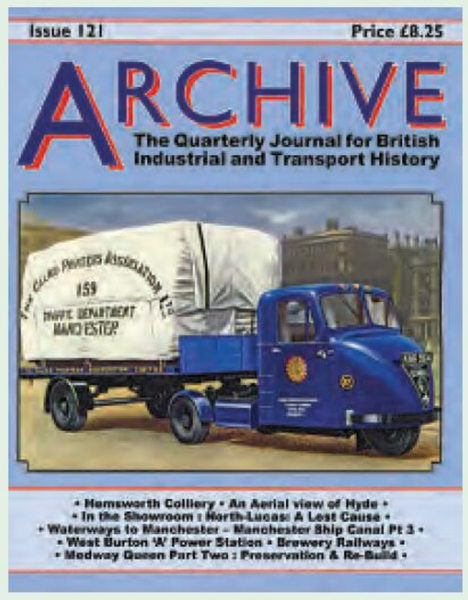


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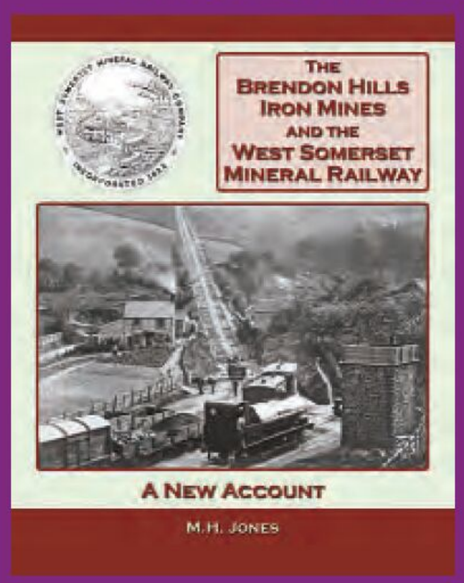
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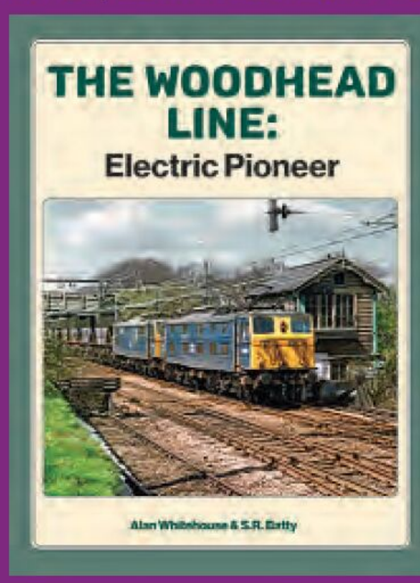
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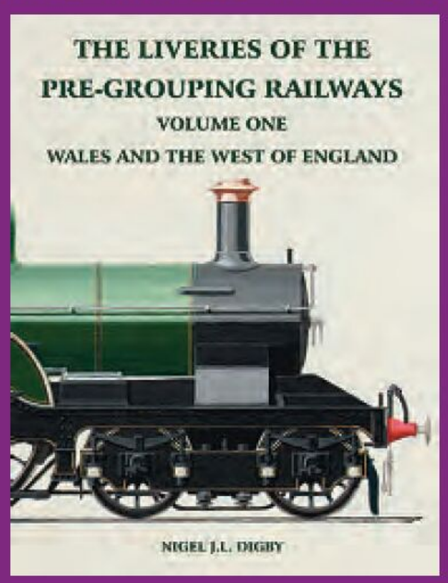
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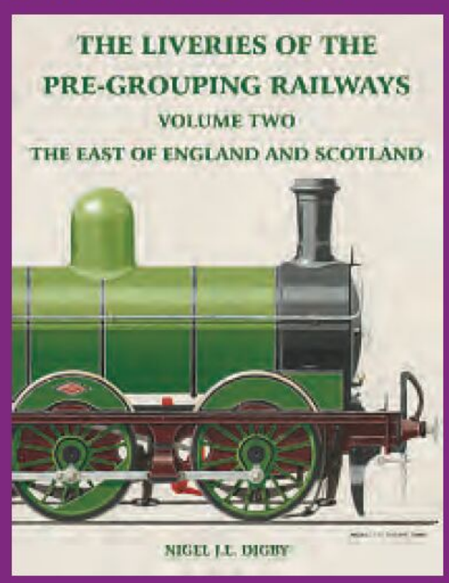
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Lightbulb moment





PANORAMA in the April issue (pages 46/47) offered an irresistible question, intended rhetorically but provoking the idle detective in me: "Is there anything in this shot that gives it away as being taken this year and not towards the end of steam in the 1960s?" So here goes…

The engine driver is wearing some rather smart spectacles, rather unlike what was available in the 1960s. It is hard to be precise, but they look like Hugo Boss or Tommy Hilfiger, or maybe Specsavers.

The bulb in the lamp on the far left of the photograph seems to be a modern LED light, possibly a Philips CorePro E27 LED GLS bulb or similar.

The edge of the platform seems to have been recently renovated. Earlier photographs show the platform edge formed as a continuous band of bricks set end on to the line, and either white, or painted white. They seem to have been replaced with black engineering bricks, with only the half nearest the line painted white.

I am sure there is something about the station totem, apart from it just being far too clean and shiny, it is probably in the wrong green, on the wrong lamp-post, at the wrong height or something.

And those two passenger warning signs where the other letters have been painted out to leave just "S.R." off to the right. They can't be the real McCoy, can they?

I am also suspicious of the two grey control boxes off in the distance.

Alec Hamilton, Cheltenham

A MAGNIFICENT picture of *Manston* at Ropley, but was your caption entirely rhetorical?

There is the LED bulb in the gas lamp for a start-off. More generally, the state of repair of the hut and the rest of the platform furniture – they wouldn't have been so well kept in the 1960s. And if I was being particularly picky, I'd say that the colour balance wouldn't have been so natural with 1960s colour films (Agfachrome, Kodak Ektachrome).

These are the skills we all need to identify 'deepfake' images nowadays. Fortunately, the heritage railway sector is more interested in re-creating the past in practical ways rather than by camera trickery. Long may it remain so!

Robert Day, Kirby Muxloe

AFTER careful scrutiny I would suggest that the two plaques 'Passengers must cross the line' and 'Beware of trains' did not originate from the Southern Railway as the lettering 'S R' is not centralised as it would have been had it been genuine. The Watercress line was part of the London & South Western Railway so the notices could have come from anywhere.

Ray Anslow, by email

I WOULD suggest there is one giveaway: the LED filament lightbulb in the station lamp!

Such bulbs are unmistakeable, and the technology behind them was not even a gleam in a scientist's eye when locos like that were daily fodder for two schoolkids in Devon on the old LSWR line to Plymouth.

I have read *The RM* since then and still do today. Keep up the great work.

Rob Fogwill, by email

I MUST confess that at first glance the Panorama on pages 46/47 could well be a blast from the past. However, not withstanding that the hut looks a little too pristine, the eagle eyed may spot the low energy LED bulb in the lamphead. A sign of the times! But please keep the old ones coming in this great magazine.

Colin Haycock, Cardiff

THANK you for another great magazine. A caption for the superb photograph covering pages 46 and 47 enquires: Is there anything in this shot that gives it away as being taken this year and not in the 1960s? Yes, the light bulb in the station lamp!

Bryan Green, by email

Thanks also to John Yates, Nigel Cripps, John S Dimascio, Steve Chambers and many others for getting in touch about this – Ed

Living in the past

HAVING read in *The RM* (April issue) about West Coast Railway deciding to cancel this year's 'Jacobite' trains, can anybody really be surprised?

It seems WCR has been 'kicking the can' of CDL (Central Door Locking) down the road for as long as it could, and the ORR has finally called time. I can't blame the ORR. Most other operators of older stock on the National Network seem to have been able to fit CDL, or at least keep a meaningful conversation going with ORR, but WCR seems to have chosen a different path.

Don't get me wrong, I am of an age where I grew up with slam-door stock, opening windows, went on railtours where everybody would disgorge from the train, and spread over the tracks at any opportunity. There was a personal responsibility to be safe. However, time moves on, and to be on the National Network now requires standards to be upheld, whether you agree with them or not.

With regards to the cost, some operators must have been putting funds away over the years for this work. If WCR chose not to, then it needs to work out a business plan to take no profit for a few years, and then return to profit. The 'Jacobite' seems to be a high-profile service, probably used by more non-enthusiasts than enthusiasts, and so their knowledge of rail safety is probably not as high as most of your readers – hence why protection to the highest standard is required.

At the end of day, if the fares have to rise to cover these costs, then they must, and if passenger levels drop too much, then the service will have to be reduced, or stopped.

If WCR can't run the 'Jacobite' this season, perhaps it should lend the licence to another operator who can run it, until they get these problems resolved.

I appreciate the above will no doubt upset many people, but to be on Network Rail, you must comply with standards, and have meaningful conversations about said standards.

Steve Wright, by email



Where is it? Our pictorial quiz, for fun only



MANY congratulations to anyone who correctly identified last month's quiz photo (shown again right), who could either be widely-travelled or a resident on The Wirral, as it shows the mural in the subway beneath Neston – the last station in England heading south from Bidston on the 'Borderlands' line.

This month's photo (above) could be easier to guess, but on which station can these attractive gates be found?

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

PUTTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT

■ THE note on page 68 of the April issue stating that the visit of a Freightliner Class 59 to the Severn Valley Railway next month will be only the second Class 59 to visit the railway is incorrect. In addition to No. 59001's visit on May 8, 1988, ARC-liveried No. 59101 visited on May 9, 1992 and was named *Village of Whatley* in a ceremony at Bridgnorth Station. **Bob Sweet, by email**

■ THE GCR passed over the Midland Main Line just south of the Midland station at Loughborough, rather than just north as stated in the April issue caption on page 27. **Roger Chapman, by email**

■ THE picture caption of the Class 26 on page 69, April issue, should read No. 26043 (D5343). No. D6543 would have become a Class 33. **Pete Cutler, by email**

■ THE locomotive (No. 45212) on the April cover is incorrectly captioned on page 3 (as No. 45407). **Geoffrey Biggs, Solihull**

■ NEVILLE Hill depot is in east of Leeds, not west (April issue, page 18). **Malcolm Storey, by email**

MEETINGS

Compiled by **Jon Longman**

WEDNESDAY, MAY 1

Bradford Railway Circle. Bradford Mechanics' Institute Library, 76 Kirkgate 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 night.

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.

RCTS. Network Rail – The Quadrant: Milton Keynes MK9 1EN. 19.30. 'The Vintage Trains Story – the rise to a Train Operating Company': Mike Corbett.

FRIDAY, MAY 3

Kettering & District Locomotive Society. Corn Market Hall, Kettering NN15 7QA. 19.45. 'The Nidd Valley Line': Tony Manktelow.

RCTS. St Teresa's Church Hall, North Filton BS34 7PL. 19.30. 'Railway Holidays in the West Country – Devon and Somerset': Stuart Warr.

SLS. Newport Community Hub (formerly The Settlement Centre), St Paul's Road, Middlesbrough TS1 5NQ. 19.30. 'Preparing to celebrate the S&D in 2025': Niccy Hallifax, S&D 200 Festival Director.

Slough & Windsor Railway Society. The Manor, Slough station. 19.30. TBA: Richard Morris.

MONDAY, MAY 6

Peak Rail Association. Farm Road Sports & Social Club, Sheffield S2 2TP. 19.30. Cine films around Sheffield from the Doug Copley collection.

TUESDAY, MAY 7

Aln Valley Railway. St Christopher's Church, Gunnerton, Hexham NE48 4AU. 19.30. Annual quiz v Gunnerton Railway Circle.

Gravesend Railway Enthusiasts' Society. Emmanuel Baptist Church, Gravesend DA12 1BB. 19.30. 'Railways at the end of my garden': David Wills.

LCGB. St John's Church Hall, Bedford MK42 0DL. 19.30. 'Shildon-Stockton – the real Stockton & Darlington Railway': Dennis Lovett.

RCTS. Beechen Grove Baptist Church, Clarendon Road, Watford, WD17 1JJ. 19.30. 'Those Were The Years Those Were.': Roland Gillott.

SEG & LRTA. Eastleigh Railway Institute, Romsey Road. 19.30. 'Digitalised cine films': Roger Manley.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 8

LCGB. Friends Meeting House, Dorking RH4 2LE. 14.00. 'The History & Mystery of the Milwaukee Road': Guy Hardy.

RCTS. Old Church Rooms, Radyr, Cardiff CF15 8DF. 19.00. 'South Wales Railways in the 21st Century': Stuart Warr.

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

Sutton Coldfield Railway Society. St James' Church Centre, Sutton Coldfield B75 5BW. 19.30. 'Travels of a Railway Writer': Chris Milner, contributing editor of *The Railway Magazine*.

THURSDAY, MAY 9

LCGB. St Bartholomew's Church, St Albans AL1 2PE. 19.30. Branch annual meeting and 'The Preserved St Albans Signalbox': TBC.

Continental Railway Circle. St Paul's Church Centre, Marylebone, London NW1 6NJ. 18.30. 'The Widow's Frontier Railways covers history of those parts of the subcontinent, lots of steam & World Series Alcos on the Bolan': Richard Pelham.

Norfolk Railway Society. United Reformed Church Hall, Norwich NR4 6QR. 19.30. 'You have seen it – Now it's gone': David Leathart.

South East Essex Railway Society. Friends' Meeting House, Leigh-on-Sea SS9 1NB. 19.30. Track night.

FRIDAY, MAY 10

SWRS. The Manor, Slough station. 19.30. 'Railways of Scotland': Stephen Bigley.

SATURDAY, MAY 11

SLS. Kidderminster Railway Museum DY10 1QX. 14.00. Members' presentations.

MONDAY, MAY 13

Lincoln Railway Society. St Hugh's Church, North Hykeham, Lincoln LN6 8JG. 19.30. '1990s North America': Paul Redford.

Oxfordshire Railway Society. Kidlington Baptist Church OX5 2DS. 19.00. 'Great Marlow Railway 150th Anniversary': Mike Walker, Marlow Railway Society.

RCTS. Greenfinch Church Hall, Ipswich IP2 0SQ. 19.15. 'The Deltics: Worthy successors to the A4s': Michael Smyth.

SEG. Deall Room, Southwick Community Centre BN42 4TE. 19.30. 'TBA': Paul Snelling.

TUESDAY, MAY 14

Enfield Transport Circle. Enfield Drill Hall Sports Club EN2 6PJ. 20.00. 'Working steam in China': Kenneth Livermore.

Great Western Society. Room 4, BAWA, 589 Southmead Road, Filton, Bristol BS34 7RF. 19.30. Yate to Narvik – By Train to the Midnight Sun': Dave Winter.

LCGB. Parish Room, St Michael's Church, Wood Green, London N22 8HE. 14.00. 'On the Cambrian Coast Express': Richard Crane.

Pewsey Vale Railway Society. Woodborough Social Club SN9 5PL. 19.30. 'Canadian Travels': Alec Thomas and a railwayana auction.

RCTS. The Swifts, Haggis Gap, Fulbourn, Cambridge CB21 5HD. 19.30. 'Midsomer Norton – Rising from the Ashes': John Baxter.

RCTS. Farm Road Sports & Social Club, Sheffield S2 2TP. 19.30. 'More slides from the Alan Lovecy Collection': Andy Barclay.

RCTS. East Croydon United Reformed Church CR0 5LP. 19.30. Croydon & South London branch annual meeting and 'Members' Images'.

Pewsey Vale Railway Society. Woodborough Social Club SN9 5PL. 19.30. 'Canadian Railways': Alec Thomas.

RCTS. Tilehouse Street Baptist Church, Upper Tilehouse Street, Hitchin SG5 2EE. 19.30. 'Memories of a Gorleston Spotter – Part 2': Chris Wright.

The 8E Railway Association. The Gladstone Club, Northwich CW9 5RB. 19.30. 'The East Coast Main Line – Part 2: York to Edinburgh': Stephen Gay.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 15

Grimsby & Cleethorpes Railway Group. The No.1, Station Approach, Cleethorpes DN35 8AX. 19.30. 'Steam around Doncaster and Lincoln': Chris Nettleton.

Pennine Railway Society. Doncaster Town Fields Sports Club, Bennethorpe DN2 6AA. 19.30. 'After Beeching – a new beginning': Graeme Wade.

RCTS. Eastleigh Railway Institute, 2 Romsey Road SO50 9FE. 18.30. 'Southern England in the early 90s': Mark Greening.

Sutton Coldfield Railway Society. St James' Church Centre, Sutton Coldfield B75 5BW. 19.30. 'The James Doubleday Collection': Richard Coghlan.

THURSDAY, MAY 16

Lutterworth Railway Society. Lutterworth Bowls Club LE15 4RB. 19.30. 'Northamptonshire Railways – Part 7': Mike Dix.

Marlow & District Railway Society. Bourne End Community Centre, Wakeman Road SL8 5SX and on Zoom. 19.30. 'Bucks and Herts branch lines': Richard Crane.

Monmouthshire Railway Society. Lysaght Institute, Orb Drive, Newport NP19 0RA. 19.00. 'The Great Train Robbery': Ian Boskett.

Norfolk Railway Society. United Reformed Church Hall, Norwich NR4 6QR. 19.30. TBA.

RCTS. Saltaire Methodist Chapel, Shipley BD18 3HJ. 19.30. 'The Big Four in Colour': David Peel.

RCTS. Woking United Reformed Church, Woking. 19.15. 'The Transport Select Committee': Chris Loder, MP for West Dorset.

FRIDAY, MAY 17

Great Western Society. Village Hall, Stoke St Mary, Taunton TA3 5DE. 19.30. 'Railways in the North and East': John Sparkes.

LCGB. Keen House, 4 Calshot St, London NW1 9DA. 18.30. TBA.

SLS. Conference Room, 1st floor (access via Black Swan Courtyard), Newcastle Arts Centre, 67 Westgate Rd, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 1SG. 19.00. 'My Book of World Trains Part 2': Phil Kirkland.

SWRS. The Manor, Slough station. 19.30. 'Railways Accidents and Incidents': Geoff Burch, former Southern Region steam driver.

MONDAY, MAY 20

RCTS. Shenfield Parish Hall, 60 Hutton Road CM15 8LP. 19.30. 'The Great Central Railway': Ray Schofield.

RCTS. Cheylesmore Community Centre, Arundel/Poitiers Road, Coventry CV3 5JX. 19.30. 'Irish Railways – Part 1 Derry': Chris Youett.

RCTS. Green Cox Green Community Centre, Highfield Lane, Maidenhead SL6 3AX. 19.30. 'Czech Railways Today': Robert Pritchard.

TUESDAY, MAY 21

Leicester Railway Society. Braunstone Civic Centre, 209 Kingsway, Leicester LE3 2PP. 19.30. 'Galas over the last couple of years': Michael Chapman and Brian Holland.

RCTS. Didcot Civic Hall, Britwell Road OX11 7JN. 19.00. 'The North Staffordshire Railway - Part 3': Brian Sullivan.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 22

RCTS. Bassil Shipham Centre, Tozer Way, St Pancras, Chichester PO19 7LG. Meeting on Zoom. 19.15. 'Ulster 1958-1965 – The Great Northern Railway Lines': Leslie McAllister.

Sutton Coldfield Railway Society. St James' Church Centre, Sutton Coldfield B75 5BW. 19.30. Meeting cancelled.

THURSDAY, MAY 23

Gravesend Railway Enthusiasts' Society. Emmanuel Baptist Church, Gravesend DA12 1BB. 19.30. 'Project 24': Clive Emsley.

South East Essex Railway Society. Friends' Meeting House, Leigh-on-Sea SS9 1NB. 19.30. 'Mangapps Update': John Jolly.

Stevenage Locomotive Society. Community Arts Centre, Roaring Meg Retail Park, Stevenage. 19.30. Annual meeting and members' evening presentations by Andy Lickfold and Stuart Clarke.

FRIDAY, MAY 24

SWRS. The Manor, Slough station. 19.30. 'Railway Scenes in Germany – Berlin Brandenburg': Steve Olive.

SATURDAY, MAY 25

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

TUESDAY, MAY 28

RCTS. Digswell Village Church Hall, Welwyn AL6 0DH. 14.00. 'Railtours and Specials – Part 2': John Day.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 29

Bradford Railway Circle. Bradford Mechanics' Institute Library, 76 Kirkgate, Bradford BD1 1SZ. 14.00. 'Stately Trains': Stephen Middleton.

Pennine Railway Society. Zoom meeting. 19.30. 'More Recent Photographic Wanderings': Robin Patrick. www.penninerailwaysociety.com.

Sutton Coldfield Railway Society. St James' Church Centre, Sutton Coldfield B75 5BW. 19.30. 'Steam Images': Bill Gibbs.

THURSDAY, MAY 30

Stevenage Locomotive Society. Community Arts Centre, Roaring Meg Retail Park, Stevenage. 19.30. 'The Jim Clements Collection – Central Wales in the steam era with stills and cine': Michael Clements.

FRIDAY, MAY 31

Railway Club of the New Forest. Village Hall, Highwood Road, Brockenhurst. 19.30. '60 years of steam ramblings': Simon Foote.

SWRS. The Manor, Slough station. 19.30. 'Scenic railways around the road': John Laker and Keith Spillet.

MONDAY, JUNE 3

Peak Rail Association. Farm Road Sports & Social Club, Sheffield S2 2TP. 19.30. 'West of the Pennines': Bob Avery.

TUESDAY, JUNE 4

Enfield Transport Circle. Enfield Drill Hall Sports Club, 1 Old Park Avenue EN2 6PJ. 20.00. 'Oxford to Cambridge – Then & Now': Richard Crane.

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1
POSING 'TUG': Immaculate No. 60085 *Snowdon* – recently outshopped by DB Cargo at Toton – poses with a rake of wagons at Swinden Quarry, North Yorkshire, on March 23, during a charity photo charter organised by Chris Gee in collaboration with Tarmac Quarries and GBRf. Attended by 55 photographers, more than £1000 was raised for Martin House Children's Hospice and Great Ormond Street Hospital. STEVE SIENKIEWICZ

2
'TERRIERS' MEET: A view from the cab of LBSCR No. 55 *Stepney* at Sheffield Park, Bluebell Railway, on March 25, as classmate No. 72 *Fenchurch* approaches from the north with a goods working during a Jon Bowers photo charter. STUART CHAPMAN

3
GOLDEN 'GOYLE': The sun sets behind Type 2 No. 31210 at Ruddington (Great Central Railway North) on March 30, during an event organised by Midlands Diesel Photo Charters. CHRIS GEE

4
SMOKING AREA: The 2ft-gauge Ryam Sugar Company No. 1 is in the right place at the Statfold Barn Railway on March 17! The 0-4-0 loco was built by US firm Davenport Locomotive Works in 1917. MIKE SPENCER

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MANCHESTER RIVALS: TransPennine Express DMUs Nos. 185117+185110 head west out of Manchester towards Warrington Central and Liverpool Lime Street on March 26, sandwiched between the Bridgewater Canal and the Metrolink tram line to Eccles, MediaCityUK, Trafford Centre, Altrincham, Manchester Airport and East Didsbury. The tram tracks are built on the former approach to Manchester Central station (closed May 1969), while behind the tram is an abandoned viaduct that in 2022 was transformed into the National Trust's Castlefield Viaduct 'sky garden'. TOM MCATEE

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100 YEARS AGO MAY 1924

LNER orders a 'Garratt'

AN order has been placed with Beyer, Peacock & Co Ltd, Manchester, by the London and North Eastern Railway for one powerful 'Garratt' locomotive.

It will be the largest engine in Great Britain and will have a tractive effort of some 62,000lb. The engine will consist of two eight-coupled systems and will weigh about 165tons. The grate area will be approximately 56 sq ft, and the four cylinders will be 21 inch diameter by 26 inch stroke. The wheel arrangement will be 2-8-0-0-8-2, and the coupled wheels 4 ft 8 in diameter.

This is the first articulated locomotive to be ordered by a British railway for use on standard gauge lines. At present there is but one 'Garratt' locomotive at work in Great Britain, and that is engaged in and around some copper mills in South Wales.

50 YEARS AGO MAY 1974

Station for Birmingham's National Exhibition Centre

WORK is to start soon on the £3.6 million station on the London Midland Region electrified line from Euston to Birmingham, which will serve the National Exhibition Centre near Birmingham.

The station will be between Marston Green and Hampton-in-Arden and will have five 1000ft platforms each capable of accommodating a 13-coach train. The concourse, built above the tracks, will include a travel centre, catering facilities and bookstall, with a covered walkway to the main concourse of the exhibition centre.

The new station will be an important feature in the proposals of the West Midlands PTE for the development of local commuter rail services on the Coventry line and will include generous provision for car parking and rail/bus interchange.

Piccadilly Line carpets

BECAUSE conventional flooring of maple slats – one of the few suitable woods – is becoming more costly and difficult to obtain, London Transport is experimenting with other floor coverings for its Underground carriages.

Carpeting is being tried in one Piccadilly Line vehicle to assess its contribution to appearance, comfort and noise reduction, as well as its durability, maintenance needs and relative cost.

In answer to criticism from incredulous passengers that carpet seemed an unnecessary luxury during a time of unreliable train services, LT pointed out that it is fitted to only one of more than 4000 of its cars. It may prove to be an unsatisfactory alternative to other materials, but this could be established solely by trials in service. Vinyl asbestos tiles and composition flooring are being tested on two District Line trains and trials of further materials will be made in the next few months.



Class 90 No. 90003 *Raedwald* and a rake of Mk.3 stock in 'One' livery at the franchise launch on April 1, 2004. CHRIS MILNER

20 YEARS AGO MAY 2004

New Anglia franchise to be known simply as 'One'

NATIONAL Express has given the brand name 'One' to the new Greater Anglia franchise it launched on April 1.

Combining the operations of Anglia, Great Eastern, West Anglia and Stansted Express, the TOC's unusual title was influenced by the fact that the four companies will work seamlessly as one franchise out of Liverpool Street station.

It is the first of the new-style franchises awarded by the SRA with the emphasis on passenger enhancements, and National Express chief executive Phil White described it as an exciting day for the industry, building on what had been achieved by FirstGroup and GB Railways.

Striking new liveries have been devised for the new TOC, bringing a continental look to the stock, especially the design for the Stansted Express trains.

The launch at Liverpool Street was attended by Transport Secretary Alistair Darling and SRA chairman Richard Bowker, the former naming Class 90 No. 90003 *Raedwald*, after the King of the East Angles around 600AD. Future names are expected to follow a similar theme.

New liveries, train refurbishments and an £11m station refurbishment programme will follow.

RCTS

Britain's leading Railway Society

The RCTS: Then and now

THE Middleton Railway in Hunslet, Leeds, not only lays claim to being the oldest continuously working railway in the world, but also the first standard gauge railway to be taken over and operated by unpaid volunteers. The line has been in continuous operation since 1758, and has had preserved status since June 1960.

Preservation came about because traffic on the then-Middleton Colliery Railway had been severely curtailed by the line's owners, the National Coal Board. Part of the line was purchased by a neighbouring company, Claytons, which allowed the Middleton Railway Preservation Society (later The Middleton Railway Trust) to operate the line. The founding father of the preserved railway and leader of the volunteers was Dr Fred Youell, a physics lecturer at Leeds University.

By all accounts Dr Youell was a formidable character. An example of this was when the M1 (as it was then, now renumbered M621) was being built through the south of Leeds in the late 1960s, its planned route went through the course of the railway. Dr Youell asked for a tunnel to be built in order to accommodate the line. The engineers did not really want to do this, and asked if there was another way. "Yes" replied Fred, "we'll settle for a level crossing!" The tunnel was duly built.

Passenger trains ran for just one week during June 1960, formed of an ex-Swansea & Mumbles Railway double-deck tram (which was sadly later scrapped) hauled by a hired-in Hunslet diesel. However, in contrast to other preserved railways, the Middleton Railway's early focus was on freight traffic, passenger trains not being reinstated until 1969. Between 1960 and 1983, when freight traffic ceased, the railway transported many thousands of tons of fabricated and scrap metal from Balm Road goods yard to Claytons and its neighbours Robinson & Birdsell.

Since 1983, the operational focus has very much been on passenger traffic.

However, the railway has also become a de facto museum of industrial railways, having a large collection of steam and diesel industrial locomotives. The emphasis has very much been on preserving locally manufactured locomotives, and the railway therefore provides a home for the products of John Fowler & Co, Hudswell Clarke, Hunslet Engine Company, Kitson & Co, and Manning Wardle.



Hawthorn Leslie 0-4-0ST No. 6 prepares to depart Moor Road for Park Halt on October 22, 2023. MARK KELLY/RCTS

The Middleton's running line is not the longest, being just under a mile, but it oozes atmosphere. After passing through the aforementioned motorway tunnel, the line enters Middleton Park and ends at Park Halt, where there is a run-round loop. The line does not end with anything as technologically advanced as a buffer stop. No, the rails simply disappear into a mound of earth.

There is another part of the Middleton Railway that only sees occasional use – the Balm Road branch. This line connects Moor Road to Balm Road goods yard, where in days gone by freight traffic would be taken over by British Rail locomotives. The connection to the national network is now bolted closed, having not been used since 1990. The next scheduled operation of the branch will be at the Autumn Gala in October.

The Middleton Railway remains a fascinating line to visit, and will hopefully feature in the pages of the *Railway Observer* and *The Railway Magazine* for many years to come.

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

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TRACK RECORD

The Railway Magazine news digest

A POWERFUL COMBINATION:

WR 'Modified Hall' No. 6990 *Witherslack Hall* double-heads with LMS 'Jubilee' No. 45596 *Bahamas* at North Ives, with the 14.45 Keighley to Oxenhope service during the Keighley & Worth Valley Railway's Spring Steam Gala on Saturday, March 23. The two locomotives share the same wheel arrangement but were allocated to the Western and Midland regions respectively. *Witherslack Hall* was visiting from the Great Central Railway, while *Bahamas* is a KWVR resident. IAN DIXON

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Compiled by **Gareth Evans**

Pannier pair are now resident at Minehead locomotive shed

West Somerset Railway fleet gears up for the future as overhauls progress.



No. 6435 following its arrival at Minehead on April 11, with No. 9466. JONATHAN JONES-PRATT/WSR.

THE West Somerset Railway (WSR) is once again home to a GWR '64XX' 0-6-0PT following the relocation of No. 6435 from Bodmin to Minehead on Thursday, April 11.

As reported in *RM* March, auto-fitted 1937-built No. 6435 and 1951-built WR auto-trailer No. 232 have been bought from the Bodmin Railway by WSR plc chairman Jonathan Jones-Pratt's JJP Holdings company for use on the WSR. The loco and carriage were among several items of rolling stock offered for sale by the Cornish line early in the New Year.

Following its arrival at Minehead, No. 6435 was placed on display in the shed yard for the benefit of WSR passengers. It has received cosmetic attention – cleaning and polishing, plus the application of black paint to the tyres in place of the hitherto polished finish. The Pannier was due to take part in gala photo shoot as part of the line's May 3-6 Spring Steam Spectacular gala.

The autocoach is expected to move from Bodmin to Bishops Lydeard in mid-May.

Jonathan's other steam loco resident at Minehead, WR 0-6-0PT No. 9466, is now back on the WSR roster and is reportedly running well. Having passed its hydraulic test, the loco has a 14-month boiler ticket. At the time of writing, No. 9466 was available for hire to another heritage line over the winter – email Jonathan at jon@jjpholdings.co.uk.

His third steam loco, GWR 'Hall' No. 4936 *Kinlet Hall*, remains under overhaul at Tyseley Locomotive Works (TLW).

"With the blessing of Alistair Meanley (of TLW), the overhaul of *Kinlet Hall* is being expedited," Jonathan told *The RM*.

Progress

"A number of components are to be overhauled under contract by the WSR at Williton – a programme which is due to start in May. In short, it will be anything which can be carried on a lorry other than the boiler."

He said boiler work will continue to be carried out by TLW, as will the loco's completion and commissioning for main line operation.

Meanwhile, WSR plc's 'Manor' No. 7828 *Odney Manor* was expected to be back in traffic by late April.

"A massive 'well done' to members of the WSR Locomotive Department for their hard work. We are going into the season in a strong position," said Jonathan.

WR 'Modified Hall' No. 6990 *Witherslack Hall* arrived at the WSR after taking part in the Keighley & Worth Valley Railway's March 21-24 Spring Steam Gala. The 4-6-0 worked its first WSR public trains on April 14 ahead of starring in the WSR's Spring gala, having become a replacement for the unavailability of No. 2807 (see separate story on page 69).

"It was the first time a 'Hall' has operated on the WSR since the completion of infrastructure works, which has seen the higher axle loading reinstated, allowing us to run bigger engines again," explained Jonathan.

Resources

"No. 6990 is due to return home after our gala. We are most grateful to Great Central Railway for allowing the loco to visit the WSR. We would also like to thank the other loco owners for their support for the gala."

In a separate development, the West Somerset Railway Association (WSRA) has confirmed that it plans to restore both GWR 'Small Prairie' No. 4561 and BR '4MT' 2-6-4T No. 80064 to steam, with the work as far as possible being done at Williton.

The WSRA and the WSR plc, which runs the Williton-based restoration facility, have jointly concluded that it would be best if the restoration of No. 4561's boiler was carried out externally. No. 4561's boiler is due to head to Riley & Son (E) Ltd shortly. This will allow the team at Williton to finish everything else on No. 4561 – and to also complete the overhaul of No. 80064.

The 'Standard' arrived from the Bluebell Railway on November 30, having been gifted to the WSRA by the loco's owning group, the 80064 Locomotive Fund (*RM* January).



MAKING AN ENTRANCE: Construction of the new pedestrian entrance to Didcot Railway Centre (DRC) is well underway, as shown in this view from April 13. When complete, it will allow for step-free access to the former GWR steam shed site for the first time. The current access subway will be extended past the existing stairs (which will no longer be used by DRC visitors), emerging in a sunken concourse with new, wide stairs and a ramp. In this image, the main line station is to the left, the DBC red Class 66s are seen stabled in the West Yard, while DRC's coal stage is on the right – and the ticket office has already been relocated out of shot to the right of the photographer. The project is a complex one, especially given the additional logistical challenge of all plant and materials requiring delivery by rail. GARETH EVANS

MOGUL SHINES: The Severn Valley Railway allowed a sneak preview of Stanier Mogul No. 13268 for the cameras when it was briefly rolled out of the paint shop at Bridgnorth on April 16, two days ahead of the line's Spring Steam Gala. Since its overhaul was completed earlier this year, the 90-year-old locomotive has been receiving its new livery. Hand-applied lettering and lining, as well as many sheets of gold leaf, have given it an impressive and authentic finish. It is pictured with members of the staff and volunteers who helped to return the loco to top condition. JOHN TITLOW





GWR 0-6-0PT No. 7754 and GWR '38XX' 2-8-0 No. 3802 double-heard at Fisherman's Crossing on the approach from Llangollen to Glyndyfrdwy on April 14. OWEN HAYWARD

Four in steam for Dee Valley event

LLANGOLLEN & Corwen Railway's April 12-14 Branchline Gala saw a quartet of steam locos in action for the first time in several years.

GWR 2-8-0 No. 3802 was back in steam after an absence of more than two years following a comprehensive bottom end and cylinder overhaul, and '57XX' 0-6-0PT No. 7754 was formally rededicated to traffic after a restoration which has taken nearly 20 years and largely completed using volunteer labour.

Kitson 0-6-0 *Austin 1* was also in action, while Hudswell, Clarke 0-6-0ST No. 68067 (75091/1943) operated its last trains at Llangollen for the foreseeable future before heading off for hire to Embsay & Bolton Abbey Steam Railway.

Diesel traction also featured in the mix, with Class 26 No. 5310 (26010) and the Class 108 DMU.

Phil Coles, chairman of Llangollen Railway Trust, said: "I would like to thank all members of the team who made this great weekend happen, plus everyone who came and supported the railway on our first big gala since we reopened.

"Pulling off an event of this scale isn't without its challenges, but thanks to the dedication of our volunteers and staff, it was a resounding success."

Gala proves a hit and young volunteering is put in focus

THE East Lancashire Railway has described it's March 15-17 Legends of Steam gala as 'an outstanding success', attracting in excess of 4000 visitors.

The event exceeded revenue expectations, with a trebling of a positive financial contribution in excess of £65000 in fares alone.

"Platforms, coaches, shops and pubs were filled with excited visitors keen to see and ride behind No. 60007 *Sir Nigel Gresley*, No. 70000 *Britannia* and No. 45690 *Leander*," said ELR chairman Mike Kelly.

"Heritage events like this prove the value of heritage railways to the wider public and to enthusiasts for their love for the nostalgia and engineering excellence of these iconic locomotives."

Meanwhile, the ELR board has endorsed a proposal by general manager Lee Kenny to establish a Young Person's Working Group. It will support the board's strategy to promote and recruit volunteers aged 16 to 25, and to encourage them to get involved with innovative approaches to inspire them.

While there are already initiatives supporting the volunteer workforce at the line, like Volunteer Champions, the general manager feels there should be a separate group of younger volunteers working together to develop and support the East Lancashire Railway's younger generation and also aid the recruitment of younger volunteers.



LEFT: In a separate development, Didcot Railway Centre-based No. 4079 *Pendennis Castle* visited the ELR in April as part of the loco's centenary tour. The 4-6-0 is pictured hauling its first public train on the line, the 09.50 from Heywood past Lumb Woods, in rain on Wednesday, April 10. The 'Castle' was rostered for April 10-14, 20/21 and 27/28. No. 4079 is booked to appear at the Churnet Valley Railway's May 4-6 gala. KEVIN WHITEHURST

SIDELINES

Itemised thefts

A REGISTER of stolen items is the latest feature to be added to online management system HOPS (Heritage Operations Processing System). All entries in the register are publicly visible. There are no fees involved to either list or view. New entries are emailed to subscribers. "This facility has been created to provide a mechanism to permanently list stolen items in order that potential buyers can identify them. Viewings of the items can be reported to the railway and hopefully more items recovered," said Danny Scroggins, programme manager at HOPS Heritage Railways. Visit www.hops.org.uk for details.

Half-dozen Bulleids

SIX Bulleid Pacifics are now set to be rostered for Swanage Railway's June 7-9 Strictly Bulleid 2 gala. Three visiting locomotives have been confirmed for what promises to be the biggest gala ever held at the Swanage Railway. 'Merchant Navy' No. 35006 *Peninsular & Oriental S. N. Co*, 'Battle of Britain' No. 34081 *92 Squadron* and 'West Country' No. 34092 *City of Wells* from the Gloucestershire Warwickshire, Nene Valley and East Lancs railways respectively will operate alongside No. 34070 *Manston*, No. 34028 *Eddystone* and No. 34072 *257 Squadron*.

East Coast giants

'A1' No. 60163 *Tornado* and Deltic No. 55009 *Alycidon* running as No. 55013 *Black Watch* are booked to star in the Nene Valley Railway's May 25-27 East Coast Giants event. Attractions are due to include five 'A1'/Deltic services per day with the last train double-heading, real ale, trade stands, and shed tours at Wansford. An East Coast Freight Storm photographic day is to be held on May 24, organised by the NVR Wagon Group. Visit www.nvr.org.uk or call 01780 784444 for more information.

'SNG' to visit Bluebell

LNER 'A4' No. 60007 *Sir Nigel Gresley* is to star in the Bluebell Railway's October 11-13 Giants of Steam 2024 gala. The 4-6-2 is also booked to haul special 'Golden Arrow' Pullman dining services on the line the following weekend, October 19/20. Further details will be announced in due course.

SIDELINES

Cotswold gala roster

THE latest visiting locomotive has been announced by the Gloucestershire Warwickshire Steam Railway (GWSR) for its May 25-27 Cotswold Festival of Steam. West Somerset Railway-based 2-6-0 No. 9351 will join Didcot Railway Centre -based 'Saint' No. 2999 *Lady of Legend*. Home fleet locos planned to appear at the event include 'Modified Hall' No. 7903 *Foremarke Hall*, 'Manor' No. 7820 *Dinmore Manor* and SR Bulleid Pacific No. 35006 *Peninsular & Oriental SN Co.* '2884' 2-8-0 No. 3850, which is close to the end of an extensive overhaul and will run if completed in time. This could be its first public appearance since overhaul.

Signalbox open day

THE largest-surviving GWR signalbox still standing is due to open to the public on Saturday, July 13. Visitors to Princes Risborough North 'box will be welcome from 10am to 4pm. Admission is free, but donations of any amount will be gratefully received. There are no Chinnor & Princes Risborough Railway heritage trains operating on the day, which allows for a safe route for visitors to access the 'box, via the restored Platform 4 at Princes Risborough railway station. Visit www.risboroughbox.org.uk for details.

In-house catering at café

MANAGEMENT of the café at Toddington station has been brought back in-house by the Gloucestershire Warwickshire Steam Railway. The outlet was previously run by an external franchise, which ended after the 2023 season. Since then, volunteers have been working flat-out to turn the café into an appealing 80-seat facility, renamed Cotswold Halt. In addition to a new menu, there is also The Halt Bar, which will open on special occasions, specialising in local Cotswold beers, ciders and spirits. The Cotswold Halt is open from 9am to 4pm, six days a week. It is closed on Mondays, except bank holidays.

Detail touches

THE environs of Rowley station at Beamish museum continue to be enhanced with period touches. Several NER bollards are being restored to their former glory and will soon be ready for installation around the goods yard area. Appropriate 'clutter' for the goods and passenger platforms is also being added – including several restored handcarts.

Wheel milestone reached

New-build 'G5' locomotive takes shape in Shildon.

CONSTRUCTION of 0-4-4T No. 1759 by the Class G5 Steam Locomotive Company Ltd (CG5SLCL) is moving apace at the Hackworth Industrial Park, Shildon.

The long saga of the replacement wheel has finally come to an end. Contractor William Cook has cast wheel No. 4, which has been proof-machined by ADA Heavy Machining and the keyway cut in. In early April, the crank-axle wheelset was being assembled by South Devon Railway Engineering, bringing the epic saga of the crank-axle to a close – a five-year project on its own.

Next step

Once the wheelset is back at the group's County Durham premises, the next step is a rolling chassis – though it will be some time before it moves under its own power.

"We have the components for this – namely the springs, hangers, numerous pins, axle-boxes and phosphor bronze bearing," Tim Taylor, G5 company secretary, told *The RM*.

"There is a good chance of having the locomotive on its wheels by the end of the year – fingers crossed!"

An order has recently been placed with Northern Steam Engineering for the manufacture of side tanks. This comes as the '0 Gallon Fund to raise money for side tanks, launched in August last year, has raised more than half the required amount.

"We are also looking at the balancing pipes between side tanks and rear cab tank. These would have been cast, but will now be fabricated," added Tim.

With the connecting rods and straps having been machined, an order has been placed for the associated parts – namely the bearings, bushes, oil caps, strap bolts and cotter pins.

Eccentric sheaves are being cast by Sutton Castings, with further orders for parts to follow.

Machining of the cylinder block is now complete. The work has been carried out by contractor Daniela Works, which is now located in the unit next door to the 'G5'. As part of the process, before the block is put back in the frame, the front cylinder covers and valve chest cover have been machined and test-fitted.

Components

Work has started on the slide valve spindles, valve rods, glands and bushes. Alan Parkin, the loco group's CAD (computer aided design) designer, is working closely with Daniela Filova, director of Daniela Works, to ensure the CAD drawings will enable the manufacture of parts so they will fit with minimum work.

"Once the cylinder block is back in place, we can then reassemble the front of the locomotive," explained Tim. "This will involve fixing the front buffer beam in place and fitting the front running boards, which will enable us to install the front sandbox/splasher, before refitting the smokebox and chimney. We can then complete the 'front treatment' with the buffers and screw coupling. Painting would be the next step – a vermillion buffer beam with loco number and NER green lined livery on the sandboxes."

Open days continue to be held on the first Saturday of the month, 10am-1pm, to December at the Hackworth Industrial Park, Shildon DL4 1HF. For details, visit www.g5locomotiveltd.co.uk.



Wheel No. 4 has been proof machined keyway cut in. AHM/G5SLC



COLOURFUL COMBINATION: **Ahead of its return to main line operation, No. 60532 *Blue Peter*, owned by Royal Scot Locomotive and General Trust, has been undergoing testing on the Severn Valley Railway following the completion of the 4-6-2's overhaul by Crewe-based Locomotive Services Group (LSG). The 'A2' Pacific climbs Eardington Bank on the first day of loaded test trains at the Severn Valley Railway on March 25 hauling a train of six Mk. 3s carriages, plus and a solitary Mk. 1.** JOHN TITLOW

Moors confirms oil-firing future for *Dame Vera Lynn*

THE North Yorkshire Moors Railway (NYMR) is working with US-based railroad engineering and mechanical contractor FMW Solutions (FMW) to convert WD 2-10-0 No. 3672 *Dame Vera Lynn* from coal to oil as part of its overhaul.

Paul Middleton, NYMR's director of mechanical engineering, said: "This is a great opportunity to develop oil-burning systems on our locomotives. This will help ensure our steam locomotives remain in service for future generations. Oil has many benefits, including lowering the risks of lineside fires, reducing staff hours maintaining locomotives and reducing business risk due to the unavailability of coal." Key firing components are due to be manufactured both at FMW's workshop in Tennessee and by the NYMR at Grosmont. The final installation is anticipated to take place on the NYMR.

Meanwhile, the overhaul of BR '4MT' 2-6-4T No. 80135 continues to progress. On March 20, the loco's frames were moved from storage in the NELPG shed to road two of the repair shed at Grosmont for continuation of the overhaul following the outshopping of 'Black Five' No. 44806.

The boiler for No. 80135 is receiving attention by contractor Heritage Boiler Steam Services Ltd on Merseyside.



PEAK TIME ON SHED: **An impressive line-up of motive power was on offer in Haworth on the damp morning of March 23 as locos were prepared for the Keighley & Worth Valley Railway's Spring Steam Gala. Pictured left to right are: Nos. 41241, 6990 *Witherslack Hall* (visiting from the Great Central Railway), 52044, 75078, 45596 *Bahamas* and 4079 *Pendennis Castle* (visiting from Didcot Railway Centre). Nos. 78022 and 85 are just visible behind No. 41241.** ROBERT BATTY

Avon Valley celebrates half-century with four-day gala

THE Avon Valley Railway (AVR) marked its 50th anniversary in style with four days of celebrations on April 4-7.

Two visiting locos were the stars of the show – each serving as a nod to the line's pioneering days of preservation at Bitton. Midland Railway – Butterley-based Avonside 0-6-0ST *Cranford* stood in for AVR resident Avonside 0-6-0ST *Edwin Hulse*, which is under overhaul at Bitton, while Foxfield Railway-based Hunslet 'Austerity' *Wimblebury* ran in the guide of 'Austerity' *Glendower*, which is currently out of traffic at the South Devon Railway. Replicating the AVR's earliest trains, *Cranford* hauled a solitary BR Mk.1 carriage with a brake van.

Other attractions included guided tours, talks and stands in a marquee – plus dining trains offering a 1970s-inspired menu.

One of the 50th anniversary headboards and one of our 50th anniversary discs are being raffled. Tickets are available at £1 each from www.avrht.org/shop and will be drawn at the end of the year.



Hunslet 'Austerity' 0-6-0ST *Wimblebury* is seen running *Glendower*, an early resident of the AVR and is pictured heading away from Bitton on April 5. STUART CHAPMAN

Relaid sidings set to boost Severn Valley Railway revenue

SIDINGS have been reinstated at Foley Park to help the Severn Valley Railway (SVR) further develop its ongoing partnerships with the main line rail industry.

Foley Park was formerly the location of a halt on the old Kidderminster to Bewdley loop line, all traces of which are long gone.

The original sidings on the site were laid in the 1920s to serve the nearby sugar beet factory and removed in the 1980s.

Initially, the sidings will be used as a stabling point for the Harsco stone-blowing unit, which will be on the SVR for most of 2024.

Work so far on the sidings has included installing a crossover from the running line and the creation of a short siding with head shunt.

Further plans are afoot to maximise the revenue-earning possibilities of the site, including laying three long sidings which could be offered out as a commercial rolling stock storage facility. Chris Bond, SVR's head of infrastructure, said: "It will need a lot of work to further clear the area to prepare for the laying of the sidings, and timetables will be subject to what materials and resources we can pull together to achieve this. If possible, we will look to start on this in 2024, as the sooner it's completed, the sooner we can see some revenue flowing in."

FAMILY GET-TOGETHER: **Lakeside & Haverthwaite Railway kicked off its 2024 operating season on March 23 in upbeat fashion with a brief visit of LMS 'Jubilee' Class No. 45690 *Leander*. Arriving from the East Lancs Railway four days earlier, the 4-6-0 passed its fitness-to-run exam and was then operated for the benefit of its owners, the Beet family – who saw their two main line locos running together for the first time. No. 45690 joined BR '2MT' 2-6-0 No. 46441, which recently returned to steam following overhaul. The locos are seen at Haverthwaite on March 22 during a photo charter organised by Peter Van Campenhout. Nos. 45690 and 46441 operated public services on the line over the weekend of March 23/24 – before *Leander* moved to the Watercress Line to take part in that line's April 26-28 Spring Steam Gala (*RM* March).** JACK BOSKETT



DIARY

MAY
May 3-6 West Somerset: Spring Steam Spectacular
May 4/5 Severn Valley: Model Railway Weekend
May 4-6 Churnet Valley Railway: Steam Gala
May 4-6 Didcot Railway Centre: Steam Into the '40s
May 4-6 East Lancs: Days Out With Thomas
May 4-6 Epping Ongar: Festival of Steam Gala
May 4-6 Isle of Wight Steam Railway: Real Ale Festival
May 4-6 Middleton Railway: Teddy Bears' Specials
May 4-6 North Norfolk Railway: Dad's Army Live
May 4-6 South Devon Railway: Family Fun Weekend
May 4-6 Spa Valley Railway: Days Out With Thomas
May 5 Ribble Steam Railway: Royal Saloon Refreshments
May 5 Whitwell & Reepham Station: Steam Sunday
May 5/6 Buckinghamshire Railway Centre: Days Out With Thomas
May 5/6 East Anglian Railway Museum: Steam Day
May 5/6 East Somerset Railway: Bank holiday bands
May 5/6 Helston Railway: Teddy Bears' Picnic
May 5/6 Lincolnshire Wolds Railway: Running Days
May 7 & 21 Bodmin Railway: Murder Mystery Trains
May 9 Swanage Railway: Preview Day
May 10-12 Bluebell Railway: Branch Line Gala Weekend
May 11/12 Didcot Railway Centre: Mini May Gala
May 11/12 Epping Ongar Railway: *Leander's* farewell
May 11/12 Great Central: Open Extravaganza
May 11/12 Bo'ness & Kinneil: Days Out With Thomas
May 12, 19 and 26 Buckinghamshire Railway Centre: Steaming Days
May 12 Ecclesbourne Valley: Vintage Road & Rail Rally
May 12 Mid-Norfolk Railway: Bus and Coach Day
May 16-18 Barrow Hill Roundhouse: Rail Ale
May 18-19 Bluebell Railway: Road Meets Rail
May 18/19 Kent & East Sussex: 1940s Weekend
May 18/19 Great Central Railway: Heritage Bus Rally
May 24-27 South Devon Railway: Spring Rails & Ales
May 25-27 East Lancs: Vintage 1940s Weekend
May 25 Didcot Railway Centre: Paddington at Didcot
May 25 East Somerset Railway: Birds of Prey Day
May 25-27 Gloucs Warks: Cotswold Festival of Steam
May 25-27 Nene Valley Railway: East Coast Giants

Boughton opens for business!

Volunteers delight as new station on Northampton & Lamport Railway ceremonially opened by local MP.

Words & pictures by Chris Milner

MARCH 30 was a massive day for the 300 volunteers and management of the Northampton & Lamport Railway (NLR), opening a half-mile extension and new station at Boughton on the northern edge of Northampton.

The opening ceremony was performed by local MP and former Rail Minister Chris Heaton-Harris.

Completing the extension has been the culmination of 17 years of hard work which has included the restoration of a low-height seven-arch viaduct, as well as laying half a mile of track by hand. This extension now gives the railway just over 1½ miles of operational line.

Boughton is also fully signalled, showing off a fine array of semaphore signals controlled by a box originally at Betley Road, Crewe, with the wooden superstructure placed on a new replica brick base.

The lever frame has been built using components from Croft signalbox, Leicestershire.

In fact, the signalling on the line has a high priority and is controlled by three signalboxes and is seen as one of the most comprehensive and detailed on any heritage railway of similar size, thanks to the vision of infrastructure director Graham Peacock.

As regards the new single platform built by volunteers, it can accommodate five carriages and its construction used 27,198 bricks, with apparently just two bricks to spare.

Reaction

Adam Giles, NLR chairman, said: "We started construction of the extension in 2007 and work on the platform began in 2019. The whole thing has been built by a very small group of volunteers. We have not had the benefit of expensive machinery and it's been pure hard work in all weathers.

"When we started, there was nothing here at all – no platform, no track – so everything people will see has been built brand new."

Mr Heaton-Harris was full of praise for what the volunteers had achieved. He added: "This railway was opened in 1996, on an Easter Saturday, and I'm told it was by Roger Freeman another MP and Transport Minister.

"When I was the Rail Minister, I had just one railway station in my constituency, which was Long Buckby. I'm now very proud to have three railway stations in my constituency – and the best thing about these two new ones is that they connect to pubs at each end of the line!"

Funding for the extension has been through public donations, as well as grants from the former Daventry District Council and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development.

Future

Having reached the line's southern limit, future focus – as funding permits – will be turned to extending north beyond Merry Tom Lane crossing and then on towards Lamport.

Running alongside the railway is the Brampton Valley Way, a 14 mile footpath between Northampton and Market Harborough along the former LNWR trackbed, which is open to pedestrians, bicycle riders and horse riders.

Trains normally run on the NLR on Sundays – plus selected Saturdays and Bank Holidays. Visit www.nlr.org.uk for full details of services.

This year, the railway has introduced driver experience courses and cab rides using both steam and diesel locos – the website has more details.



MP Chris Heaton-Harris and NLR chairman Adam Giles unveil the replica nameboard at Boughton station on March 30.



Hunslet 'Austerity' 0-6-0ST No. 3193 *Norfolk Regiment* sits in the new station at Boughton, having arrived with the VIP train from Pitsford & Brampton on March 30. In the distance is Class 31 No. 31289. Hawthorn Leslie 0-4-0ST *Swanscombe No. 4* was at the north end of the VIP train, which operated in top-and-mode.

Broadway train services resume after first phase of viaduct repairs

GLOUCESTERSHIRE Warwickshire Steam Railway (GWSR) services began running through to Broadway again in time for the Easter weekend – having been suspended since early November to allow repairs to be carried out on a viaduct.

Work to re-waterproof the surface of Stanway viaduct and to stabilise the 200m-long viaduct parapets, under which a mortar joint was unexpectedly found to have failed, has now been completed.

The track has been reinstated and the viaduct handed back to the railway, in time for services to Broadway station to resume on Good Friday, March 29.

"This first phase of the project was undertaken by Walsh Construction and its sub-contractor Lampitt Rail Services with consulting engineers David Symonds Associates," explained Dr Graham Plant, GWSR's engineering director.

"It was completed within budget and in the expected time frame – we were fortunate that generally favourable weather has been on our side, allowing the work to press ahead with little interruption. I am particularly pleased that all the works were completed safely over the five-month contract. We will now allow the viaduct to dry out before starting work on Phase 2 which is planned to start in 2025, subject to funding. This will encompass repair of the structure's brickwork that has been damaged by water seepage over many decades."

The work could not have been carried out without vital support from the Gloucestersure Warwickshire Railway Trust which launched an appeal last year to fund the now-completed first stage of the viaduct repair work, costing around £600,000.

"In all, complete repair of the viaduct will cost up to £1.8 million, so the appeal remains open," added Dr Plant. "We expect the painstaking task to repair the brickwork to take up to three years to finish."

Visit www.gwrt.org.uk for details of how you can help.



GWR 2-6-2T No. 4555 is on hire to the Chinnor & Princes Risborough Railway for the 2024 season from the Dartmouth Steam Railway. The Prairie, recently repainted in early BR passenger lined green livery, is seen heading up Chinnor Bank with the 12.50 departure from Princess Risborough on April 7. MARTYN TATTAM

Chinnor upgrades its 'independent line' track

THE Chinnor & Princes Risborough Railway (CPRR) is relaying its independent line into Princes Risborough station – which runs alongside the Network Rail siding hitherto used to access the line's eastern terminus.

Since 2018 when it opened a rebuilt fourth platform alongside Princes Risborough's Network Rail / Chiltern Railways station, CPRR trains have accessed the layout there via a half mile diversion over a Network Rail siding; but only when it is not otherwise needed.

Known as the Thame Branch Siding, it is part of the remains of the old line from Princes Risborough to Oxford via Thame. Adjacent to it were the remains of the former GWR branch to Chinnor and Watlington, but after cessation of a daily coal train for Chinnor cement works in 1989, the track had become derelict.

CPRR has now lifted most of the old track, removed the trees and flattened the base ready for new track to be laid.

Some of the rail is re-useable, but only a few of the sleepers are fit for use in sidings.

Volunteers are now pressing on with relaying the independent line – 60ft panels are being assembled in small batches on top of existing track nearby, which makes getting the sleeper spacing right straightforward, then the CPRR's twin-jibbed rail crane carries each panel to its final position. One rail is then de-keyed, allowing the panel to be curved to suit, then re-keyed.

Last year the Princes Risborough to Aylesbury branch was closed for a period to allow it to be diverted onto new embankment and bridge over HS2 and Network Rail kindly donated some of the concrete sleepers made redundant as a result. They are old bullhead types, so fit the recovered rail. The rail off the Aylesbury branch was cut up to get it off the HS2 site quickly.

Unfortunately, it was not possible to recover as many sleepers as hoped, so the railway is still about 400m short of track to complete its independent line. It is looking for another source and busy fundraising, conscious also of the quantity of ballast it will need once the track is done.

Meanwhile, in recent weeks the level crossing at Wainhill has been renewed. Track has been relaid and a modern modular system installed which will provide a smooth crossing for vehicles, pedestrians and horses.

■ A steam gala has been planned for Friday to Sunday September 13-15 as part of the CPRR's 30th anniversary celebrations. It is hoped two guests locos will be there to join No. 4555.

No scheduled Swanage trains to Wareham

REGULAR Swanage Railway passenger services will not operate over Network Rail metals to Wareham this season, the Dorset heritage line has confirmed.

A trial heritage diesel train service to the main line at Wareham ran on 90 selected days between April and September in 2017 and 2023.

"While our trial heritage train service on the busy Network Rail main line into Wareham was operationally successful, it did not deliver commercially and any future service to Wareham would require a subsidy so it could operate," said Swanage Railway Trust chairman Frank Roberts in a statement.

"During the two-year trial, our Wareham fares reflected the additional costs of running over the national railway network into Wareham while not detrimentally affecting the fare structure of our important steam and diesel heritage train services between Norden, Corfe Castle, Harman's Cross, Herston and Swanage. Our popular heritage train services between Norden and Swanage carried more than 150,000 passengers in 2023.

"Operating, maintaining and developing a heritage railway is growing increasingly expensive."

The Swanage Railway described its connection with the national network at Worgret Junction, a mile west of Wareham on the main line from London, as "important" – because it enables excursion trains from elsewhere in the country to run to Corfe Castle and Swanage; bringing several hundred passengers on each train and much- needed business to the Isle of Purbeck.



Visiting from the Bluebell Railway, SECR 'O1' 0-6-0 No. 65 is seen departing Harmans Cross with a Swanage to Norden train during the Swanage Railway's Victorian Weekend gala on March 24. The DMU cars were refurbished with the original intention of operating over main line metals to Wareham. MARK V PIKE

'28XX' stopped for repairs

GWR '28XX' 2-8-0 No. 2807, which returned to the Gloucestershire Warwickshire Steam Railway roster last Autumn following overhaul, has been temporarily withdrawn from traffic.

In a statement, the loco's owning group, Cotswold Steam Preservation Limited (CSPL), said: "We are still in the first year of bedding in the engine after a three-and-a-half-year heavy general overhaul. Issues have arisen which are best resolved now.

The loco is being moved to Ian Riley's facility in Heywood, Lancs, to address these minor issues. The CSPL board and Riley's have agreed a plan to address them to ensure No. 2807 can return to service as soon as possible. CSPL can then focus on the engine operating at the GWSR with potential visits to other preservation railways in the coming years."

The Churchward loco moved from Toddington to Heywood on April 11.

The development meant No. 2807 was unable to take part in the West Somerset Railway's May 3-6 Spring Steam Spectacular gala – Great Central Railway-based No. 6990 *Witherslack Hall* filling the slot instead.

Compiled by **Gareth Evans**

Milk train reborn

Half-a-dozen tankers gathered to re-create the past at the East Somerset Railway.



'Saint' No. 2999 *Lady of Legend* hauls its train of six milk tanks during a 30742 Charters event on the East Somerset Railway on March 25. MARTIN CREESE

AN easily forgotten aspect of railway goods operations of the past has helped the East Somerset Railway (ESR) to celebrate its half-century as a heritage line.

While milk trains are today a memory on the national network, they were once a familiar sight on parts of Britain's railways. Fortunately, several milk tanker wagons have survived in preservation, but they are located at various heritage sites rather than concentrated in one location, making it hard until now to re-create a milk train. On March 25 however, that changed at the ESR.

Martin Creese, owner of 30742 Charters took up the story: "Over the years I've had the pleasure of participating in and organising photo charters on various railways with a short milk train of one or two tanks, the most recent having been back in September 2023 when I ran a 30742 Charters day with newly overhauled Large Prairie No. 4110 on a full brake and two milk tanks at the ESR.

"In discussion around photo charters to support a visiting loco for the line's 50th anniversary with ESR's Tom Bailey and Phil Wilson, I suggested it would be nice to have a combination that would be different to the other railways. The idea of recreating a milk train was born."

Resources

Costs were calculated to include transport and some repairs to the wagons, plus some contingency. Forty generous photographers allowed the target to be met.

In early February, four tanks arrived at Cranmore. Derby-built No. 44000 from Midsomer Norton, courtesy of the Somerset and Dorset Railway Trust; Swindon-built Nos. W102 and W3018 courtesy of the 813 Fund and the West Somerset Railway; and finally, Swindon-built No. W2835 from the Gloucestershire Warwickshire Steam Railway and Andrew Goodman. Andrew arranged all the transport moves.

The wagons joined the two resident examples – Derby-built No. 44044 and Swindon-built No. W3035. All carry, albeit a little faded in some cases, the United Dairies livery of a silver tank and black running gear.

It was originally hoped the train would be hauled by No. 6880 *Betton Grange*, but the loco was not quite ready. Thanks to the Great Western Society at Didcot, the most appropriate deputy No. 2999 *Lady of Legend* stood in.

Thoughts are now being given to whether this can become a longer term project.

Future

Martin added: "The popularity of milk tankers on photo charters and the diverse range of motive power that hauled them gives plenty of opportunity in the future which could provide a sustainable income to maintain them.

"I have a list from a '14XX' to a Bulleid Light Pacific in my wish list, the latter to recreate the workings from Seaton Junction. Given the establishment of themed goods rakes on many heritage lines, a milk train based on the ESR may yet become a reality."

■ If you would like details of future milk train events or as the project evolves, email: mail.30742@btinternet.com.

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Steam loco fleet strengthened

Trio of operational 0-6-0STs now on Aln Valley Railway roster following arrival of recently overhauled *Renishaw Ironworks No.6* from Tanfield.

THE Aln Valley Railway's (AVR) steam locomotive fleet has been boosted by the news that the Northumberland line will be the new home for Hudswell Clark 0-6-0ST, *Renishaw Ironworks No.6*, works number 1366 built in 1919.

The locomotive, along with fellow 0-6-0ST No. 65, works number 1631, built in 1929, was originally purchased by the late Terry Robinson and stored for some time at Doncaster diesel depot, making an interesting comparison with the BR motive power usually present there.

Renishaw has just completed a full overhaul at the Tanfield Railway and was then sold by the previous owner to Adam and Diana Stone, both working volunteers on the AVR. The loco's new owners secured the sale and transport to AVR within just a week. This was a very quick decision to strengthen the steam engine fleet and to give AVR flexibility around general maintenance.

Operation

Following safety tests and checks, *Renishaw* entered service over the Easter weekend.

Aln Valley is home to a number of other locomotives, the two other active fleet members currently being NCB No. 60 and Richboro.

Hudswell Clarke 0-6-0T *Richboro*, works number 1243 built in 1917, was purchased by the AVR in 2019 and is due to be overhauled in 18 months' time. However, following the arrival of *Renishaw* alongside a substantial donation towards the overhaul, the railway is considering withdrawing *Richboro* from service to undergo overhaul now, which would even out the out of service dates for the operational locos.

'Austerity' 0-6-0ST No. 60 was built in 1948 as works number 3686 and worked for the National Coal Board in the Durham area. For this, it was built with a slimmed down cab in order to work through the narrow tunnel leading to the famous Lambton coal staithes in Sunderland. Now owned by Stephen Wood, the loco is on long-term loan to the railway and is in full working order.

Fellow 'Austerity' 0-6-0ST No. 48, built again by Hunslet Engine Company as works number 2864 in 1943, is a long-term restoration project. Hudswell Clarke 0-6-0T *Jennifer*, works number 1731 built in 1941, is under overhaul at the Flour Mill, Forest of Dean.



***Renishaw Ironworks No. 6* is seen in action at Lionheart station at the Aln Valley Railway on March 31.** AVR

Future

The railway is also home to a pair of 0-4-0ST locomotives. Peckett W6 class *Merlin*, works number 1937 built in 1939 is undergoing overhaul and is expected to be completed later this year, while Hawthorm Leslie 0-4-0ST *Penicuik*, works number 3799 built in 1935 has recently been donated to the railway, although having been present for some years. No work has yet commenced on the locomotive.

Contemporary Edwardian Barclay suits the 'Middy'

THE Mid-Suffolk Light Railway (MSLR) has hired Pontypool & Blaenavon Railway-based Barclay 0-4-0ST *Caledonia Works* for the 2024 season.

Built in 1910 as works number 1219, the loco was delivered new to Stewarts & Lloyds Ltd at its Clydesdale Works in Mossend, near Motherwell. It was returned to steam by owner Ryan Pope at Williton on the West Somerset Railway in 2016, before taking up residence at Blaenavon.

Roster

The first public outings for the engine were over the March 31-April 1 Easter weekend.

"We are delighted to obtain this pretty little loco for the season," said John Durrant MSLR locomotive superintendent. "Although the type never ran on the original line, it is very much a contemporary Edwardian machine and suits our period perfectly."

Caledonia Works is due to be in operation on all of the MSLR's open days until at least the Everything Goes day on September 1.

Of the other locomotives at Brockford, home of the MSLR, Cockerill 0-4-0VBT works number 2525, built in 1906 is in full working order and will be in use throughout the season.

Hudswell Clarke 0-6-0ST, works number 1604 built in 1928, worked all its life at a sugar factory in Bardney, Lincolnshire, before being sold into preservation. It has been under restoration at the MSLR for several years. The work has been based around an education scheme which allows members of the public to learn about steam locomotives and the techniques and skills used to restore and maintain them.

The recently repaired boiler has now been lowered into the frames and the smoke box fitted, the next major job is to pipe everything up to ensure that all fittings are correct, then remove the boiler, have it retubed and finally refitted ready for a steam test, hopefully by early next year.

Progress

The sole ex-main line locomotive at Brockford is LNER 'Y7' 0-4-0T No. 985, built in 1923 to the North Eastern Railway class 'H' design, almost identical to that of NER No. 1310 currently on display on the Middleton Railway.

No. 985 first appeared at Brockford in 2016 and after a few years' work has been undergoing overhaul. The locomotive's chassis has been overhauled at Brockford, with the boiler going to the North Norfolk Railway for repair and is due back in June this year, with a possible return to service towards the end of the year.



RIGHT: ***Caledonia Works* hauls a passenger train at the Mid-Suffolk Light Railway on April 1.** JAMES KINDRED

READY FOR A DAY'S WORK: **Two Hunslet 'Austerities' being prepared for work at Rolvenden on the Kent & East Sussex Railway on April 7. On the left is No. 25 *Northiam*, built in 1953 as works number 3797 – and on the right, leaving the yard for passenger train duty is No. WD75008 *Swiftsure*, built in 1943 as works number 2857.** CHRIS LIVINGS



Compiled by **Cliff Thomas**

SINGLE LINES

■ GRAHAM Morris' Kerr Stuart 0-4-0ST 'Wren' *Peter Pan* will visit Westonzoyland Pumping Station Museum's August 26 Railway Gala. This will be the loco's second appearance on the 2ft gauge running line at the museum, *Peter Pan's* August 2022 visit being the first time a steam loco had operated at Westonzoyland.

■ JAMES Evans' ex-Dinorwic Hunslet 0-4-0ST *Felinheli* (*Velinheli*) moved under its own steam for the first time since early 2017 on March 17. The new boiler in the overhauled loco passed its official test on March 22.

■ THE boiler was lifted from the frames of the Ffestiniog Railway's ALCO 2-6-2T *Mountaineer* at Glan y Pwll depot by the volunteer restoration team in March, followed by shot-blasting in readiness for further testing and inspections.

■ THE McLaren-Benz MBD4 engine destined for fitting to Kerr, Stuart 6wDM 4415/1928 returned to the Ffestiniog Railway-based restoration team in March. It was sent to a contractor for rebuilding in August 2021, with delivery back expected in 12 weeks!

■ FFESTINIOG Railway's Gloster Wagon Company 1879-built 'Bowsider' carriage No. 20 has emerged from the paint shop following extensive refurbishment in late-1950s green and ivory livery. When it entered the carriage works in 2015, it had a 1920s 'Colonel Stephens' livery of green with red ends and frames.

■ ALISHAN Forest Railway's Mitsubishi diesel locomotive DL-34, currently on loan to the Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway (W&LLR), returned to Llanfair on April 4. It went to Peter Briddon's workshop in Darley Dale last September for its braking system to be modified to work with W&LLR vacuum-fitted stock. Grondana couplings are now being fitted in W&LLR's workshop. Completion of these works will enable test running with W&LLR carriages.

■ LEIGHTON Buzzard Railway is holding a Diesel Gala with a Hint of Steam on May 27. Nine diesel locos hauling passenger and freight trains, including double and triple-heading, will be in action, with Kerr, Stuart 0-4-0ST 'Wren' *Peter Pan* providing the 'hint' of steam presence on passenger services.

■ CROWLE Peatland Railway has started building a new platform which will offer disabled access to trains. The first layer of old concrete sleepers was laid between steel uprights during March.

£500k redevelopment appeal

Talyllyn Railway unveils development plans for for Tywyn Wharf and Pendre.

THE Talyllyn Railway (TR) officially launched its £500,000 'The 75 Appeal' on March 22. It aims to raise the amount over the next five to six years towards financing its 'Preserving Our Past, Building Our Future' redevelopment programme.

In late 2022, the TR secured a £110,000 National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) development grant award towards this project (*RM*, Headline News, November 2022). This enabled the employment of a project manager who has been developing various aspects of the TR's proposals.

The appeal has been launched now to prove to the NLHF, other grant-giving bodies and sponsors that the TR is capable of raising appropriate match-funding. The intention is to submit the full bid for more than £1million to NHLF later this year, with the outcome hopefully known in early 2025.

Approach

Acknowledging that £500,000 is an ambitious target, the TR observes that spreading the appeal over several years equates to the less daunting aim of raising £100,000 a year for five years. Moreover, where previous TR appeals have been aimed primarily at TRPS members, this appeal embraces visitors, passengers and donors from further afield.

The 'Preserving Our Past, Building Our Future' programme encompasses developments much as outlined previously, including constructing a new engineering facility on the site of the life-expired North Carriage Shed at Pendre, building a new carriage shed on a new site, developing new carriage maintenance facilities and a paint shop, restoration of the original workshop building at Pendre to allow public access, provision of additional volunteer accommodation, the remodelling of Wharf station, and a new all-weather heritage facility to tell the TR's story. There will also be a community engagement programme.

The cost of implementing the full programme is estimated at some £4 million.

Concept design options, including three potential redevelopment schemes for the Pendre site (no decision has yet been made on which is favoured) and proposals for the adaptation of Trefri (the house adjacent to Wharf station bought in 2019) were displayed.



Talyllyn Railway's freshly overhauled Fletcher, Jennings 0-4-2ST No. 1 *Talyllyn* was displayed in its new blue livery at Wharf station on March 22 during the launch of the railway's '75 Appeal'. It was not used on the day, the train carrying invitees to Abergynolwyn being handled by Hughes 0-4-2ST No. 3 *Sir Haydn*. Having arrived at Abergynolwyn Fletcher, Jennings 0-4-0WT No. 2 *Dolgoch* hauling the Talyllyn's original carriages worked shuttles to Nant Gwernol, pausing on the way for invitees to view heritage developments at Ty Dwr and the location of the old winding house above Abergynolwyn village. CLIFF THOMAS

Each year for the duration, the appeal will focus on a particular aspect of the redevelopment programme, although everything raised will go into the general development 'pot'.

Facilities

The first year will focus on volunteer accommodation in the form of converting Trefri, the provision of additional carriage storage (enabling demolition of the present North Carriage Shed) and initiating the community engagement programme.

These aspects will remain priorities even if Lottery backing is not secured, although timeframes for achieving them would change.



FREIGHT IN FOCUS: Beamish Museum's April 6/7 Wheels of Industry event featured visits by Ffestiniog Railway-based Hunslet 0-4-0STs *Britomart*, pictured hauling freight wagons on April 6, and *Hugh Napier*. They joined resident locos Avonside 0-4-0T *Glyder* and replica Lewin 0-4-0T *Samson* on the narrow gauge line in the colliery area. DAVE HEWITT

Gertrude enters Leighton Buzzard service after overhaul

ANDREW Barclay 0-6-0T *Gertrude* (AB1578/1918) entered service at the Leighton Buzzard Railway (LBR) on March 10 double-heading with its sister loco, LBR's *Doll,* and hauled its first LBR train solo on March 24.

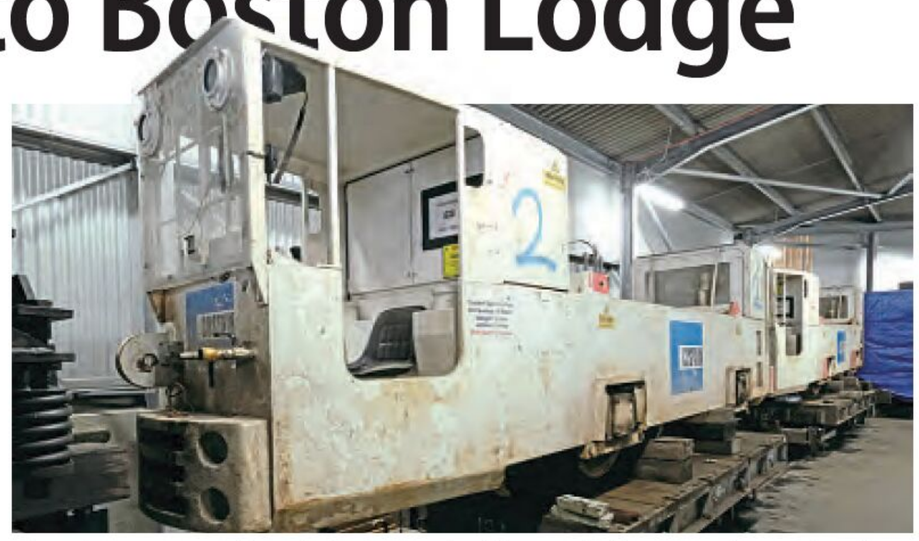
Gertrude had steamed at LBR following its restoration during an August 2009 gala visit, also double-heading with *Doll*. It then left to fulfil a hire period at the Welsh Highland Heritage Railway. On expiry of its boiler ticket and the end of that hire, the loco, owned by Sarah Westmacott, returned to LBR in February 2019 where a 10-year overhaul commenced. Initially hindered by the Covid-19 pandemic, other factors arose which further delayed its entry into LBR service.

FR plans carbon-neutral shuttles to transport visitors to Boston Lodge

DURING a behind-the-scenes tour of Boston Lodge in March, which formed part of the FR's Heritage Lottery Fund open week, visitors were told that the two ex-Costain double-ended 14-ton, four-wheel battery-electric locos (built by Clayton in 2012) bought last year following their use on the Tideway Tunnel Project in London (*RM*, October 2023) are likely to see passenger use.

Although originally said to have been bought for shunting at Boston Lodge and Dinas (Welsh Highland Railway), the new idea is for them to haul trains from Harbour station for visits to the interpretation centre, which will be opened at Boston Lodge when the current reconstruction project is complete, projected for later this year.

The solar panels on the carriage shed can produce enough electricity to power the whole of Boston Lodge in the summer, thus the FR will be able to promote these trains as being carbon-neutral.



The Ffestiniog Railway's (FR) two double-ended 14-ton, four-wheel battery-electric locos, works numbers B4539/3 and B4539/5, pictured at Boston Lodge on March 15 during a behind-the-scenes tour. These gauge-variable (750mm and 610mm) locos will have to be regauged to 600mm gauge before they can enter FR service. JAMES WAITE

Guest locos gear up for galas

ENTHUSIAST events at two 15in gauge heritage lines are expected to feature an interesting roster of visiting steam locomotives alongside their respective resident performers this month.

Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway's (R&ER) May 4-6 gala will feature visits by Perrygrove Railway's 0-6-0ST *Mr Hallworth* and privately-owned Exmoor Steam Railway-built 0-4-0TT No. 312 *St. Egwin* from The Valley Railway Adventure (previously Evesham Vale Light Railway).

Perrygrove Railway's May 18/19 Steam Gala weekend will feature three visiting locos. Following the R&ER visit, privately-owned Evesham-based Exmoor Steam Railway-built 0-4-0TT No. 312 *St. Egwin* and Ravenglass-based reconstructed Heywood 0-4-0T *Katie* from Ravenglass will travel down to Perrygrove and be joined by miniature-type 15in gauge 0-6-0 tender loco *Jack*. The latter was built in the 1950s by Jack Lemmon-Burton for his (now long-closed) estate railway in Sussex.

For some years it has been displayed at the Bredgar and Wormshill Light Railway and is visiting from The Steam Workshop, where it is for sale.



A debutant at Statfold's Spectacle of Steam Weekend was privately-owned Ruston & Hornsby 11/13 HP 4wDM 201970/1940 *Alistair* which, as reported last month, returned to operation in mid-February. It is pictured in action on March 16. PETER JOHNSON

One in, one out at Statfold

STATFOLD Barn Railway's March 16/17 Spectacle of Steam Weekend saw the return to operation of Hunslet 0-4-2ST 3902/1971 *Trangkil No. 4* (3902/1971) following its 10-year overhaul. It also saw the final appearance of Hunslet 0-4-2ST *Howard* (1842/1936), which will now be displayed in the museum until commencement of its 10-year overhaul.

Both locos were built by Hunslet to an earlier Kerr, Stuart 'Brazil' class design, the main difference between the two being different valve gear and cabs.

Gowrie boiler appeal launched

THE Gowrie Locomotive Trust has launched an appeal to finance the boiler of new-build Hunslet 0-6-4T Single-Fairlie *Gowrie*.

The intention had been to start on the boiler next year, but the boiler maker has indicated a wish to commence when a current contract is completed in about late summer/early autumn. To take up this opportunity, the trust must raise £20,000 by late autumn this year to enable work to commence. Funding efforts will continue after construction of the boiler starts, the likely total cost of the boiler being about £100,000.

Meanwhile, other significant progress is being made on the project. With the cylinder patterns completed and delivered to the foundry (*RM*, February), the left cylinder has been cast, and after visually deeming it to be satisfactory, casting of the other cylinder has been given the go-ahead. The platework is also progressing. The bunker, which will include two coal rails (not a feature of the original *Gowrie*) to allow about a quarter of a ton of additional coal to be carried, has been test-assembled by a contractor. Following approval of the assembly, the plates have been dismantled and sent away for shot-blasting and will be fully assembled when they return. The contractor has also started assembling the side tanks.



EASTER MONDAY STEAM

Devon Railway Centre began its 2024 operating season on Good Friday, March 29. Three days later, O&K 20hp 0-4-0WT (5744/1912) *Rebecca* is pictured hauling a passenger train at the venue, which is located in Bickleigh, near Tiverton. JOSH BRINSFORD

SINGLE LINES

■ WELSH Highland Heritage Railway's (WHHR) ex-WDLR Baldwin 10-12-D No. 794 (BLW44699/1917) restoration 'as' WHR No. 590, having been completed by the Vale of Rheidol Railway (VoR) last year, has returned to Aberystwyth. After initial display in VoR's newly-opened museum building, it was scheduled to receive a hydraulic boiler test, followed by an annual steam test in the latter part of April, and then enter VoR's works for attention to 'technical issues'.

Following completion of its lengthy restoration, the loco was launched into WHHR service on May 27, 2023. It then undertook test runs over the Welsh Highland Railway to Beddgelert, preparatory to appearing during the June 23-25 Welsh Highland Centenary event.

Unfortunately, lubrication issues became apparent, including a centre driving wheel bearing running hot, and the loco was failed (*RM*, July 2023).

It spent the WHR centenary event on static display at WHHR's Gelert's Farm and has not run since.

■ THE frames/chassis of Statfold Narrow Gauge Museum Trust's Baldwin 10-12-D 4-6-0T WDLR No. 779 (BLW 44657/1916) are to be reassembled at Statfold Barn.

Extensive work has been undertaken at the private Workshop X by volunteers since the components were sent there at the end of 2020.

Moving in the region of 100 renovated (and labelled) components back to Statfold in late March represents a change from the original plan (*RM*, January 2021), which envisaged complete restoration of the loco at Workshop X other than boiler work, which was always planned to be done at Statfold. Members of the volunteer team at Workshop X are in the process of assembling the cab.

Baldwin 4-6-0T WDLR No. 779 arrived at Statfold in March 2013 following importation from India, where it had worked at Ryam sugar factory until the early 1990s.

■ THE refurbished boiler for Hollycombe Steam in the Country's Andrew Barclay 0-4-0WT 1995/1931 *Caledonia* passed a hydraulic test on March 24. Reassembly of the loco is now in progress.

■ THE Bure Valley Railway's Winson-built 'ZB' 2-6-2 *No. 7 Spitfire* will visit Romney, Hythe and Dymchurch Railway's May 11/12 gala.

DIARY

MAY
4-5 Ffestiniog Railway Friends Day
4-5 Welsh Highland Railway 60 years of preservation
4-6 Bala Lake Railway Steam on Road and Rail
4-6 Bressingham Steam Gala
5 Bredgar & Wormshill Light Railway Steam Event Day
5-6 Leighton Buzzard Railway Teddy Bears Bank Holiday
11-12 Statfold Barn Railway Steam in Miniature
11-12 Romney Hythe & Dymchurch Railway Steam and Diesel Gala
11-12 Welshpool & Llanfair Railway Paw Patrol visits
11-12 Perrygrove Railway Teddy Bears Picnic
12 Groudle Glen Diesel & Electric Day
12 Apedale Bus Rally
18-19 Apedale Lister Fest
18-19 Perrygrove Railway Steam Gala
18-19 Hampton Kempton Waterworks Railway Weekend of Steam
18-19 Westonzoyland Pumping Station Steam on the Levels
19 Amerton Railway Volunteer Recruitment Day
19 Leighton Buzzard Railway Model Railway exhbition
19 West Lancs Teddy Bears Day
25-27 Fairbourne Railway Count Louis 100th Birthday Gala
25-30 Welshpool & Llanfair Railway Build in Bricks
26 Talyllyn Railway Tracksiders Day
26 Leighton Buzzard Railway Paw Patrol Day
27 Leighton Buzzard Railway Diesel Gala
30 Talyllyn Railway Children's Day

JUNE
2 Bredgar and Wormshill Light Railway 1940s Steam Event Day
8-9 Statfold Barn Sweet Indian Steam
15-16 Lappa Valley at 50
15-16 Hampton Kempton Waterworks Railway Gala Weekend
15-16 Amerton Railway Summer Steam Gala
16 Devon Railway Centre Father's Day Special
16 Westonzoyland Pumping Station Father's Day Steam Up
16 Perrygrove Railway Father's Day
16 Leighton Buzzard Railway Father's Day
16 West Lancs Strawberries & Steam
21-23 Welshpool & Llanfair Railway Beer and Cider Festival
23 Leighton Buzzard Railway Classic Car Show
27 Welsh Highland Heritage Railway An evening of Steam and Song

New boiler needed for 19B

Good news, bad news and surprising news for Statfold-based Darjeeling loco.

ALTHOUGH initial examination of the boiler lifted from Darjeeling Tank Locomotive Trust's (DTLT) 1889-built Darjeeling Himalayan Railway Sharp, Stewart B-class 0-4-0ST (3518/1888) No. 19B at Statfold Barn Railway in January (*RM*, March) seemed encouraging, more detailed inspection has produced less favourable results.

Non-destructive testing and a 30-page detailed engineering condition report revealed the copper firebox, which was known to have cracks and patches, required replacement. Moreover, other areas of concern have led to the decision to have a wholly new boiler constructed.

Origin

The report produced the surprise news that the boiler, which DTLT had believed to be the original boiler fitted to the loco in 1888, was stamped 'B 4977'. This indicates it actually originates from a similar B Class locomotive built in 1903, just prior to the Sharp, Stewart company merging with others to become the North British Locomotive Company. This was No. 27B, later No. 784 in the all-India numbering scheme, a loco which was one of the modified B-class locos operated at Tipong Colliery. Withdrawn some 20 years ago, it became a spare parts donor and no longer exists.

Discovering that the boiler was not actually original to the loco meant it was no longer viewed as important to keep a very rare piece of engineering history operational. Two designs for a new boiler are being developed and will go out for tender. DTLT anticipates making its selection and drawing up contracts around autumn this year with the hope that the new boiler will be manufactured during 2025 enabling No. 19B to steam again by spring 2026.

Deciding to construct a wholly new boiler raises issues concerning funding with the estimated cost of returning No. 19B to operation being £228,000.

Finance

In relation to overhauling the chassis, Graham Lee and Statfold Narrow Gauge Museum Trust have offered to donate £50,000 worth of work. DTLT's reserves supplemented by some corporate fund-matching, means the trust has sufficient funds to progress this work preparatory to receiving the boiler. To raise money to finance the boiler DTLT is making a big effort to encourage more subscribers paying £10-£25 per month, seek more donations and to persuade existing subscribers to extend their contributions beyond the base five-year term.

Future plans include taking the loco to Glasgow where it was built and when the loco is back in action to build a third carriage (No. 11), which will have a balcony, full wheelchair access and will allow those in wheelchairs to get close to the loco when it runs without a tender.



While B-class 0-4-0ST No. 19B undergoes overhaul at Statfold, the two replica Darjeeling Himalayan Railway carriages also now in the ownership of the Darjeeling Tank Locomotive Trust remain in use. They are pictured on March 16 being hauled by the Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Railway's 0-4-0+0-4-0 Garratt K1, currently resident at Statfold, during the line's March 16-17 Spectacle of Steam Enthusiasts' Weekend. PETER JOHNSON



SPRING STEAM IN THE SUN:

Threlkeld Railway & Mining Museum resident Bagnall 0-4-0ST *Sir Tom* (2135/1926) gets into its stride as it heads up to the quarry with the 13.15 departure on Saturday, March 30. The museum is open seven days a week during the school holidays and shut on Mondays during term time. STEVE SIENKIEWICZ

Manx Northern Railway carriage repatriation plan

THE Isle of Man Steam Railway Supporters' Association (IOMSRSA) has confirmed it has been in talks with the Three Foot Gauge Society aimed at returning 1879-built six-wheel (Cleminson flexible wheelbase) Manx Northern Railway carriage No. 3 (later Isle of Man Railway N.42) to the Isle of Man.

Following withdrawal from service the carriage had survived sufficiently well to be cosmetically restored and was displayed in the railway museum at Port Erin between 1976 and 1998. The vehicle left the Isle of Man in 2012 and was kept in open storage at Weetings Farm in Suffolk as part of a collection of vehicles for the Southwold Railway Trust until being moved to the trust's Steamworks site on January 7, 2019. Although some remedial work has been undertaken, one of the main solebars is broken. This will have to be replaced before the carriage sees further use.

With no space available on the Isle of Man Steam Railway itself, the IOMSRSA has launched a public appeal seeking someone prepared to offer a suitable location where the vehicle can be accommodated to ensure its retention on the Isle of Man.

Compiled by **Josh Brinsford**

Battery power boosts fleet

Brand new loco debuts at family railway attraction in Mid-Devon.



The new battery loco is seen at the front of the line of three locos at Dockside station on April 1 – with Cromar White built 'Hymek' *Arthur* and Pfeiffarbahn-built *Millie* behind. The recently rebodied carriages are seen in the foreground. JOSH BRINSFORD

DEVON Railway Centre (DRC) kicked off its 2024 operating season on Good Friday, March 29 with a brand-new locomotive entering traffic on the venue's 7¼in gauge line.

The as yet unnamed battery-powered locomotive was built in 2024 by Abbots Model Engineering for the DRC. It joins the three other locos – including *Rio Grande* constructed by Bimpson in 1982, *Millie* built in 1993 by Pfeiffarbahn and *Arthur* which is based on the Class 35 'Hymek' diesel locomotives. *Arthur* was built by Cromar White in 1969 and became the first miniature locomotive on site at the DRC when it arrived from Twycross Zoo in 1999.

While all four locos are operational, the new locomotive and *Arthur* are expected to operate the lion's share of duties on the line.

Work carried out during the closed winter season has included the construction of new carriage bodies, rebuilding most of the track and installing a new locomotive shed at the station end of the line.

Located in Bickleigh, near Tiverton, the DRC is well known for its 2ft gauge collection – as well as static standard gauge rolling stock and model railways.

The miniature railway begins at the entrance of the centre with a covered station which includes a locomotive turntable.

The route takes passengers to the riverside picnic area, the line running parallel with the 2ft gauge railway and traverses a loop through the Magic Wood before returning to the main station.

For enthusiasts, one of the best times to visit the miniature railway is during the Anything Goes gala weekend held over September 21/22 which will see all four of the miniature locomotive fleet out and about.

Essex galas

TWO lines in the county of Essex are due to hold gala weekends in the coming weeks.

The 7¼in gauge Barnards Miniature Railway's July 20/21 Exmoor Gala will celebrate the work of the Exmoor Steam Railway. It will feature several guest locos from across the country alongside the resident Exmoor-built fleet operating both passenger and demonstration freight trains. The two-mile line, which passes through woodland and crosses bridges over the river Mardyke, will be in operation between 11am and 4pm. Visit www.barnardsminiaturerailway.eu for details.

Meanwhile, five guest locos are due to be in use during the 7¼in gauge Colne Valley Miniature Railway's May 18/19 steam gala. Passenger journeys are also due to be offered on a portable 5inch gauge railway – plus the regular standard gauge trains.



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1 | 3
2 | 4

1
EVENING DIAGRAM: As No. 4079 *Pendennis Castle* takes a short break at the Edwardian station of Oakworth in West Yorkshire, the camera captures a magical moment with the signal, level crossing and gas lighting all helping to frame up the image – which was taken on the evening of Friday, March 22 during the Keighley & Worth Valley's Steam Gala. The GWR 'Castle' was visiting from Didcot Railway Centre. ROBERT BATTY

2
SHUNTING WITH *SIR B*: Vintage Carriages Trust-owned Manning Wardle L class 0-6-0ST *Sir Berkeley* (1210/1890) re-creates a scene from the past on the Colliery Line at Beamish Museum on April 6, during the Wheels of Industry gala. The Middleton Railway-based loco is seen coupling up to the chaldron wagons as the traincrew agree the next move. MATT DITCH

3
TIME FOR REFLECTION: GWR 'Hall' Class 4-6-0 No. 4930 *Hagley Hall* simmers in the platform at Arley station on the Severn Valley Railway. The idea was to re-create a typical 1930s Great Western Railway country station scene during a special photographic night shoot for a small group of photographers organised by the railway. JACK BOSKETT

4
SPRING ACROSS THE SOLENT: BR '2MT' 2-6-2T No. 41313 approaches Deacons Lane bridge on the Isle of Wight Steam Railway with the 11.00 from Smallbrook Junction on March 24. With the daffodils in bloom, there is no mistaking the time of year. NICK GILLIAM




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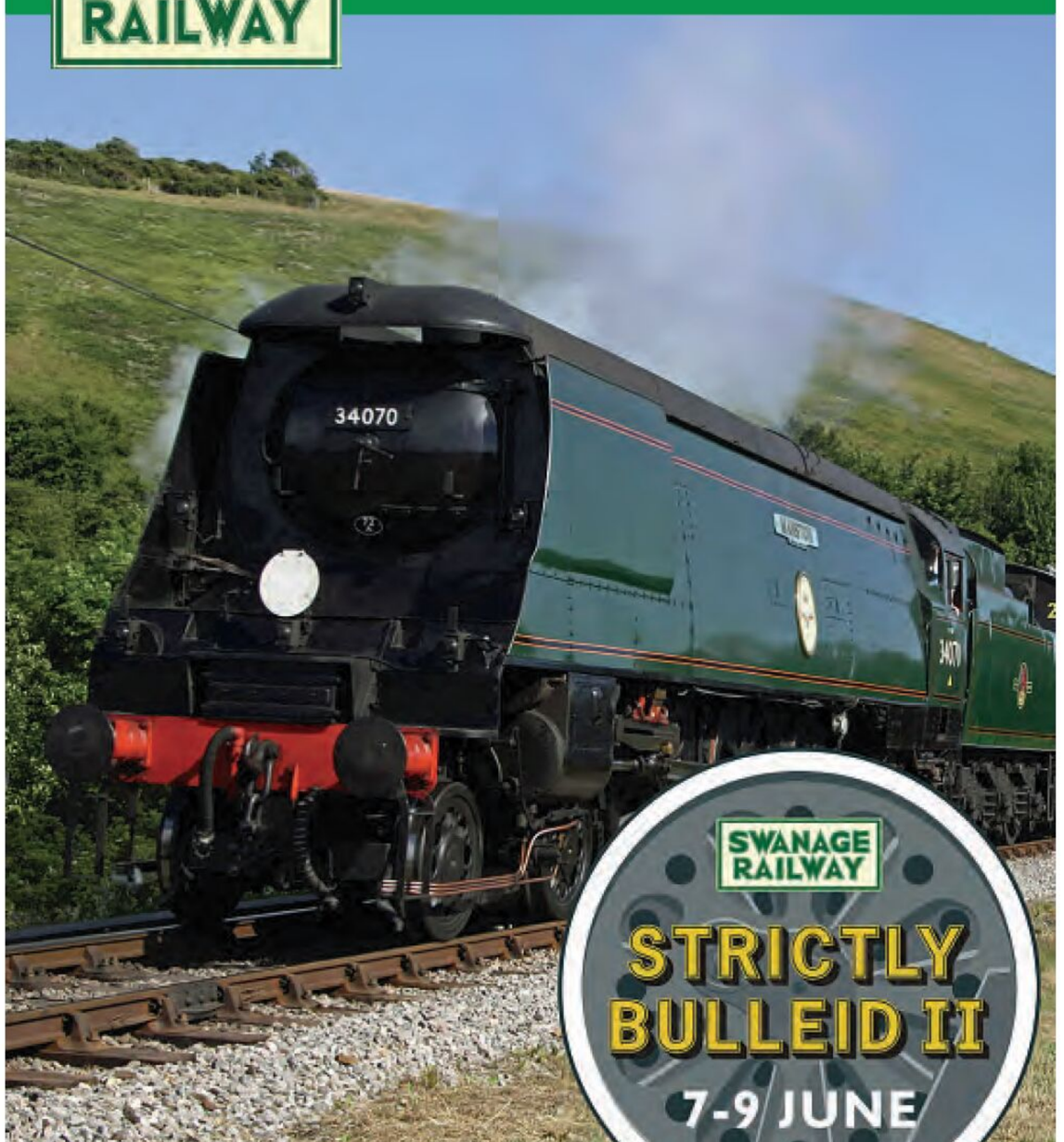


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Compiled by **Graeme Pickering**



Blackpool No. 40 is seen shortly after leaving Town End terminus during the Crich Tramway Village 'Easter Eggstra' Bank Holiday Weekend event. NATIONAL TRAMWAY MUSEUM

Electrical issues delay start of new season

Movements of trams resumed at Crich during the four-day bank holiday weekend, but a substation failure led to cancellation of the Easter Sunday launch at Heaton Park.

PROBLEMS with the supply to overhead power lines affected the start of the planned running season for two heritage tramways.

At Crich Tramway Village in Derbyshire, home to the National Tramway Museum (where a decision was taken in early March to postpone opening by a week, from March 9 to March 16, due to surrounding road closures and installation works), visitors were warned that there would be no trams in operation for the first week of the season due to an "unforeseen technical issue" with the overhead line equipment.

To make up for the lack of a tram service, admission was free for children and at a reduced rate of £5.00 for adults.

Meeting

Following a meeting of the board of directors, it was decided to further postpone services. The museum confirmed that a fault with the electrical supply had been identified when an "unusual reading" was noted during pre-season commissioning checks. It added that the supply had been isolated in order to maintain safety and allow investigations and repair work to take place.

Trams resumed on March 30, the Saturday of the Easter weekend, as part of the 'Easter Eggstra' event.

On March 27, Manchester Transport Museum Society, which operates Heaton Park Tramway, announced that its 2024 season would not be starting as planned on Easter Sunday. The failure of the main contactor in its electrical substation prevented trams running and its museum from opening as the tramcars stored in the building could not be moved either. The problem occurred during testing ahead of the new season. It was expected to take time to obtain and fit a replacement part.

SIDELINES

Tramtown workshop tours begin

THE first workshop tours of 2024 began at Blackpool Tramtown on March 29.

Visitors can see the wheel lathe, welding and forge facilities in hour-long tours on Mondays and Saturdays.

The wider Rigby Road site has been off-limits to volunteers and visitors since autumn last year, but the fitting shop was reopened for use by Blackpool Transport staff late last year, to prepare vehicles for the new operating season, with Starr Gate depot providing a temporary base for the heritage trams in service.

Bids for funding the restoration of the roof of the Rigby Road tram shed are being planned.

Further information on the tours can be found at: blackpoolheritage.com

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'Terror Tram' back in service

EAST Anglia Transport Museum's (EATM) 2024 season began on Good Friday (March 29) with the launch of Blackpool Brush car No. 634 into service for the first time since completion of its overhaul.

The tram, which carries 'Terror Tram' livery, similar to the 'Terror Train' branding it carried in the 1990s as an advertisement for Coral Island, arrived at Carlton Colville for final testing in November as part of a five-year loan to EATM from owner Fylde Transport Trust (FTT).

Temporary repairs have been made to one of its resistance grids in order to bring it into service, although both grids will need to be removed and fully refurbished before it can be used again on the Blackpool system.

The tram's former owner Andy Ashton was in attendance for the launch of No. 634, which joined Blackpool Standard No. 159 and Vambac No. 11 in service on the day.

Mr Ashton purchased No. 634 in 2009, initially working on its restoration at Rushden in Northamptonshire, including internal work and a repaint into green and cream livery. It later moved to the North East Land, Sea & Air Museum at Sunderland before returning to Blackpool in 2016.

It was donated to the Blackpool Heritage Trust and passed to the FTT when the collections were merged.



Blackpool No. 634 is seen in action at EATM at Carlton Colville on March 30, the day after its return to service, passing Portsmouth Corporation Trolleybus No. 313. There is a 14-year age difference between the two vehicles, No. 634 dating from 1937 and No. 313 having been built in 1951. FTT

Compiled by **Jack Boskett and Josh Brinsford**

Successful test runs for DEPG's preservation pioneer 'Hymek'

West Somerset Class 35 is one step closer to being back in traffic.



No. D7017 hauls No. D6566 and stock past Castle Hill, at the West Somerset Railway, with its first test run on April 9. JOSH BRINSFORD

THE Diesel and Electric Preservation Group's 'Hymek' No. D7017 is preparing for a return to traffic after a successful series of loaded test runs on April 9-11 at the West Somerset Railway.

The diesel-hydraulic has been out of action since failing at the WSR's diesel gala in June 2023 – although it has not been used regularly since 2019, when it was found to require a bogie overhaul.

The test runs began with Class 33 No. D6566 (33048) hauling a rake of six empty Mk.1s from Minehead to Williton, where No. D7017 took the '33' and stock forward to Bishops Lydeard.

After running round, the 'Hymek', '33' and stock departed for Minehead, but No. D70107 was detached at Williton following issues with a gasket on a radiator element. This was repaired in the yard in time for further test runs on April 10 and 11, which were successful with only minor issues.

The 'Hymek' was the first of the class to be preserved and the also the first locomotive preserved by the DEPG (then called the Diesel and Electric Group) in 1975. It is hoped that the loco will be back in service for the WSR's June 6-8 Summer Diesel Festival.

SIDELINES

Pioneer 26 for East Lancs

FIRST-BUILT Class 26 No. 26007 (D5300) is the third visiting locomotive to be confirmed for the June 27-29 Summer Diesel Gala.

The Type 2 will join already announced Freightliner Class 47 No. 47830 (D1945) *Beeching's Legacy* and Class 57 No. 57003 from Locomotive Services Limited at Crewe, with more guest locos to be confirmed.

'Teddy bear' named

CLASS 14 No. D9504 was named *Jon Grimwood* at the Kent & East Sussex Railway on April 6. Jon is the late son of the loco's owner, Mike Grimwood, and was named by Jon's son. The oldest operational 'Teddy Bear' is planned to visit the Ecclesbourne Valley Railway for the July 25-28 14s@60 diesel gala.

'Rat' moved

THE Keighley & Worth Valley Railway's Class 25 No. 25059 moved to Barrow Hill on March 16 for a major overhaul by Pioneer Diesels. The loco last saw use in 2019 when it was withdrawn with serious flood damage.

DPS 'Deltic' round-up

THE Deltic Preservation Society's No. D9015 (55015) *Tulyar* has entered the latter stages of its overhaul.

Electricians have moved onto the engine, while the engineering team is working on final jobs such as setting the gaps on the load regulator.

Meanwhile, No. 55019 *Royal Highland Fusilier* has had its speedometer cable replaced, putting the locomotive in position for a C exam, and No. 55009 *Alycidon* is to visit the Nene Valley Railway for the May 25-27 East Coast Giants Weekend.

Class 20s for WSR gala

TWO Class 20s will visit the West Somerset Railway (WSR) for its June 6-8 Summer Diesel Festival. Nos. 20142 *Sir John Betjeman* and 20189 are courtesy of Michael Owen/20189 Ltd, both locomotives having previously appeared on the WSR back in 2018.

The '20s' are expected to bring in other guest locomotives from the Severn Valley Railway, including Class 46 No. 182 (46045), courtesy of the Peak Locomotive Company, and No. 50033 *Glorious*, courtesy of the Class 50 Alliance.



BR BLUE FOR MOORS '37':

The North Yorkshire Moors Railway's Class 37 No. 37264 has been repainted into standard BR Blue livery while undergoing an overhaul at the line's Grosmont depot. The locomotive previously carried BR Large Logo. No. 37264 is planned to return to service as soon as possible, including operation at the line's June 14-16 diesel gala, the first such diesel event at the NYMR since 2016. No. 37264 is seen outside Pickering station on March 23 following its repaint. TYLER SCOTT-LEPPAN



MARGATE '47' SWAP: Locomotive Services Ltd's Type 4 No. 47841 *The Institution of Mechanical Engineers* left the One:One Collection at Margate on March 23 after five years at the Kent museum – pictured in the abnormal load bay at the M1 Junction 24, Kegworth. The '47/8' returned to LSL's base at Crewe Diesel Depot and its place at Margate will be filled by recently withdrawn No. D1944 (47501) *Craftsman* following its engine fire in 2023. STEVE DONALD

Midland 'Pacer' is ready for comeback in September

FORMER Northern Trains Class 142 'Pacer' No. 142013 has been outshopped in GMPTE Orange livery following restoration work at the Midland Railway – Butterley. The overhaul also included fitting all windows with new rubber seals, removing the seats for corrosion repairs, replacing rotten floor sections, and fitting a replacement exhaust.

No. 142013 was the 17th 'Pacer' to be preserved when it arrived at the MR-B in June 2020. It is set to be launched into service at the line's September 21/22 DMU Gala alongside other resident railcars, including No. 141113 in WYTPE Red and Cream livery and No. 142011 in BR Provincial Blue.



RIGHT: One car of 142013 is unveiled at the Midland Railway – Butterley on March 7. EVAN GREEN-HUGHES

FUNDING AWARD FOR LLANELLI

Two Government grants worth £60,000 have been awarded to the volunteer-run Llanelli & Mynydd Mawr Railway. A total of £40,000 was granted by the UK Government Shared Prosperity Fund and a further £20,000 by the Carmarthenshire County Council Targeted Finance Fund. The money will help several projects at the railway, including turning the bodyshell of Class 153 DMU No. 153374 (pictured) into a cafe and community hub at Cynheidre. Electricity foundations have already started for this project, and the National Grid connection will take place during the summer. It is estimated that the new facility will be up and running later in the year or in early 2025. L&MMR



SIDELINES

Four guests announced for Keighley gala

THE Keighley & Worth Valley Railway has announced the first four guest locomotives for its June 20-23 Diesel Gala. They are Class 14 No. D9520, which has been on the KWVR since last year's diesel gala, Class 50 Nos. 50008 *Thunderer,* making a return visit following last year's event, and 50021 *Rodney* from Eastleigh Works, plus a GB Railfreight Class 69.

'Peak' steam heat

THE Peak Locomotive Company has purchased the boiler and galvanised steel water tanks from the to-be-scrapped Class 45 No. 45015 at the Battlefield Line; the group intended to reuse the parts on classmate No. 45041 *Royal Tank Regiment*. The boiler is being overhauled at the Midland Railway – Butterley while the loco is operating at the Nene Valley Railway.

Scottish 'PEP'

MEMBERS at the Fife Heritage Railway have raised sufficient funds to fit new windows to its EMU No. 313121, which was damaged in a vandal attack. Currently stored in Kirkland Yard, a safer location is being planned for its future.

'Pacer' festival

THE Aln Valley Railway is claiming a preservation first on May 18 with a timetabled operation of two ex-Northern 'Pacers' Nos. 144004 and 144016, both as individual and multiple units. The railway is offering tickets for the whole day for £8 for adults and £4.50 for children. A free shuttle bus from Alnmouth for Alnwick railway station will operate for those who wish to travel by train.

New home found for Irish railbus

THE 1981-built BREL railbus No. RDB977020 is set to return across the Irish Sea for a new life in preservation at the Gwendraeth Valley Railway, in Carmarthenshire, West Wales.

Poppy Line seeks diesel

THE North Norfolk Railway is seeking an additional diesel loco to help bolster the resident fleet for short or medium-term use. The loco will join the operating fleet of Class 31 No. D5631 (31207) and Class 37 No. D6732 (37032).

DIARY

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
18 Nene Valley Railway Night Mail Jolly Fisherman
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
1-2 Kent and East Sussex Railway 50th Anniversary Gala
6-8 West Somerset Railway Summer Diesel Festival
7 Great Central Railway Sulzer running day
7-9 North Norfolk Railway Rales and Ales Mixed Traction Gala
7-9 Avon Valley Railway Bitton Beer Bash Diesel Gala
9 West Somerset Railway Mixed Traction Day
9 Telford Steam Railway Pacer Day
14-16 North Yorkshire Moors Railway Diesel Gala
15-16 Severn Valley Railway Mixed Traction and Real Ale Festival
20-23 Keighley and Worth Valley Railway Diesel Gala
27-29 East Lancashire Railway Summer Diesel Gala

July
6-7 Midsomer Norton Railway Wickham Weekender
12 Great Central Railway English Electric running day
12-14 Gloucestershire and Warwickshire Railway Diesel Gala
12-14 Mid-Hants Railway Diesel Gala
20-21 Midland Railway Centre Rail Riders Diesel Gala
25-28 Ecclesbourne Valley Railway 14s @ 60 Diesel Gala
27-28 Severn Valley Railway Kidderminster 40th Anniversary mixed traction weekend
30 Yeovil Railway Centre Diesel Train Day

August
2-4 Caledonian Railway Diesel Gala
2-4 Spa Valley Railway Summer Diesel Gala
3-4 Llangollen Railway 1960's weekend
4 Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway Double Up Sunday Class 47s
6 Yeovil Railway Centre Diesel Train Day
11 Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway Double Up Sunday Class 37s



No. 47292 is captured working at the Churnet Valley Railway during its March 27 test run. STEVE TURNER

Trouble-free trial for CVR '47'

Type 4 in final stages of extensive overhaul.

CLASS 47 No. 47292 successfully worked a test train at the Churnet Valley Railway on March 27 in the latest stage of its restoration to traffic.

The loco hauled a rake of six Mk.1s plus 'Crompton' No. 33021 on a five-mile journey from Cheddleton to Ipstones.

This includes the CVR's steepest gradient, but no assistance was needed from the '33' at the rear.

Work on the Type 4 is near to completion after several years following its rescue from the hands of T J Thompson Ltd scrap dealers.

It was previously at Crewe Basford Hall, where it had been heavily stripped of parts for spares.

Remaining work includes painting the cab fittings and refitting the cab heaters. It is booked for a full repaint over winter 2024/25 into two-tone green with small yellow ends and red buffer beams, as it looked when first outshopped from Crewe Works as No. D1994 in April 1966.

Large Logo repaint for Class 50 Alliance 'Hoovers'

THE Class 50 Alliance has announced that Nos. 50007 *Hercules* and 50049 *Defiance* will be repainted into BR Large Logo livery this summer, the two main line-registered locos currently carrying GBRf livery.

This will be the first time that No. 50007 has worn this look in preservation. The 'Hoover' carried Large Logo in BR days from February 1983 to February 1984 before its controversial repaint into lined GWR green livery and renaming as *Sir Edward Elgar*. The Alliance returned to it standard BR Blue with the *Hercules* plates after purchasing the loco from Boden Rail in 2016.

CL50A chairman Tony Middleton said, "We have been proud of Nos. 50007 and 50049 wearing the striking livery of GBRf for the past five years, but now it is time for a change, and we know the large logo livery is a very popular choice for many of the locomotive's admirers".

Bodywork repairs have begun at the locos' Severn Valley Railway Kidderminster base ahead of moving to Eastleigh Works for the repaint.

Their final mainline trip in GBRf colours is expected to be Pathfinder Railtours' 'The Mazey Day Cornishman' from the Midlands to Penzance on June 29.

CLASS 90 PROGRESS AT CREWE

Good progress is being made on the restoration of former Freightliner Class 90 No. 90050 at the Crewe Heritage Centre. The restoration group has raised the final £2000 needed to complete the cosmetic restoration, which will include a complete repaint. The '90' was on display at the Crewe Heritage Centre during the March 23/24 Modern Image O Gauge (MIOG) exhibition, seen there on the second day of the event. BRAD JOYCE





MERSEYRAIL '507' SAVED

The Class 507 Preservation Society has reached an agreement to take over ownership of EMU No. 507001 (pictured in service at Southport), which has served the Liverpool City region for 46 years. Earmarked for withdrawal later this year, the unit is due to be moved to the Nantmawr visitor centre, near Oswestry, for conservation work. While the society has secured agreements with all parties for the train to be preserved, an estimated £10,000 needs to be raised to move the vehicles to the Nantmawr site – visit www.class507.org.uk for more details. J GLEIG / CLASS 507 PRESERVATION SOCIETY

1
2 3

1
HEAVY LOCO, LIGHT RAILWAY: The remarkable sight of visiting 'Heavyweight' Type 3 No. 37714 meeting 'Chopper' No. 20087 at Northiam, Kent & East Sussex Railway. The two ex-BR locos were taking part in the line's diesel gala on April 12-14. KEVIN BOORMAN

2
BREAKING NEW GROUND: Making an historic first visit for the class to the KESR gala was the sole-surviving Class 17 'Clayton' No. D8568, the blue-liveried machine seen approaching Rolvenden on April 12 with an afternoon service to Bodiam. STUART CHAPMAN

3
SHUNTER HAULAGE: The KESR gala also included home-fleet Class 03 No. D2023 and Class 14 No. D9504, the '03' seen with more of a light rail feel on April 13 hauling a Class 108 DMU vehicle soon after leaving Rolvenden as the 15.22 to Tenterden. CHRIS LIVINGS

Compiled by **Chris Milner**

SIDELINES

Bookings are open for 'Peak' return

WITH the news that 'Peak' No. 45118 *The Royal Artilleryman* has been released from Harry Needle's workshops at Barrow Hill and has returned to Crewe for test runs, bookings for the loco's first tour on July 27 from Bristol to Chesterfield are now open. The tour will make a call at Duffield to connect to the Ecclesbourne Valley Railway's 14s@60 event to mark the diamond jubilee of the Class 14. More info at inter-city.co.uk

'Thumper' for Imberbus

UK Railtours is running Hastings DEMU No. 1001 from Tonbridge to Warminster via London Waterloo on August 17, which is the day of the Imberbus event, where a fleet of Routemaster buses take passengers to the uninhabited village of Imber on Salisbury Plan, which was abandoned in 1943.

Rail trespassers beware

GoPro camera to be used on Vintage Trains steam tour to help identify trespassers.

CONCERNED at the increasing level of trespass on the main line when steam specials are running, Vintage Trains (VT) has said it is considering plans to fit a GoPro camera to the front of a steam locomotive.

The first expected use of the technology is due to be on May 10 when VT marks the 60th anniversary of WR 'Castle' No. 7029 *Clun Castle* running from Birmingham Snow Hill to Plymouth. The camera is expected to be used again the following day when the train works from Plymouth to London Paddington via Bristol.

It was on May 9, 1964, that *Clun Castle* ran the fastest non-stop from Plymouth to Bristol in a record 133 minutes and nine seconds – reaching a top speed of 96mph.

Back then, this train ran as 1Z48 for railway publisher Ian Allan as 'The Great Western Castle Swansong', and this train will carry the same reporting number.

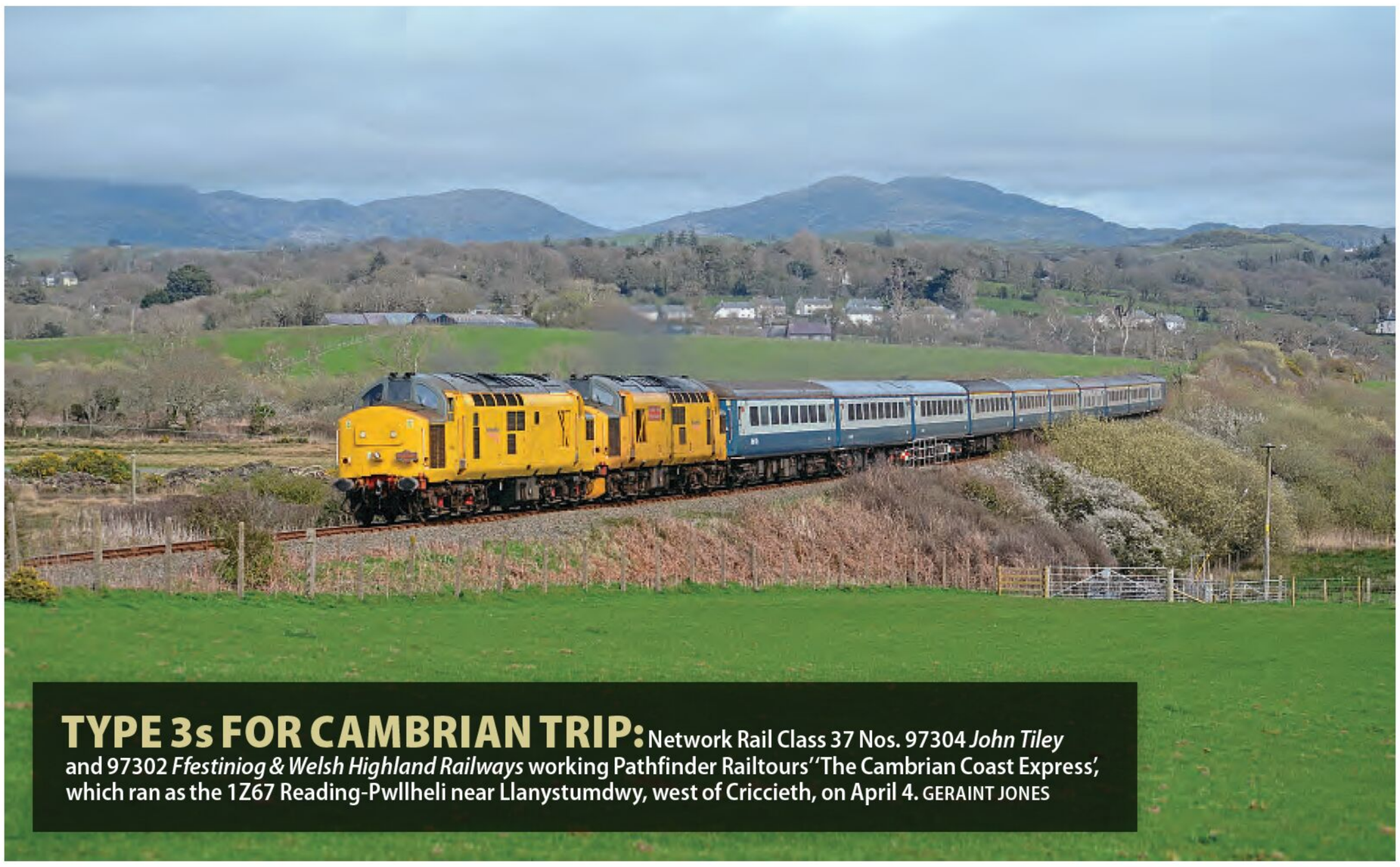
The decision to have a forward-facing camera comes as no surprise given the amount of trespass occurring nationally, and not just for steam or diesel specials. In the same way that there has been concern over people leaning from carriage windows, which has now been stopped, trespassers are not only putting themselves in danger, but are also risking the future of all charter trains on the network should a life-changing injury or fatality occur.

On May 10, the VT special will call at Widney Manor, Warwick Parkway, Banbury, and Oxford. The train will run via Didcot, Swindon, and Bath, before a break at Bristol Temple Meads for servicing ahead of a non-stop to Plymouth.

VT said there will be a diesel on the rear of the train between Bristol and Plymouth, but not between Plymouth and Paddington on May 11.

Seats for the two-day train start from £250 tourist class, £325 first class, £450 in a Pullman seat at a table for four, or £960 for two people at a guaranteed table for two. There are also plans to recreate the 1964 restaurant car menu.

Visit www.vintagetrains.co.uk or call 0121 708 4960 for details.



TYPE 3s FOR CAMBRIAN TRIP: Network Rail Class 37 Nos. 97304 *John Tiley* and 97302 *Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Railways* working Pathfinder Railtours' 'The Cambrian Coast Express', which ran as the 1Z67 Reading-Pwllheli near Llanystumdwy, west of Criccieth, on April 4. GERAINT JONES

Tornado to face S&C test

FOLLOWING the completion of a major overhaul, 'A1' No. 60163 *Tornado* will face a stiff test on June 29 when it works a railtour from the East Midlands over the Settle & Carlisle line.

'The Ribblehead Rambler' will be operated by Vintage Trains using its own rolling stock, and it will be the first time one of its trains has been hauled by *Tornado*. The collaboration rekindles a relationship from 1996 when the *Tornado's* frames were erected at Tyseley; however, the two organisations have worked on other main line ventures.

The 'Rambler' begins at Leicester and will be steam-hauled throughout to Carlisle. The train will call at East Midlands Parkway, Chesterfield, Doncaster and Leeds. There will be a break at Carlisle while the loco is turned and serviced. Return is as per the outward leg.

Tourist class seats cost £115, premier dining with breakfast and four-course evening dinner £299, (£50 supplement for a table for two), and a first class compartment for up to six passengers costs £1000, with regular hot drinks served through the journey. There are also options to pre-order bacon rolls or afternoon tea.

Visit www.a1steam.com or call 01325 488215 for details.



'SKODA' AT SUNDERLAND BRIDGE: LSL Class 90 No. 90001 *Royal Scot* works Steam Dreams charter 1Z90, the 08.15 London King's Cross to Newcastle, past Sunderland Bridge on April 6. The Class 90 handed over to 'A4' No. 60007 *Sir Nigel Gresley* for the return to the capital. The '90' disgraced itself, working back light engine on April 8, failing south of Doncaster, and was rescued back to Crewe by an LSL Class 37. ALEX AYRE

'Cromptons' to tackle the S&C

RARE traction over the famed Settle & Carlisle line is on the cards for Saturday, July 13 when a pair of Class 33 'Cromptons' will tackle the steeply-graded route.

The Pathfinder Railtours 'Cumbrian Cromptons' starts at Reading with a West Coast Class 47 or 57 and picks-up at Didcot Parkway, Oxford, Banbury, Warwick Parkway, Dorridge, Birmingham New Street and finally Crewe, where the traction will change to the Class 33s.

Heading north along the West Coast Main Line as far as Farrington Junction, the train runs through Blackburn and Hellifield before traversing the S&C to arrive at Appleby. From here, passengers can opt (at additional cost) for a road coach excursion to Pooley Bridge for an afternoon cruise on Ullswater, rejoining the train later at Penrith.

Alternatively, passengers can remain on board and spend time in Carlisle before the return journey direct along the West Coast Main Line.

Fares are £129 standard (£89 junior) or £476 for a bay of four seats. First class fares are £195 adult, £175 junior, or £740 for a party of four. Premier dining seats are £299 adult, £279 junior, and a party of four priced at £1156.

Premier dining will include a Great British Breakfast, elevenses, and a four-course evening dinner.



ROYAL SCOT IN KENT
LMS 4-6-0 No. 46100 *Royal Scot* breaks new ground for the class, working Saphos Trains' 'Golden Arrow' railtour March 30, repeating a trip it made on March 26. Steam was attached at Hanwell for the venture in to Kent. TONY PAGE

'Whistler' tour to Skegness

PATHFINDER Railtours is heading to Skegness on July 27 with an excursion hauled by Class 40 No. 40145.

It will be almost 40 years since the last 'Whistler' visited Skegness (September 15, 1984), their visits being on Saturday-only holiday trains from Manchester and Leeds.

The 'Jolly Whistler' tour starts from Burton-on-Trent (06.10) with a West Coast Railway Class 47 or 57, and will then call at Birmingham New Street, Sandwell & Dudley, Wolverhampton, Stafford and Crewe, where the West Coast loco will be exchanged for No. 40145.

From Crewe, the route is via Stockport, the Hope Valley, Sheffield, Retford, Lincoln and Sleaford, arriving in Skegness for a break of about three hours.

The return route will be Sleaford, Nottingham, Stenson Jct to Burton-on-Trent (set down) and thence back to Crewe via Birmingham.

Fares start at £129 standard, £89 junior, and a bay of four seats priced at £476. First class fares are £195 adult, £175 junior, or £740 for a party of four. Premier dining seats are £299 adult, £279 junior, and a party of four is priced at £1156. Premier dining includes a Great British Breakfast, elevenses, and a four-course evening dinner.

Book online at www.pathfindertours.co.uk or call 01453 834477.



RARE TRACK TOUR: In a heavy storm, GB Railfreight Class 66 No. 66306 eases through the East Midlands Gateway freight terminal towards the headshunt on March 23, with UK Railtours' 'Gateway Galloper' tour from London. At the rear is No. 66308. CHRIS MILNER

Andania to head charity charter

THIS year's annual Railway Benefit Fund (RBF) fundraising excursion will be a 'bucket and spade' special on June 5 from Crewe to York and Scarborough, hauled by Class 40 No. D213 *Andania*.

Using all first class rolling stock and crew, and stewards provided by Locomotive Services Group, the charter is a vital part of RBF's annual fundraising efforts to support current, former and retired UK railway people and their families.

Starting at Crewe, the charter picks up at Warrington Bank Quay and Manchester Victoria only and will set down in York for passengers preferring the attractions there, before terminating at Scarborough.

Ticket options are £199 for full dining or £99 for first class non-dining. The full dining option includes a full English breakfast on the outward journey and supper on the return. The first-class non-dining choice will include the option to purchase light refreshments from the buffet bar.

There will be a charity raffle and other activities on the day, with all proceeds going to the RBF. Visit www.railwaybenefitfund.org.uk for details.

STEAM TOURS: MAY

Date	Name	Steam Section	Locos	Promoter
1-31	'The Jacobite'	Fort William-Mallaig (mornings)	45212	WCRC
May				
1	'S&C Fellsman'	Blackpool-Blackburn-Hellifield-Carlisle	LSL pool	ST
4	'English Riviera Express'	Taunton-Kingswear-Taunton	LSL pool	ST
8		Colchester-Ipswich-Ely-Chesterfield	LSL pool	SD
11		Euston-Northampton-Chester	LSL pool	SD
14	'Welsh Marches Express'	Bristol TM-Hereford-Shrewsbury-Bristol	LSL pool	ST
16		Chesterfield-Bedford-Victoria	LSL pool	SD
18	'Lakelander'	Preston-Shap-Carlisle-Workington-Preston	LSL pool	ST
23	'S&C Fellsman'	Chester-Hellifield-Carlisle-Chester	60007	ST
28		Windsor & Eton Riverside-Clapham-Diss-Norwich	LSL pool	SD
30	'Welsh Marches Express'	Bristol TM-Hereford-Shrewsbury-Bristol	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: MAY

Date	Name	Section	Locos	Promoter
4	'May the Fourth be With You'	Easteigh-Portsmouth Hbr-Bristol-Exeter-Waterloo	33012+GBR Cl 73 (TnT)	BLS
9	'Jurassic Crompton'	Eastleigh-Guildford-Waterloo-Swanage	33012	BLS
11	'S&C + Tyne Valley Pullman'	St Albans-Oakham-Hellifield-Carlisle-Hexham-St Albans	LSL Blue Pullman	MP
12	'Return of Jurassic Crompton'	Swanage-Eastleigh-Waterloo-Eastleigh	33012/69007 (TnT)	BLS
16	'Cambrian Coast Express'	Cardiff-Newport-Shrewsbury-Barmouth-Pwllheli	2 x Cl 37s	PT
23	'Blackpool Pullman'	Ayr-Troon-Dumfries-Blackpool-Ayr	LSL Blue Pullman	MP
25	'Hanson Hanse'	Eastleigh-Ealing Bdwy-King's Cross-King's Lynn & return	50008 +Cl 20 (TnT)	BLS
26	'Millbrook Meander'	Eastleigh-Romsey-Weymouth & return	50008 + Cl 66 (TnT)	BLS
28	'Ben Nevis & Lochaber Pullman'	Morpeth-Berwick-Edinburgh-Fort William-Morpeth	LSL Blue Pullman	MP
31	'Torbay Riviera Pullman'	Carlisle-Lancaster-Warrington-Paignton-Carlisle	LSL Blue Pullman	MP

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

Key: **TnT** Top-and-tail formation
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 **SD** Steam Dreams 01483 209888 **ST** Saphos Trains saphostrains.com
UKR UK Railtours 01438 715050 **VT** Vintage Trains 0121 708 4960

Compiled by **Chris Milner**

SIDELINES

Revenue check

A CRACKDOWN on fare evaders using Chiltern Railways services has resulted in the operator recouping more than £400000 of lost revenue from 3984 cases of fare evasion in the past 12 months. Chiltern said in one case, a customer bought short tickets on 350 occasions, resulting in an agreed settlement to the operator of £15000 following an investigation.

Taxis relocated

THE new taxi rank at London Euston station opened on April 7 and is located at the front of the bus station in the former Euston Square Gardens East, adjacent to Eversholt Street and Euston Road. The current rank west of the station will be decommissioned and become a temporary public garden with new planting, seating areas, and a walking route to the station until the area is required for construction of a future HS2 terminus.

Station upgrade

INCE station, on the line between Wigan North Western station and Lostock Junction in Bolton, will close from June 2 until November 2024 for electrification and associated work.

The temporary closure will allow platform extension work to be undertaken, the replacement of a footbridge which leads to the station, and the replacement of Ince Green Lane road bridge to provide the height for the overhead electric equipment.

Developer appointed for York Central

HOMES England and Network Rail Property have signed a development agreement with McLaren Property and Arlington Real Estate to be strategic development partners for York Central, one of the UK's largest city centre regeneration schemes.

The agreement will lead to the transformation of one of the largest brownfield sites in England, alongside other partners the City of York Council and the National Railway Museum, creating 2500 new homes (20% of which will be affordable) and one million square feet of office, retail and hospitality space, thereby creating a major new employment hub.

There will also be improvements to the access to York station, as well as enhancements at the National Railway Museum.



The Kirow crane lifts carriages of unit No. 195103 back onto the rails before the two units were taken to sidings at Ulverston. ROBERT FRANCE

Void filled after derailment

Investigations and extensive repairs required after incident involving DMU on the north side of Morecambe Bay.

FOLLOWING the derailment of a Northern Rail Class 195 on March 22 near Grange-over-Sands, Network Rail has undertaken extensive repairs to the permanent way which took a month, the line reopening on April 22.

Two Class 195s – Nos. 195104/133 – were working from the 05.18 Preston to Barrow-in-Furness when the train hit a void in the track at speed and the leading unit was derailed, with the carriages hitting the embankment sea wall. No injuries were sustained by the four staff and four passengers on the train.

With the RAIB (Rail Accident Investigation Branch) inquiry completed and the site released, recovery of the leading unit – No. 195104, which was derailed on all wheels – was achieved using a specialist recovery team and Kirow multi-tasker crane. The units were moved to sidings Ulverston. However, before track repairs commenced, Network Rail engineers used a variety of specialist methods to carry out a thorough investigation into the ground conditions at the site. This process has included drilling boreholes, probe testing, radar and electrical tests and an investigation into the type of earth and rock the embankment is made of.

Results of the testing would inform engineers of the best way to repair the void. Members of the team are also carrying out additional investigations so they can be certain about the condition of the embankment and track in the area.

Photographic evidence supplied to *The RM* shows the presence of pipes running under the running rails and between the sleepers, which were installed to pump water from a nearby flooded golf course into Morecambe Bay.

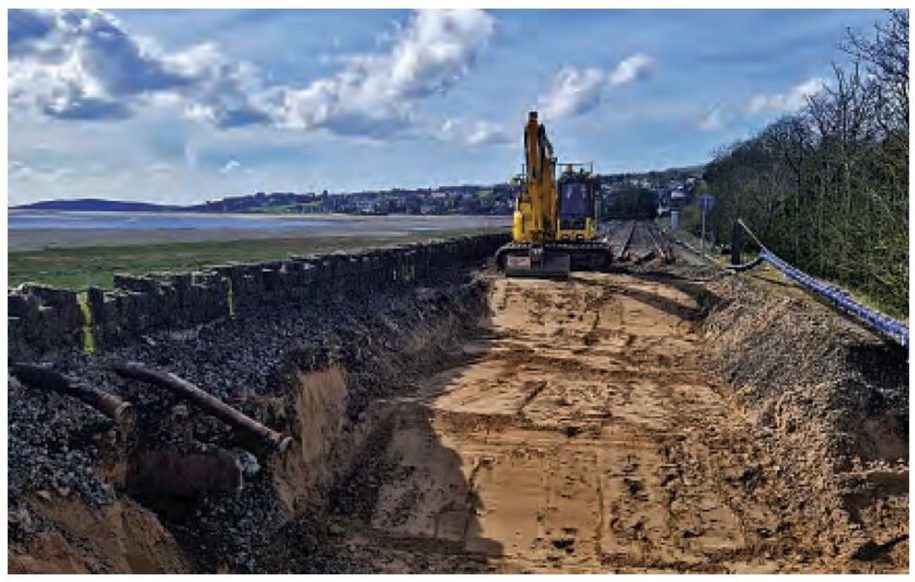
These pipes have RAIB 'evidence' tags on them, and at least one pipe shows signs of damage.

Voids have appeared adjacent to where the pipes run under the rails.

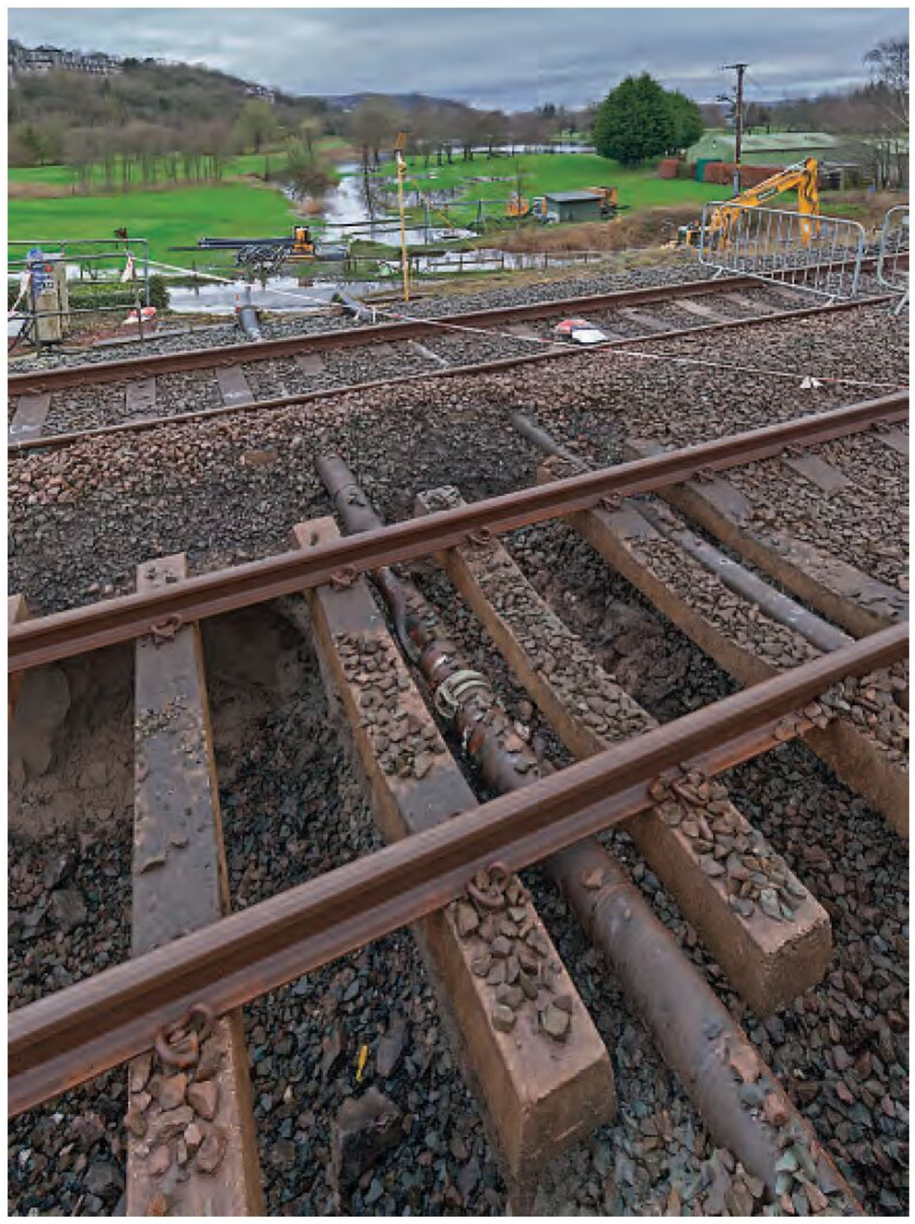
The golf course flooding has been documented in the local press which indicates intermittent floods have plagued the Meathrop area for a decade or more. It is understood a tamper ran over the line just over 48 hours before the derailment, although the significance of that in relation to the void has not yet been revealed.

As part of its preliminary investigation, RAIB said the train was travelling at 56mph when the accident occurred, the train striking a wall situated at the top of the embankment with the units coming to a stand, remaining upright, with the rear of the train about 31 metres beyond the cavity.

RAIB said its investigation will assess the condition of the railway and nearby drainage, the planning and management of relevant railway maintenance activities and how the railway infrastructure at this location was managed in response to local flood risks, along with any underlying management factors.



With the site released, part of the trackbed has been excavated in preparation of repairs. NETWORK RAIL



One of pipes carrying floodwater running under the track. Note the flooded golf course from where water is being pumped and the void to the left of the pipe. ROBERT FRANCE

£150m Hope Valley upgrade completed

TO mark the completion of the Hope Valley Railway Upgrade, Rail Minister Huw Merryman officially opened the new, fully accessible platform at Dore & Totley station in Sheffield on April 8. The Hope Valley line was closed from March 16-25 to complete the work.

The minister's visit marks the end of the £150 million Hope Valley Railway Upgrade programme, which began in spring 2021 and has delivered various improvements to the line between Manchester and Sheffield. These improvements have included a 1km-long new passing loop between Bamford and Hathersage, removing a previous bottleneck.

There have been signalling improvements and the construction of a new footbridge at Hathersage to replace a foot crossing.

The biggest improvement, however, has been at Dore & Totley station which now boasts two platforms for the first time since the 1980s.

The new platform is linked to the existing platform by a fully-accessible footbridge with lifts, the existing platform having been extended to accommodate six-carriage trains. The signalling changes have led to the closure of Totley Tunnel East and Grindleford 'boxes, with control transferring to York ROC. The mechanical signalboxes at Edale, Earle's Sidings and New Mills South Junction will remain operational for the foreseeable future.



Work on the Hope Valley upgrade taking place at Grindleford, where the signalbox has been decommissioned. NETWORK RAIL

40% of UK stations remain inaccessible

A STUDY by German travel comparison site Omio has revealed that nearly 40% of UK railway stations remain inaccessible.

The study examined factors such as wheelchair-accessible access to platforms, guidance for the visually impaired, and the availability of real-time visual information on platforms in 16 European nations. The survey placed the UK in ninth place.

Wheelchair access is available at only 61% of stations in the UK, making it one of the less accessible railway nations in Europe. In comparison, the Netherlands leads in accessibility, at 97%. The Czech Republic had the worst overall accessibility.

• A report published by the Office of Rail and Road (ORR) into the reliability of more than 1300 Network Rail-managed passenger lifts at 491 stations, showed that reliability is either in decline or static.

The ORR is taking further action to understand Network Rail's monitoring and management processes.

Trial build of new Dumfries footbridge

A NEW £3.6 million footbridge for Dumfries station has undergone a trial assembly at an off-site location in Annan at the end of March.

This process has allowed an inspection of the steelwork before the project passes to the next phase, which included building the lift shafts and bridge foundations.

Fabricated locally by M&S Engineering Ltd, the new footbridge is part of an Access for All scheme, improving accessibility for those with reduced mobility, prams, and luggage.

The bridge was dismantled and painted before being transferred to Dumfries ahead of its installation by crane, overnight on April 13.

The new footbridge weighs 51 tonnes and incorporates elements from the original footbridge at Dumfries station, including a saltire design on the bridge parapet.

A sandstone cladding on the lift towers will complement the station's heritage features.



The Dumfries footbridge assembled as part of the trial build in the yard of M&S Engineering at Annan. NETWORK RAIL

£4.8bn investment for Scotland's railways over next five years to boost resilience

FUNDING for Scotland's rail network over the next five-year 'control period' has been set at £4.8 billion.

Network Rail has allocated the sum out of an overall investment during control period seven of £45.4bn, which will run from April 1, 2024, to March 31, 2029.

The money will be used to improve punctuality, reduce delays and upgrade the network's resilience.

Of the £4.5bn, £2bn will be used for infrastructure renewals, while a further £1bn will be used for maintenance needs. Network Rail said there will be increased investment in drainage systems, with recruitment of more drainage engineers. There will be investment in new technology to help monitor the impact of bad weather, alongside the installation of more remote monitoring equipment to give early warning of potential issues.

Further work will be carried out to reduce the railway's carbon footprint. There are also plans to reduce costs throughout the ScotRail network by adopting new ways of working.

Alex Hynes, MD of Scotland's Railway, said: "The plan we have announced will help us deliver a safe and reliable railway for our customers and one which supports the social and economic growth of the communities we serve. We will also work with our industry partners and government to ensure we deliver value for money for the taxpayers who fund us, while improving the service we offer to passengers and freight customers."

SIDELINES

Glenfinnan viaduct repairs to cost £3.4m

NETWORK Rail commenced a £3.4 million project to carry out repairs on the 123-year-old Glenfinnan Viaduct during April.

Working with principal contractor AmcoGiffen, engineers will assess the condition and structural strength of the viaduct, while carrying out maintenance work to protect it from water erosion, completing concrete repairs and making other improvements.

The investment will futureproof the landmark structure, which is 1000 feet in length. Work will take around a year to complete, and there are no plans for a suspension of rail services during the work.

The Grade A-listed viaduct was completed in 1901 by Sir Robert McAlpine.

Footbridge for Lostwithiel – and a new road bridge too?

A TEMPORARY footbridge is to be installed at Lostwithiel station, Cornwall, connecting both platforms since the original footbridge was demolished in the late 1960s. Plans for a permanent bridge are being developed.

With no footbridge, there is a risk that passengers can miss trains as the barriers for the adjacent level crossing are lowered for an average of 22 minutes per hour, a situation which also delays pedestrians.

Network Rail is also progressing with a plan to build a permanent bridge over the railway, preparing a proposal to submit to the Department for Transport for approval. A previous design did not meet stringent safety regulations.

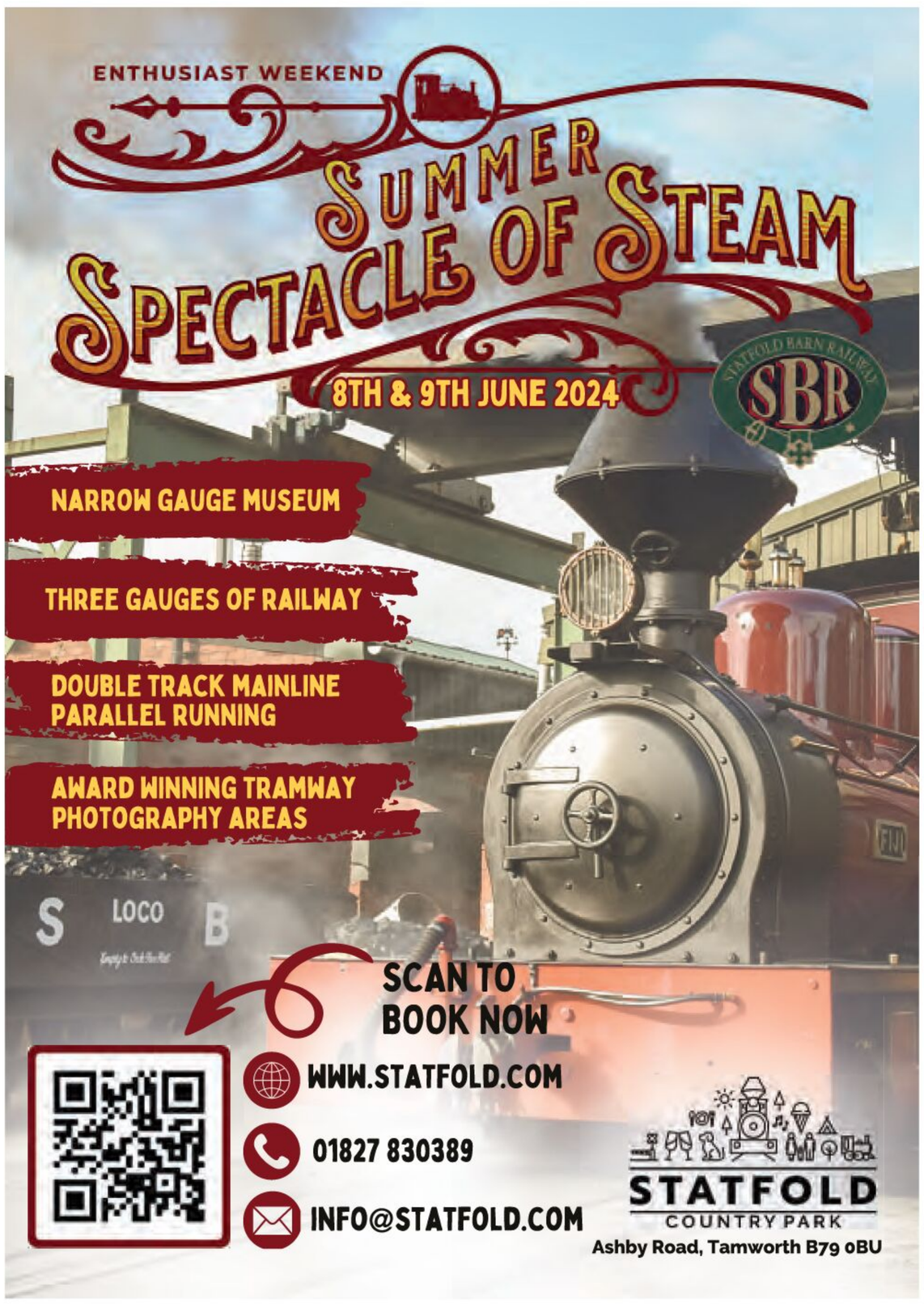
The only other crossing over the railway is the A390 Liddicoat Road, north of the town.

Admin fees for ticket refunds lowered

THE fee to refund fares has been reduced to £5 from £10 following a review by the Office of Rail and Road (ORR) and a call to the industry to revise refund processing costs.

The change in fee reflects that most refunds are undertaken digitally and that processing costs were lower.

The ORR has been reminding passengers that they will continue to be entitled to a fee-free refund if they choose not to, or are not able to, travel because their journey has been affected by delays or cancellation.





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Partners 'proud' of successful nuclear material movements by rail

Programme to move over 1000 containers of low level radioactive waste was completed ahead of schedule.



The final train carrying drums of low level radioactive waste from Winfrith in Dorset to the NWS repository at Drigg in Cumbria, consisted of seven cabriolet containers. With DRS Class 68 No. 68002 *Intrepid* leading and No. 68016 *Fearless* at the rear, it is seen passing through Brockenhurst station on January 23 on the first leg of its journey to Crewe Coal Sidings. It would arrive at Drigg two days later. JOHN DEDMAN

NUCLEAR Transport Solutions (NTS), the parent company of Direct Rail Services, has announced that a project involving the movement of 1068 drums of low level radioactive waste from Winfrith in Dorset to Cumbria for final disposal, was concluded significantly earlier than expected.

Careful planning and collaboration between the businesses, Nuclear Waste Services (NWS), Nuclear Restoration Services (NRS) and NTS, all of which are companies of the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority, led to the last of the 11 trains carrying the containers being received at the Low Level Waste Repository at Drigg on January 25, seven months ahead of schedule. The first working took place on March 24, 2022.

Coordination

The trains carried cabriolet containers, each carrying 10 drums. NWS told *The RM* that organisation, in particular a well-coordinated process of returning empty containers for reuse, and removing full ones, was key to the success of the project. It involved waste originating from the Steam Generating Heavy Water Reactor at the Winfrith site which was closed down in 1990 and subsequently decommissioned. Originally classified as intermediate level waste, after significant radioactive decay, it was reclassified as low level, allowing it to be transported to Drigg.

Years of work

The project was the culmination of several years of work which included detailed technical assessments of the waste, the manufacturing of specialist equipment and improvements to and installation of new facilities at the Winfrith site, originally used for reactor trials by the UK Atomic Energy Authority. The retrieval and emplacement operations for the waste took two years.

"We managed to improve our timings on each retrieval, meaning that the final drum was retrieved well ahead of schedule," explained Laura Street, NRS head of waste for Winfrith and Harwell. "The shipment of the drums by rail provided significant savings to the taxpayer and also saved 7502 kilogrammes of carbon emissions for each rail shipment compared to transporting these drums by road."

Howard Falconer, NWS head of waste services described the arrival of the final train at Drigg as a "proud moment".

Rail takes the RAP as target is set for use of reprocessed asphalt

AGGREGATE Industries (AI) is aiming to move 40,000 tonnes of Reclaimed Asphalt Pavement (RAP) a year, by rail, for processing.

Since December, the company's Crawley site has received the material (dug up during work on roads and pathways in West London) by train from Day Aggregates at Brentford for recycling into new asphalt products.

The largest loads of it so far transported to AI have each weighed 1500 tonnes. RAP makes up half the cargo of two trains per month from Day to AI's Crawley railhead, but it is already assessing potential to utilise other locations for dealing with it.

Thomas Edgcumbe, managing director of Aggregate Industries' surfacing solutions division, said the company was committed to increasing its use of RAP by 60% by next year: "Utilising what in the past has been a waste product and recycling it into new products is not only smart thinking but means we are preserving raw materials, reducing lorry movements by using rail, and reducing emissions through less intensive production processes, but to make this a reality we need collaboration across the supply chain and we need the buy-in of our partners, so it is fantastic to be working with Day Aggregates to transport and process the materials."

Solent Rail Terminal opens following joint investment of £17.5 million

RAIL Minister Huw Merriman officially opened the Solent Rail Terminal at the Port of Southampton on March 20.

Operated by Solent Stevedores at the western docks, the company and Associated British Ports (ABP) have invested £17.5 million in the facilities. Development to broaden the range of services on offer began in autumn 2022.

For the first time at the port, laden and empty container handling, storage, maintenance and repairs can all be undertaken within the same 18-acre site. The rail loading pad has been extended by 130 metres (142 yards) and the new track layout allows simultaneous arrivals and departures. ABP estimates the terminal will be able to handle a 71% increase in daily services and 125% more containers than it could previously.

■ DP World says that the proportion of freight being moved by rail instead of road from its Southampton logistics hub increased from 21% to 35% between September 2023 and February this year. This period coincided with the launch of financial incentives to customers to encourage modal shift, supported by the introduction of new rail workings to Cardiff, East Midlands Gateway, Hams Hall and iPort Doncaster.

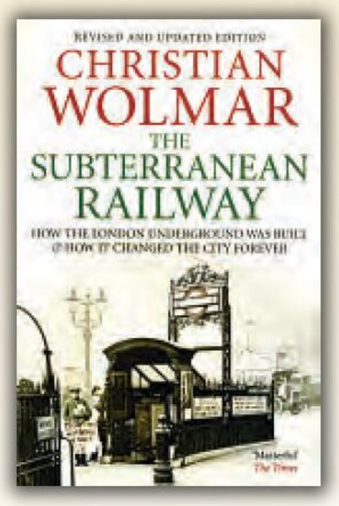


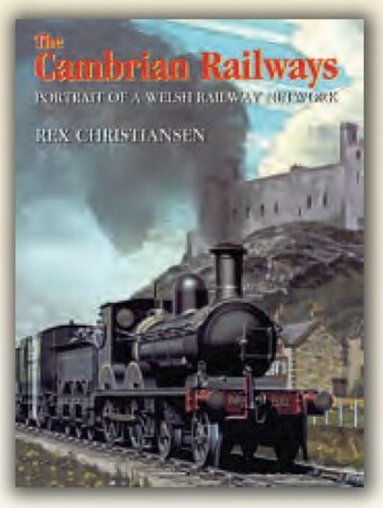
Right: Regional director of Associated British Ports Southampton Alistair Welch, Solent Stevedores executive chairman Stuart Cullen, Rail Minister Huw Merriman, Solent Stevedores managing director Fiona Robson and the company's rail and containers director Mark Hooper attended the terminal opening. ABP

You can win super rail prizes

Summer is just around the corner, and what you need is a brilliant rail read or some classy Hornby wagons! Yes, we've got some superb prizes which must be won... to stand a chance of scooping one or some of them, just find the words hidden in our grid...

1st

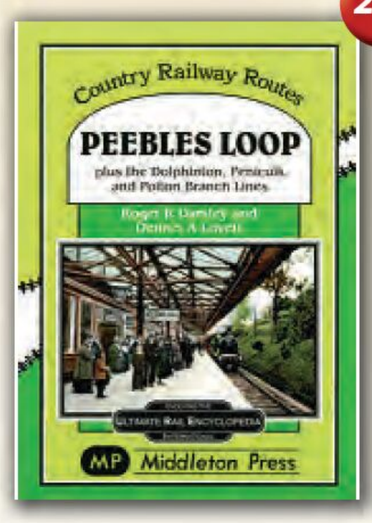


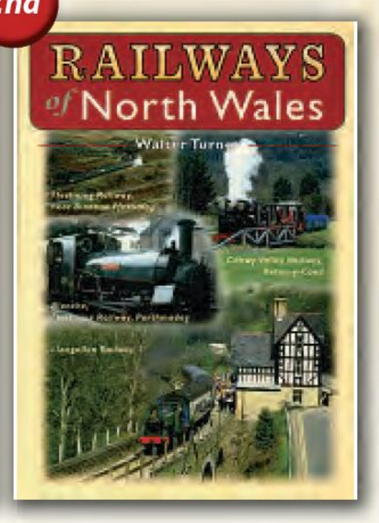




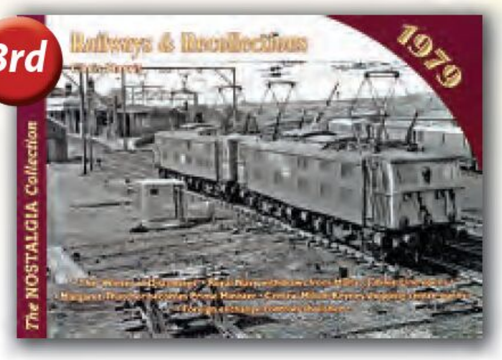


2nd





3rd



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Mark those answers on the grid – they could be written forwards, backwards, horizontally, vertically or even diagonally!

Once completed please send the answer form (photocopies are accepted) to The Railway Magazine, Wordsearch Competition, Mortons Media Group Ltd, PO Box 99, Horncastle, Lincs. LN9 6JZ.

Closing date is Thursday, June 6, 2024.

Winners will be chosen at random and contacted.

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■ There are no cash alternatives available.
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Book: The Subterranean Railway by Christian Wolmar.
Book: The Cambrian Railways by Rex Christiansen.
Hornby OO gauge four-plank wagon – Stevens & Co.

2ND PRIZE – Book: (Country Railway Routes) Peebles Loop by Roger R Darsley & Dennis A Lovett.
Book: Railways of North Wales by Walter Turner.

3RD PRIZE – Book: Railway Recollections, 1979 by Chris Harris.

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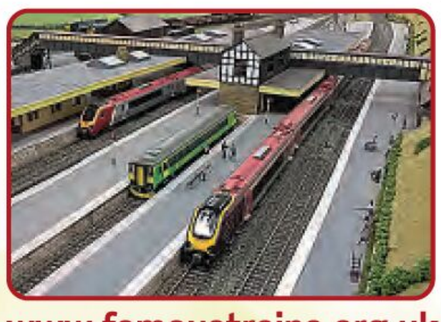
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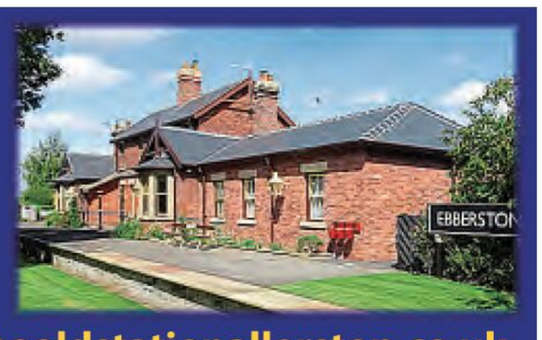
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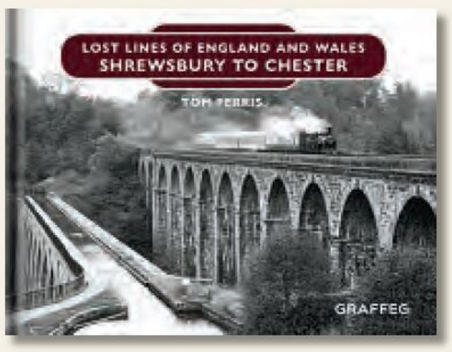


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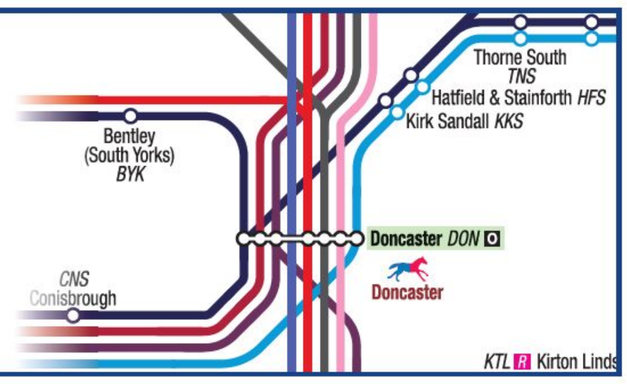
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3 What is Steamways Engineering's house called?
4 In which 'livestock centre' is the Exe society's diamond exhibition?
5 In the 'lost lines', which city is at the opposite end to Shewsbury?
6 On what day is the Henley-in-Arden community bar open 12-3?
7 Which business's phone number ends 6386?
8 Up to how many trains can you see running at Famous Trains?
9 What is £20 annually at the Military Railway Study Group?
10 Which business is closed Wednesday and Sundays?
11 What day of the week can you visit Bob?
12 Visit railmap.org.uk for the?
13 At which railway is the 40-ton bogie Warwell?
14 How many bedrooms are at the Old Station?

Compiled by **Graeme Pickering**

SIDELINES

Bulwell derailment report published

THE Rail Accident Investigation Branch (RAIB) has published its report into the derailment of a Nottingham Express Transit tram at Bulwell on June 12 last year, with recommendations that operator Nottingham Trams Ltd reviews control room policy and procedures regarding its response to engineering faults, improves risk assessments and that its management of change considers human factors.

It also highlighted learning for drivers regarding not making assumptions about signals and indicators based on previous experiences.

Southbound Alstom Citadis tram No. 232 travelled over facing points which had not reset correctly following the passage of two northbound trams, derailing and striking a pole supporting overhead line equipment. The driver and a passenger received minor injuries and there was significant damage to the tram and infrastructure, leading to the line being closed until June 23 for repairs.

The RAIB says the driver did not observe an indicator showing the points were incorrectly positioned. The driver had not been informed of an issue with those points and believed control would have notified them of a problem beforehand.

Coventry VLR setback

COVENTRY City Council cabinet member for regeneration Jim O'Boyle says that he does not expect the city's very light rail pilot demonstration system to be in public use until 2026 at least. The Department for Transport said it had approved £15 million so far to support testing, but rejected the business case for the council's wider plan.

Short-formed DLR trains

DOCKLANDS Light Railway weekday services between Woolwich Arsenal and Stratford International have been reduced to two cars.

Transport for London says this is to help ensure it can continue to run a reliable service until its 54 new CAF-built trains are phased into service.

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Supertram investment case submitted to the Government

New fleet proposed and options for expansion considered as part of vision for 'bigger and better' system, integrated with other transport.

SOUTH Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (SYMCA) has submitted a business case to the Government as it seeks funding for modernisation of the Supertram system.

SYMCA plans the refurbishment of all of the existing trams by 2027 and the introduction of a new fleet by 2032.

After 27 years in Stagecoach hands, operation of Supertram services returned to the public sector on March 22, with South Yorkshire Future Trams Ltd (a company wholly-owned by SYMCA) taking over. The authority has outlined a vision for "a bigger and better tram network that is fully integrated with other modes of transport, and is cleaner, greener and safer, getting people to where they want to go and connecting communities".

A new mobile phone app has been launched for purchasing tickets and one-day, five, seven and 28-day adult and child tram only fares have been discounted by 10% for the first 100 days of the new operator. Deep cleaning of all tram stops and shelters has also been promised within the same time frame. A review of the timetable will also take place. SYMCA says this will look at opportunities for changes to better serve passenger demand.



On March 29, at Meadowhall Interchange, on a yellow route service, Siemens Duewag Supertram No. 102 will soon begin its journey back to Middlewood. Alongside, Class 399 'Citylink' tram-train No. 399207 is out of service. Class 399s work the Cathedral-Rotherham Parkgate route, which serves Meadowhall South/Tinsley but avoids Interchange. South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority envisages new trams and expansion of the Supertram system as part of a fully integrated public transport network. JED KENDRAY

Plans

The results of a public survey, which closed on April 30, will be used to gauge views on subjects ranging from personal safety and condition of tram seating to tram stop information, the accommodation of bicycles on board and at stops (potential for further 'bike and ride' facilities is being assessed) and whether (in addition to already permitted assistance animals), pet dogs should be allowed on trams.

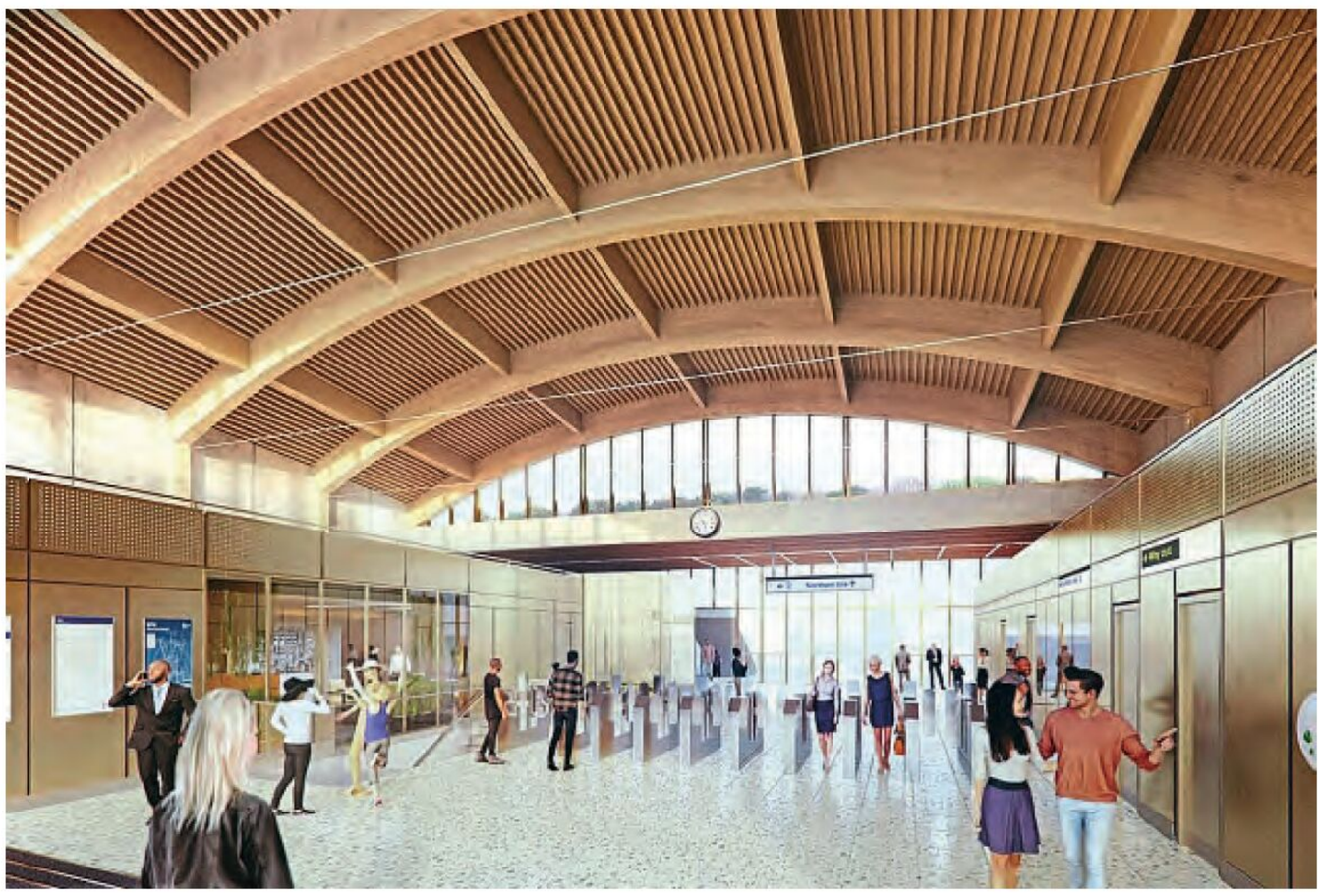
As well as a new stop, planned to serve the Magna Science and Adventure Centre in Rotherham and neighbouring communities from later this year, SYMCA says it is still exploring opportunities to extend the Supertram network to Stocksbridge and Barrow Hill using tram-trains, as well as Chesterfield.

Supertram's existing tram-train services, operated by Class 399 'Citylink' sets, began in October 2018 when the system was extended from Meadowhall South/Tinsley to Rotherham Parkgate using the heavy rail route via Rotherham Central.

■ Across the Pennines, Greater Manchester Mayor Andy Burnham has indicated that decisions on extending Metrolink are expected this summer. He said that Transport for Greater Manchester was still working on a "watertight" business case in the hope of securing Government funding. Stockport, Middleton, Heywood and Bolton are among the destinations proposed for an expanded system.

A need for Government financial support to improve connectivity on the Fylde Coast has been highlighted by Blackpool Pride of Place Partnership. In its '2030 Agenda for Action', published in March, the alliance of public, private and voluntary organisations lists a tram-train link between Fleetwood and Preston among its priorities to develop the area's economy.

The case for reopening the five-mile long railway line between Fleetwood and Poulton-le-Fylde which would form part of the route, was selected to be developed further as part of the Department for Transport's 'Restoring Your Railway' programme.



COLINDALE UPGRADE: **The first in a series of partial closures of the Northern Line between Golders Green and Edgware, to facilitate work on Colindale station, took place from April 2-11. £43.1million from the Government's Levelling Up Fund has been allocated to Transport for London for the modernisation of Colindale and Leyton stations. Plans for Collindale, which will close between June and December as redevelopment gathers pace, include a new entrance (seen in this artist's impression) and ticket hall, a lift providing step-free access from street to platform level, an accessible toilet, in-station retail space and improved cycle parking.** TFL

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Compiled by **Graeme Pickering**



Class 220 CrossCountry 'Voyager' No. 220031 and 'Super Voyager' No. 221140 at Plymouth on February 17 this year. TIM GREEN/CC BY 2.0

Further five 'Super Voyagers' are set to boost CrossCountry fleet

Operator sets out plans for gradual introduction of former Avanti West Coast sets to strengthen capacity following last year's HST withdrawals.

CROSSCOUNTRY has announced that a further five Class 221 'Super Voyagers', leased from Beacon Rail, will be added to its fleet.

The units are in addition to seven secured last October, making a total of 12 units transferring to the operator following release by Avanti West Coast.

Gradual introduction of the units from June this year will begin to address the shortfall in train capacity which CrossCountry and its passengers have had to contend with since the withdrawal of its five High Speed Train sets last year. Over the summer holiday period, it expects the cascade to result in a weekly increase of ahout 12000 seats. However, there will also be temporary changes to the timetable between June and September in an attempt to relieve overcrowding on some of its busiest long-distance services, with a reduced number of calls at Wakefield Westgate, Chesterfield, Basingstoke and Winchester. This is intended to encourage passengers making shorter journeys to use other operators.

Benefit

From May 2025, CrossCountry expects to reap the full benefit of the dozen additional Class 221s, which equate to 60 carriages. It said this will lead to more than 36,000 extra seats on north-south services each week. Diagrams which will see longer trains include those using the Reading-Newcastle corridor.

CrossCountry's entire fleet (which includes 29 Class 170 'Turbostar' diesel multiple units, its Class 220 'Voyager' and Class 221 'Super Voyager' sets) will receive complete refurbishment. Some preliminary work involving deep cleaning, renewal of worn and damaged seat bases, and repainting damaged interior panels has been carried out in recent months on the Class 170s. Work on the Class 220 and 221s includes new seats, improvement of onboard technology, and exterior repaints, to be completed by summer 2026.

"Not only will the refurbishment delight fare-paying passengers with increased levels of comfort and accessibility, but the overhaul programme will also support UK suppliers and skilled jobs," said Peter Broadley, UK rolling stock and services managing director for Alstom, which built and will refurbish the Class 220s and 221s.

GETTING READY FOR A RETURN:

Europhoenix has confirmed that Class 91 No. 91117 is being prepared for a return to service. The locomotive was moved from Barrow Hill depot to UK Rail Leasing's overhaul operation at the former Brush works in Loughborough, where (as pictured) both cabs have undergone corrosion repairs and a repaint. Europhoenix said it will be fitted with test equipment in preparation for a project expected to get underway in the next few months. Along with No. 91120, No. 91117 was bought by the company in 2019, to be re-geared for operating freight services in Eastern Europe. No. 91120 went on long-term loan to Crewe Heritage Centre in September 2022. EUROPHOENIX





Another 31 DB Cargo 'Tugs' released for sale

A TOTAL of 31 locomotives have been put up for sale by DB Cargo (DBC) in its latest round of Class 60 disposals.

Nos. 60003/005, 60023/025/027, 60030/031/033/034/035, 60041/042/043/045/049, 60051/053/054/058, 60067/069, 60071/072/073, 60082/083/088, 60091/094/097 and 60500 (originally numbered 60016) were advertised on the company's website. The deadline for registering an interest in purchasing the 'Tugs' was noon on April 19.

With the exception of No. 60082, which is at Crewe, all are stored at DBC's Toton depot. No. 60091 was the most recently stored of those currently for sale, in September 2021. The rest have spent between eight and 19 years in storage, No. 60088 having been there since November 2005.



No. 60091 was still an active member of the DB Cargo fleet when pictured on March 24, 2016, heading the 6B33 Theale Murco to Margam tanker working at Steventon Causeway level crossing in Oxfordshire. FOULGER RAIL PHOTOS/CC BY-SA 2.0

Previous sales

As reported in March's *RM*, 16 locomotives (Nos. 60001, 60007, 60010/015/019, 60020, 60039, 60040/044, 60059, 60063/065/066, 60079, 60092 and 60100) were put up for sale earlier this year. With the exception of No. 60065, all were overhauled as part of the company's Super 60 project, which aimed to improve reliability and extend their operational lives. Twelve (Nos. 60001/007/010/015/020/040/044/059/065/066/092/100) were only withdrawn last year. DBC stated that it would be willing to discuss any requirement for ongoing maintenance or reinstatement services.

Cheshire-based aggregates handling business Land Recovery Ltd is understood to have completed the purchase of all 12 Class 60s advertised by DBC in January 2023 (Nos. 60012/032/036/037/048/052/068/077/078/084/089/093) with the intention of returning some to use on construction trains for HS2.

£60m revamp for EMR 'Regional' and 'Connect' trains

NINETY East Midlands Railway trains are to receive interior modernisation as part of a £60 million programme.

All of the Class 158 and Class 170 diesel multiple units which make up EMR's 'Regional' fleet and the 21 four-car Class 360 electric sets operating its 'Connect' and 'Luton Airport Express' services between Corby and London St Pancras are to be refurbished.

EMR said the Class 158s, which generally operate between Liverpool and Norwich, via Manchester, Sheffield and Nottingham, will receive refreshed interiors, including new foam and covers for seats and CCTV.

Its Class 170s are in use throughout the East Midlands. EMR said they will be given an "extensive refresh", which as well as new seat foam, covers and CCTV, will incorporate the installation of new passenger information systems.

Having migrated to EMR from different operators, the company wants to ensure that the vehicles are of a consistent standard.

Seating

To cater for commuter, leisure and airport passengers, the Class 360s will be fitted with 2+2 seating in airline and bay layouts, with luggage racks, charging points and new information systems.

The work is being carried out with financial support from rolling stock owning companies Eversholt Rail, Porterbrook and Angel Trains. Class 360 modernisation will be carried out by Siemens Mobility, which built and maintains the units.

■ EMR said automated announcements recently introduced on Class 158s and Class 170 trains will provide "consistent and clear" information and give senior conductors more time to offer passengers face-to-face support. Customer feedback regarding the system will influence its plans for the Class 810 'Aurora' fleet of intercity trains, which are due to enter service next year.



East Midlands Railway Class 360 No. 360108 at Kettering station with a St Pancras-bound service on August 27, 2022. KEUNEKE/CC BY-SA 4.0

SIDELINES

Inter7City power car repairs

SCOTRAIL has confirmed that four Class 43 High Speed Train power cars from its Inter7City fleet are receiving attention from contractors.

Nos. 43128 and 43169 have been moved to UK Rail Leasing at Loughborough for rebuilding, using former LNER Class 43s as donors. It is understood that Nos. 43305 and 43367 will be used to provide replacement parts for the pair, as well as spares.

Nos. 43129 and 43150 are to undergo cab repairs at Brodie Engineering in Kilmarnock following accident damage. No. 43129 ran into a fallen tree at Broughty Ferry, near Dundee, on December 27 last year.

'Fossil-free' fuel target for Freightliner

FREIGHTLINER is working in partnership with synthetic fuels company Zero, with the aim of running all its locomotives on fossil-free fuels by 2040.

Zero says its synthetic replacement to diesel fuel is carbon-neutral. Rather than being fossil-based, it is manufactured using carbon dioxide and hydrogen and can be used as a drop-in alternative to conventional diesel.

SIDELINES

Class 350/3 interior work is completed

DIAMOND Rail Services has completed the interior refurbishment of London Northwestern Railway's 10 Class 350/3s. In collaboration with Siemens, the project, which began last September at King's Heath depot in Northampton, involved fitting new seat cushions and covers, laying new carpet, and restoration work to grab handles – work previously carried out on Class 350/1s and 350/4s.

More '321s' for Varamis

LATE March saw further Class 321 additions to the Varamis Rail fleet as two more ex-Greater Anglia units, Nos. 321339 and 321440, were unveiled by the operator within the same week. Having launched its first services between Mossend and Birmingham International in January 2023, the London market is its latest focus for development.

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Locotractors to replace '08s' at Celsa

Vehicles to be used by GB Railfreight for shunting at former Allied Steel & Wire site.



Three Zephir Lok 16.300s have been purchased by Porterbrook to replace a trio of Class 08 shunters on GB Railfreight operations at the Celsa Steel UK site in Cardiff. PORTERBROOK

PORTERBROOK has purchased three Zephir Lok 16.300 locotractors for leasing to GB Railfreight.

Designed to move under their own power on rails or road, the freight operator will use them for shunting at Celsa Steel UK in Cardiff, replacing three Class 08s on lease there.

Based in Modena, in Italy, Zephir has been manufacturing locotractors since 1977, marketed as a lower-cost and more efficient alternative to traditional locomotives. It produces 11 models in the Lok range; electric and diesel versions are available. Porterbrook has chosen the diesel option with EU Stage V emissions-compliant engines.

It said the duty cycle for shunting at the site currently rules out the use of battery or electric traction but pointed out that the Lok 16.300s will deliver a fuel efficiency saving of up to 60%, lower carbon emissions, and can run on hydro-treated vegetable oil instead of conventional diesel. Their ability to operate as road vehicles is also expected to improve operational flexibility at the site.

Procurement of the locotractors, the first of which is due to be delivered for immediate entry into service in October, was arranged through Zephir's UK distributor, Depot Rail. It will also provide fleet support. All three Lok 16.300s are expected to be operational this autumn.

Porterbrook said it looks forward to working with Zephir as it continues to replace traction for depot movements. It estimates that there are more than 300 shunters in operation in the UK, the majority of which will need to be replaced in the next few years.

■ Bletchley depot is to undergo a £66 million redevelopment financed by Porterbrook, with completion expected in autumn next year.

Buildings will be fully refurbished, overhead line equipment installed, and sidings for five and 10-car trains created in order for it to become the principal base for London Northwestern Railway's Class 730 fleet. It is the latest of a series of major investments in facilities by the company, which purchased Long Marston Rail Innovation Centre and secured a 49% stake in Kilmarnock-based Brodie Engineering earlier this year.

Wagon Report Compiled by **Steven Fredrick Lappage**



Colas Rail tamper No. DR 73910 *Jupiter* stabled in the Pleck engineer's sidings, Walsall, on March 3.

VTG Rail UK is carrying out a programme of modifications to its fleet of FWA/B 'Ecofret' triple-unit intermodal sets following a series of derailments. Changes include extended inter-wagon drawbars, strengthened Wabtec TF20 low track-force bogies and brakegear.

Problems can arise if the centre wagon of a triple set is unladen and subject to heavy braking. Essentially, the middle vehicle can be squeezed by the outer flats, especially if they are loaded, leading to the possibility of the bogies lifting and the wheelsets derailing. GBRf is the main user of triple sets.

The use of permanently connected drawbars between wagons is not new. In 1965/66, RY Pickering built 96 close-coupled 45-ton Class A tanks for Standard Oil, Nos. 6104-199 (later ESSO 56104-199). Sixteen sets of six wagons were assembled, with plate link couplings at the inner ends and standard buffers and drawgear at the outer ends.

This arrangement was later deemed to be a failure and the wagons were converted to normal. They remained in use like this until 2016, carrying gas oil from Fawley refinery to traction depots in Wales and the West Country.

British Railways also had large numbers of single bolster 'twins' for the transportation of steel billets, built new, or double bolster sets converted from 'Lowfits' and 'Conflat A' stock. Most notable were the sets of 'twins' modified from former War Department ramp wagons, Nos. W162500-543 to diagram 1/418. As rebuilt, they were rated to carry 22 tons.

■ TATA Steel's decision to close the two blast furnaces at Port Talbot will have a major impact on the fortunes of rail freight, especially in South Wales. However, scrapping of steel slab and billet-carrying wagons was taking place even before this announcement, and has turned into a large-scale cull.

In addition to the usual European Metals Recycling sites, scrapping has been taking place in Margam yard.

Recent disposals have been BAA's Nos. 900000/020/055/120/127/135/161/174/193/244, BBA's Nos. 910002/012/019/087/091/113/190/238/277/308/321/337/343/ 350/360/386/ 430/445/472/496/506-508/514/526/549/575/578/589, BDA/BEA bogie bolster flats No. 950568, Nos. 951029/112/132/133/155.

■ BRODIE Engineering of Kilmarnock, now partly owned by Porterbrook Leasing, has been awarded a contract to refurbish the FNA-D fleet of nuclear flask carriers, Nos. 11 70 9229 001-6 to 040-4. Operated by Direct Rail Services, they were built from 2014 by WH Davis and are notable for their distinctive Barber 'Easy Ride' bogies.

Nuclear material for recycling, storage or disposal is transported to Sellafield from various locations, including Bridgwater, Dounreay, Dungeness and Hartlepool.

■ NATIONAL Wagon Preservation Group has acquired IVA Cargowaggon van No. 23 80 2398 590-1 to act as a stores vehicle, holding spares for its rake of CDA china clay hoppers Nos. 375050/061/063/067/090/091/113/117 at the Bodmin Railway. More CDAs scrapped onsite in Cornwall have been Nos. 375074/075/087/093/099/107/112/116/118/121.

■ PLASSER & Theurer has delivered two new Dynamic 09-4x4/4S tampers to Colas Rail, Nos. DR 75016/017. Their alternate EVN identities are Nos. 99 70 9123 018-2/019-0.

Correcting last month's notes: EVN No. 99 70 9123 016-6 actually applies to Balfour Beatty Unimat 08-4x4/4S tamper No. DR 73949, delivered in 2020.

■ DISPOSALS of DB Cargo spoil and ballast opens have included MEA*/MFA Nos. 391107*/126*/155*/280*/302/316/368/407*/412/420/508/510/541*/603*/635*/640*/655*/682*; MHA/MPA^ Nos. 394005/029/031/034/037^/040^/049/072/144/159^/178/194^/204/262^/285/286/311^/314/315^/319/343/363/400/512/565/609/611/626/634/710/713^/714/729/749/817/823/846/852/921/953/998; MTA low-side opens Nos. 395113/138/145/258/273/405/418/447/562/613.



Refurbished IPA multi-unit automotive transporter No. 23 87 4384 043-7 passing Bescot station on March 1.

LOCOMOTIVES



Class 37 No. 37606 has been outshopped from Loram, Derby, in its former guise as Railfreight-liveried No. 37508, complete with Thornaby depot's Kingfisher logo. It is pictured at Derby on April 18 with Loram-liveried classmate No. 37418 *An Comunn Gaidhealach*. STEVE DONALD

Allocations
20901 HNRL-BBXX
20905 HNRL-BBXX
43305 HQ/SCEL-HA/HAPC
60001 WQBA-WQDA
60003 WQCA-WQDA
60004 WQCA-GBTG
60005 WQCA-WQDA
60007 WQBA-WQDA
60010 WQBA-WQDA
60014 WQCA-GBTG
60015 WQBA-WQDA
60018 WQCA-GBTG
60019 WQBA-WQDA
60020 WQBA-WQDA
60023 WQCA-WQDA
60025 WQCA-WQDA
60027 WQCA-WQDA
60030 WQCA-WQDA
60031 WQCA-WQDA
60033 WQCA-WQDA
60034 WQCA-WQDA
60035 WQCA-WQDA
60039 WQBA-WQDA
60040 WQBA-WQDA
60041 WQCA-WQDA
60042 WQCA-WQDA
60043 WQCA-WQDA
60044 WQBA-WQDA
60045 WQCA-WQDA
60049 WQCA-WQDA
60051 WQCA-WQDA
60053 WQCA-WQDA
60054 WQBA-WQDA
60058 WQCA-WQDA
60059 WQBA-WQDA
60063 WQBA-WQDA
60065 WQBA-WQDA
60066 WQBA-WQDA
60067 WQCA-WQDA
60069 WQCA-WQDA
60071 WQCA-WQDA
60072 WQCA-WQDA
60073 WQCA-WQDA
60079 WQBA-WQDA
60082 WQCA-WQDA
60083 WQCA-WQDA
60088 WQCA-WQDA
60091 WQBA-WQDA
60092 WQBA-WQDA
60094 WQCA-WQDA
60097 WQCA-WQDA
60100 WQBA-WQDA
60500 WQCA-WQDA
66002 WBAE-WBAT
66003 WBAE-WBAT
66013 WBAE-WBAT
66015 WBAE-WBAT
66020 WBAE-WBAT
66028 WBAE-WBAT
66034 WBAE-WBAT
66050 WBAE-WBAT
66053 WBAE-WBAT
66063 WBAE-WBAT
66073 WBAE-WBAT
66074 WBAE-WBAT
66075 WBAE-WBAT
66078 WBAE-WBAT
66080 WBAE-WBAT
66082 WBAE-WBAT
66086 WBAE-WBAT
66087 WBAE-WBAT
66090 WBAE-WBAT
66093 WBAE-WBAT
66098 WBAE-WBAT
66105 WBBT-WBAT
66115 WBAE-WBAT
66116 WBAE-WBAT
66125 WBAE-WBAT
66128 WBAE-WBAT
66131 WBAE-WBAT
66133 WBAE-WBAT
66134 WBAE-WBAT
66135 WBAE-WBAT
66136 WBAE-WBAT
66137 WBAE-WBAT
66139 WBAE-WBAT
66140 WBAE-WBAT
66143 WBAE-WBAT
66147 WBAE-WBAT
66148 WBAE-WBAT
66150 WBAE-WBAT
66151 WBAE-WBAT
66152 WBAE-WBAT
66164 WBAE-WBAT
66164 WBAT-WBHT
66170 WBAE-WBAT
66172 WBAE-WBAT
66174 WBHT-WBAT
66182 WBAE-WBAT
66186 WBAE-WBAT
66187 WBAE-WBAT
66197 WBAE-WBAT
66199 WBAE-WBAT

Liveries
Balfour Beatty white and blue: 20901/05
DB Cargo red: 66002, 66177/81
Freightliner orange: 08531, 59102
GBRf: 69011
HNRC orange: 08877
TPE branding removed: 68023/29/30
+ Colas decals: 59003

Named
08805 *Hunslet*

Names removed
08649 *Bradwell*
08805 *Robin Jones 40 Years Service*
43029 *Caldicot Castle*

Renumbered
37606 – 37508

Exported
To Poland: 66956

Sold
Europhoenix: 37407
HNRC: 37419/22, 37716
Meteor Power: 37424/25

For Sale
60003/05/23/ 25/27/30/31/ 33/34/35/41 /42/43/45/49/ 51/53/54/58/ 67/69/71/72/ 73/82/83/ 88/91/94/97, 60500



Left: LSL's No. 57311, in lined-black LNWR livery, passes Stone Road (Norton Bridge, Staffordshire) on April 4 hauling Mk.2 coach No. 5991 from Eastleigh Works to Crewe. BRAD JOYCE

Stored/stopped locations
Boden Rail, Colwick: 97301
Crewe DMD: 43054, 47841

Disposal
C.F.Booth, Rotherham: Cut date: April 2: 91104

MULTIPLE UNITS

Allocations
197103 HQ-CH
319214 sent for disposal
319454 sent for disposal
321339 HQ/SAXU-GW/VRMU
507020/31 sent for disposal
555001/20 newly delivered GF/PXGG
701058 newly delivered HQ/HYHQ
710374 HQ-WN
720102/38 HQ-IL
730214 newly delivered HQ/EJHQ
769922/59 SBXH-MBCS
777039/41 HQ-KD
805012 newly delivered HQ/HFHQ

Liveries
Pride: 755421
ScotRail base blue: 769922/59
SWR: 458421/22

Named
168215 *Marylebone Station 125 years 1899-2024*

Names removed
323201 *Duddeston*
323202 *Butlers Lane*
323205 *Blake Street*

Renumbered
458521 – 458421
458522 – 458422

Formations
458420: 67620+74020+74120 +67720
458421: 67621+74021+74121 +67721
458422: 67622+74022+74122 +67722

Now in passenger traffic
197103
710374
720102/38
777039/41

Sold
Porterbrook: 379001-30
Varamis Rail: 321339

Stored/stopped locations
Belmont Yard: 730023/24
MoD Bicester: 701530
Central Rivers: 175101/13
Cockshute Yard: 74401 (458520), 74422 (458522), 74438 (458521)
Crewe: 197123
Derby: 701008, 720139/41, 720504
Eastleigh: 701019/22/58
Ely: 175102/06
Global Centre of Rail Excellence: 360201/02/03
Kirkdale: 777038/51
Landore: 175011, 175112/15
Marchwood: 701004/14/16
Old Dalby: 730020, 730214
Oxley: 805012, 807002
Soho: 730016
Taff's Well: 398002
Willesden: 720101, 720519
Wolverton: 321341, 323202
Worksop: 720144

Disposals
C.F.Booth, Rotherham: Cut date: April 2: 64566
Arrival dates: April 4-5: 319454; April 10: 507020/31

HAULED COACHING STOCK

Stored/stopped locations
Great Yarmouth: 10237, 12091
Long Marston: TP07
Loughborough: 42097, 42376, 44012, 45003
Wishaw: 5238 (Corrects previously reported cut)

■ STOCK CHANGES CORRECT AS OF APRIL 20.

Compiled by **Ashley Butlin**

The network's notable moves

Avanti West Coast

Driver training and fault free running of the new Class 805 units on the WCML continues to bring in reports.

On March 6, No. 805002 was working Oxley-Euston-Crewe-Euston; No. 805004 was working between Euston and Lancaster, while No. 805008 was on a Holyhead-Crewe circuit. On March 11, new No. 805010 moved from Merchant Park to Oxley.

During a visit to Euston on Monday, March 18, Nos. 805007 and 805006, both in plain white livery, were seen arriving at platform 16 ECS (Empty Coaching Stock) 5Q72/10.44 from Crewe. The train was being worked by a GBRf crew.

Newly liveried in AWC colours, Class 805 No. 805009 ran empty on Tuesday, March 19, and again on the next day, from London Euston (5Q11/08.03) to Lancaster and back (5Q13/11.46).

Class 390 No. 390002 ran empty from Polmadie Depot in Glasgow (5Z14/12.15) to arrive at Wembley Inter-City Depot at 18.40 on Tuesday, March 26.

Great Western Railway

A visit to West Ealing station on Monday, March 4, found Class 230 No. 230001 *Viva Venturer* stabled alongside platform 5 over the battery charging rails. At West Ealing station a large sign has appeared near the platform 5 buffer stops with the emergency procedure for the Fast Charge Battery Train Trial.

A little later on the same day at Greenford, No. 230001 was seen arriving into the bay platform, and then after a few minutes heading back to West Ealing. This working, which ran under RailAdventure's operator licence, was ECS 5Q22/14.22 from West Ealing to West Ealing EMU Sidings. On this day the regular Great Western passenger service to Greenford was being worked by Class 165 No. 165120.

Later that week, the testing started in earnest with No. 230001 shadowing the regular services. On Friday, March 8, it was first seen running ECS 5Q47/12.22 from West Ealing to Greenford, slowing but not stopping at South Greenford station. It was then forced to stop by the signal at Greenford South Junction to wait for No. 165126, working 2G27/12.30 from Greenford to West Ealing, to clear the bay platform at Greenford.

A little later, but still at South Greenford, No. 230001 was seen again now forming 5Q48/12.42 from Greenford to West Ealing. Then about half an hour later it was again seen for a final time for the day, now at Drayton Green, working the 5Q60/13.16 from Greenford to West Ealing.

It has now been reported the testing has identified the position of the charge rails at West Ealing to be not quite right for regular permissive working (two trains in the platform), which will require them to be moved towards the buffer stops. Otherwise, the testing has gone well, and No. 230001 will now return to Reading for a period of three to four weeks. In April it is expected to resume testing and hopefully start driver training.

Before the opening of the Elizabeth Line, the Greenford service routinely worked into Paddington rather than terminating by platform 5 at West Ealing. At Paddington the Class 165 joined the many others of the same class working into London. With the Elizabeth Line now open, Class 165s are quite rare at Paddington, the Greenford service only reaching that far early in the morning and late at night.

On Wednesday, March 13, engineering works meant the Greenford services finished earlier than normal so it proved possible to ride on the 2G61/21.00 from Greenford to London Paddington with No. 165124. There is clearly a lot of slack in the timetable, because despite being held for about four minutes between Drayton Green Junction and West Ealing Junction, it arrived at Paddington on time. The unit departed ECS at 21.42 to Reading.

Great Western's plans to use Euston station when access to Paddington is blocked by HS2 works are becoming clearer. Apparently over the Christmas 2024 break two GWR trains an hour will operate from Euston. The Night Riviera will also be routed to Euston when Paddington is closed. Whilst the Class 57 locomotives and Mk.3 stock are cleared to work into Euston, this is not the case for the GWR's Hitachi IETs.

A visit to Euston station on Monday, March 18, found No. 802101 Nancy Astor CH arriving at platform 16 ECS the 5Q82/11.22 from Willesden South West Sidings to London Euston. At Euston the GWR staff who had travelled with the train were seen checking clearances, particularly relating to the ramps used to assist less able passengers on and off trains. After around half an hour at Euston No. 802101 left as 5Q83/12.07 ECS departure to Willesden South West Sidings. However, visiting Euston again a little less than an hour later No. 802101 was seen again, now alongside platform 15.

Greater Anglia

New Class 720 units continue to be moved between various storage locations with the following being reported: No. 720142 was hauled from Worksop to Derby by Class 69 No. 69010 on March 7. The following day, the Class 69 along with No. 69008 took No. 720141 from Derby to Worksop. The next reported move was on March 14 when No. 720139 was moved from Derby to Worksop by Nos. 69010+57303, the pair then returning No. 720140 to Derby.

On March 15, Class 47 No. 47749 conveyed Nos. 720138+720102 from Derby to Wembley. The Class 47 along with Class 69 No. 69008 moved new No. 720144 from Derby to Worksop on March 21, returning with No. 720141 to Derby.

During weekdays, Greater Anglia is using Harwich Parkeston Quay yard as an overflow storage area for pairs of Aventra Class 720 units. Departing Colchester Carriage Servicing Depot as 5A96/11.28 and arriving at Harwich International station at 12.05 before moving into Harwich Parkeston Quay yard.

Here is a sample of the pairings: Nos. 720584+720539 on March 7; Nos. 720508+720522 on March 12; Nos. 720507+720134 on March 13; Nos. 720539+720133 on March 14; Nos. 720122+720566 on March 15; Nos. 720558+720130 on March 18; Nos. 720577+720121 on March 22; Nos. 720108+720123 on March 25; Nos. 720508+720583 on March 27; and Nos. 720102+720508 on April 4. For No. 720102 it was just a couple of days since its release into service from Ilford Depot.

The units stay until the following morning when they normally leave as 5F61/06.10 to Witham to form 1F11/07.16 Witham to London Liverpool St. However, on occasions the pairings have been split at Colchester or indeed have worked out of Harwich International station with 1A95/07.28 diagram to London Liverpool St (the overnight Hook of Holland – Harwich International port North Sea crossing connection for passengers travelling to the capital.)

Caledonian

Class 92 No. 92006 was worked south by Class 47 No. 47749 *City of Truro* as the 0A42/10.51 Loughborough Brush to Wembley Intercity Depot on March 11, after attention at the works.

A visit to Euston station on Wednesday, March 13, found Class 92 No. 92014, in Caledonian Sleeper livery, arriving on one of the non-platform roads between platforms 15 and 16. After a few minutes it continued working light engine to Wembley InterCity Depot.

Northern Rail

Class 195 No. 195104 derailed near Grange-over-Sands due to sink holes forming under the track on March 22. The DMU was coupled to No. 195133 and was operating the 05.18 Preston to Barrow service. Four passengers and four members of staff were safely evacuated from the train. The line was closed while Network Rail began repairs which were expected to possibly



A trio of Hitachi-built trains operated by three different companies line up in the rain at Edinburgh Waverley on March 14, with (from left) TPE's No. 802202 (9N11, the 11.35 to Berwick-upon-Tweed), Lumo's No. 803004 (1E84, the 11.24 to King's Cross) and LNER's No. 801202 (1S05, the 07.00 from King's Cross). ALEX AYRE



Loram-liveried Type 3 No. 37418 *An Comunn Gaidhealach* makes for a colourful combination with inspection saloon No. 975025 *Caroline* as they run along the sea wall at Shakespeare Cliff, west of Dover, on April 10 with 2Z04 from Tonbridge to London Victoria via Ashford, Dover Priory, Canterbury East, Faversham and Bromley South. ANDREW GARLAND

take four weeks to complete.

From Monday, March 25 train services ran between Carlisle and Barrow-in-Furness on the Cumbrian coastline. Bus replacement services operated between Barrow-in-Furness and Lancaster while the recovery of the train and repair work took place at Grange-over-Sands.

Transpennine Express

Movements of the Mk.5 sets between Longsight and Long Marston saw No. TP09 + Class 68 No. 68026 go to Long Marston on March 12. The following day the Class 68 took debranded TP04 back to Longsight. This was followed by No. 68027 taking set TP07 to Long Marston.

MerseyRail

A further three new units Nos. 777038+777051+777053 were moved from Dollands Moor to Wembley by Class 66 No. 66131 on March 7, going forward to Northampton Yard on March 9 behind Class 43 Nos. 43468+43480 before being taken forward to Walton Old Junction on March 11.

Two of the units stored at Long Marston, Nos. 777030+777041, were moved to Walton Old Junction on March 7 top-and-tailed by RailAdventure Class 43 Nos. 43468+43480 and 43484+43465.

New units reported in traffic included Nos. 777027+777032 in early March, followed in early April by No. 777041.

Transport for Wales

Class 175 units no longer used by TfW are still being moved around between various locations prior to being moved off-lease to Ely.

Moves reported included on March 7 No. 175109 being top-and-tailed by Class 37 Nos. 37800 and 37608 from Central Rivers to Landore. On March 19, Nos. 175104+175005 ran from Landore to Ely.

Class 37 Nos. 37901 and 37800 top-and-tailed No. 175011 from Crewe to Landore on March 22. Three days later, the same pair moved No. 175101 from Landore to Central Rivers. A further move on March 28 found No. 175112 hauled from Crewe to Landore by Nos. 37901+37611. Finally, reported on April 4 was Nos. 175102+175106 running from Landore to Ely.

Reported movements of Class 197 units prior to entering traffic included No. 197114 being moved from Wolverton to Crewe by Class 66 No. 66534 on March 12. This was followed by No. 197125 being moved from Donnington to Crewe on March 13 by Class 66 No. 66548.

The 06.42 Llandudno to Manchester Airport had problems again on April 3. It started punctually using Class 197 No. 197120. Passengers then transferred to No. 197019 at Llandudno Junction, which was needed at Chester to attend to engine power problems, leaving 18 minutes late. At Chester, Nos. 197042+197103 were waiting ready to receive the passengers. When everybody was aboard, it was found that the two units were not communicating properly, so fitters were called. No cure was found, and No. 197103 was detached, leaving No. 197042 to depart solo, 41 minutes late. As a result, the train was terminated at Manchester Piccadilly, 39 minutes late, and passengers for the airport had to seek an alternative train.

The 14.30 Manchester Piccadilly to Cardiff Central on April 3 left on time, with Class 67 No. 67010 in charge. The 16.30 to Swansea, with No. 67012, was delayed because of track problems in Cheshire, leaving at 16.42.

It is reported that the Class 230 units on the Borderland Line cannot be used for the whole day without overheating. A pair of empty stock trains has been added to the timetable so that the Class 230 can be swapped over part way through the day. These trains are: a 5F68/13.26 from Bidston to Birkenhead North E.M.U. Depot, and 5J70/13.11 from Birkenhead North E.M.U. Depot to Bidston.

West Midlands Railway

Class 730 No. 730217 was moved from Worksop to Oxley on March 13 by Class 37 No. 37608. Two days later the Class 37 took No. 730220 from Derby to Oxley. A further move on March 26 found No. 730020 being hauled from Oxley to Old Dalby by Class 37 No. 37884.

London Overground

Between Friday, March 29 and Easter Monday, April 1 there was no Overground service between Highbury & Islington and New Cross / New Cross Gate / Clapham Junction.

On Easter Sunday March 31 London Overground operated a London Bridge to West Croydon service, bringing Overground trains away from their usual routes to London Bridge station. To try the one day only Overground service a correspondent made a journey on the 2K59/14.24 departure from London Bridge to West Croydon formed of No. 378146.

Southern Railways

Due to an operational incident in Brighton Depot on March 6, stock variations and a few cancellations were inevitable. The 04.45 ECS to Bognor Regis was cancelled. Luckily, Bognor had an extra unit, but it was a four-car unit instead of the normal three, No. 377137 was utilised for the Bognor Regis, Littlehampton and Portsmouth services starting with the 06.10 from Bognor Regis.

The 04.37 ECS to Littlehampton which forms the 06.05 service to London Bridge was cancelled. The 06.47 Brighton to Littlehampton and 07.55 return was formed of No. 377312 instead of a four-car unit. Due to a shortage of stock at Eastbourne the 05.57 Hastings to Victoria was formed of No. 377407 throughout which later formed the 07.46 Victoria to Littlehampton. On arrival at Littlehampton, it formed the 09.50 ECS move to Brighton Depot. Due to the late running of the 09.46 from Victoria, after waiting displaced crew, it arrived at Littlehampton some 20 minutes behind schedule.

Delays in the Worthing area on March 11 due to an unidentified incident meant that the following did not take place at Littlehampton: the 09.16 from Victoria formed of Nos. 377115+377416+377123, which normally divides, was left to form the 11.13 return to London instead of the more usual eight car. The 12-car 09.46 from Victoria would also have been divided but was left to form the 11.43 return to London instead of the normal eight. As a result of this, the 11.18 Bognor Regis via Littlehampton to Brighton Depot ran direct from Barnham to Angmering as there was no stock to pick up.

On March 12, the 09.55 ▶

Littlehampton to Portsmouth service and return 10.57, were cancelled as No. 377323 was pulled from service with a cab fault. No. 377409 having arrived from London replaced the dud 377 to form the 12.09 to Bognor Regis.

The early morning peak service was in disarray on March 18 when there was a trespasser on the line at Aldrington, near Hove causing services to be cancelled or diverted and stopped short of their destinations. The 07.10 Littlehampton to London formed 377129+377444+377463 was diverted via the Arun Valley.

The 07.40 Littlehampton was delayed at Haywards Heath for around 20 minutes waiting a member of the displaced train crew. It eventually ran fast to Victoria.

Later in the day, due to an operational incident at Gatwick Airport the 19.18 Littlehampton to Bognor Regis and 20.05 return, 20.39 to Bognor Regis and 21.05 return were all cancelled.

Class 377/2 No. 377202 was the first dual voltage unit to be modified with extra cameras and illuminated screens seen passing Ford on the 12.29 Portsmouth to Brighton service on March 18.

Class 377 No. 377474 was removed from traffic on arrival at Victoria on March 19 after working the 12.13 from Littlehampton due to a wheel slide protection fault meaning the 14.16 return formed of No. 377472 was the sole unit to work the service throughout and 16.13 return.

The morning peak hour started off with cancellations and delays to services on the West Coastway Route on March 22 when the 04.54 Chichester to Brighton hit an object in the Angmering area with unit No. 377431 having some damage to the leading bogie.

Early morning services were disrupted due to a points failure at West Worthing on March 25. Services were diverted, severely delayed or cancelled with the 07.10 and 07.40 Littlehampton to London services diverted via the Arun Valley running fast to Three Bridges. The 07.55 to Brighton was delayed by 40 minutes while the 06.40 Littlehampton to London terminated at Haywards Heath after a long delay at Durrington.

There was more West Coastway misery for Southern passengers the following day due to signal and infrastructure issues at Hove. The shuttles into Brighton were cancelled, while early morning trains from Littlehampton were diverted into Brighton and terminated with passengers transferring to other services towards London. The services from Littlehampton were restarted at Preston Park with the stock running via the carriage road. The 10.13 Littlehampton to London ran direct via the Cliftonville Spur at reduced speed.

Normal service did resume but not for long as a points failure occurred at Bognor Regis cutting the station out. Services to Bognor Regis were terminating at Barnham and return services to London started from Barnham. The 11.09 Littlehampton to Bognor Regis was cancelled but the 12.09 Littlehampton to Bognor Regis ran as booked.

Further problems ensued on March 27 on the West Coastway route when a person jumped from a bridge between Littlehampton and Angmering.

The 05.11 Littlehampton to London formed of Nos. 377459+377149 was diverted via Horsham and Three Bridges.

South Western Railway

New Class 701 Aventra units continue to be moved around. When seen passing through Market Harborough they are usually heading south, but on March 1 No. 701012 was taken north by Class 47 No. 47727 *Edinburgh Castle* as the 5Q24/11.55 Eastleigh TMD to Derby Litchurch Lane.

Class 455 No. 455868 has been repainted in a version of British Rail blue and grey livery at Bournemouth T&RSMD and is reported to have returned to London on Wednesday, March 6 ECS as 5Y51/14.32 from Bournemouth to Wimbledon Park Depot Sidings.

On Sunday, March 17, a correspondent made a journey as far as Surbiton on the 2G49/17.06 from Waterloo to Guildford formed of No. 455868 and red livery No. 455901.

While the new livery on No. 455868 looks very smart, the effect is spoilt by the interior, which remains extremely shabby. Blue and grey No. 455868 was seen again on Saturday, March 23 at the buffer stops by platform 20 at Waterloo having worked in as 2S48/16.13 from Hounslow still partnered with No. 455901.

Shortage of rolling stock continues to plague SWR. On Wednesday, March 6, at 09.27 at Egham, the Waterloo-Reading departure (2C19) was formed of a single Class 458. At the same time, the Weybridge-Waterloo departure (2S22) was formed of a single class 450. Later in the day at Bracknell, the 11.50 Waterloo-Reading (2C27) departure was formed of an eight-car Class 455.

Ten minutes later, the 12.00 Reading-Waterloo departure from Bracknell (2C30) was also formed of an eight-car Class 455.

Movements of the Class 458 units between Bournemouth and Widnes, and back as four car Class 458/4 units found No. 458415 returned from Widnes to Wembley by Class 69 No. 69008 on March 12, going forward to Bournemouth the following day. The Class 69 then took No. 458521 to Eastleigh, continuing to Widnes on March 13. The next reported move followed on March 25 when Class 69 No. 69009 brought No. 458422 south from Widnes to Wembley, going on to Bournemouth the following day. The Class 69 then took No. 458501 north on March 27.

Charter Trains

Locomotive Services' Class 47 Nos. 47805 *Roger Hosking* in BR Green and 47828 in Intercity Swallow, top-and-tailed the 1Z57/05.15 Chesterfield to Portsmouth Harbour 'Portsmouth Harbour Stateman' and 1Z58/16.09 return on March 28. The return train actually started at Portsmouth & Southsea after a traction motor problem.

In a positioning move ready for the following day's railtour, 'Castle' Class 4-6-0 No. 5043 *Earl of Mount Edgcumbe* arrived at WCR's Steamtown base in Carnforth on Friday, March 15, at 14.53 having run, along with GUV support coach No. W96100 and Mk.1 No. W35470, from Tyseley (5Z29/09.59).

Friday, March 29, saw the 1Z60/10.40 Crewe to Edinburgh observed passing Thankerton being operated by Class 47 No. 47712 and the push pull ScotRail set with DBSO No. 9707 bringing up the rear. This train was followed by the 0Z60/13.09 Carlisle to Dumbarton Central Civil Engineers siding being operated by Class 47 No. D1935 (47805).



Network Rail Class 37s Nos. 97304+97302 have just crossed the famous Barmouth Bridge over the Mawddach estuary and emerge from the subsequent short tunnel to head towards Barmouth station with Pathfinder's 'Cambrian Coast Express' from Reading to Pwllheli on April 4. MICHAEL ANDERSON

DB Cargo

Class 66 No. 66152 *Derek Holmes Railway Operator* hauled the Walsall to Dowlow Briggs empty box wagons through Chesterfield on February 15.

Class 66 No. 66124 led the 6D37/11.48 Lackenby to Scunthorpe train through Yarm on March 3.

Scrap trains reported in recent weeks included Class 66 No. 66131 on a Cardiff Tidal-Saltley-Cardiff Tidal diagram on March 4. A further move on March 7 found No. 66112 on a Tidal-Kingsbury-Tidal diagram. On March 28 No. 66207 was observed on a Tidal-Swindon-Tidal move.

A visit to London Victoria station on Monday, March 4 found the British Pullman train standing alongside platform 2 having been worked in by Class 67 No. 67024 ECS 5Y40 from Stewarts Lane T&RSMD with No. 67021 at the country end of the platform.

Returning to Victoria station on Sunday, March 24 No. 67024 was seen arriving at platform 7 at the head of Pullman service 1Z25/14.28 from Maidstone West. No. 67021 was then seen being attached to the rear of the train in readiness to work empty stock train 5Z25 to Stewarts Lane T&RSMD.

On Wednesday, March 13, Class 66 No. 66170, still in EWS livery and looking a little shabby, was seen passing platform 4 at Willesden Junction at the head of the 6L12 from Acton Terminal Complex to Bow East.

In an unusual move on March 15 Class 66 Nos. 66105+66097 moved a rake of 56 empty steel wagons from Tees Yard to Margam. A similar move followed on April 2 when Nos. 66012+66030 moved a further rake of 50 wagons to Margam.

It was reported that the steel train, 6D94/05.53 Rotherham Masborough Freight Depot to Hull Hedon Road Sidings hauled by Class 66 No. 66004 had become divided between Melton Lane Level Crossing and the approach to Ferriby Station on March 27. All services between Brough and Hull were consequently suspended. It is reported that the condition of the track in this area may be an issue. This not the first time there has been a problem in the area.

Freightliner

Class 66 Nos. 66536 and 66559 hauled 4O95 Leeds Freightliner Terminal to Southampton Maritime Container Terminal containers through Chesterfield on February 15.

Class 66 No. 66952 hauled the Cliffe Hill Stud Farm to Leicester Humberstone Road stone hoppers on March 2.

Observations of the 09.11 Westbury to Crawley New Yard and 18.31 return working produced Class 59 No. 59001 Yeoman Endeavour on March 4 and 5. On March 18 No. 59206 *John F Yeoman Rail Pioneer,* still in excellent ex works condition powered the service. However, the 18.31 return trip was diverted via Southampton goods loop with an hour stop over.

The following day, No. 59103 *Village of Mells* was noted in Chichester Yard and No. 59104 *Village of Great Elm* passed by, working the Westbury to Crawley New Yard aggregates. The next observation was on March 25 when No. 59101 *Village of Whatley* powered the service, returning via Southampton.

Making a rare appearance on the WCML through Euxton on March 5 was Class 70 No. 70001 running from Crewe Basford Hall to Carlisle and back on a route learning trip.

Observed on Tuesday, March 19, Class 47 No. 47830/D1645 *Beeching's Legacy* ran light from Crewe (0Z80/07.47) to Carlisle and (0Z81/11.53) return.

Several Genesee & Wyoming-liveried Class 90s were on show at Manningtree and Ipswich on March 21, with Nos. 90013+90044 noted at Manningtree hauling 4L91/02.10 Trafford Park Freightliner Terminal to Felixstowe North Freightliner Terminal intermodal, while at Ipswich Nos. 90041+90048 headed out with 4M63/09.12 Felixstowe North FLT to Trafford Park FLT only for classmates Nos. 90010+90047 to arrive on 4L89/04.10 Crewe Basford Hall to Felixstowe FLT.

A correspondent's walk down platform 2 saw Nos. 90013+90044 parked in field sidings with No. 90006 and another unidentified Class 90 behind. It was a short turnaround for Nos. 90047+90010 as they headed back with 4M87/11.13 Felixstowe North FLT to Ditton (O'Conner) FLT at 12.44 taking the middle road through Ipswich station that looked in need of a visit from the Weedkiller Unit.

DRS

Class 66 No. 66424 *Driver Paul Scrivens 1969-2021* was observed hauling 4E49 Daventry to Doncaster iPort Tesco containers through Chesterfield on February 15.

Chiltern Railway liveried Class 68 No. 68015 passed Thankerton with 0Z15/09.15 Kingmoor sidings to Mossend on Tuesday, March 5.



Following release by DCR, GBRf 'Grid' No. 56098 is working as yard shunter at Wellingborough. It arrived on April 8 as light engine move 0F56 from Leicester LIP (Locomotive Inspection Point). RICHARD GENNIS



Former 'Grid' No. 56065, now re-engined as No. 69010, is seen in green primer livery on April 9 as it passes over Stewarts Lane depot in South London working the 6Y42 engineer's train from Hoo Junction to Eastleigh. STEVE MORRIS

On Saturday, March 3 Class 88 No. 88002 *Prometheus* was coupled in front of Class 68 No. 68003 *Astute* to pull three white FNA flasks from Sellafield (6K73/08.30) via Ulverston to Crewe. The same service on Saturday, March 9, was worked by consecutively numbered Class 68 Nos. 68004 *Rapid* + 68005 *Defiant* pulling two white FNA Flasks.

Seen on March 7 were Class 66 No. 88005 and Class 68 No. 68004 returning from Bridgwater to Crewe, with three flasks, whereas on March 14 the same pair top-and-tailed the working.

Class 57 No.57307, still carrying pink-backed *Lady Penelope* nameplates, ran light on Wednesday, March 20 from Crewe (0Z57/12.22) to Carlisle.

Seen passing through Lancaster at 17.39 on Wednesday, March 20, were Class 66 Nos. 66126+66427 top-and-tailing a pristine set of blue mineral wagons marked DRS and VTG. This train (6Z10) was heading for Sellafield having run via Toton and Lichfield from Davis & Sons, Shirebrook (dep 12.33).

Also, on Wednesday, March 20, Class 68 Nos. 68002 *Intrepid* + 68033 *The Poppy* double headed three white FNA flasks from Sellafield (6K73/16.54) to Crewe.

GBRF

Observed on February 14 and 19, was Class 69 No. 69010 in green undercoat hauling 6X55 Beeston Sidings to Toton North Yard Civil Engineer train.

Class 66 No. 66725 *Sunderland* hauled a short train of cement tanks from St Pancras Churchyard to Ketton through Leicester on February 14. On the same day Class 66 No. 66771 *Amanda* hauled 4M29 Felixstowe North to Birch Coppice containers, also through Leicester.

Class 66 No. 66766 *Gail Richardson* hauled 4E34 Southampton Western Docks to Doncaster iPort containers through Chesterfield on February 26.

The March workings on the Harwich Refinery to North Walsham diagram were hauled by No. 66782 on March 6/7, then nothing until March 20/21 when No. 66301 was allocated the run (the first time it had done so), March 27/28 by No. 66766, and on April 3 it was No. 66768 that travelled from Peterborough MPD as 0L41 to arrive into Harwich Parkeston Quay yard around 07.45 and move the empty wagons in two 9-tank tranches into the yard, before leaving at 10.30 as the normal 6P41 diagram to the Norfolk loading site, returning on April 4 as the normal 6A32 diagram with the loaded set.

March proved slightly better than February for weekend intermodals into Harwich Parkeston Quay yard. On March 9 No. 66770 worked in with 4L43/02.50 Doncaster iPort and subsequently left on Monday, March 11, at 09.30 with 4R43 round to Felixstowe. Unexpectedly, on that same day there was a light engine move 0Z17 by No. 66723 *Chinook* from Peterborough MPD which arrived in the yard at 09.45 and collected the consist of new FEA-G intermodal flats (that had arrived on February 28 with No. 66777 *Annette*) and returned to Peterborough as 4Z16.

No. 66770 arrived again with 4L43 from Doncaster i-Port the following weekend of March 16, before departing with 4R43 on the Monday. It was not until ▶

Good Friday (March 29) that No. 66785 *John Ellis* arrived at 09.45 with the 4L43 from Doncaster, followed nearly two hours later by No. 66705 *Golden Jubilee* arriving with 4L02 from Hams Hall.

Surprisingly, on the following day, Saturday, March 30, No. 66705 left the yard with 4Z02 round to Felixstowe Port leaving No. 66785 to reside in the sidings until Tuesday, April 2 when it left for Felixstowe with the normal 4R43 diagram at 09.30.

Scrap trains reported included Class 66 No. 66742 on a Small Heath Yard to Swindon where it was loaded before returning to Liverpool on March 4. The same loco was in use again on March 11 on a Small Heath Yard to Kingsbury and Liverpool, and again March 13 on a Liverpool-Saltley-Liverpool diagram and the following day on a Liverpool-Swindon-Liverpool diagram.

On Saturday, March 16 it worked a rake of empties from Liverpool to Small Heath Yard going forward on Monday, March 18 to Attercliffe before returning the loaded wagons to Liverpool. The next day it was on a regular Liverpool-Saltley-Liverpool turn.

The 6O82 from West Ruislip to Grain Thamesport was seen pulling away from New Kew Junction on Thursday, March 21, behind a rather dirty Class 66 No. 66772 *Maria*. This train was returning empty having delivered tunnel segments for the construction of HS2.

A visit to Ipswich on March 21 noted No. 66709 *Sorrento* on 4M22/10.26 Felixstowe South to Trafford Park Euro Terminal passing through on the middle road at 11.44 running 25 minutes late. Six days later, on March 27, the named in February and recently released into service loco, No. 66307 *Ipswich Town*, was noted on the same diagram passing over the Cattawade bridges that span the River Stour tidal estuary just outside Manningtree station.

MoD traffic reported included, on March 22, Class 66 No. 66776 on a Marchwood-Kineton-Marchwood diagram. On March 25, No. 66730 had charge of a Kineton-Marchwood-Eastleigh working. Two days later it was in action again working from Kineton to Longtown and back.

Class 66 Nos. 66727 *Maritime One*, 66792 *Collaboration* and 66797 were all noted at Brighton on engineer's trains on March 24 in connection with planned engineering work between Brighton and Lewes.

In what is not a common working Class 66 No. 66759 *Chippy* ran light on Tuesday, March 26 from Carlisle NY (0N01/08.51) to Crewe and back (0N02/12.30).

On Thursday, March 28, the 6Y48 from Eastleigh East Yard to Hoo Junction Up Yard, which was formed of HQA Autoballaster Bogie Hoppers and headed by Class 69 No. 69002, in BR blue with large logo, was seen passing Richmond station.

The 6E34/22.18 from Liverpool Biomass terminal to Drax on April 2 was put into Castleton East Junction Loop at 03.26 on the next morning with 'a problem on the train'. It stayed there until 16.04, then continued to Drax in the path of 6E10 (nominally 11.00 from Liverpool Biomass).

Colas Rail

Not often reported, Class 97 Nos. 97303 *Dave Berry* and 97302 *Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Railways* ran light from Crewe Basford Hall to Rectory Junction (Colwick Colas), east of Nottingham, on February 19.

Class 56 No. 56096 hauled nine bogie tank wagons from Sinfin to Grangemouth Ineos, being observed through Chesterfield on February 26.

The regular Grangemouth-Sinfin-Grangemouth oil tanks were observed on March 4 hauled by Class 56 No. 56049.

Class 56 No. 56049 passed Thankerton on Tuesday, March 5, whilst working 0C01/07.01 Grangemouth Oil Terminal to Carlisle New Yard.

On Saturday, March 9, the 6S36/08.32 Dalton Oil Terminal to Grangemouth Oil Terminal was triple headed by Class 70 Nos. 70804, 70811 and Class 56 No. 56113.

Observed on Sunday, March 10, Class 70 No. 70806 was running light from Carlisle (0Z98/11.37) to Bescot. Later that day, Class 37s Nos. 37175 + 37254 ran as a light engine duo from Derby (0Z10/08.44) on a 339-mile journey via Shap to Millerhill in Edinburgh. Also on that Sunday afternoon, seen passing through Lancaster at 15.32, were Class 56s Nos. 56049 + 56105 pulling a set of empty log carrying vehicles from Chirk (dep 11.05) north to Carlisle.

A further light engine move on March 20 found Class 37 Nos. 37610+37405 run from Crewe to Millerhill.

Class 70 No. 70810 and Class 56 No. 56049 ran north as a light engine duo on Monday, March 25, from Rugby (0C01/08.06) to Carlisle New Yard. After arriving at Carlisle No. 70810 then departed at 14.03 pulling a fully loaded log train (6J37) south via Shap to Chirk.

West Coast Railway Co

WCR's green Class 47 No. 47815 pulled an empty set of maroon Mk.2 coaches on Tuesday, March 5 from Southall (5M43/10.15) to Carnforth.

Arriving at WCR's Steamtown base in Carnforth at 18.01 on Thursday, March 7, was 'Black Five' 4-6-0 No. 44871 which, along with a maroon support coach, had earlier departed from Southall (5M43) at 10.41.

On Wednesday, March 13, WCR Class 37 No. 37676 + Class 47 No. 47237 pulled three maroon Mk.2 coaches from Carnforth (5Z46/08.59) via Manchester Victoria to Castleton Hopwood on the East Lancashire Railway. Later both locos returned as a light engine duo (0Z47) via Todmorden to arrive back in Carnforth 211 minutes ahead of schedule at 13.20.

Chocolate and cream liveried Class 57s Nos. 57313 + 57601 top-and-tailed an empty set of matching 'Northern Belle' coaching stock from Carnforth (5V42/12.39) to Southall on Thursday, March 14.

Varamis Rail

Varamis Rail continues to add further Class 321 units to their fleet. Unit No. 321440 was sold to them some time ago but was located at Worksop and extraction was difficult. In the event it was moved along with No. 321337 by Class 37 No. 37884 from Worksop to Sims Metals, Newport on March 20, where No. 321337 was deposited before the Class 37 took No. 321440 north to Northampton. Towards the end of March, No. 321339 also joined the Varamis fleet.

A visit to Liverpool Street station on Wednesday, March 13, found Class 321 Nos. 321428+321429 by platform 11, having arrived ECS as 5Z01/10.20 from Willesden Princess Royal Distribution Centre to London Liverpool Street. No. 321428 was carrying a headboard 'The Varamis Express', which also featured the Cross of St George and Scotland's Saltire. The units were at Liverpool Street for the Varamis Rail launch. The seats have been removed from both units, which are now adapted internally for their future use carrying parcels. However, externally, apart from the removal of operator branding, they are little changed from when they were in passenger service.

Hanson & Hall

The company continues to move units between Banbury and Bristol with the following reported: on Wednesday, March 6, Nos. 165028+165031 Banbury-Bristol and Nos. 165032+165005 Bristol-Banbury. On the same day they took No. 710265 Willesden TMD-Wembley ICD for tyre turning.

On March 8, they moved No. 710265 Wembley ICD-Willesden TMD, on March 13 it was No. 710267 Willesden TMD-Wembley ICD for tyre turning and on March 15 No. 710267 Wembley ICD-Willesden TMD. March 20 Nos. 165026+165037 relocated from Banbury toBarton Hill and Nos. 165028+165031 moved from Barton Hill to Banbury. Noted on March 26 was Class 168 No. 168112 returned from Wolverton to Aylesbury.

Hanson & Hall undertook an unusual move on March 21, on behalf of Loram using ROG Class 37 No. 37800 working between Toton and Derby RTC to move a short rake of side tipper ballast wagons.

Locomotive Services

LSL's Class 43 Nos. 43049 + 43055 plus matching 'Midland Pullman' coaches ran empty



The telephoto lens highlights the subsidence on the approach to Hensall station (in North Yorkshire, on the line between Knottingley and Goole) as 'Tug' No. 60026 heads a biomass train to Drax Power Station on April 6. CHRIS GEE



Hastings DEMU No. 1001 worked a railtour from Hastings to Exeter Central on April 6, travelling out via Kensington Olympia, Reading and Taunton, then back via Salisbury, Eastleigh and Waterloo. The return leg of the 'Cogload Climber' is pictured as it passed through Yeovil Junction. JOSH BRINSFORD



Ahead of the introduction of its 'West Highland Pullman' service later this year, Locomotive Services Ltd sent Class 37s Nos. 37409 and 37667 (D6851) with the Mk.3 push-pull set to Fort William on April 3 to begin driver training – the 5Z37 empty stock move from Crewe seen arriving at Fort William. However, with West Coast Railway pulling its 'Jacobite' service in a row over door locks (see last issue), LSL took the opportunity to run its empty stock train as a short-notice passenger charter service from Fort William to Mallaig and back on April 8 and 9. GORDON KIRKBY

from Crewe (5Z42/10.30) to Barrow-in-Furness on Friday, March 8. After departing 76 minutes late from Barrow-in-Furness on the following day this formation (1Z43) ran to Whitby via Preston and Wakefield to arrive just eight minutes late in Whitby at 13.00.

Later this formation returned on the same route (1Z44) from Whitby at 14.35. On Sunday, March 10 this formation (5Z46) returned from Barrow-in-Furness (dep 14.41) to Crewe.

DC Rail

A major catchup on DC Rail operations follows: Class 60 No. 60055 *Thomas Barnado* dominated the Chaddesden, Peak Forest Cemex, Brandon, King's Lynn, Middleton Towers, Ravenhead, Chaddesden circuit until January 29. The trains of 17 or 18 box wagons convey stone from Peak Forest to Brandon, sometimes direct and sometimes via Chaddesden, and sand from Middleton Towers to Ravenhead.

Observations included at Derby on January 29, when No. 60055 was hauling 18 box wagons of stone from Peak Forest to Chaddesden.

Class 56 No. 56098 in BR large logo livery hauled 18 box wagons of stone from Chaddesden to Brandon through Nottingham on January 30. It hauled 15 empty box wagons from Chaddesden to King's Lynn through Derby on February 2 and through Stamford on February 9.

Class 60 No. 60055 hauled three box wagons and No. 60046 *William Wilberforce* from Willesden to Chaddesden (6Z60) on February 14, where they were observed at Leicester. The following day it hauled 6Z82 Peak Forest to Brandon stone train through Chesterfield and Nottingham. It hauled 6Z69 Tunstead to Leicester Humberstone Road stone train and 6Z92 Humberstone Road to Chaddesden empty stone on February 19.

Class 60 No. 60046 *William Wilberforce* dominated the Chaddesden, Peak Forest Cemex, Brandon, King's Lynn, Middleton Towers, Ravenhead, Chaddesden circuit from February 22. It hauled 17 box wagons of stone from Peak Forest to Brandon on February 22, and it worked 17 box wagons of sand from Middleton Towers to Ravenhead through Leicester and Narborough on February 24.

When observed on February 26, No. 60046 hauled 17 box wagons of stone from Peak Forest to Chaddesden through Chesterfield and Derby. Two days later, it was observed hauling 17 empty box wagons from Brandon to Chaddesden through East Midlands Parkway. It worked 18 box wagons of stone from Peak Forest to Brandon through East Midlands Parkway on February 29, and 18 box wagons of sand from Middleton Towers to Ravenhead through Leicester and Narborough on March 2.

No. 60046 hauled 18 box wagons of stone from Peak Forest to Brandon through Nottingham on March 4, and it worked the empty box wagons from Brandon to Chaddesden through East Midlands Parkway on March 5. It hauled 18 box wagons of sand from Middleton Towers to Ravenhead through Nottingham on March 9, due to the Peterborough to Syston Junction line being closed for engineering works.

Celsa Steel, Cardiff

As evidence that Beacon Rail's Class 18s will not have a monopoly on the replacement of Class 08 diesel shunters, it has been announced that three Zephir LOK 16.300 road/rail shunters have been purchased for use at the Celsa Steel works in Cardiff. The locos will be owned by Porterbrook and leased to GB Railfreight, which has the contract for shunting at Celsa Steel.

Sims Metals, Newport

Arrivals for recycling in recent weeks included Class 507 Nos. 507002+507030 brought south by Class 37 No. 37884 on March 11. These were followed by No. 321337 also delivered by No. 37884 on March 20, having arrived from store at Worksop.

Loram

Class 43 Nos. 43062+43013 top-and-tailed 1Q28/10.22 Derby RTC to Tees Yard test train through Yarm on March 3.

On Thursday, March 7 inspection train 1Q76 from Tonbridge West Yard to Seaford was seen drawing up alongside platform 15 at London Bridge, top-and-tailed by Class 73 Nos. 73963 *Janice* + 73961 *Alison*.

GBRf Class 73 Nos. 73963+73961 top-and-tailed a 1Q51/10.05 Derby RTC to Eastleigh TMD test train south through Market Harborough on March 11. The Eastleigh to Eastleigh via Portsmouth, Littlehampton, Portsmouth, Southampton, and Totten ran on March 12, formed off Class 73 Nos. 73961 and 73963 top-and-tailing Nos. 9523+1256+999550+6262, being observed at Littlehampton.

Network Rail Tampers Nos. DR77904+DR77913 were moved on Monday, March 11, from Tyne Yard Sidings in Gateshead (6U12/08.28) via Carlisle to Crewe.

Colas Rail Class 43s Nos. 43274+43277, plus a set of yellow Network Rail track inspection coaches ran on Monday, March 11 from Derby (1Z13/13.01) via Shap to Carlisle. From Carlisle this train formation later departed from Platform 1 at 16.43 (1Q13) via Settle bound for York.

On Wednesday, March 13, Network Rail yellow liveried Tamper No. DR73114 ran from Wigan South Junction (6U12/09.58) to Carlisle and back at 13.42 to Wigan to complete a day's 214 mile out-and-back trip. It ran the same diagram the following day.

On Monday, March 18, Colas Rail Tamper No. DR73913 was moved from Crewe (6J11/09.51) via Shap to Carlisle High Wapping Sidings and No. DR73922 ran from Edge Hill Sidings in Liverpool (6J38/09.52) also via Shap to Maryport.

A visit to King's Cross on Monday, March 18, found the New Measurement Train (NMT) drawing up alongside platform 1 as train 1Q04 from Darlington Up Sorting Sidings to London King's Cross formed of power cars Nos. 43062+43013. After only a short while at King's Cross, the NMT headed north five minutes ahead of its booked departure time of 14.23 as train 1Q05 to Cambridge TR&RSMD.

SB Rail's Dynamic Tamper No. DR75013 was moved on Tuesday, March 26, from Oxenholme (6Q61/15.00) south to Bletchley.

Our thanks

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RETAILER OF THE YEAR!

End of the line

Movements of peat by rail in Ireland has finished after almost a century.

AFTER 98 years, peat haulage by rail came to an end on Bord na Móna (BnM) on March 29, when the last load of peat was hauled off the Bellair System near Ballycumber, Co. Offaly.

Several locomotives had been transferred in by rail after being made redundant elsewhere on the vast Boora/Blackwater system, to help remove the final peat stockpile. The final 20-wagon peat train operated on March 29, hauled by No. LM434 into the reception sidings at Bellair. No. LM434 is a BnM-built diesel hydraulic built in Boora works in 2004 and rebuilt to a more modern spec in 2016.

The honour of shunting the wagons fell ironically to the last of BnM's redoubtable Ruston & Hornby locomotives, No. LM163 dating from 1956. The last wagon was discharged at 10.45, bringing to an end peat haulage by rail by BnM and its direct predecessors, the Turraun Peat Co which began using rail for peat haulage in 1926.



After 98 years of peat trains in Ireland, the very last train was loaded on March 29, at one of the last harvested stock piles on the Bellair system, in County Offaly. The stockpile was reached via 1.5 miles of temporary track, and the train hauled by No. LM434 is seen being loaded at Bellair. TED MCAVOY

Bridges back in as Foynes line track laying due to start

WORK on rebuilding the Limerick to Foynes line for traffic reached its latest milestone on April 9, when the first of three major structures was lifted back into place.

The 29.19m three-span bridge deck over the River Deel, between Ballingrane and Askeaton, last renewed in 1906, was lifted back in place, following an extensive renovation nearby by contractors.

The refurbished structure was repaired and strengthened to take the heaviest train on the Iarnród Eireann. Work included masonry repointing and repairs to wingwalls and the bridge abutments – plus the installation of new waybeams and decking with derailment guards.

Furthermore, a replacement structure for UBF (LB) 20 near Adare was observed being lifted into place on April 9, using a large road crane, to replace a wrought iron single span bridge.

By April 13, three miles of trackbed from the Foynes side of Askeaton station near MP 21 to MP 24 had been completed, with the initial layer of ballast ready to allow track laying to start – which is due to begin in May near Foynes.

Irish Transport Minister Eamon Ryan visited the Deel Bridge on April 12, and said on social media he expected that the line would also reopen to passenger traffic in addition to freight.



A road crane was used to lift in the refurbished and strengthened structure that makes up the three-span Deel viaduct. Here the structure is seen in place, on April 9, looking towards Limerick. It is the first of three major bridges to be completed as part of the project to reopen the Limerick to Foynes line. HASSARD STACPOOLE

Direct Dublin – Rosslare trains could be axed

THE National Transport Authority (NTA) is considering terminating existing rail services between Dublin and Rosslare at Greystones.

The plan was revealed in email correspondence between County Wexford-based Senator Malcolm Byrne and the deputy chief executive of the NTA, Hugh Creegan.

Mr Creegan said: "The current proposals under development envisage that train services from Rosslare/Gorey would terminate at either Wicklow or Greystones where passengers would interchange to the Dart service."

"This would allow more frequent diesel train services to be run between Rosslare and Wicklow/Greystones, linking in with the frequent Dart services from that point northwards."

Mr Creegan added: "The current feasibility study being undertaken for the Dart battery train service between Greystones and Wicklow town is also assessing whether that interchange should be at Wicklow or Greystones."

The study is also assessing the potential for an hourly Dart, but work is at an early stage.

Pressure group, South East On Track, which campaigns to improve rail services across the region, said the proposal will "marginally improve" services for Kilcoole and Wicklow, "while making the service almost unusable for passengers at busier stations further south."



BRIGHTER FUTURE FOR TARA TRAFFIC: **It was announced on April 17 that an agreement had been reached with the unions to allow Tara Mines to reopen on a phased basis from June. Before the announcement, it was planned to move the 34 dedicated wagons to Limerick for storage. The first of three such trains operated on April 15, when No. 075 moved 12 wagons, working the 09.37 North Wall to Limerick transfer. It is seen arriving into the up loop at Ballybrophy and on arrival it was held in the loop when one of the wagons developed a wheel flat and the train was failed.** NEIL DINNEN

RPSI railtour to mark 30 years of '201' locos

THE Railway Preservation Society of Ireland (RPSI) plans to operate a diesel railtour to celebrate 30 years of the 201 Class locomotives.

The one-day event will see the RPSI Craven carriages being hauled by a 201 Class throughout. It will depart from Dublin Heuston on Saturday, June 15, at approximately 08.15, with an initial destination of Kildare. From there, the tour will return to Dublin, before taking the Phoenix Park line to Connolly.

The destination for the railtour is Rosslare Europort. This will be the second visit of a '201' on a passenger train south of Arklow and a rare loco-hauled visit to Rosslare Europort station. Visit www.steamtrainsireland.com.

Compiled by **Keith Fender**

SIDELINES

Go-ahead for brand-new international railway

AFTER many years of discussion, the President of Kyrgyzstan, Sadyr Japarov, has recently announced that the planned 523km China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan (CKU) railway connecting China with Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan will be built.

A joint venture formed by the three countries will build the line, which is estimated to cost $8 billion. The section from Torugart, on the Kyrgyzstan/China border, to Makmal in western Kyrgyzstan will reportedly be built as standard gauge (as used in China), but west from there to Jalal-Abad and the connection with Uzbekistan's rail network will be built as 1520mm (5ft) broad gauge, as used in Russia and former Soviet states.

It is claimed that the new line will shorten the route between China and Europe by 900km, reducing transit times and avoiding the Trans-Siberian route across Russia. Through trains would still have to either transit southern Russia, or alternatively Iran and then Turkey, leading to another change of gauge on the route to Europe.

Maglev is delayed

THE 286km long Japanese 'Chuo Shinkansen' 500km/h maglev line being built between Tokyo and Nagoya will open at least five years later than the original planned date of 2027. Construction work has been delayed, and the rail company building it, JR Central, now says operation is unlikely before 2034. A planned extension from Nagoya to Osaka will also be delayed, although no dates have been announced; this was due to open in 2037.

'Chargers' are taking over

New Siemens-built locos are replacing vintage 1990s 'Genesis' design.

AMERICAN national passenger rail company Amtrak has now replaced most of its 1990s vintage General Electric (GE) built 'Genesis' P42 diesel locos used for the major long-distance trains across the USA with new Siemens-built type ALC-42 'Charger' locos.

The GE P42 locos remain in widespread use hauling regional services south of Washington DC, but this will change in the next year or two. Two smaller classes of 'Genesis' loco will also eventually be replaced by the new locos.

Amtrak ordered 75 ALC-42 locomotives in 2018, and subsequently in June 2022 increased the number on order to 125. The ALC-42 loco has a Cummins QSK95 4200HP (3100kW) engine and is capable of 125mph/200km/h operation. An 8300-litre diesel fuel tank is fitted to each loco to give them extended range as refuelling is normally only possible at scheduled pre-planned stops on each route.

The first loco was constructed at the Siemens factory in Sacramento, California, in 2020 and delivered for testing in 2021. The first passenger train hauled by ALC-42 locos was on February 8, 2022, working the Chicago-Seattle 'Empire Builder'.

By the end of 2022, about 20 were in traffic, and by March 2024 more than 50 were in service or undergoing commissioning, leading to many long-distance trains previously hauled by a pair of P42 locos now being a pair of ALC-42s instead. Mixed pairings of P42 plus ALC-42 are possible and will remain fairly common this year until more 'Chargers' are available.



A pair of ALC-42 'Charger' locos, Nos. 323 and 317, leave Orlando on March 15 with one of the two long-distance trains which serve the city, train 98 'The Silver Meteor' from Miami to New York Penn. KEITH FENDER

Dual mode variants

In addition to the diesel ALC-42, Amtrak has ordered 75 dual mode versions, designated ALC-42E and designed to work with new Siemens-built push-pull trains working regional services from or through New York, where diesel loco operation is banned.

The new ALC-42E locos will only work as bi-modes when coupled to the new vehicles.

Two types of special vehicle are planned: one is equipped with a pantograph and traction motors, enabling the diesel loco to become an electric, using its traction motors but not the diesel engine, when under overhead catenary (between Boston and Washington DC), replacing the need for electric locos.



The first batch of 'Genesis' locos were the slightly lower-powered P40 version built from 1993. A total of 44 locos were built and by 2009 all had been stored, sold, or scrapped after accidents. From 2009, 15 were overhauled for Amtrak and can still be found working in place of P42 locos occasionally. The 'Auto Train' service that operates daily from Lorton, Virginia, overnight to Sanford, Florida, often loading to 20-plus vehicles as it includes car-carrying wagons, is still routinely P40-hauled, sometimes by a pair. On March 15, the southbound service, train 53, is seen a few miles north of Sanford passing DeBary, Florida, with P40 No. 832 leading P42 No. 179. KEITH FENDER

The other bi-mode variant, for trains working up the Hudson Valley route from New York, is a battery car to be connected to the loco – again converting it to an electric loco – but removing the need to use the third rail suburban electrification which is what currently happens. When the ALC-42E fleet and the battery cars are in service, the specialist batch of dual mode P32AC-DM 'Genesis' locos equipped with third rail shoe gear will no longer be required.

Financial troubles impact on Argentina's passenger train operations

PASSENGER services have been suspended or reduced on some long-distance routes in Argentina as rail companies struggle with historic debt and as the country's economy continues to struggle with inflation running at more than 250% a year.

In the south of the country, Tren Patagónico (Patagonian Trains), which is owned by the Río Negro provincial government, suspended its services in January due to a lack of funds for track repairs.

Despite the operator's website saying no trains were running, it was reported locally that services using an ex-Spanish DMU had resumed between Bariloche and Ingeniero Jacobacci in early April. Long-distance passenger (Bariloche-Viedma) plus freight traffic on the route remains suspended.

Another long-distance service – only reintroduced by national rail company Trenes Argentinos in 2023 (see World Track Record, August 2023) – was cut back by 374km in early April when the last through service from Palmira (near Mendoza) to Buenos Aires ran.

In future, the weekly service will only operate to Justo Daract, 654 km from Buenos Aires.



Tren Patagónico 1959-built Alco RSD16 loco No. B819 in the company's latest livery at Viedma depot on November 13, 2023. This loco was used for commuter passenger services on the San Martín line in Buenos Aires until replaced by new Chinese-built locos about a decade ago; Tren Patagónico mainly uses it for freight. IAIN SCOTCHMAN



RAILTOUR DUTY: A pair of N Class locos used by Victoria passenger rail operator V/Line worked a special train organised by Victoria-based 707 Operations. The 'Riverlander' train, marketed as one of the operator's 'slow railway journeys', took passengers from Melbourne to Swan Hill, and from there via the freight-only line to Piangil on the Murray River. The train is seen with locos Nos. N468+N462 at Lake Boga Silo level Crossing on March 10 with the return train to Melbourne. V/Line is expected to cease use of N Class locos later this year, replaced by new DMUs. SIMON BROWN

Locos acquired for new Spanish railway

EIGHTEEN new triple-voltage locos have been acquired by two rival operators to operate on a recently-opened railway in northern Spain.

Spanish state-owned freight operator Renfe Mercancías, which is in the process of being part-privatised via a new joint venture with the world's biggest shipping line, MSC, has introduced 12 new multi-voltage locos built by Stadler, in Valencia.

The 6000kW machines designated Class 256 are triple voltage 1.5kV DC/3kV DC/25kV AC Iberian gauge (1668mm) electric locos and are Stadler's 'Euro6000' model. Competing rail freight operator Captrain (owned by French Railways, SNCF) has also obtained six similar 'Euro6000' locos via Alpha Trains.

The Class 256 locomotives are required following the opening of the new 24.648km-long Pajares Base tunnel in northern Spain late last year as this is electrified at 25kV AC, unlike the Spanish classic network which uses 3kV DC.

The new tunnel and dual gauge line are equipped with ERTMS Level 2 signalling, which the new locos are delivered equipped with.

The new line via the Pajares Base tunnel, now Europe's seventh longest, opened on November 29, 2023, after more than two decades of construction, linking the northern province of Asturias to the existing high speed network at León.

The route, which also has 10 more tunnels and 10 viaducts, passes under the Cantabrian Mountain range, shortening the distance by rail from Oviedo to León by 37km, avoiding the steeply-graded and circuitous line over the Pajares Pass. Journey times for both passenger and freight trains have been reduced by more than an hour by the new route, although only trains equipped for 25kV AC can use the line. Passenger trains can operate part of the route on standard gauge before switching to broad gauge for the journey north via a gauge changer north of the base tunnel. The old line via the mountain route remains open for now for freight and a daily regional passenger train – although this line may close in the future.



New RENFE electric loco No. 256 108 is seen with empty car-carriers in Venta de Baños yard on November 20, 2023. IAIN SCOTCHMAN



New bi-mode set No. SFB503 at Curicó on January 30, having arrived from Santiago. MIIKA NICHOLSON

Fastest trains in South America enter scheduled passenger service in Chile

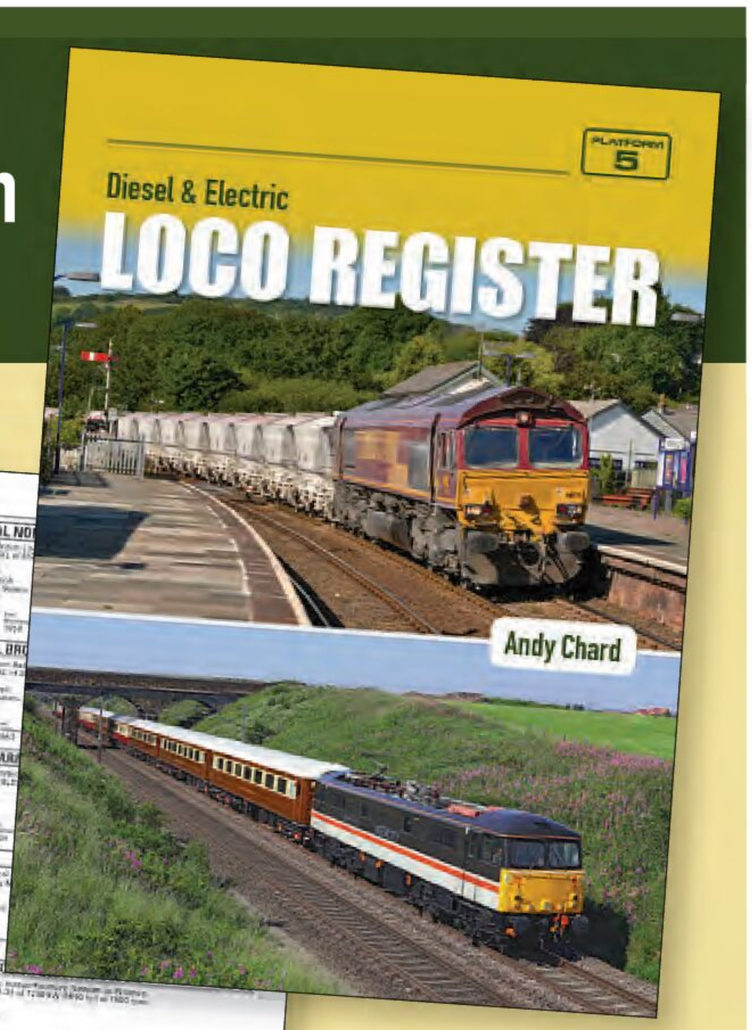
CHILEAN national rail company EFE introduced six new four-car bi-mode (3kV DC electric/diesel) multiple units, built in China by CRRC Sifang, in January 2024. The 1676mm gauge trains have entered service with regional operating subsidiary EFE Central on the 188km Santiago-Curicó route; these services will be extended south to Talca and further to Chillán (397km from Santiago) during 2024. EFE said these are the first 160km/h trains in Chile and are also the fastest anywhere in South America, although it is unclear how much of the line has been upgraded for 160km/h operation.

EFE also has a large number of new EMUs on order from CRRC, with 32 three-car trains ordered for $171 million in 2023 for delivery from 2025.

The new trains will allow expansion of the commuter rail network to include the Santiago to Melipilla section of the line to the coastal city of Cartagena.

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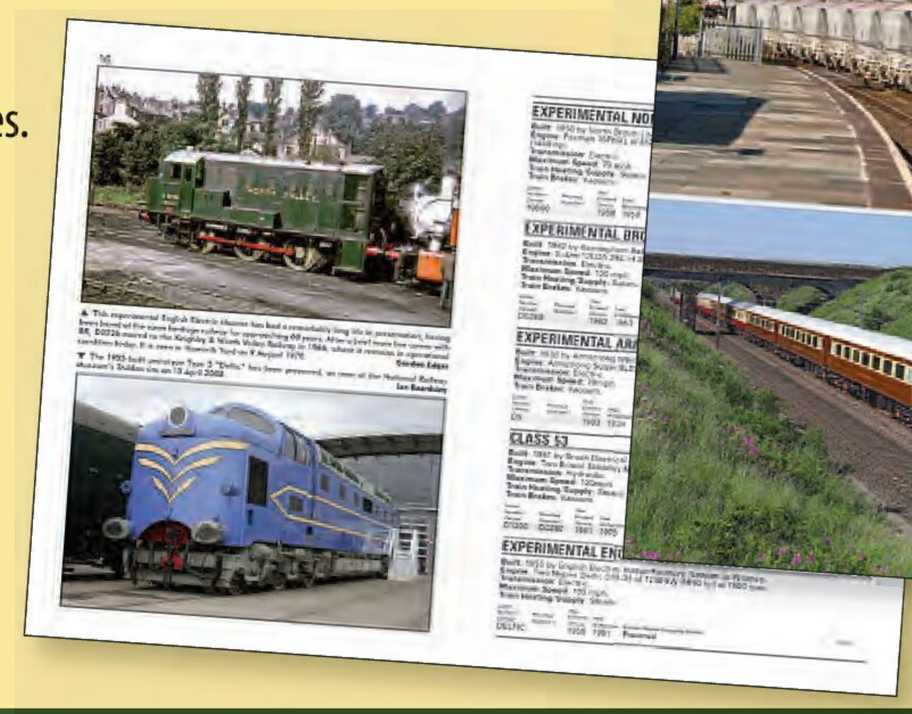
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Railways of Cornwall A decade of change

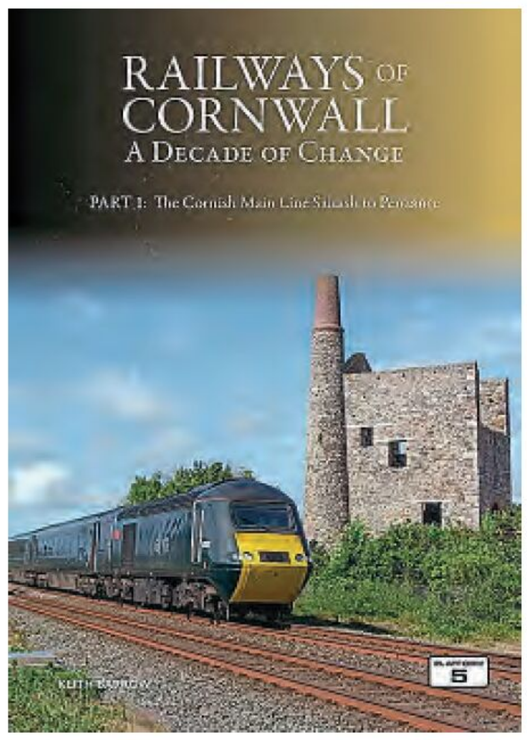
By Keith Barrow

THERE is something so appealing about the railways west of Plymouth, with the main line cutting through some stunning scenery, and four of the five branch lines heading off to coastal towns and resorts. Even though the manual signalling has now largely been replaced (see the March 2024 issue for more on the latest round of signalling upgrades in Mid-Cornwall), and the 'Night Riviera' is the last remaining loco-hauled service, there is still much to enjoy in the far South West.

In this book the author, himself a railway journalist and photographer, records the changes over the decade from 2013 on the main line between Saltash and Penzance (the branch lines will be covered in a subsequent Part 2 book). The decade has seen huge investment and renewal, with HSTs replaced by Hitachi-built IETs, and the infrastructure upgraded to allow more frequent services.

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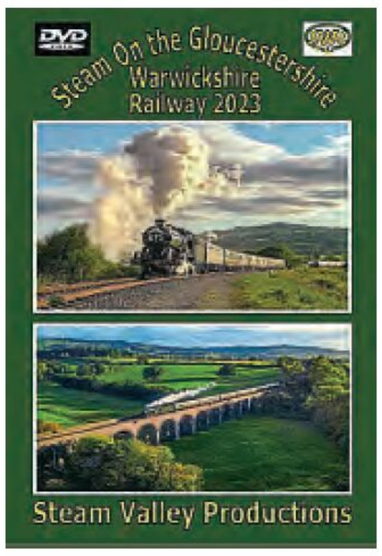
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Steam on the Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway 2023

DVD/Blu-Ray

FOLLOWING on from its compilation of action on the Severn Valley Railway, the producers have now turned their attention to the Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway with similar impact.

Joining the GWSR's photographers group to gain lineside access, this video covers the line's entire 2023 season, from the spring visit of BR Standard '4MT' No. 75014 *Braveheart* to the mince pie specials in December. GWR 4-6-0 No. 4079 *Pendennis Castle* is seen visiting the line for the first time, while 2-8-0 Churchward heavy freight No. 2807 – the oldest surviving working GWR-built locomotive – is seen returning to traffic. There is also a special feature on GWR 2-8-0T No. 4270 from the end of 2002 to the start of the new season, filmed before its 10-yearly boiler certificate expired.



Other visitors featured are a BR Standard '2MT' 2-6-0 from the Great Central Railway, 'U' Class 2-6-0 No. 31806 from the Swanage Railway, and Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway 'Pug' 0-4-0ST No. 11243 from the East Lancashire Railway. Also in action from the home fleet are WR 4-6-0s Nos. 7903 *Foremarke Hall* and 7820 *Dinmore Manor*, plus Bulleid 'Merchant Navy' Pacific No. 35006 *Peninsular & Oriental S N Co.* Nos. 4270, 35006, 75014 and 75014 can also be seen hauling demonstration freights.

If you need to be convinced to visit (or revisit) this superb heritage line, then this video shows what you have been missing.

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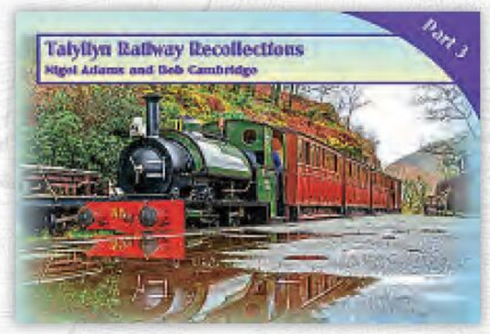
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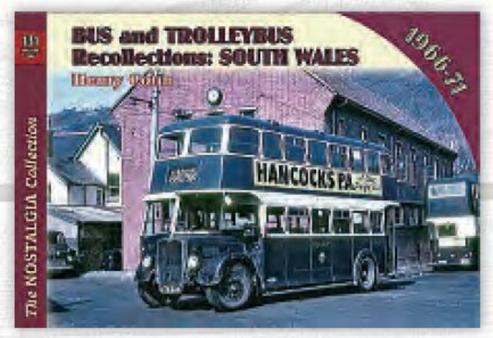
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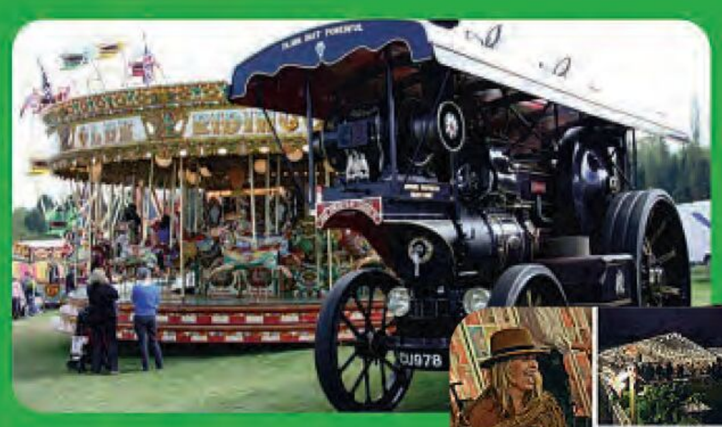
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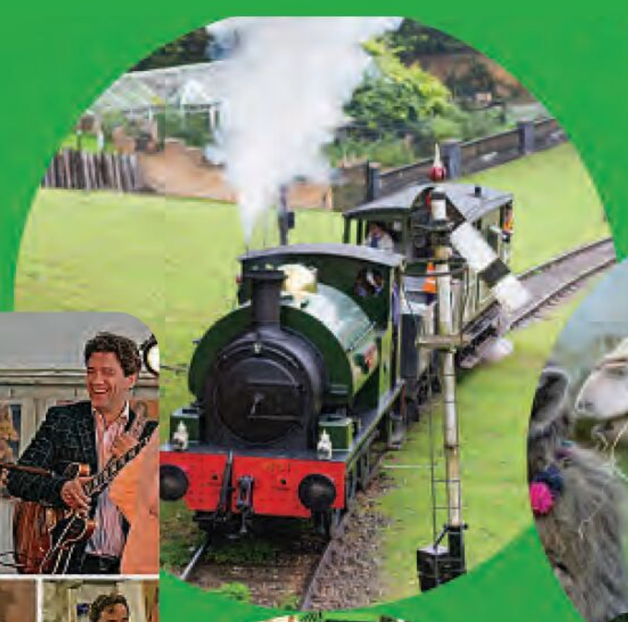
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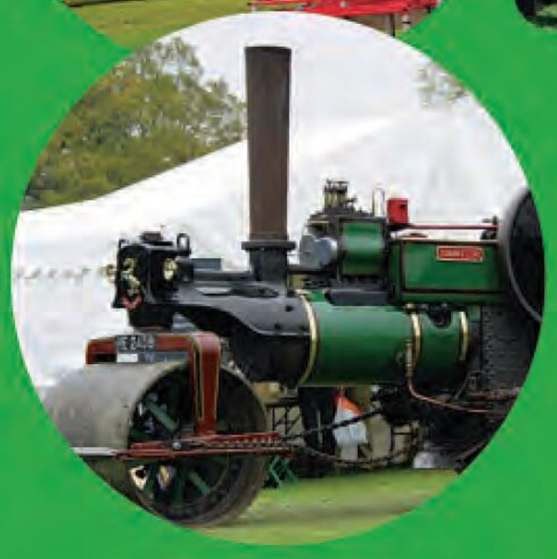












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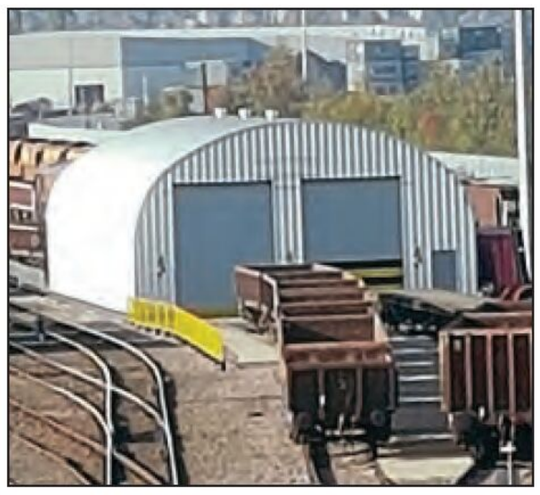
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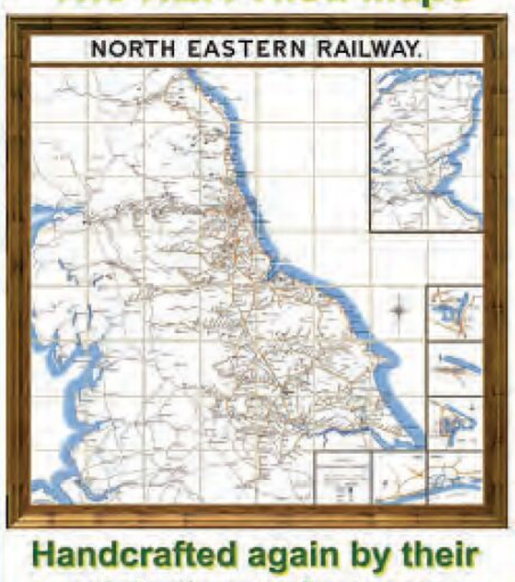


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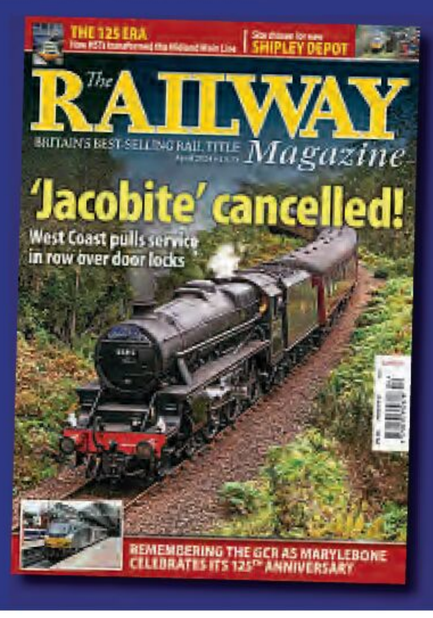
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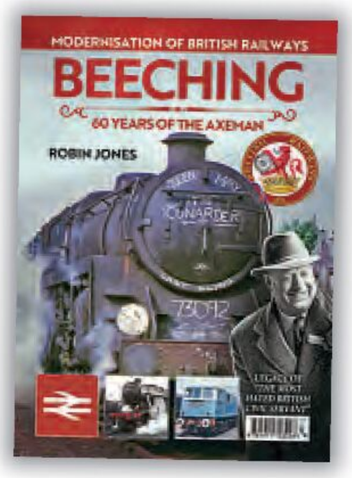
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Across

1 Surname of the author of 'The Signalman', one of his 'Mugby Junction' stories (7)
5 ___ *Mill*, No. 86526, named after a BBC Birmingham studio in 1991 (6)
9 Preserved 'Jubilee' No. 5690 (7)
10 and 11 Former Cromford & High Peak station, junction of the present-day High Peak and Tissington trails (7,3)
12 Gem of a Pullman Parlour Car? (5)
13 'Jubilee' No. 45639 (7)
14 'B1' 'Antelope' No. 61018 (3)
15 ___ & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad, Colorado, USA (7)
17 '___ Bogies', nickname of David Jones 4-4-0s for the Highland Railway (4)
21 ___ *Line*, 'Merchant Navy' No. 35027 (4)
24 ___ Railway, heritage line with a station at Corfe Castle (7)
27 Union formed from the amalgamation of the NUR and NUS (1,1,1)
28 *Knight of* ___, 'A3' No. 60065 (7)
29 Sir Josiah ___, LMS President (5)
30 ___ Railway, Welsh mineral line from Caersws (3)
31 New-build 'A1' No. 60163… (7)
32 …and new-build BR 'Clan' No. 72010 (7)
33 Type of tank loco with the tank straddling the boiler (6)
34 ___ *Castle*, GWR No. 7004 (7)

Down

1 ___ Moor, Channel Tunnel freight terminal near Folkestone (8)
2 L&YR station between Blackburn and Hellifield (8)
3 and 20 down ___ *Lines*, 'Merchant Navy' No. 35030 (5,8)
4 'A3s' Nos. 60083… (3,4)
5 …and 60096 (7)
6 Lancashire town with Central and Manchester Road stations (7)
7 ___ Bridge, London Underground traction maintenance depot near Earl's Court (6)
8 Romney, ___ & Dymchurch Railway (5)
16 Initials on the tender of preserved 4-2-2 No. 1 (1,1,1)
18 St ___ Highway, LSWR Cornwall station… (3)
19 …and GWR Cornish station, the last before Penzance (8)
20 See 3 down
22 *Loch Eil* ___ *Bound*, Class 37 No. 37027 (7)
23 'West Country' No. 34096 (7)
24 GER station between Heacham and Wells (7)
25 Danske Statsbaner, Danish ___ Railways (5)
26 ___ *Leone*, 'Jubilee' No. 45627 (6)
29 Woburn ___, station on the Bedford-Bletchley line (5)

May crossword entry form

Name .....

Address .....

.....

Postcode .....

Tel Email .....

Send completed form (photocopies are accepted) to: May 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 July 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 March issue

Across: 1 Wootton 5 Bassett 9 Askrigg 10 Lea 11 Pen 12 Lord of the 14 Crewe 15 Nigel 17 Ardrossan 19 Wagons-lit 21 Seven 24 Isles 25 Sun Stream 27 Tie 28 GCR 29 Tranent 31 Non-stop 32 Rushden

Down: 1 W. P. Allen 2 Oak 3 Trigo 4 Night Mail 5 Belle 6 Starcross 7 Express 8 Tintern 13 Rug 16 Longsight 18 Detonator 19 Whitton 20 Gilwern 22 Vue 23 Nympton 25 Scrap 26 Trams 30 End

March winner: Pete Colston, Sutton Coalfield

Runners-up: Katherine Frost, Northampton; and Suzanne Frost, Fishponds

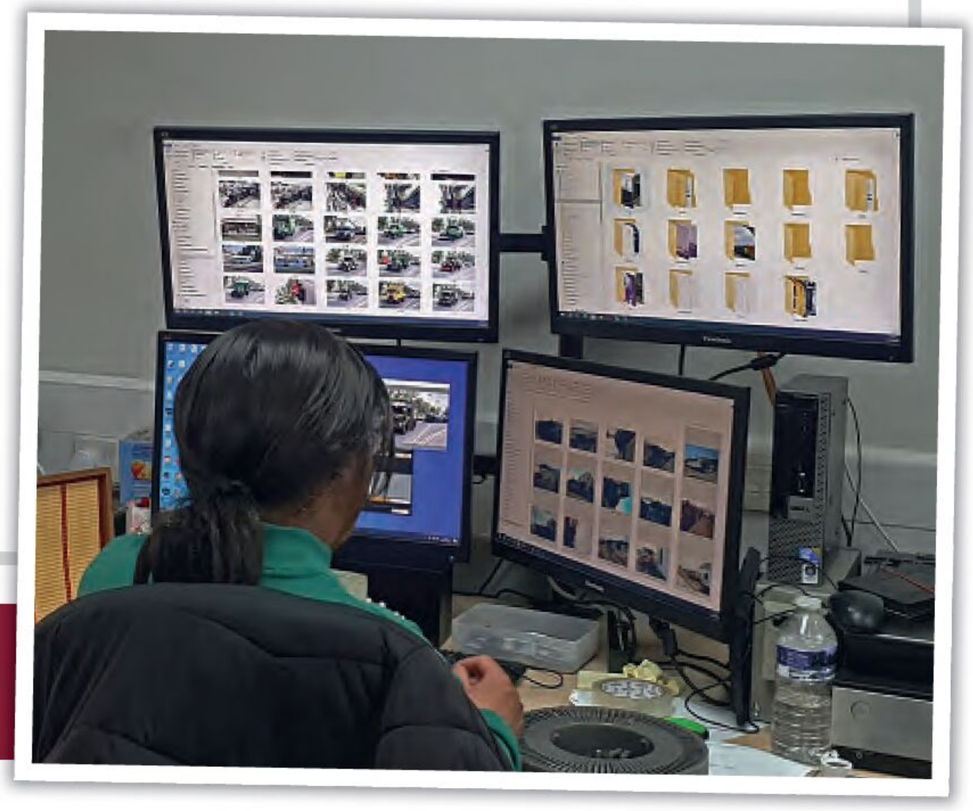
The closing date for this month's crossword is Friday, June 7, 2024.

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...

THE digital age makes it far simpler to take pictures than in the days of film, but one major consideration for both the film and digital eras is how best to preserve and pass on photographic collections for the enjoyment of future generations.

We visit specialist photo library The Transport Treasury to find out more about this important process.



To pre-order the June issue, scan this code on your phone or visit classicmagazines.co.uk/issue/rm

See the very best of Britain aboard a special excursion train!



From romantic First Class getaways to great value family seaside days out, and from rare and scenic routes to visiting some of the UK's finest attractions, there are UK Railtours for everyone!

Upcoming Availability

THE BLYTH AND TYNE AND BEAMISH MUSEUM
Saturday 8th June
We have availability in all three classes on this tour.

THE ANCIENT KINGDOM
Saturday 15th June
Fully Booked, waiting list open

THE JOLLY FISHERMAN
Saturday 22nd June
First Class is fully booked, but there are seats available in Standard Class.

THE DEAN FOREST RAILWAY
Saturday 27th July
Fully Booked, waiting list open

THE WATERSIDE WANDERER
Sunday 28th July
Fully Booked, waiting list open

BY ROUTEMASTER TO THE LOST VILLAGE OF IMBER
Saturday 17th August
First Class is fully booked on our return to ImberBus.
We have a few Standard Class seats left.

Dates For Your Diary **Not On Sale Yet!**

SATURDAY 6TH JULY – EAST SOMERSET RAILWAY
An Off The Beaten Track excursion to this popular heritage railway, featuring special traction!

SUNDAY 14TH JULY – 'THE NORTH WEST FREIGHTER'
We need plenty of time in the North West of England to explore our chosen freight lines which we expect to include the Folly Lane branch (Runcorn) and a visit to Preston Docks to access the Ribble Railway where passengers can enjoy a train ride and visit the locomotive sheds including areas not usually open to the public. Traction will be provided by GBRf.

SATURDAY 10TH AUGUST – NEWPORT
An understated destination, but we think you will be as excited as we are about our visit to a never before visited non passenger location. Originating in the London area our traction is expected to be 2 x GBRf class 66 locomotives.

SUNDAY 1ST SEPTEMBER – WHITBY
We plan to head to North Yorkshire for a seaside visit, with power from heritage locos which UK Railtours have not used for many years

SATURDAY 7TH SEPTEMBER – ROMNEY HYTHE AND DYMCHURCH RAILWAY, DOVER, MARGATE, WHITSTABLE AND FAVERSHAM
A Great Day Out with something for everyone!

SATURDAY 14TH SEPTEMBER – SCOTTISH BORDERS
Fans of rare track won't want to miss this one!

SATURDAY 21ST SEPTEMBER – BLUEBELL RAILWAY
Following our very popular visit last year to the Bluebell Railway's beer festival, we once again visit this renowned preserved railway in Sussex for their Autumn beer festival. Traction will be provided by GBRf.

SATURDAY 28TH SEPTEMBER – LLANDUDNO AND CHESTER
Our tour takes an interesting route from London to Chester and Llandudno Junction where we plan to access the Glan Conwy freight sidings.

SATURDAY 26TH OCTOBER – FELIXSTOWE
An Off The Beaten Track Excursion to East Anglia featuring heritage traction

SATURDAY 14TH DECEMBER – CAROLS AT NORWICH CATHEDRAL
This year our festive celebrations take us to a new venue for our annual carol concert

SATURDAY 28TH DECEMBER – YET ANOTHER AWKWARD WEEK ADVENTURE
Some rare track to get you through the week between Christmas and New Year.

AUGUST 2025 – THE RETURN OF OUR FAMOUS SCOTTISH LANDCRUISE! MORE NEWS SOON!

UK RAILTOURS

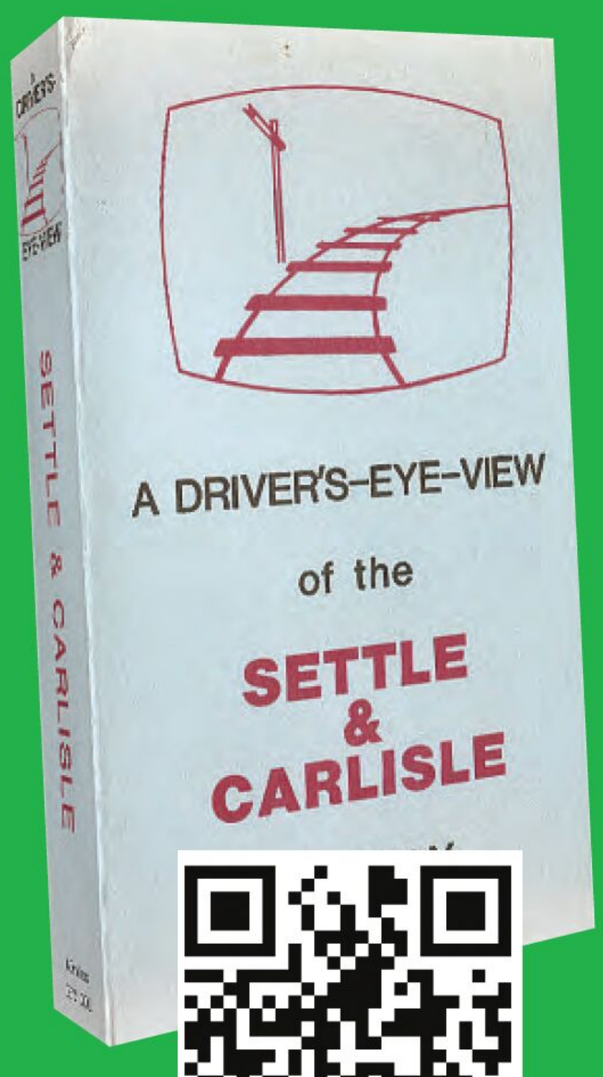
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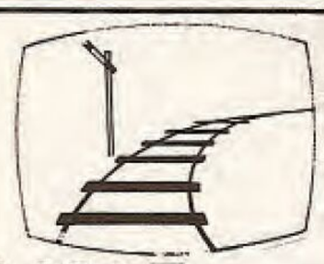
The very original Driver's eye view sold for £19.55 equivalent to an unbelievable £79 today!

Our first advert appeared in the July 1984 Railway Magazine (right). Available on VHS and BETAMAX! Remember them?

Numbered DEV 001 it was filmed in April of that year. The invention of the videocassette enabled specialist content to be viewed in people's homes for the very first time and TV cameraman and railway enthusiast Peter Middleton had the idea of placing a camera in the driver's cab. He coined the phrase 'Driver's eye view', words that have been used to describe myriads of simpler 'cab rides' ever since.

By comparison to Video125's Driver's eye views today, the original S&C was chalk and cheese. The trees were bare, the picture quality was poor, there were few runbys, no cab-interior shots, no aerial views, and not even a professional narrator, yet it filled a gap in the market and sold thousands….

A DRIVER'S-EYE-VIEW ON VIDEO OF THE SETTLE & CARLISLE LINE



Continuous views from the cab of 'The Long Drag'—the notorious 15 mile 1 in 100 climb from Settle Junction to Blea Moor.

See the picturesque Ribble Valley and the famous Ribblehead Viaduct. Travel right over the summit at Ais Gill and beyond to Appleby—all from the driver's cab! Plus continuous running over the Long Meg-Armathwaite section running through tree-lined Lazonby!

This video cassette—specially produced by Video 125 in association with the Railway Development Society—runs a full 60 colourful minutes complete with original cab sound and commentary.

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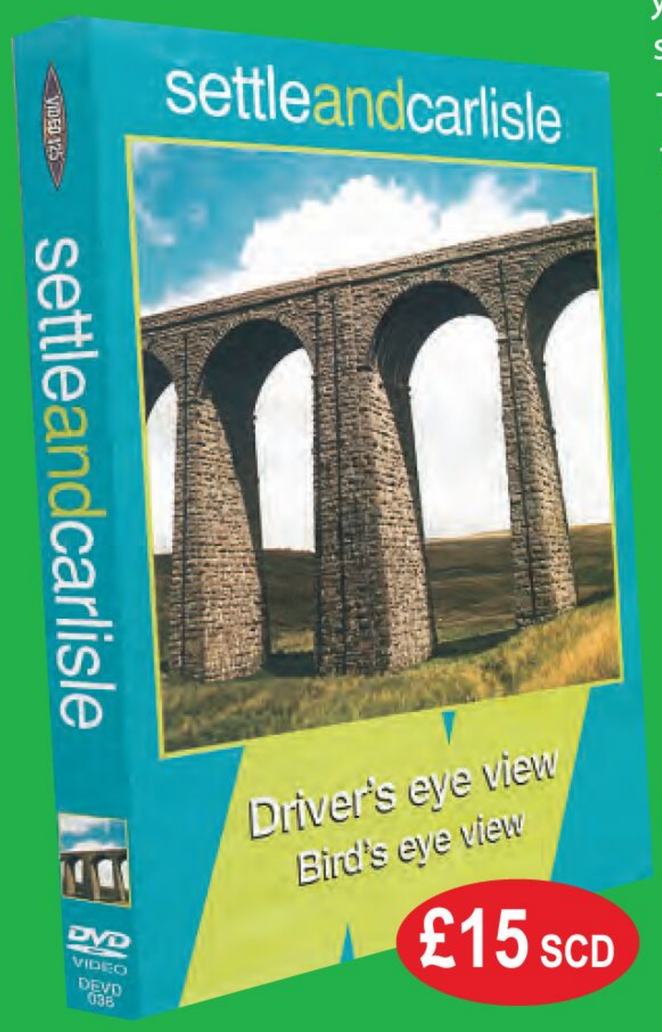
Orginal 1984 Settle and Carlisle is NOT for sale



Double track Ribblehead



Blea Moor Signal Box



Today, our infinitely better *Driver's eye view of the Settle and Carlisle* (filmed in 2002) features all of the above plus sunshine and green trees but costs just £15, a far cry from £79!

Celebrating 40 years of publishing, we've come a long way, with over a hundred video productions to date, available as digital downloads, DVDs and Blu-ray discs (all factory replicated and not burnt).

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