

Railtalk Magazine

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Submissions & Contributions

Railtalk Magazine, a magazine written by the Enthusiast for the Enthusiast. So why not join the team. We are always looking for talented photographers and writers to join us at Railtalk. Be it though pictorial submissions or via a written article featuring an event or railtour, we greatly appreciate any contributions to the magazine however big or small.

Photographic Contributions

All Photographic contributions should to be sent to us via email, post or via the members section page on our website. Contact addresses are provided above.

All images should be provided at a resolution of at least 2400px x 1700px at 240dpi.



Welcome to Issue 222

Once again the DfT has announced some more thoughts on the future of Britains railways and in particular, GBR.....

The future 'directing mind' Great British Railways has been described in more detail than before as part of a consultation launched by the Department for Transport. Key points include that 'passengers will travel on GBR trains, running on GBR tracks, and arrive at GBR stations – all run by the expert leadership of a single organisation in line with a clear strategic direction set by the Secretary of State'. Some existing railway industry organisations will no longer be needed, or have new duties.

GBR will decide track access charges for the remaining third-party operators, and it will be possible for them to appeal to the Office of Rail and Road. GBR will also work 'in close partnership' with the private sector, while the Department for Transport will 'step back from day-to-day involvement in the railway'.

The Office of Rail and Road will concentrate on safety and efficiency. The ORR will no longer approve access or direct the sale of access rights for the GBR railway and will not set standard access terms for GBR.

Third party operators will have 'fair access' to the network, and GBR will have a statutory duty to promote rail freight. Third party ticket retailing will continue, but the industry functions currently managed by the Rail Delivery Group, including retailing, will be taken over by GBR as part of its 'simplified sector structure'.

There will be the promised 'new voice for passengers' in the shape of a new passenger watchdog which will able to hold both GBR and non-GBR operators to account. This body would moderate unresolved passenger complaints and resolve disputes, which at the moment is the responsibility of the Rail Ombudsman. The Ombudsman could cease to do this, or alternatively it could be sponsored by the new watchdog instead of the ORR. The DfT also says there is 'potential for the new watchdog to be built from the existing passenger watchdog Transport Focus'.

The proposed new funding process will 'take the best of e current periodic review and control period system', and core settlements will still last for five years. The ORR will continue to monitor business plans and the practicality of settlements. The system of train driver training will be modernised, with 'outdated criteria' being modernised 'to reflect new innovations, technology and scientific developments'.

Meanwhile, open access operator First Group has published two more documents claiming that open access passenger services are value for money and boost economic growth...

First, along with Virgin, is facing a setback to its plans to launch new services after the government sent two letters sounding discouraging notes, although it is still Department for Transport policy to allow open access services where they provide 'improved connectivity and choice for passengers'. The first letter was from transport secretary Heidi Alexander, who wrote to the Office of Rail and Road on January 6th this year voicing some reservations about the recent boom in open access applications, saying: 'There is a balance to be struck to ensure the benefits provided by open access operators outweigh the impacts they have on taxpayers and the ability to operate the network efficiently. We need to be mindful of the impacts of open access such as the level of revenue they can abstract from contracted services and the associated implications for passengers.'

She said her letter did not amount to any change to her formal guidance, but that changes to that guidance were being 'considered'.

Once again, thanks for all the photos sent in this month, we really appreciate the time taken to send them to us. Until next month, stay safe.

Andy

This Page

Class 47 802, 33 207 and 33 029 head through Swindon on February 17th working 5Z77 Bristol Kingsland Road to Southall WCR Depot. These locos were working an empty stock train to Southall that formed a charter train the following day using all 3 locos. *Colin Pidgeon*

Front Cover

On February 12th, Class 37 402 is sat on the rear of 3Q52 21:29 Exeter Riverside - Penzance with 37 425 on the front in Penzance with two GWR Castle sets side by side under the station canopy. *Barry Beeston*



West Coast's Class 57 010 piloting 57 009 with 47 812 at the rear, pass Winwick working 5Z57 Burton Wetmore Sidings to Carnforth Steamtown on February 23rd. *Brian Dobbs*

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With Thanks

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These issues wouldn't be possible without contributions from:
Michael J Alderdice, John Alsop, Steve Andrews, Ray Anslow, Mark Armstrong, John Balaam, Brian Battersby, Steven Beesley, Barry Beeston, Mark Bennett, Michael Bennett, Tom Blanpain, Ben Bucki, Ian Callander, Keith Chapman, Steve Chapman, Julian Churchill, Russell Clarke, Nick Clemson, Keith Davies, Brian Dobbs, Derek Elston, Eddie Emmott, Mark Enderby, Colin Gildersleve, Vernon Goodey, John Goodrich, Greig Gibson, Carl Grocott, Richard Hargreaves, Dave Harris, James Haywood, Brian Hewertson, Paul Hewertson, Stuart Hillis, David Hollowood, Colin Irwin, John Johnson, Richard Jones, Anton Kendall, Colin Kennington, Ken Livermore, Mathijs Kok, David Lindsell, Barry Longson, Michael Lynam, Kevin McCormick, Phil Martin, David Mead, Chris Morrison, Ken Mumford, Alan Naylor, Gerald Nicholl, Jeff Nicholls, Chris Perkins, Mark Pichowicz, Colin Pidgeon, Neil Pugh, Andy Pratt, Andre Pronk, Alan Rigby, Charlie Robbins, Bryan Roberts, Barry Robinson, Dennis Rowland, Tim Saunders, Neil Scarlett, Paul Senior, Alan Sinclair, John Sloane, Laurence Sly, Lee Stanford, Steve Stepney, Steven Thompson, Mark Torkington, Brian Turner, Allison Twycross, Gerard van Vliet, David Wood, Leuan Wood, Shep Woolley, Erik de Zeeuw and the guys at RailUK.

Charter Scene S.R.P.S. Railtours

The Capital Highlander

Class 37 409 tucked in behind 37 403 stands at Inverness working 1Z37 06:58 Carlisle to Inverness on February 8th which had to detour via Springburn, Falkirk High, Dalmeny Chord, Forth Bridge, Ladybank to Perth after a DRS freight train failed and blocked the original route. *Kevin McCormick*

Charter Scene S.R.P.S. Railtours

The Capital Highlander

Class 37 409 leads 37 403 at Aviemore on 1Z39 16:42 Inverness to Carlisle on February 8th.
Kevin McCormick



Charter Scene UK Railtours

The Shakespearian Sonnet

On February 22nd, Class 20 205 and 20 007 with 20 142 on the rear head through Shirley working 1Z60 Long Marston to Stratford upon Avon. *Richard Hargreaves*



Charter Scene Railway Touring Company

The Settle and Carlisle Spring Express

On March 1st, SR BoB Class No. 34067 'Tangmere' heads 'The Settle and Carlisle Spring Express' through Firbank towards Beckfoot and onwards to Carlisle. *Shep Woolley*



Charter Scene Railway Touring Company

The Settle and Carlisle Spring Express

On March 1st, SR BoB Class No. 34067 'Tangmere' drifts over Ribblehead Viaduct with the return leg of 'The Settle and Carlisle Spring Express' to Preston and Newport, South Wales.
Shep Woolley

Charter Scene Pathfinder Railtours

The Settle & Carlisle Spring Express

SR BoB Class No. 34067 ‘Tangmere’ bursts through Cherry Tree with a return charter to Newport on March 1st. Class 57 314 was on the rear. *John Sloane*



Charter Scene Railway Touring Company

The Mancunian

On March 1st, Black 5 No. 45212 steams past Plumley hauling 'The Mancunian' 1Z67 Manchester Victoria - Holyhead. *Mark Enderby*



Charter Scene Railway Touring Company

The Mancunian

Its been quite a few years since steam worked along the mid-Cheshire line so the sight of Black 5 No. 45212 crossing the Trent and Mersey Canal on the outskirts of Northwich on March 1st was most welcome. Unfortunately, the Holyhead bound 'Mancunian', was running late and caused considerable delay to the following service when it stopped at Mouldsworth for water. *Jeff Nicholls*



Charter Scene Railway Touring Company

The Mancunian

On March 1st, Black 5 No. 45212 gets the 09:32 Manchester Victoria to Holyhead 'Mancunian' underway following its Stockport pickup and is seen shortly after passing Edgeley No. 1 signalbox. *Lee Stanford*



Charter Scene Railway Touring Company

The Mancunian

On March 1st, LMS No. 45212 worked an RTC excursion from Manchester to Holyhead. Seen here crossing the Weaver Navigation at Northwich over the former CLC route from Manchester to Chester. Steam has not been over this route for very many years, so a rare occurrence. Yarwoods boatyard, that still maintains heritage vessels is under the bridge.
Brian Dobbs

Charter Scene Railway Touring Company

The Winter Cumbrian Mountain Express

On February 1st, SR BoB Class No. 34067 ‘Tangmere’ heads the first ‘Winter Cumbrian Mountain Express’ of 2025 through a chilly Greenholme towards Shap heading to Carlisle.
Shep Woolley



Railway Touring Company

The Winter Cumbrian Mountain Express

On February 1st, with Wild Boar Fell forming the backdrop, SR BoB Class No. 34067 ‘Tangmere’ tops Aisgill summit with the return leg of ‘The Winter Cumbrian Mountain Express’ back to Preston. *Shep Woolley*



Charter Scene Midland Pullman

Winter West Highland Pullman

Power car No. 43058 ‘Loch Eil’ with 43047 on the tail arrives at Crewe with 1Z43, the 06:40 Watford Junction to Fort William on February 21st. *Derek Elston*

Charter Scene Midland Pullman

Winter West Highland Pullman

Power car No. 43058 ‘Loch Eil’ with 43047 on the tail pass Euxton with a Watford to Fort William charter on February 21st. *John Sloane*



Charter Scene Pathfinder Railtours

The Verney Venturer

West Coast Railways Class 33 207, 33 029 and 47 802 pass a wet Princes Risborough with Pathfinders' 'Verney Venturer' railtour on February 15th. *Chris Morrison*



UK Railtours

The Chopper Quartet

Better late than never, as RA power cars Nos. 43468 and 43480 arriving at Crewe 48mins late with 1Z55 08:38 Preston to Kidderminster S.V.R. on February 21st. *Derek Elston*

Rail Adventure power cars 43468 and 43480 stand at a wet Bewdley after arrival with 1Z55 08:38 Preston to Kidderminster S.V.R. on February 21st. *Derek Elston*

Class 20 048 and 20 142 ‘Sir John Betjeman’ whistle the time away until their 13:15 departure to Kidderminster with what will form 1Z57 13:54 Kidderminster S.V.R. to Watford Junction on February 21st. *Derek Elston*







Charter Scene UK Railtours

The Chopper Quartet

Rail Adventure power cars Nos. 43468 and 43480 speed into Euxton with a Preston to Kidderminster charter on February 21st.
John Sloane



Charter Scene

ECS and Light Engine Moves

Not a matching pair this time for LSL as Class 20 No. D8107 leads sister 20 118 through Reddish South on February 25th operating the 07:44 Crewe to Whitby route refresher. *Lee Stanford*

Rail Adventure power cars Nos. 43480 and 43468 lead Class 20 007 and 20 205 with 5Z60 Wembley to Carnforth ECS through Moore on February 23rd. *Mark Enderby*

On February 6th, Class 33 207 and 33 029 pass Moore with a Southall - Carnforth ECS. *Mark Enderby*







Charter Scene

ECS and Light Engine Moves

Class 47 802, 33 029 and 33 207 head an empty stock working from Carnforth to Bristol Kingsland Road past Bradley on February 14th. *John Sloane*



Class 67 005 'Queens Messenger' and 66 119 top'n'tail Royal Coach No. 2920 seen on the approach to Northampton running as 5Z81, the 05:53 Toton T.M.D. to Wolverton Centre Sidings on February 18th. *Derek Elston*



Class 47 802 speeds through Euxton with a Southall to Carnforth empty stock movement on February 19th. *John Sloane*



Charter Scene

ECS and Light Engine Moves

Steaming freely, Stanier Black 5 No. 45212 cruises through the Northamptonshire countryside at Church Brampton running as 5Z42, the 11:15 Carnforth Steamtown to Southall WCR on February 6th. *Derek Elston*

Class 20 205, 20 007 and 20 142 'Sir John Betjeman' await departure from Watford Junction as ECS working 5Z57 17:28 Watford Junction to Wembley Receptions 1-7 on February 21st. *Derek Elston*

Class 47 No. D1935 'Roger Hoskins MA 1925-2013' eases up to a red at Leamington Spa working ECS move 5Z55, the 09:48 Eastleigh Arlington (Zg) to Crewe H.S. on February 7th. *Derek Elston*





Charter Scene ECS and Light Engine Moves

A pair of West Coast 33's were employed on the 10:19 Southall to Carnforth ECS working on February 6th and in lovely sunny conditions Class 33 207 and sister 33 029 are seen approaching Winwick Jct. *Lee Stanford*

Charter Scene ECS and Light Engine Moves

LNER A2 No. 60532 ‘Blue Peter’ passes Bradley on the return test run from Preston to Crewe on March 6th. Inset: Class 47 No. D1935 is seen on the rear of the above at Coppull Hall.
John Sloane

Charter Scene

ECS and Light Engine Moves

Not exactly an everyday sight at Winwick! Class 33 207 and 33 029 open up from a signal check on a Southall - Carnforth stock move on February 6th. *Jeff Nicholls*

Class 33 029 piloted by 33 207 'Jim Martin' passes Northampton working ECS move 5M43, the 10:19 Southall WCR to Carnforth Steamtown on February 6th. *Derek Elston*

Class 50 007 'Hercules' running as 0K50, the 11:30 Hinksey Sidings to Kidderminster S.V.R. passes Leamington Spa on February 7th. *Derek Elston*





Charter Scene ECS and Light Engine Moves

On January 29th, SR MN Class No. 35018 'British India Line' works 5Z35 over Capernwray Viaduct towards Hellifield, heading to Derby Litchurch Lane. *Shep Woolley*

LSL Class A2 No. 60532 'Blue Peter' heads southbound at Winwick with a returning loaded test run from Preston to Crewe HS on March 6th. *Brian Dobbs*

Charter Scene

ECS and Light Engine Moves

Class 47 802, 33 029 and 33 207 head south through Warrington on February 14th. *Jeff Nicholls*

A most unusual consist at Golborne as Class 57 010 hauls 57 010 and two old Rail Express coaches from Burton-on-Trent Wetmore to Carnforth on February 24th. Class 47 812 tags along on the rear. *Jeff Nicholls*

Black 5 45212 hurries past Winwick Junction with its support coach on February 6th as it heads from Carnforth to Southall. *Lee Stanford*







Charter Scene

ECS and Light Engine Moves

Black Five No. 45212 bowls through Acton Bridge with a Carnforth - Southall move on a sunny February 6th. *Jeff Nicholls*

The empty stock of 'The Mancunian' on March 1st passes round Lowton Curve on its way to Manchester Victoria. *Jeff Nicholls*

On March 1st, 'Black Five' No. 45212 approaches Manchester Victoria with empty coaching stock for a Manchester Victoria to Holyhead charter. *Russell Clarke*







Avanti West Coast

The new Avanti IET sets have now settled in on their diagrams from North Wales to London Euston and on a sunny February 18th, Class 805 012 passes silently through Stafford working the 13:32 Chester to London Euston service. *Lee Stanford*

On February 6th, Class 390 121 passes Winwick Junction with the 08:38 Glasgow to London Euston service. *Lee Stanford*

Class 805 007 stands at Stafford with 1A26 08:53 Holyhead - London Euston service on February 18th. *John Balaam*







Avanti West Coast

On February 26th, after working from London Euston to Chester, Avanti IET Class 805 012 then ran empty stock as the 14:10 Chester to Longsight depot and is seen passing Heaton Chapel making a rare sight of an IET on the Manchester line from Crewe. *Lee Stanford*



Class 807 002 arrives at Crewe on February 27th working the 14:43 Liverpool Lime Street to London Euston service. *Lee Stanford*



Class 807 003 stands at Watford Junction working 9G38 18:16 London Euston to Wolverhampton service on February 21st. *Derek Elston*



Avanti West Coast

Class 390 121 heads northbound at Winwick with 9S77 London Euston to Glasgow Central on February 22nd. *Brian Dobbs*

Class 805 008 and 805 005 wait to depart Chester on February 27th working a service to London Euston. *Michael Lynam*

'Evero' Class 807 007 passes Acton Bridge on February 11th working a Liverpool Lime Street - London Euston service. *Michael Lynam*







Caledonian Sleeper

Class 92 028 is seen at Glasgow Central on February 6th having arrived on the rear of the ECS for with 1M11 23:40 Glasgow Central to London Euston. *Kevin McCormick*

Caledonian Sleeper

Class 92 043 is on the blocks at Glasgow Central having arrived with 5M11 from Polamdie on February 6th. *Kevin McCormick*

Chiltern Railways

Class 68 012 working 1R21 London Marylebone - Birmingham Moor Street, calls at Leamington Spa on February 5th. *Richard Hargreaves*

Class 168 323 with the 2L32 Stratford to Leamington Spa nears the end of its journey on February 5th. *Richard Hargreaves*

Class 168 005 with the 1H33 Birmingham Moor St. to London Marylebone service approaches Leamington Spa on February 5th.
Richard Hargreaves







Chiltern Railways

On February 22nd, Class 68 011 working 1R29 London Marylebone to Birmingham Moor Street arrives at its destination. *Richard Hargreaves*



DVT No. 82305 at the sharp end of 1H45, the 12:45 Birmingham Moor Street to London Marylebone powered by Class 68 010 'Oxford Flyer' arrives at Leamington Spa on February 7th. *Derek Elston*

Class 168 111 working 5J28 London Marylebone to Stourbridge Junction, passes through Birmingham Moor St. on February 22nd. *Richard Hargreaves*





On February 7th, Class 68 010 ‘Oxford Flyer’ growls away from Leamington Spa with 1R21 10:02 London Marylebone to Birmingham Moor Street. *Derek Elston*

Chiltern Railways recovers over £1million of lost revenue in warning to fare evaders

Chiltern Railways has issued a warning to fare evaders after announcing the recovery over £1million in lost revenue throughout 2024.

The operator’s Economic Crime, Fraud & Prosecutions Unit recovered over £400,000 of lost revenue in 2023 and a total of £1,051,287 in 2024.

Chiltern is reminding customers to purchase their ticket before they board. With ticket offices, online purchases, ticket vending machines, smartcards, the mobile app and contactless payments where appropriate – buying a ticket has never been simpler.

There were 8,064 cases reported for investigation on the Chiltern network in 2024. Some cases involved customers not paying for their full journey, adults buying child tickets and railcard misuse. Between £12,000 - £15,000 each was recovered from three individuals who had systematically avoided paying the correct rail fare over a substantial period of time.

In addition, 2,156 penalty fares were issued throughout 2024 and 149 went to prosecution. A total of £114,330 was recovered via penalty fares, taking the total of lost revenue recovered by Chiltern Railways in 2024 to £1,165,617.

Tony Baxter, Operations Director at Chiltern Railways, said: “The vast majority of our customers pay for their tickets before they travel but unfortunately there is still a lot of money lost on the railway through fare evasion every year. We are determined to ensure fairness for the paying customer and there is no excuse for fare evasion as it has never been simpler to purchase a ticket.

Anyone risking boarding without buying the correct ticket for their journey is at risk of a penalty fare or prosecution.”

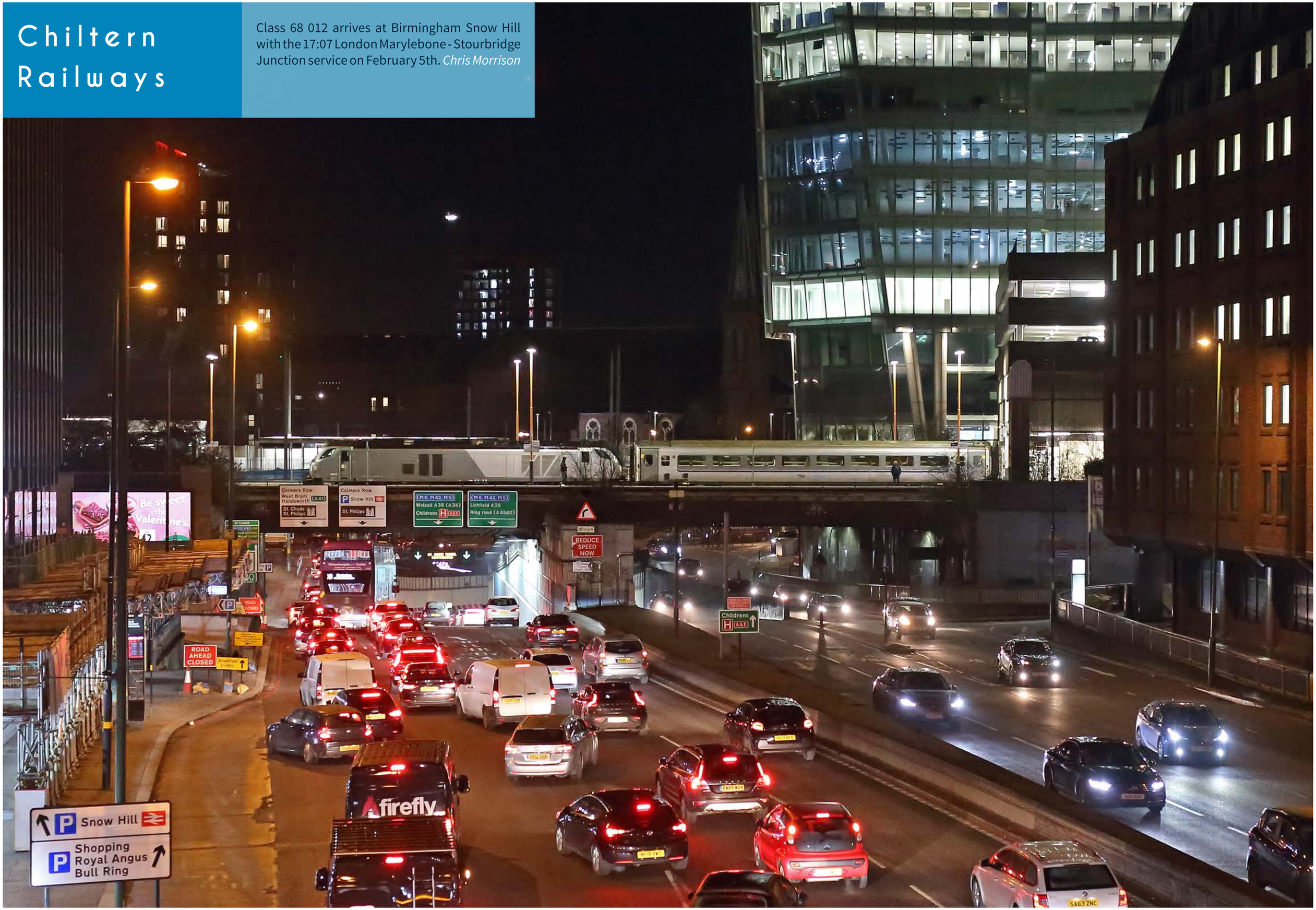
Chiltern’s Economic Crime, Fraud & Prosecutions Unit was set up in 2019. Since then, the amount of revenue recovered from fare evasion has increased hugely year-on-year.

In January 2023, following a national consultation by the Department for Transport, an increased penalty fare of £100 was introduced across the country’s rail network.

Chiltern also launched its ‘Buy Before you Board’ campaign in 2024, with posters present at stations and vinyl floor signage before ticket gates, reminding customers that travelling without a valid ticket is a criminal offence.

Chiltern Railways

Class 68 012 arrives at Birmingham Snow Hill with the 17:07 London Marylebone - Stourbridge Junction service on February 5th. *Chris Morrison*



Class 68 015 'Kev Helmer' propels 1H41, the 11:45 Birmingham Moor Street to London Marylebone away from its station call at Leamington Spa on February 7th. *Derek Elston*

Chiltern Railways holds Railway Children Sleepout at London Marylebone Station

Chiltern Railways' colleagues took part in an overnight sleepout at London Marylebone Station on February 27th, to raise crucial funds for the charity Railway Children. Railway Children's Big Station Sleepout involves railway colleagues, friends and family taking on the challenge of sleeping out on a cold, hard railway station floor for just one night.

By signing up, participants committed to raising at least £100 for Railway Children's crucial cause, supporting vulnerable children in the UK, Tanzania and India.

As part of this year's sleepout at London Marylebone Station, 13 Chiltern colleagues raised over £5,000 (with donations still open). Money raised goes towards protecting children when they are most at risk, so children don't just survive but thrive.

Richard Allan, Managing Director of Chiltern Railways, said: "Railway Children is a charity close to my heart and I am keen that we support their crucial work. The sleepout is one of the charity's biggest fundraising events of the year and I am proud that Chiltern colleagues took part at London Marylebone Station this year. I joined Railway Children as a Trustee in 2024 and the charity makes a huge difference to so many children's lives. We had a great team spirit during the event and whilst we woke early and a bit tired, we are thrilled to have raised more than £5,000 so far."

Rob Capener, Chief Executive Officer of Railway Children, said: "Our sleepout always has a brilliant atmosphere and we're hoping this year's event will have a big impact with the help of our supporters and the rail community. Working closely with the British Transport Police, we know that hundreds of vulnerable young people are identified on the UK rail network every day. Many are running away from difficult situations at home, being groomed by abusers or exploited by county lines gangs. The challenges children and young people face are more prevalent than ever with increasing levels of poverty, exploitation and mental health.

"The sleepout event is a great way to raise vital funds for our programmes that help us reach children in need of urgent support while increasing awareness of our work with thousands of people who use the transport system every day. Thank you to Chiltern for hosting London Marylebone's first sleepout event."

Railway Children works closely with British Transport Police and holds a variety of events each year. The charity also hosts a youth platform, offering advice on a range of issues to help young people build a brighter future. Chiltern Railways is a regular supporter of Railway Children.

Chiltern Railways

Class 168 218 departs Leamington Spa with 1G27 11:36 London Marylebone to Birmingham Snow Hill on February 7th. *Derek Elston*

Class 168 005 arrives at Leamington Spa with 1R29 12:02 London Marylebone to Birmingham Moor Street on February 7th. *Derek Elston*

Class 165 018 and 165 002 stand at Leamington Spa with 1R25 11:02 London Marylebone to Birmingham Moor Street service on February 7th. *Derek Elston*

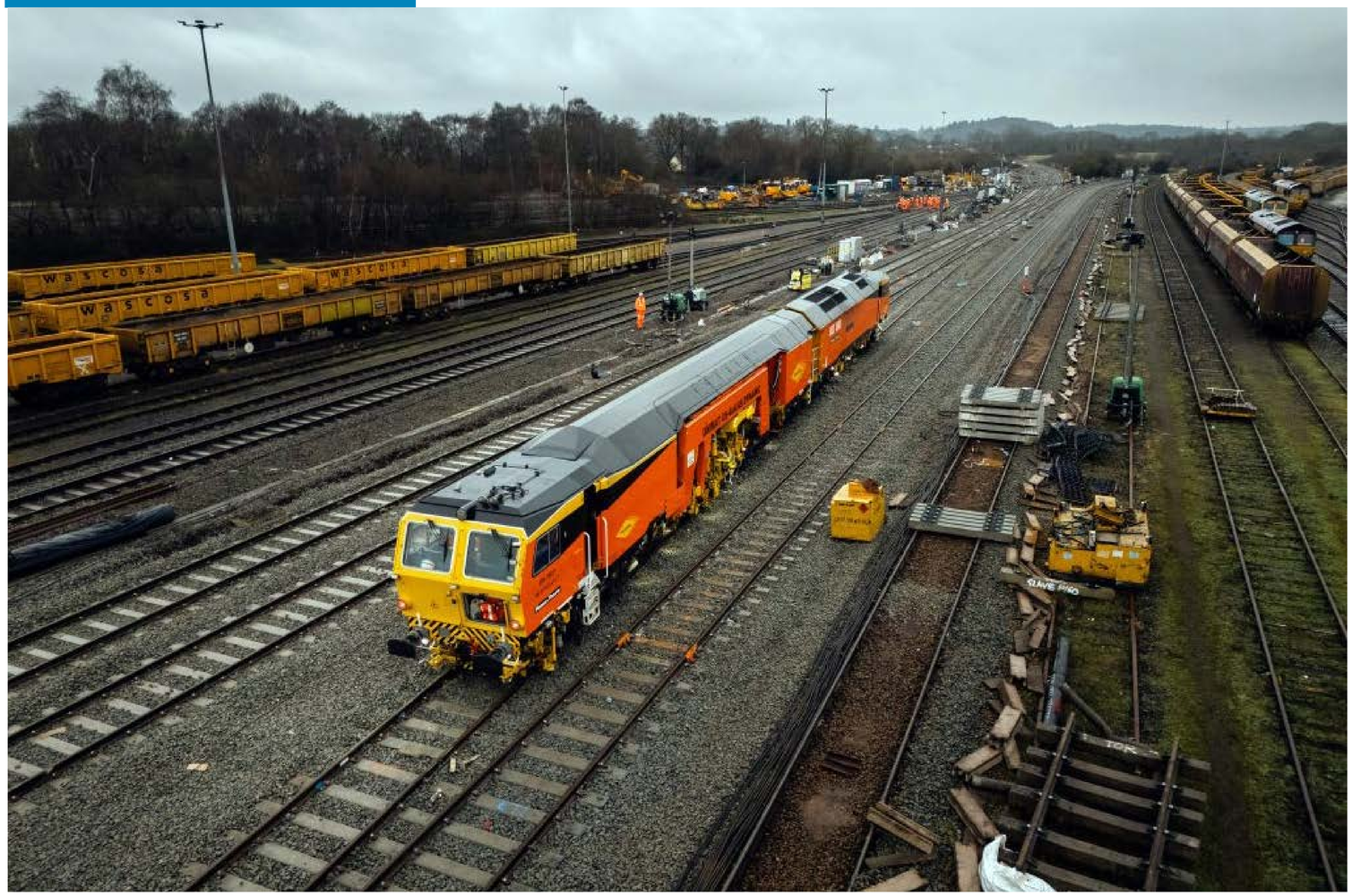






Colas Rail

SRSA WRAP UP WESTBURY WORKS



The South Rail Systems Alliance (SRSA) Bristol division have recently put the finishing touches to a 30-day long multidisciplinary blockade at Westbury, Wiltshire, one of the largest projects ever delivered by the SRSA.

Harnessing the SRSA's rail infrastructure expertise, work began over Christmas 2024 to regenerate a crucial artery on the West of England Main Line, running between Cardiff and Portsmouth.

Tracking Progress
Utilising our fully refurbished Kirow 1200 crane, the SRSA successfully installed 30 Switches and Crossing (S&C) panels including:

26 High Performance Switch Systems Points Operating Equipment
2 timber units with mechanical handpoints
2 concrete fixed diamonds
These S&C panels were installed with associated plain line track.

The SRSA also completed 1513m of un-associated plain line track, 550 fully inspected and passed welds, 92 permanent joints, 25 stresses with all lines handed back at a maximum line speed of 75mph.

The track was subsequently tamped using two Colas Rail 09 Class Tamping Machines.

Signalling a New Era
Through our Signalling team, an abundance of signalling and telecommunication upgrades were made throughout the Westbury track network.

In total the team completed:

Alterations to Train Describer
14 New Location Cabinets (LOC) to control the lineside assets
Alterations in 22 existing LOCs
22 ends of High Performance Switch Systems
4 ends HW2000s Point Machines (double Slips)
2 Hand Points
41 affected Track Circuits
23 affected Signals (including one brand new route on W407)
11 sets of Train Protection Warning Systems
3 Automatic Warning Systems
15 new signs
15km of new cabling
500m of troughing upgrades
10km of cable recoveries
Alterations to Signallers display and control panels and to maintainers panel

Keeping it Civil
70m of Coper adjustments were made throughout platform 2 of Westbury station, with platform resurfacing, 65m of tactile paving and 10 coper supporting brackets successfully implemented.

Enhancing Electrification and Power
Our electrification and power (E&P) team were also involved with multiple upgrades such as a new Functional Supply Point, 5 650/110v Transformers replaced, a new Points Heating Control Cubicle (PHCC) and amending two existing PHCCs, 22 new points heating Transformers, 6 hot and cold probes, 11 trackside connection boxes, 96 points heating strips and 5km of new cabling.

Demonstrating Drainage Delivery
Throughout the infrastructure, our Bristol drainage team successfully installed 2 single track Under Track Crossing (UTX), 1 double track UTX, 225m of drainage including 16 new catch pits, 6 refurbished track pits and 5m of connecting T piece.

That's a RRAP
Along the down siding spur, we installed 10.8m of Tap-Strail Road Rail Access Point (RRAP) track including edge beams.

The SRSA's additional scope of works on the RRAP involved 13m of trough protection, with timber treated edging and steel plates along with 3.6m of barriers to protect nearby cabinets.

Speaking on the successful delivery of the month long blockade, Network Rail Western and Wales Region Acting Programme Director (Track), Ross Mahoney said "I know how much effort and sacrifice went into the planning and delivery of this job, which has been running non-stop since Christmas Eve. Thanks to everyone who gave up their Christmases, weekends and everything else to make this happen.

"This is comfortably the biggest renewal we have planned for the entire control period and the benefit it brings to the Western Route and the wider Region cannot easily be overstated.

"Thanks to everybody involved in this fantastic achievement."

To complete the project scope, the SRSA enlisted the help of High Motive, Mac Rail, Sunbelt Rentals, AP Webb, McGinley, Ganymede, A1, ISS, Progress Rail and Supply Chain Operations amongst other suppliers to ensure successful delivery.

The SRSA is comprised of Colas Rail, Network Rail and AECOM, an alliance created to deliver a portfolio of works across the southern region of the UK over a 10-year period.

Pictured: Colas Rail UK Tamping machines completing essential track maintenance

Colas Rail

On February 12th, Class 56 051 arrives at Doncaster from Rectory Jct. as 0D01 to join up with four classmates Nos. 56 105, 56 090, 56 094 and 70 805 in the Colas sidings. *Russell Clarke*

Class 56 090 working 6J37 Carlisle - Chirk Kronospan is seen at Chirk station waiting to set back into Kronaspan on March 3rd. *Phil Martin*

On February 18th, Class 56 113 passes through Crewe station while running round its engineering train working from Basford Hall - Bradwell Up Sidings. *Michael Lynam*







Colas Rail

COLAS RAIL UK WELCOME BACK REFURBISHED KIROW 1200 CRANE





In a first for the UK rail industry, Colas Rail UK's Strategic Plant team were reunited in December 2024 with their Kirow 1200 crane following an overhaul at Techne Kirow's workshop.

The Logistics
Starting its journey in July 2024, our crane travelled internationally from the UK to Techne Kirow's facilities in Leipzig, Germany.

Hauled by Allelys fleet, our crane travelled from the UK via boat to the Port of Cuxhaven, Germany before arriving at its final destination of Leipzig.

The Overhaul
From July to November 2024, the crane was dismantled by Techne Kirow's team before parts were replaced with top-of-the-line equipment and software.

This included a new stage 5 euro engine, new major cylinders, pumps, motors and all flexible hydraulic hoses. The crane also received the latest software to assist our operators while on site.

The Benefits
With the new hardware, our crane is now able to perform additional lifting duties to further assist our clients on site.

From a sustainability perspective, the new engine provides more fuel efficiency and reduced noise to be more considerate towards our site neighbours.

These upgrades also futureproof our crane for the next 15 years.

The Projects
Wasting no time since returning to the UK, our crane undertook works with the South Rail Systems Alliance, assisting our teams at Keyham and our month-long project programme at Westbury.

Speaking on the return of the crane, Operations Manager, David Thomas said "Since the crane come back to the UK it's been out working on multiple sites, receiving rave reviews by site teams and also from the staff operating and maintaining it.

"The new lifting configurations has been a brilliant addition to allow to continue to deliver and maintain our gold standard service to clients."

Prior to the crane leaving for Leipzig, our Strategic Plant team were awarded Gold in Network Rail's Routes to Gold scheme for outstanding site delivery.

Pictured Left: The Kirow undergoing upgrades at Techne Kirow's workshop. ©UK Colas Rail

Pictured Right: The overhauled Kirow Crane in use at Westbury. ©UK Colas Rail

Colas Rail

Class 56 090 growls through Charnock Richard cutting with the Carlisle to Chirk log train on March 3rd. *John Sloane*

Class 66 791, on hire to Colas, forges past Balshaw Lane Junction with the Carlisle to Chirk log train on March 5th. *John Sloane*

Class 56 113 is seen at Crewe on February 18th with 6K38 10:08 Basford Hall Yard - Bradwell. *John Balaam*







Colas Rail

Swietelsky/Harry Needle's Class 37 405 and Network Rail's 97 302 head the 6C56 09:50 Aberystwyth - Chirk Kronospan logs past Wrexham General on February 22nd.
Chris Morrison

Colas Rail

Network Rail's Class 97 302 and Swietelsky/ Harry Needle's 37 405 power the 6C56 09:50 Aberystwyth - Chirk logs through Newtown on March 1st. *Chris Morrison*

CrossCountry

Class 220 005 is seen at Stafford on February 18th, working the 13:25 from Manchester to Bournemouth. *Barry Longson*



A nocturnal view of passing Voyagers at Stafford on February 12th sees Class 221 122 depart for Bristol as an unidentified sister waits time before heading to Manchester Piccadilly. *Lee Stanford*



Class 220 011 and 220 002 are seen at their first stop at Stockport on February 2nd before heading to Bristol Temple Meads. *Lee Stanford*



CrossCountry

Class 221 115 working the 10:10 Manchester Piccadilly to Bournemouth service calls at Leamington Spa on February 5th.
Richard Hargreaves

DB Cargo

Class 66 047 ‘Maritime Intermodal Two’ heads through Rainford with 6E26 Knowsley FLT to Wilton EfW refuse train on February 18th. *Brian Dobbs*

Class 66 005 in Maritime livery passes through platform 14 at Manchester Piccadilly on February 13th with an intermodal working from London Gateway - Trafford Park. *Michael Lynam*

Class 66 002 passes Acton Bridge with a mixed rake of wagons from Arpley Sidings - Toton N. Yard on February 11th. *Michael Lynam*







DB Cargo

Still retaining EWS livery, Class 66 095 is seen at Rainford with 6E26 Knowsley to Wilton refuse train on February 26th. *Brian Dobbs*



DB Cargo

Class 66 021 passes southbound through Doncaster on February 13th with a container train from Wakefield Europort - Felixstowe Europort. *Michael Lynam*



Class 66 066 ‘Geoff Spencer’ departs Crewe on light engine move 0Z20, the 08:55 Crewe T.M.D. (E) to Toton T.M.D. on February 21st. *Derek Elston*



Class 66 096 idles up to a red signal at Acton Bridge with a Dollands Moor - Ditton working on February 6th. *Jeff Nicholls*



DB Cargo

Class 66 653 is seen at All Stretton on February 28th working 6V75 09:30 Dee Marsh - Margam. *Phil Martin*

DB Cargo

On February 27th, Class 66 165 has charge of 6H59 the 13:50 Ashburys to Dowlow at Heaton Norris Junction. *Barry Longson*



DB Cargo

A sunny morning at Acton Bridge on February 26th finds Class 66 186 with DIT 66 127 and 66 069, together with one wagon, on an Arpley Yard - Margam TC working. *Jeff Nicholls*



Class 66 112 approaches Doncaster on February 13th with an engineers train from York - Doncaster Up Decoy. *Michael Lynam*



On February 7th, Class 66 103 powers through Leamington Spa working 4M71 09:48 Southampton Western Docks Berth 109 to Birch Coppice Exchange Sidings. *Derek Elston*



DB Cargo

Class 66 653 passes Gobowen on February 26th working 6V75 09:30 Dee Marsh - Margam. *Phil Martin*

Class 66 186 working 4O21 09:20 Trafford Park Euro Terminal to Southampton Western Docks Berth 109 service passes Leamington Spa on February 7th. *Derek Elston*

A late running 4E94 06:32 Southampton Western Docks Berth 109 to Masborough F.D. passes through Leamington Spa with Class 66 124 at the helm on February 7th. *Derek Elston*







DB Cargo

Still in the revised EWS DB Livery, Class 66 095 exits the south portal Upholland tunnel, with 6E26 the 10:51 Knowsley to Wilton Tees Industrial and Domestic Waste train, on March 4th. *Paul Senior*



Class 66 652 is seen at Kempseye with 6V75 09:30 Dee Marsh Reception Sidings - Margam TC on February 18th. *Keith Davies*



Class 66 654 passes Kempseye, Shrewsbury on January 29th working 6V75 09:30 Dee Marsh - Margam steel. *Phil Martin*



DB Cargo

On March 3rd, Class 66 019 approaches Swindon hauling 6C03 Northolt Sidings - Severnside Sita. *Ken Mumford*



Class 66 653 at Bayston Hill with 6V75 09:30 Dee Marsh Reception Sidings - Margam TC on February 28th. *Keith Davies*



Class 66 653 passes Burgs Lane, Bayston Hill working 6V75 09:30 Dee Marsh - Margam steel on January 30th. *Phil Martin*



DB Cargo

Class 66 654 passes Leaton working 6V75 09:30 Dee Marsh - Margam on February 1st. *Phil Martin*



Class 66 117 is in charge of the Seaforth to Mossend intermodal service as it passes Coppull on February 19th. *John Sloane*



Class 66 170 has a lightly loaded 4L56 13:20 Trafford Park to London Gateway in tow on February 18th, at it passes through Stafford. *Barry Longson*



DB Cargo

On March 5th, Class 66 047 has emerged from Upholland tunnel into a bright patch of sunlight as it works the Wilton to Knowsley binliner. *John Sloane*

Class 66 002 takes the slow line at Balshaw Lane Junction with the Seaforth to Mossend intermodal service on March 4th. *John Sloane*

Class 66 025 has emerged from Upholland tunnel and approaches Upholland station with a Wilton to Knowsley empty binliner service on February 7th. *John Sloane*







DB Cargo



Class 66 070 passes Leamington Spa working 4M54 the 09:31 Southampton M.C.T. EWS to East Midlands Gateway Terminal DBC on February 7th. *Derek Elston*

DB Cargo signs major contract with Siemens Mobility to fit Class 66 locomotives with ETCS

DB Cargo UK has signed a major contract with Siemens Mobility to begin fitting the new European Train Control System (ETCS) to the UK's Class 66 freight locomotives.

Work will begin in July to fit the new in-cab signalling system to nine Class 66 locomotives (all owned by DB Cargo UK) with the work being undertaken by the company at its Toton Traction Maintenance Depot in the East Midlands.

The work, which is scheduled to be completed in March 2026, is the first phase of a national programme, which will eventually see all our Class 66 locomotives fitted with ETCS as part of the roll-out of the European Rail Traffic Management System (ERTMS) in the UK.

The initial roll-out of ERTMS is being delivered by the £1.4bn East Coast Digital Programme, which will see traditional lineside signals replaced by the new digital in-cab technology.

Siemens Mobility is the East Coast Digital Programme's chosen partner, responsible for designing, integrating and installing its Trainguard 200 Onboard unit onto freight locomotives, enabling a signals free East Coast Mainline.

DB Cargo UK's Head of Asset Management and Maintenance Jon Harman said the contract award underlined the company's long and proud history of delivering engineering excellence to the rail sector.

He added that mobilisation work had already begun at Toton to facilitate the delivery of the new contract. This will see the installation of a new load bank, wash plant and overhead cranes, as well as new accommodation to co-locate staff from Siemens on the site.

"Having recently played a significant part in the 'first-in-class' fitment of ETCS on one of our own Class 66 locomotives (66039), which has recently undergone dynamic testing at Network Rail's Rail Innovation and Development Centre, we are looking forward to continuing our collaboration with Siemens to install the new technology in further locomotives," said Jon.

"This contract award has been secured on the back of the hard work and dedication of our maintenance and engineering colleagues and represents a significant boost to our order book," he added.

"DB Cargo UK is very proud of the industry-leading role we continue to play in the delivery of ERTMS here in the UK which will deliver a more dynamic, reliable and safer railway for all those who use it."

"It will provide much needed capacity for freight on the East Coast Main Line and other routes and this significant investment in the Class 66 locomotive is a further advancement towards securing the long-term growth of our sector," added Jon.

Rob Morris, Joint CEO and Managing Director Rail Infrastructure UK&I, Siemens Mobility, said: "I'm delighted that Siemens Mobility is playing a key role to transform rail travel and transport for freight users through the fitment of our European Train Control System (ETCS) on the Class 66 locomotives.

"Following the successful first-in-class fitment, the complexity of integrating ETCS across multiple design variants has truly showcased the skill, precision, and dedication of our engineering teams. We look forward to continuing our collaboration with DB Cargo UK, Network Rail and the East Coast Digital Programme on this exciting project."

Emily Woodward, Network Rail's Senior Sponsor (Freight) for ECDP, said: "This is an exciting step on the journey to a digital railway, which will contribute to rail freight's growth by helping freight trains operate more efficiently on the network. We welcome the collaboration and innovation as our partners progress the pioneering work of fitting freight locos for the next generation railway."

DB Cargo

Class 66 186, 66 127 and 66 069 pass Kempseye on February 26th with 6V71 09:43 Arpley Sidings - Margam TC. *Keith Davies*

DC Rail Freight

Just before sunset on March 1st, Class 60 096 crosses the Weaver Navigation on Dutton Viaduct with 6M90 Middleton Towers to Ravenhead Sidings. *Brian Dobbs*

DC Rail Freight

Class 60 055 on 6Z52 Tytherington Quarry to Appleford sidings passes through Swindon on February 17th. This train had been delayed due to fire bells going off on 60 055 between Hallvington and Wootton Bassett Junction. *Colin Pidgeon*

DC Rail Freight

Just before sunset on February 22nd, Class 60 028 heads northbound at Winwick Junction with 6M89 Middleton Towers to Ravenhead Sidings sand train.
Brian Dobbs

Direct Rail Services

On February 6th, Class 66 427 passes Moore with a Shap - Crewe loaded ballast. *Mark Enderby*

Class 88 008 ‘Ariadne’ glides through Northampton with 4L48, the 13:37 Daventry DRS (Tesco) to Tilbury2 Container Terminal on February 18th. *Derek Elston*



New DRS rail service in groundbreaking trial

Direct Rail Services (DRS) has started a new groundbreaking rail service in a trial from Teesport to Manchester.

The service is the first on this route to use the ultra-low IDA wagons, which allow the use of standard high-cube containers, opening up the route to new customers and products moved by rail.

DRS is part of Nuclear Transport Solutions (NTS) which operates a wide variety of specialist transport solutions from nuclear to domestic intermodal rail services.

Gottfried Eymer, NTS’s Managing Director for Rail, said: “This trial offers a new route to customers who may not have considered rail before. It is an open access service which will amalgamate different customers to one train, saving time and cost. Rail is much more environmentally friendly when compared to road, producing up to 76% fewer CO2 emissions and each train can remove up to 40 HGVs from the roads, reducing congestion.

“This is a fantastic opportunity for customers new to rail and we’d welcome anyone considering a switch to rail to get in touch.”

The service will operate from the PD Ports-owned terminal in Teesport and demonstrates the collaborative work which is going into diversifying supply chains and improving their environmental credentials.

Jo Edmenson, PD Ports’ key account manager for rail freight services, said: “Trans Pennine connections for operators looking to move goods across the country have been confined to road freight for many years due to the constraints of the rail network, with height restrictions at stations, bridges and tunnels causing a number of issues.

“There is much anticipation about the Trans Pennine upgrade, which will hopefully remove many of those blockages, but with a completion date of 2030, we felt that was too long to wait when we considered the importance of rail freight as a means of decarbonising the supply chain and removing road movements from congested major routes.

“We’re excited to partner with DRS to offer this new service, direct from the UK’s sixth largest port to the heart of the north west. The route opens up a major new connection between the two regions and offers alternative means of shipping goods into the east coast of the UK and onwards, with the same true for exports.”

Direct Rail Services

Class 68 034 speeds through Stafford on February 18th, with 4S44 the 12:13 Daventry to Coatbridge ‘Tesco’ liner. *Barry Longson*

Class 88 010 ‘Aurora’ departs Crewe light engine on February 21st as 0Z10, the 07:39 Crewe Gresty Bridge (DRS) to Stoke Marcroft Engineering. *Derek Elston*

Class 68 034 heads southbound at Winwick with 4M27 Coatbridge to Daventry on March 5th. *Brian Dobbs*









Having got numerous units in sun, the cloud rolled in for the arrival of Class 68 002 working 4E49 11:37 Daventry to Doncaster iPort on February 28th.
Barry Longson

New DRS rail service set to save major CO2 emissions and support decommissioning mission

In the first tranche of rail services –
100,000 kg of CO2 emissions saved
150,000 lorry miles prevented
2,320 lorry journeys taken off the road

Direct Rail Services (DRS) has begun moving over 46,000 tonnes of material by rail, yielding significant environmental benefits.

Nuclear Transport Solutions' rail division, DRS, has launched a new rail service to deliver aggregate for a project vital to the safe and secure disposal of nuclear waste.

During the first campaign, DRS will operate two trains a day, four days a week, to Nuclear Waste Services' (NWS) Low Level Waste (LLW) Repository site, in Cumbria. The trains will deliver aggregate for the Southern Trench Interim Membrane (STIM) project – a project to replace a protective barrier over the legacy disposal trenches at the site.

The trains mean fewer HGVs will be required for the project, and rail transport produces up to 76% less CO2 compared to road traffic, saving around 100,000 kg in CO2 emissions in this first tranche of rail services.

This marks the first time DRS has used its JNA-Z box wagons, with each train delivering over 750 tonnes of material – the equivalent of 36 HGVs.

This is the first in a series of material deliveries as part of the project, delivering 46,400 tonnes of aggregate over 64 trains, and it's estimated that 2,320 lorry journeys will be saved in this stage alone – removing over 150,000 road miles.

Further trains will be run in other stages over the project's three-year duration, making the journey from Shap quarry to the LLW Repository, near Drigg.

Gottfried Eymer, NTS Rail Managing Director, said: "Rail is the obvious choice for bulk movements like these, taking many thousands of lorries off the road, reducing congestion, and improving the environment.

"This is the first of many movements for our box wagons, and I look forward to seeing them running across the country."

Direct Rail Services

Class 68 034 ‘Rail Riders’ passes northbound at Winwick with 4S44 Daventry to Coatbridge on February 18th. *Brian Dobbs*



Usually a Class 68 turn, 66 434 heads north at Golborne with 4S44 from Daventry to Coatbridge on February 24th. *Jeff Nicholls*



Class 68 002 heads a southbound Coatbridge - Daventry intermodal through Acton Bridge on February 11th. *Michael Lynam*



Direct Rail Services

On February 5th, Class 66 434 passes light engine through Settle working from Carlisle - Crewe Basford Hall. *Michael Lynam*

On a dull February 1st, unique liveried Class 88 010 speeds past Mauldeth Road working the 15:20 Trafford Park to Daventry 'Tesco' service. *Lee Stanford*

Class 88 010 'Aurora' passes Deansgate with the 'Tesco' train from Daventry to Trafford Park on the cool afternoon of February 12th. *Bryan Roberts*







Direct Rail Services

With a train that seems to last forever, Class 88 003 approaches Winwick Junction on February 6th hauling the 12:13 Daventry to Coatbridge. *Lee Stanford*

Class 68 034 passes through Stafford on February 18th with an intermodal from Daventry - Coatbridge. *Michael Lynam*

Class 66 427 working the 4V38 10:10 Daventry - Wentloog diverted ‘Tesco’ intermodal passes Sharpstones Lane, Baystan Hill on January 25th. *Phil Martin*







Direct Rail Services

The 12:30 Shap Summit quarry to Crewe Basford Hall adds to the bright sunny conditions as it heads past Winwick Junction on February 6th behind Class 66 427. *Lee Stanford*

Taken through a large lens sees DRS operated Class 88 010 approach Mauldeth Road on February 14th with the 08:44 Daventry to Trafford Park 'Tesco' train. *Lee Stanford*

Class 66 434 heads northbound through Winwick with 4S44 Daventry to Coatbridge on February 22nd. *Brian Dobbs*







Direct Rail Services

The 6K73 service from Sellafield to Crewe runs past Bradley on February 8th behind Class 68 016 and 88 010. *John Sloane*

Class 66 429 is working a late running Daventry to Coatbridge 'Tesco' train as it hurries through Euxton on February 21st. *John Sloane*

Class 88 004 whisks through Leyland with the Daventry to Coatbridge 'Tesco' service on February 20th. *John Sloane*







Direct Rail Services

Class 66 430 has charge of the 6K05 engineer's train from Carlisle to Crewe at Coppull Moor on March 3rd. *John Sloane*



Direct Rail Services

Running over five hours late, due to a land slip north of Preston, Class 88 004 'Pandora' and 88 003 'Genesis' speed past Alder Lane, Winwick, with 4M27 05:38 Coatbridge - Daventry on February 22nd. *Paul Senior*



East Midlands Railway

On February 28th, Class 158 852 and 158 862 form the 11:51 Liverpool Lime St. to Norwich service, seen at Chesterfield. *Barry Longson*

On February 21st, Class 170 272 stands at Crewe ready to work 1N05 08:10 to Newark Castle. *Derek Elston*

Class 222 103 calls at Chesterfield on February 28th while working the 13:37 Sheffield to London St. Pancras service. *Barry Longson*







Freightliner

The retimed 6V22 Woking to Merehead stone empties with Class 59 203 hauling, is seen near Grateley on February 18th. *Michael Bennett*



Freightliner

Class 90 003 and 90 047 pass through Stafford on February 18th working a container train from Trafford Park - Felixstowe. *Michael Lynam*



Class 66 597 passes through Stafford with a liner from Ditton - Felixstowe on February 18th. *Michael Lynam*



Class 90 011 and 90 009 working 4L67 10:20 Trafford Park F.L.T. to Felixstowe North F.L.T. passes Northampton on February 25th. *Derek Elston*



Freightliner

Class 90 049 and 90 007 working 4M63 09:12 Felixstowe North F.L.T. to Trafford Park F.L.T. head through Northampton on February 18th. *Derek Elston*

Class 90 014 ‘Over The Rainbow’ paired with 90 045 pass Northampton with 4M63 09:12 Felixstowe North F.L.T. to Trafford Park F.L.T. on February 25th. *Derek Elston*

Carrying its new livery, Class 70 008 passes through Stafford on February 18th with a rake of empty box wagons from Walsall - Crewe Basford Hall. *Michael Lynam*







Freightliner

On a sunny February 6th, Class 59 101 passes Ashbury crossing working 6C48 Appleford to Whatley Quarry. *Ken Mumford*



Class 66 587 heads through Doncaster on February 13th working a Felixstowe - Leeds liner. *Michael Lynam*



On February 1st, Class 90 012 and 90 007 pass Warrington working 4Z82 Carlisle to Crewe (ex Coatbridge). *Mark Enderby*



Freightliner

At Stafford on February 18th, Class 66 515 worked 4M81 the 08:01 Felixstowe North to Garston liner. *Barry Longson*

Class 66 419 leading 6Y45 12:07 Westbury Down TC - Goonburrow Junction heads through Par Station with 66 531 on the rear on February 9th. *Barry Beeston*

Class 70 011 hauling the 4M55 Southampton to Lawley Street liner heads through Leamington Spa on February 5th. *Richard Hargreaves*







Freightliner

Class 90 049 and 90 007 double head the 4M63 09:12 Felixstowe North to Trafford Park through Stafford on February 18th. *Barry Longson*

On February 5th, Class 66 602 working 6Z80 Banbury to Tunstead passes through Leamington Spa. *Richard Hargreaves*

Class 66 508 ‘City of Doncaster’ working 4O14 Garston to Southampton liner approaches Leamington Spa on February 5th.
Richard Hargreaves







Freightliner

Saturdays are tuning out to be very interesting at Deansgate station as around 11:30 the 0K42 Trafford Park to Basford Hall is used to clear out locos back to base in a convoy. On February 15th, the convoy passes Deansgate with Class 66 585 leading 66 543, 66 951, 90 011 and 90 009. *Russell Clarke*

Class 59 204 on 6C48 Appleford Sidings to Whatley Quarry passes along platform 4 at Swindon on February 12th. *Colin Pidgeon*

On February 17th, Class 66 594 heads through Swindon working 4L36 Wentloog to Felixstowe. *Colin Pidgeon*







Freightliner

On a sunny February 5th, Class 70015 hauling the 4O90 Leeds to Southampton liner approaches Leamington Spa. *Richard Hargreaves*

On February 12th, Class 59 001 heads through Swindon on 6B12 Merehead to Wootton Bassett with a train of almost brand new HOA Hoppers passing on the UML. How long before these new wagons attract the artists? *Colin Pidgeon*

Class 66 606 is seen at Arpley on February 14th. *Jeff Nicholls*







Freightliner

On a gloomy February 12th, Class 70 008 heads through Winwick. *Jeff Nicholls*



Bright winter light greets Class 66 597 as it passes Stafford on February 18th hauling the 11:00 Ditton to Felixstowe North FLT.
Lee Stanford



On March 1st, the 0Y45 Stoke Gifford to Hinksey Sidings approaches Swindon with locos Class 66 597, 66 548, 66 605 and 66 951. *Ken Mumford*



Freightliner

Class 66 606 runs light engine through Latchford on February 14th. *Jeff Nicholls*

A sunny afternoon on February 18th sees Class 90 003 and 90 047 pass Stafford with the infrequent 4L67 10:20 Trafford Park to Felixstowe. *Lee Stanford*

Class 66 413 passes Kempseye on January 29th with the 6Y56 09:26 Shelwick Jct. - Crewe Basford Hall. *Phil Martin*







Freightliner

On a sunny February 28th, Class 66 534 ‘OOCL Express’ is seen at the head shunt of Southampton Up Yard. It is viewed from Horseshoe Bridge, St. Denys, running round its train of empty gypsum wagons that arrived as 14:36 Millbrook Freightliner Terminal - Southampton Up Yard - Southampton Western Docks. *John Goodrich*



Class 66 420 passes through Doncaster on February 13th with a rake of container flats on route to Doncaster Up Decoy with 66 524 attached to the rear. *Michael Lynam*



Class 66 513 pauses at Swindon on February 17th working 4L33 Wentloog to London Gateway. *Ken Mumford*



Freightliner

Multi working Class 90 011 and 90 009 glide through Northampton with 4L67 10:20 Trafford Park F.L.T. to Felixstowe North F.L.T. on February 24th. *Derek Elston*

Class 66 601 'The Hope Valley' passes Leamington Spa on February 7th working 6Z80 09:57 Banbury Reservoir Tarmac to Tunstead Sidings (Fhh). *Derek Elston*

Class 70 010 working 4O90 06:04 Leeds F.L.T. to Southampton M.C.T. passes through Leamington Spa on February 7th. *Derek Elston*







Freightliner

Class 70 016 passes through Northampton working 4O38 09:52 Lawley Street F.L.T. to Southampton M.C.T. on February 18th. *Derek Elston*

Powerhaul pairing of Class 90 043 and 90 045 lead the 4M63 09:12 Felixstowe North F.L.T. to Trafford Park F.L.T. as they pass Northampton on February 13th. *Derek Elston*

Class 90 003 and 90 047 powering 4L67, the 10:20 Trafford Park F.L.T. to Felixstowe North F.L.T. liner head through Northampton on February 18th. *Derek Elston*







Freightliner

Class 70 008 passes Moore on February 17th working Shap to Basford Hall stone.
Mark Enderby

Freightliner

‘Freightliner 60’ branded Class 70 008 passes Euxton at the head of a Shap to Basford Hall working on February 17th. *John Sloane*

Class 70 014 delivers fresh air as it passes through Northampton with an empty rake of flats as 4O38 09:52 Lawley Street F.L.T. to Southampton M.C.T. on February 6th.
Derek Elston

Class 70 011 passes Leamington Spa with 4M55 the 08:32 Southampton M.C.T. to Lawley Street F.L.T. on February 7th. *Derek Elston*







GBRf

Class 66 739 ‘Bluebell Railway’ speeds northbound at Winwick with 4S57 Hams Hall to Coatbridge on March 6th. *Brian Dobbs*

Class 66 788 ‘Locomotion 15’ hurries through Crewe working 4M61 02:17 Felixstowe North Gbrf to Ditton (O’Connor) on February 21st. *Derek Elston*

Class 66 305 ‘Embsay & Bolton Abbey Steam Railway’ leads 4M32 05:24 Southampton Western Docks (GBRf) to Hams Hall through Leamington Spa on February 7th. *Derek Elston*







GBRf

Class 66 756 'Royal Corps of Signals' and 66 771 'Amanda' pass Horseshoe Bridge, St. Denys, with the afternoon 14:48 Eastleigh - Westbury engineering train on February 28th.
John Goodrich

Class 66 794 'Steve Hannam' leads 6O55 14:40 Daventry GBRf to Dollands Moor (GBRf) empties through Northampton on February 13th.
Derek Elston

A very dirty Class 66 707 hauls empties through Sankey on February 14th. *Jeff Nicholls*







GBRf

On February 9th, Class 66 301 passes Moore with Doncaster - Liverpool Biomass empties. *Mark Enderby*

Class 66 777 'Annette' rounds the curve at Castleton with empty Biomass wagons from Drax on February 12th. *Bryan Roberts*

On February 18th, Class 66 721 makes a rare appearance in the North West, working 6G92 the 08:28 Hindlow to Small Heath, seen passing through Stafford. *Barry Longson*







Class 66 773 crosses Northwich Viaduct with 6E10 Liverpool Biomass Terminal to Drax on March 1st. *Brian Dobbs*

GBRf

Retro BR liveried Class 66 789 approaches Small Heath with the 05:32 Hindlow - Banbury stone train on February 28th. Many additions to the Birmingham skyline taking shape in the background. *Chris Morrison*

GBRf

Class 66 747 crosses the Weaver Navigation on Dutton Viaduct with 4M11 Felixstowe to Ditton on March 1st. *Brian Dobbs*

On February 18th, Class 66 710 was entrusted to work 4M16 the 00:36 Southampton to Ditton intermodal, seen approaching Stafford. *Barry Longson*

Class 66 305 with the 4M32 Southampton to Hams Hall intermodal is seen at Leamington Spa on February 5th. *Richard Hargreaves*







GBRf

Class 66 777 kicks out a plume of exhaust after a signal check at Heaton Norris Junction, while working 6E10 the 11:00 Liverpool Docks to Drax on February 27th. *Barry Longson*

On February 5th, Class 66 309 heads through Leamington Spa working 4Z26 Eastleigh to Doncaster Decoy Yard. *Richard Hargreaves*

Class 66 720 'Wascosa' and 66 776 'Joanne' top and tail the Snow and Ice Treatment Train as it passes Horseshoe Bridge, St. Denys, under an overcast sky on 10:10 Totton Yard - Woking Yard - Totton Yard on February 28th.
John Goodrich







GBRf

On February 12th, Class 47 739 is seen at Swindon working 5Q89 Long Marston to Eastleigh East Yard, hauling SWR's Class 701 059. *Colin Pidgeon*

Class 66 741 and 66 313 on the Doncaster - Liverpool Biomass empties pass Moore on February 2nd. *Mark Enderby*

On February 1st, the 6G74 Hinksey Sidings to Thingley Junction, a Civil Engineers train top 'n' tailed by Class 66 708 and 66 787 is seen coming out of Swindon East Loop to head alongside platform 4. *Ken Mumford*







GBRf

Class 66 704 passes through Horton in Ribblesdale on February 5th with a rake of empty Cement tanks from Carlisle - Clitheroe. *Michael Lynam*

Class 66 773 works hard through Lostock Gralam station on March 1st with loaded Biomass for Drax power station. *Jeff Nicholls*

Class 66 748 with the 4S57 Hams Hall to Mossend waits departure tine at Stafford on February 8th. *Richard Hargreaves*







GBRf

Class 66 766 passes Warrington Dallam on February 13th, hauling a rake of cement tanks.
Jeff Nicholls

Class 66 773 with the 4M11 Felixtowe to Ditton arrives at Stafford on February 8th.
Richard Hargreaves

Taken through the broken fence at Winwick Quay, Class 66 739 ‘Bluebell Railway’ speeds north with a well laden 4S57 11:43 Hams Hall to Mossend intermodal on February 22nd.
Paul Senior







GBRf

On February 15th, Class 66 724 passes Nuneaton Abbey Jct. with a very late running 4M01 Felixtowe - Birch Coppice. *John Alsop*

Class 66 710 passes through Stafford on February 18th with a Southampton - Ditton intermodal. *Michael Lynam*

Class 69 012 on 5Q75 Eastleigh TRSMD to Long Marston heads through Swindon on February 26th, taking SWR's 701 023 into store. *Colin Pidgeon*







GBRf

On February 14th, Class 66 707 arrives at Fiddlers Ferry with an empty rake of wagons from Doncaster.
Mark Enderby



GB RAILFREIGHT TO RUN DRAX SERVICES EXCLUSIVELY ON HVO IN 2025

GB Railfreight (GBRf), one of the UK's leading transporters of goods for businesses and consumers, has signed a 12-month agreement with leading renewable energy company Drax to use Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) for its rail freight services. Throughout 2025, GBRf will operate its rail freight services from The Port of Liverpool and The Port of Tyne to Drax Power Station in Selby, Yorkshire, exclusively on HVO.

Since 2016, GB Railfreight's trains have moved over 15m tonnes of sustainable biomass between Peel Ports, Liverpool and Drax Power Station in Selby, Yorkshire. The biomass hauled by these 10,000 train journeys – equivalent to three journeys per day – helps Drax Power Station to provide enough power for up to 4 million homes and businesses.

The Selby site provides around 8% of the UK's renewable energy and c.4% of the country's total electricity usage. These services play a critical role in supporting the UK energy security and transition to net zero.

This HVO agreement is another milestone in GB Railfreight delivering its decarbonisation strategy, with it recently announcing that its Class 99 locomotives will run solely on electricity or renewable fuels like HVO.

Marketed as one of the 'world's greenest fuels', HVO is synthetically produced through the hydro-treatment process using vegetable oils or animal fats, this significantly reduces the harmful carbon dioxide (CO_2) and nitrogen oxide (NO_x) emissions when used in diesel locomotives.

John Smith OBE, Chief Executive Officer at GB Railfreight, said: "We've had a strong relationship with Drax for over twelve years and I'm delighted that, together, we've agreed to use HVO to deliver our services. This is one of many initiatives within GB Railfreight's carbon reduction plan that will support the UK Government achieve its ambitions to make the UK a clean energy superpower."

Mark Gibbens, Head of Logistics at Drax, said: "This agreement marks an important step in our commitment to sustainability and innovation in transport. By exclusively using HVO for rail services, we are reducing our supply chain emissions and supporting the transition to cleaner, more sustainable energy solutions.

We are proud to continue our long-standing partnership with GB Railfreight, helping drive both energy security and the UK's decarbonisation goals forward."

GBRf

Class 60 096 rolls down from Coppull Hall on February 28th with a Ribblehead to Tuebrook stone train. *John Sloane*

The cement working from Clitheroe to Avonmouth passes Euxton on February 17th with Class 66 766 in charge. *John Sloane*

Class 66 766 passes Bradley at the head of the Clitheroe to Avonmouth cement working on February 19th. *John Sloane*







Class 60 021 thunders through Balshaw Lane Junction on March 4th with the Ribblehead to Tuebrook stone train.
John Sloane

Grand Central

Class 180 108 ‘Hart of the North’ arrives at a busy platform 1 at Thirsk, with the 12:30 Sunderland to London King’s Cross service on February 3rd. *Paul Senior*

Greater Anglia

Class 720 503 is seen sat in the parcels platform at Stafford on February 18th on a test run from Nuneaton. *Michael Lynam*

Great Western Railway

On February 4th, power car No. 43042 passes Burngullow Junction with 2P16 13:15 Penzance - Plymouth with 43198 on the rear. *Barry Beeston*

Great Western Railway

Class 150 246 is sat waiting to depart St. Erth on February 8th with 2A49 20:05 St. Erth - St. Ives service.
Barry Beeston

Great Western Railway

Class 57 603, with defective 57 605 on the rear, working 5Z77 Long Rock TMD - Laira T.& R.S.M.D. approaches Burngullow Junction on February 8th. *Barry Beeston*

The 2C22 13:48 Plymouth - Penzance operated by power cars Nos. 43092 and 43188 passes the 2P24 15:15 Penzance - Plymouth with 43042 and 43198 on the viaduct at Hayle on February 8th. *Barry Beeston*

PowercarNo.43189speedsthroughadownpour with 2P15 12:50 Penzance - Plymouth passing approaching Burngullow Junction with 43156 on the rear on February 4th. *Barry Beeston*







Great Western Railway

Power car No. 43004 is sat awaiting departure from St. Erth with 2P95 19:30 Penzance - Plymouth with 43093 on the rear on February 8th. *Barry Beeston*

Great Western Railway

On January 30th, power car No. 43092 leading 2E26 18:15 Penzance - Exeter St. Davids is sat waiting time at Bodmin Parkway with 43188 on the rear. *Barry Beeston*



Power car No. 43188 approaches Bodmin Parkway with 2P08 08:50 Penzance - Plymouth with 43092 on the rear on February 7th. *Barry Beeston*



Power car No. 43188 approaches the Old Engine House at Scorrier whilst operating 2P26 15:48 Penzance - Plymouth with 43092 on the rear on February 8th. *Barry Beeston*



Great Western Railway

Class 800 313 passes Ashbury crossing on February 6th working 1B16 London Paddington to Cardiff Central. *Ken Mumford*



Class 387 166 and 387 143 on 1L13 Cardiff to London Paddington are seen at Swindon on February 17th. *Ken Mumford*



On February 1st, Class 802 103 is seen at Swindon working 1D68 Bristol to Oxford service. *Ken Mumford*



Hull Trains

Class 802 304 calls at Doncaster on February 13th working a London King's Cross to Hull service. *Michael Lynam*

L.N.E.R.

Class 91 114 approaches Doncaster on February 13th working a London King's Cross to Leeds service. *Michael Lynam*



Wildlife is returning to a restored area of wetland in County Durham thanks to funding provided by LNER.

The Great North Fen restoration is a long-term project managed by Durham Wildlife Trust which is bringing back grassland, fens, ponds and wet woodland to a site near the River Skerne in southern County Durham.

Ricknall Carrs, which is just north of Darlington station and can be seen from LNER services travelling along the East Coast Main Line, had historically been an area of wetland since the ice age. However, the need for agricultural land in the nineteenth century saw the area drained, leading to the loss of natural habitats that were thousands of years old. The Trust says not only was local wildlife affected, but the drained areas exposed lowland peat which emits carbon as it degrades, contributing to global climate change.

Durham Wildlife Trust successfully applied to the LNER Customer and Community Investment Fund (CCIF) for funding to help towards the restoration of the agricultural land, and to establish the Great North Fen Habitat. The project aimed to reseed grassland, plant new wetland plants, restore hedgerows and provide new pond environments for invertebrates, which would in turn attract breeding birds and mammals such as otters and water voles back to the area.

Jim Cokill, Durham Wildlife Trust Director, said: "The work funded by LNER is the first step in delivering the vision for the Great North Fen, an area of wildlife rich wetlands, woodlands and farmland that could extend over 850 hectares. Partners like LNER are helping to deliver nature's recovery at a landscape scale and creating better environments for wildlife and people."

Rachael Wilson, Community Investment Manager for LNER, said: "The Great North Fen restoration is such an inspiring project and is closely aligned with our own aims of being better for people, places and planet. Restoring these habits not only benefits the wider environment, but also the local community, with new volunteers getting involved to help restore nature. LNER is incredibly proud to support Durham Wildlife Trust in its ambition to bring this area back to its former glory."

L.N.E.R.

Class 801 204 ‘Our Planet’ is seen at Doncaster on February 13th with a service to Leeds. *Michael Lynam*

On February 13th, Class 91 101 ‘Flying Scotsman’ approaches Doncaster working a service to York. *Michael Lynam*

Class 801 228 ‘Century’ arrives at Doncaster with a London King’s Cross to Edinburgh service on February 13th. *Michael Lynam*







Network Rail

Class 97 304 and 37 405 working 6C56 09:50 Aberystwyth - Chirk Kronaspan are seen at Gobowen on January 25th. *Phil Martin*

On February 11th, power cars Nos. 43303 and 43357 working 1Q15 Derby via the world to Landore (Swansea) passes Purton (Collins Lane) crossing, running just about on time. *Ken Mumford*

On February 3rd, Class 37 610 stands at Swindon working 0Z37 Derby (Network Rail) to Reading Triangle Sidings. *Colin Pidgeon*







Network Rail

Class 37 610 leads the return leg from Penzance of 1Q18 04:16 Reading Triangle Sidings - Paignton via Penzance passing Burngullow Junction with 37 057 on the rear on February 7th. *Barry Beeston*

Class 153 311 working 2Q70 Derby RTC to Bolton heads through a wet Stafford on February 8th. *Richard Hargreaves*





Network Rail

A Slateford - Crewe test train heads south through Acton Bridge on February 26th. Power car No. 43257 leads with 43357 bringing up the rear. *Jeff Nicholls*



Network Rail's VIU 1, Class 153 311, working 2Q30 11:55 Derby R.T.C.(Network Rail) to Derby R.T.C.(Network Rail) via a return run over the East West route passes Northampton on February 18th. *Derek Elston*



On February 5th, Class 37 610 heads through Leamington Spa working 0Z39 Reading Triangle to Derby RTC. *Richard Hargreaves*



Rail Adventure

Power cars Nos. 43423 and 43467 with four Romic group trailers form 5E08 10:54 Kidderminster (SVR) to Welwyn Garden City and were pictured at Derby on a sunny February 28th. *Barry Longson*



Rail Adventure

Whistling happily away to themselves, Class 20 007 and 20 205 are hauled through Acton Bridge on February 26th by Rail Adventure's 43480 and 43468. The consist was en route from Carlisle to the Severn Valley Railway at Kidderminster. *Jeff Nicholls*

Power cars Nos. 43480 and 43468 with a pair of barrier wagons and with Class 20 007 and 20 205 on the rear, head through Euxton on a working from Carlisle Upperby to Kidderminster on February 26th. *John Sloane*

Power cars Nos. 43467 and 43423 lead barrier vehicles Nos. 96602 and 96607 with power cars 43468 and 43480 on the rear pass Golborne on February 12th. *Jeff Nicholls*







Rail Operations Group/Europhoenix

Class 37 218 hauling barrier coach 975974, Class 321 318, 321 328 and barrier coach 975978 working 5Q64 09:27 Wembley Yard - Newport Docks passes Swindon on March 4th. *Colin Pidgeon*

Class 37 510 'Orion' working 5Q36, the 13:02 Willesden T.M.D to Widnes Transport Tech delivering London Overground's Class 378 229 for a refresh heads through Northampton on February 25th. *Derek Elston*

On February 24th, Class 37 884 'Cepheus' with 730 226 in tow passes Northampton with 5Q72, the 08:30 Gascoigne Wood Sidings to Wembley InterCity Depot. *Derek Elston*







TransPennine Express

Class 802 208 stands at Carlisle with 1S46 10:04 Manchester Airport to Edinburgh service on February 1st. *Derek Elston*

Class 802 212 glides through Patricroft on March 1st with the 08:23 Liverpool to York service. *Lee Stanford*

Class 397 005 arrives at Oxenholme with 1M86 11:03 Glasgow Central - Manchester Airport service on February 18th. *John Balaam*







TransPennine Express

Class 397 003 and 397 008 on a Longsight to Doncaster move, pass Moore on February 24th. *Mark Enderby*



Class 397 003 races past Balshaw Lane Junction on March 5th with a working from Liverpool to Glasgow Central. *John Sloane*



CAF Civity EMU Class 397 005 stands at Carlisle working 1M86 11:07 Glasgow Central to Manchester Airport on February 1st. *Derek Elston*



Transport for Wales

On February 6th, Class 197 114 is seen shortly after passing Winwick Junction with the 12:25 Manchester Airport to Llandudno service. *Lee Stanford*



Class 67 020 working 1W55 08:53 Cardiff Central - Manchester Piccadilly at Kemps Eye, Shrewsbury on January 29th. *Phil Martin*



Class 197 112 calls at Manchester Piccadilly, working 1D39 14:25 Manchester Airport - Llandudno service on February 18th. *John Balaam*



Transport for Wales

Class 67 013 brings the 10:30 Manchester Piccadilly to Cardiff service into platform 6 at Crewe on February 6th. *Barry Longson*

Class 197 122 and 197 021 form a 5 car set working the 07:01 from Milford Haven to Manchester Piccadilly on February 27th seen passing Heaton Norris Junction. *Barry Longson*

On February 8th, Class 158 831 calls at Telford Central working a service to Birmingham International. *Richard Hargreaves*







Transport for Wales

Class 67 020 runs past Heaton Norris on February 27th with the 10:53 from Cardiff to Manchester service. *Barry Longson*

Class 67 008 passes Bayston Hill with 1W55 08:53 Cardiff Central - Manchester Piccadilly service on February 28th. *Keith Davies*

Class 67 015 working 1W55 08:53 Cardiff Central - Manchester Piccadilly heads past Burgs Lane, Baystan Hill on January 30th. *Phil Martin*







Transport for Wales

Class 197 051 and 197 120 pass All Stretton on February 28th working 1V38 Manchester Piccadilly - Carmarthen service. *Phil Martin*

Class 67 010 is seen at Kempseye with 1V39 10:30 Manchester Piccadilly - Cardiff Central on February 28th. *Keith Davies*

Class 197 102 passes Sharpstones Lane on January 25th working 1V40 11:30 Manchester Piccadilly - Swansea service. *Phil Martin*







Transport for Wales

Class 67 010 is seen at Burgs Lane on February 28th working 1V39 10:30 Manchester Piccadilly - Cardiff Central. *Phil Martin*

On February 28th, Class 197 051 and 197 120 pass Burgs Lane with 1V39 09:47 Wilmslow - Fishguard Harbour service. *Keith Davies*

On February 28th, Class 67 008 passes All Stretton working 1W55 08:53 Cardiff Central - Manchester Piccadilly. *Phil Martin*







Transport for Wales

Class 67 014 passes Kempseye with 1W55 08:49 Cardiff Central - Manchester Piccadilly service on February 25th. *Keith Davies*

Class 153 367 and 153 303 arrive into Crewe where they will terminate with 2K46 08:19 service from Shrewsbury on February 21st. *Derek Elston*

Class 67 016 departs Crewe with 1V37 08:30 Manchester Piccadilly to Cardiff Central on February 21st. *Derek Elston*







Units: DMUs and EMUs

Class 710 374 stands at Watford Junction with 2C50 17:48 London Overground departure to London Euston on February 21st.
Derek Elston

Northern's Class 331 027 heads away from the call at Leyland with a Manchester Airport to Blackpool service on February 20th.
John Sloane

Northern's Class 331 020 approaches Coppull Hall with a Blackpool to Liverpool train on March 6th. *John Sloane*







Units: DMUs and EMUs

On a sunny February 6th, Southern/Gatwick Express Class 387 216 is seen passing Swaythling with 12:13 Brighton - Southampton. Since the December 2024 timetable change this train and 14:45 Southampton - Brighton have been routed via Eastleigh for route knowledge purposes. *John Goodrich*

Northern's Class 158 759 passes Horton in Ribblesdale on February 5th with a Leeds - Carlisle service. *Michael Lynam*

LNW Class 350 246 stands at Crewe on February 18th, working 1G47 09:33 Liverpool Lime Street - Birmingham New Street service. *John Balaam*







Units: DMUs and EMUs

On February 6th, Northern's Class 323 234 slows for its booked stop at Cheadle Hulme, while working the 09:46 Crewe to Manchester. *Barry Longson*



Northern's Class 323 242 working 5H70 Allerton to Wolverton heads through Stafford on February 8th. The former West Mids' unit heading for a refresh. *Richard Hargreaves*



Northern's Class 331 030 calls at St. Helens Central with 2C34 Wigan North Western to Liverpool Lime Street on February 15th. *Brian Dobbs*



Units: DMUs and EMUs

Northern's Class 156 464 approaches Rainford with 2N97 Headbolt Lane to Blackburn service on February 3rd. *Brian Dobbs*



Northern's Class 195 130 waits time at Oxenholme on February 18th working 2C06 09:32 to Windermere. *John Balaam*



SWR Class 458/4 units continue to make test runs to Basingstoke. Two empty container flats on 05:08 Garston - Southampton Maritime Maritime enabled Class 458 419 to be photographed as the leading unit on 11:19 Bournemouth Depot - Basingstoke as it passed St. Denys on February 4th. *John Goodrich*



Units: DMUs and EMUs

The vintage Northern Class 150 Sprinters are not often seen at Crewe but on February 27th, Class 150 114 was recorded during a signal stop as it returned to home territory following attention at Wolverton works. *Lee Stanford*

Still carrying the original LNWR livery, Class 350 242 departs from Stafford on February 18th with a Liverpool Lime Street to Birmingham service. *Lee Stanford*

On February 13th, Northern's Class 323 218 (stiill in WM livery) is seen at the buffer stops at Manchester Piccadilly. *Michael Lynam*







Units: DMUs and EMUs

On February 7th, Northern's Class 156 461 leads a Blackburn to Headbolt Lane service at Upholland. *John Sloane*



Northern's Class 323 207, freshly repainted from its former West Mids' livery, waits to depart Manchester Piccadilly with a service to Hadfield on February 13th. *Michael Lynam*



Northern's Class 331 111 waits to depart Leyland working a Blackpool North - Liverpool Lime Street service on February 26th. *Michael Lynam*



Units: DMUs and EMUs

Northern's Class 195 109 passes Golborne Junction on February 12th with a Barrow in Furness service. *Jeff Nicholls*

The mass of unglazed metal casts strong shadows on LNW's Class 350 118 as it stands in platform 3 at Crewe on February 27th before departing with the 16:33 to Stafford.
Lee Stanford

On February 12th, Northern's Class 150 148 is ready to depart the bay platform at Rochdale with the 11:52 stopping service to Blackburn.
Bryan Roberts





Units: DMUs and EMUs

On February 5th, West Mids' Class 172 344 and 172 007 depart Birmingham Moor St. working 2S29 Kidderminster to Stratford service. *Richard Hargreaves*

On February 12th, Northern's Class 769 448 is ready to depart Deansgate on a Southport to Manchester Oxford Road service. *Michael Lynam*

Merseyrail's Class 777 028 waits to depart Chester with a service to Liverpool Central on February 27th. *Michael Lynam*







Units: DMUs and EMUs

London Overground's Class 710 379 rolls into Watford Junction with 2D95, the 16:57 from London Euston on February 21st.
Derek Elston



Northern's Class 150 110 crosses the Trent and Mersey Canal near Northwich on March 1st with a Manchester - Chester service.
Jeff Nicholls



South Western Railway's Class 159 108 and 159 018 on the 1L37 London Waterloo to Exeter service pass through Grateley on February 18th. *Michael Bennett*



Units: DMUs and EMUs

Merseyrail's Stadler built Class 777 017 is seen on the approach to Hooton on February 6th with a service to Ellesmere Port.
Barry Longson

West Midland's Class 196 004 stands at Leamington Spa on February 7th ready to depart with 2G81, the 13:40 to Nuneaton.
Derek Elston

London Northwestern's Class 350 110 and 350 125 arrive at Northampton with the 10:48 departure as 1Y28 Birmingham New Street to London Euston service on February 18th.
Derek Elston







Units: DMUs and EMUs

With dark clouds over the Pennines, a lucky patch of sun illuminates Northern's Class 769 442 in the bay at Stalybridge, as it awaits to depart with the 11:52 to Southport on February 25th. *Barry Longson*



Northern's Class 195 116 passes Cherry Tree station with a York to Blackpool service on March 1st. *John Sloane*



Northern's Class 195 125 approaches Cherry Tree with a Blackpool to York service on March 1st. *John Sloane*



Glasgow Underground

New Stadler unit No. 303 is seen in operation on January 25th.
Kevin McCormick

Nottingham Trams (NET)

Bombardier Incentro AT6/5 supertram No. 205 departs from Nottingham Station tram stop, bound for Clifton South, on February 13th. *Ian Callander*

Toton Lane-bound Bombardier Incentro AT6/5 supertram No. 211 pauses at Old Market Square tram stop on February 13th. *Ian Callander*

Alstom Citadis 302 supertram No. 230 of Nottingham Express Transit negotiates the sharp right-turn into Lace Market tram stop en route to Toton Lane on February 13th. *Ian Callander*







Sheffield Supertram

Sheffield Supertram No. 124 approaches the railway station stop with a service to Herdings Park on February 28th. *Barry Longson*

Sheffield Supertram

Sheffield Supertram No. 116 calls at Sheffield station with a service to Halfway on February 18th.
John Balaam



National Rail



Network Rail's Civil Engineers unit No. DR76821 passes Winwick with 6X81 Gresty Lane Sidings to Gresty Lane Sidings on February 18th.
Brian Dobbs

Blue plaque erected by Greater Anglia at Ingatestone station in honour of Dorothy Wadham

Greater Anglia passengers can now see a blue plaque at Ingatestone station in honour of Dorothy Wadham who founded Wadham College, Oxford. Staff collaborated with the Essex Women's Commemorative Project (EWCP) to install the blue plaque at the station, in honour of the founder of Wadham College. The land on which the station stands was once owned by Sir William Petre, father of Dorothy. In 1846, a new ticket office that reflected the architecture of Ingatestone Hall, was built. The rear of the building was then rejuvenated by Greater Anglia between 2015 and 2017 after it required significant repairs. Now, in 2025, a blue plaque for Dorothy Wadham has been erected.

Dorothy Wadham was born into a wealthy more than four centuries ago. She was raised by the second wife of Sir William Petre and is likely to have been educated at Ingatestone Hall. In 1609, her husband Nicholas Wadham died leaving his fortune to Dorothy, and strict instructions to endow a college in Oxford. Determined and driven, at the age of 75, she instituted the College in April 1613.

She was the first woman who was not a member of the royal family or titled aristocracy to found a college at either Oxford or Cambridge.

Greater Anglia's Customer and Community Engagement Manager, Alan Neville, said: "We hope that the blue plaque it will add something special to the station, and encourage more passengers to venture out there, read from the history boards and learn about Dorothy's connection with Ingatestone Hall. Erecting this blue plaque during the celebrations for Railway 200 is a great way to highlight how much Greater Anglia values the local community's support for the railways."

The Essex Women's Commemorative Project (EWCP) is a small project team set up in 2021 by the Lord-Lieutenant of Essex. Its aim is to identify inspirational women of Essex who have been overlooked by history and are worthy of visible public recognition.

Fares Advice with RailUK

This month more questions and answers on the complex ticketing system of Britain's Railways.

50 Advanced Ticket Options…

Q: Looking at going from Haddenham to the Leeds area, there are 50 Advanced ticket options, 25 each 1st Class and Standard Class. Why are there so many? Surely a basket of options, say 3 or 4 to cover various times of day would be enough, So 6-8 in total. All have the same ticket restrictions and by definition are limited to LNER and Connections. Around the £50 mark, they are £1 different in price.

Isn't so many variants an unnecessary complexity albeit as a customer, I wouldn't see all these of course so less complex for me.

A: Advance tickets are sold by algorithm and availability, if you try to book an advance ticket you'll get one of these fares, you don't get to choose which one. BR Fares shows the totality of the fares loaded into the database. Obviously for non-advance tickets you can choose specific ones or ask them them explicitly at a ticket office.

Oyster Auto Top-Up Failed for 7 Months

Q: My partner's Oyster failed to open the barriers recently, giving error code 30. She logged on to the TFL website to check why this might be, and discovered that her auto top-up card payments have been failing, since August 2024. It looks like the payment card used has just been forgotten by TFL, as there is no payment card saved on the website, and her payment card hasn't expired or been cancelled.

So for the past seven months her Oyster has been being topped up every few weeks, but the charges have not been made to her payment card, meaning that she now owes TFL around £500.

She's inclined to just pay it straight away, she's not out of pocket overall as these payments should have been taken previously, and she should have noticed they weren't. But it's obviously a bit of a shock to come across a £500 bill out of the blue.

My question is more out of interest really, about how this could happen - has anyone heard of any similar instances? Why would TFL let this continue for 7 months, extending this much credit without blocking the card or trying to get in touch? The TFL website even states 'We have not yet attempted to contact you regarding the following failed top-ups'.

Worth a complaint, or should we just be grateful they've not instructed a debt collection agency yet?

A: Probably due to the TfL Cyber Security Incident where the entire payments and Oysters systems were brought down. They have now been rebuilt or restored. This is a relatively recent development.

I've just found the same thing when my Oyster wasn't accepted today - the £20 top ups haven't been debited from my account since 19th August. I'm sure I was seeing a top up message at the barrier. TfL website says I owe £340 - which I can pay.

As an aside, I had a BT Charge card (remember those?) which didn't charge me for calls made. When I realised that the quarterly bill hadn't included the charges, I called BT. They said, oh yes our mistake, we will write it off.

Shortly after, BT ended the Chargecard service!

Ticket Advice for All

Advice on rail ticketing is available on railforums.co.uk in the 'Fares, Tickets & Routeing' section. We believe this to be the best source of UK rail fares advice available anywhere, as we have a team of people who are familiar with the complex rail fares system who can help you. Never pay over the odds again, and ask us if you need help! See you there!

National Rail



On February 25th, Class 69 012 passes Purton (Collins Lane) working 5Q91 Long Marston to Wimbledon Park, Depot Sidings, taking SWR's 701 060 out of store. *Ken Mumford*



Network Rail's track machine No. DR76921 leads a working from Gresty Lane to Carnforth past Coppull on February 19th. *John Sloane*

Greater Anglia is Train Operator of the Year for the 3rd time in 6 years

Greater Anglia has been named Train Operator of the Year at the Rail Business Awards 2025. It is the third time in six years that the company has received the accolade, having won the award in 2020 and 2021, then taking the runners up spot in 2022, 2023 and 2024, before regaining the award in 2025.

The judges said: "Greater Anglia has consistently delivered a robust and reliable service for its users over the past year. While the judges felt the operator had been dealt a strong hand thanks to recent investment in an all-new fleet, the company has played it well, reflected in its partnership with Network Rail that has delivered industry-leading punctuality. Many congratulations!"

It also follows on from GA being named Passenger Operator of the Year award at the National Rail Awards last September.

Greater Anglia has been the most punctual operator in the UK since April 2023 with annual performance at 94.1% using both the long-standing public performance measure (PPM - which measures arrival at destination within 5 minutes) and the more demanding "Time to 3" metric (which measures arrivals of every train at every station it serves). Its best performing routes are even achieving annual performance of between 95.0% and 98.3% on the PPM measure.

The company has transformed travel across its network, replacing its entire fleet, with brand new, state of the art, more comfortable trains, with Wi-Fi, plug points, USB points, air conditioning and improved accessibility. They also offer more seats, provide better reliability and service resilience, and have enabled additional services and quicker journey times to be introduced across its network – plus new, direct services, such as from Norwich to Stansted Airport.

At the annual awards event, Greater Anglia (GA) also won the Marketing and Communications Excellence award for its Stansted Express marketing campaign. It was also a finalist in the Sustainability and Environmental Excellence award and again in the Marketing and Communications Excellence award for its Revenue Protection campaign.

Martin Beable, Managing Director, Greater Anglia said: "Everyone at Greater Anglia is very proud to have won the Train Operator of the Year award for the third time in six years. Right across our company, colleagues are passionate about doing their best for the customers and communities we serve. With excellent performance, a commitment to customer service, high quality new trains, and effective partnerships with other rail industry organisations and wider stakeholders, we're fully focused on maintaining our high standards.

"It was also pleasing to see further recognition with the Marketing and Communications Excellence award for our Stansted Express marketing campaign.

"We're grateful to key partners, such as Network Rail, the Department for Transport, Stadler, Alstom, community rail partnerships, station adopters, other rail industry organisations and regional stakeholders who all play a key role in helping us provide a high-quality service. We will continue to work to keep up our high standards and keep on improving – always focused on delivering the best train service we can for customers, communities, and wider stakeholders across our region."

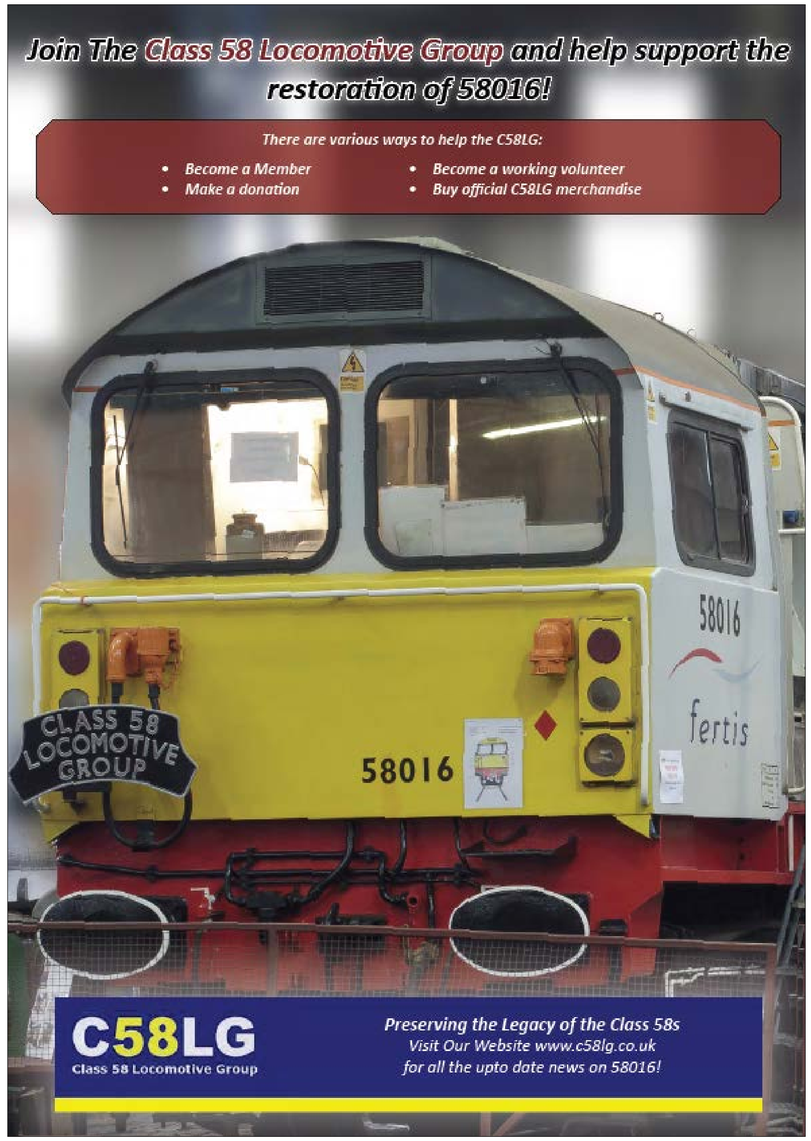
The judges' citation for GA's other award win (the Marketing and Communications Excellence award for its Stansted Express marketing campaign) was as follows:

"Greater Anglia needed to create a memorable creative campaign that would raise awareness and increase usage of the Stansted Express, that would stand out in the airport and beyond. The judges felt this was a really well planned and executed communications campaign with impressive results! Well done to them!"

In the last year, Greater Anglia has also won the Passenger Operator of the Year, Fleet Achievement of the Year and Large Station of the Year (for Cambridge) awards at the National Rail Awards, a Golden Spanner award for the excellent performance of its four car bi-mode trains at the rail industry fleet reliability awards, the Net Zero Pioneer award at the Spotlight Rail Awards for its progress in reducing its carbon emissions and operating a more sustainable railway, and three Golden Whistles awards for its high standards of punctuality and reliability.

Class 92 043 and 156 501 are seen at Glasgow Central on February 5th.
Kevin McCormick





Greater Anglia to provide an hourly Sunday service for West Runton from December 2025

Greater Anglia will be providing an hourly Sunday service to/from West Runton (between Cromer and Sheringham) on the North Norfolk coast from December 2025, fulfilling local aspirations for a more frequent Sunday service – and doubling journey options from the current two hourly frequency.

Local stakeholders and residents are keen to see an hourly service frequency at the station, which is already in place on Mondays to Saturdays, extended to seven days a week, so Greater Anglia has responded, as soon as practically possible, to add in extra services from the December 2025 timetable change on December 14th onwards.

The attractive village has also become popular for walkers using the Coastal Path, so the additional stops will provide additional options for those using public transport to get to and from their walks.

The area, although especially popular in the summer, is now becoming an all-year around destination for short breaks and day trips, served by a very reliable and attractive rail service on the Bittern Line between Norwich and Sheringham, using Greater Anglia's high quality bi-mode trains. Annual punctuality consistently averages over 95% and the new, longer, more comfortable trains that were introduced in 2019 have markedly improved the journey experience for passengers using the line.

The route, and the communities and attractions along it, are also promoted by the Bittern Line Community Rail Partnership, which has been helping to support and develop the line, consistent with local aspirations, since it was founded in 1997.

Jonathan Denby, Head of Corporate Affairs for Greater Anglia said:"We are pleased to be able to confirm that from this December West Runton will benefit from an hourly service on Sundays, giving it an hourly service seven days a week. Wherever practical, we try to develop and improve services in line with local needs, so we're glad that we can provide this enhancement, which follows local feedback about service aspirations.

"We will keep on working to build the success of the Bittern Line. The progressive improvements we have made over the last 30 years have helped increase passenger numbers on the line from around 200,000 journeys a year in 1994 to over 700,000 now."

National Rail



Oil and Water: BR Standard 4 No. 76079.
Gerald Nicholl

Loco Fleet List Ten

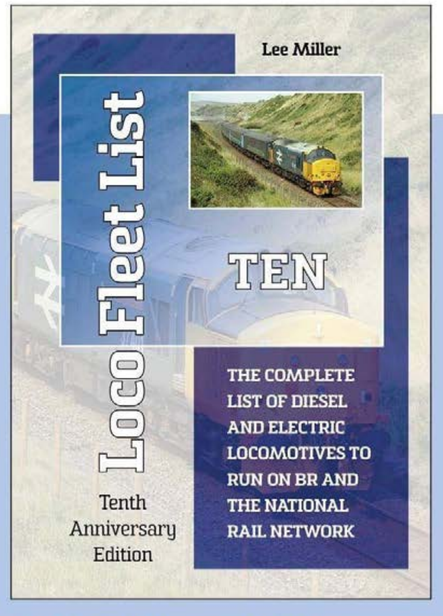
This publication gives a reference to all the Diesel & Electric Locomotives which have operated on Britain's railways from the early experimental era right up until the present day.

This information has been put together to give an easy reference to the numbering and official naming of each locomotive and includes all withdrawn, preserved and currently operating locos in TOPS classification order.

Features:

- Diesel Locomotives
- DC Electric & Electro-Diesel Locos
- AC Electric & Bi-Mode Locos
- Eurotunnel Locomotives
- Unclassified Locomotives





Loco Fleet List Ten is available via mail order for just £12.99 plus £1.99 P&P with a cheque or postal order made payable to: L Miller and sent to: 7 Wood Street, Warrington, WA1 3AY or using Paypal when visiting the Loco Fleet Shop website.

Web:www.locofleetshop.co.uk Email:lee@locofleetshop.co.uk

This special anniversary edition has undergone a complete rewrite to include scrappage dates, locations and allocations of all preserved and operational locomotives now in a perfect bound book

GTR offers 9,000 train tickets for children to celebrate bicentenary of rail at historic Bluebell Railway



Britain's biggest train operator, Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR), has joined forces with one of the country's finest preserved heritage rail routes, the Bluebell Railway, to celebrate 200 years of train travel.

GTR is offering 9,000 school children and college students from Surrey and Greater London, free rail tickets to East Grinstead with Southern and Thameslink for educational visits to 'Railway 200 @ Bluebell Railway' this summer.

The hope is the visits attract a new generation of youngsters from all backgrounds into the industry.

The school visits, every Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday from June 2nd to July 2nd, will focus on science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) learning with a chance to see historic steam engines in action.

There will be history workshops delivered by industry experts, displays of cutting-edge rail technology highlighting the future of rail, and educational activities designed by the London Transport Museum.

GTR and Network Rail staff are lending their expertise for rail safety lessons and advice about careers in the industry.

Angie Doll, Chief Executive Officer at GTR, said: "Two hundred years ago the modern railway came into existence and utterly transformed our society. The inventions, science and technology that created it makes for fascinating learning, which the Bluebell Railway is the perfect partner to deliver in a fun, engaging way. Working together, we hope to educate and inspire young people in rail's past and future. We want to attract a new generation from all backgrounds into an industry with a rich heritage that remains relevant today. The railway is great for the climate, and helps our local communities thrive."

Neil Glaskin, Chairman of the Bluebell Railway, said: "We're excited to be working with the rail industry to celebrate Railway 200. Education visits are an important part of our Railway 200 event, which runs from June to September. GTR's generous donation of free travel tickets will make education visits even more affordable for schools close to Southern stations in London and Surrey."

National Rail

Govia Thameslink Railway brings in extra trains in readiness for improved December timetable

Additional fleet of 30 x Class 379 trains supports significant improvements for Great Northern and Thameslink commuters in December 2025

More services, faster journeys and better connections between London and stations on route to Cambridge and King's Lynn

An additional fleet of 30 modern trains will help Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR) give its Great Northern and Thameslink passengers faster journeys from key destinations, better connections at the end of the year, and more space for passengers where it's needed most.

The Electrostars are leased from owners Porterbrook, the UK's leading rolling stock financier and asset management company, which acquired the fleet from Akiem in March 2024.

The first two four-carriage units (numbers 379002 and 022) have entered service on February 10th as an eight-carriage train on the existing 17:24 from King's Cross to Letchworth Garden City service. The following morning they operated the 07:45 from Letchworth Garden City to King's Cross and will continue to run these two services each weekday. More 379s will come on stream later.

The Class 379 trains, originally built in 2011 for Stansted Express, feature up-to-date customer information systems, accessibility features and plug sockets for charging devices. The units have been reactivated by GTR with support from Porterbrook and Alstom.

Faster journeys, better connections and additional peak services

The major new timetable being introduced in December will take advantage of a £4bn decade-long series of upgrades made to the route to introduce new long-distance services to London from the North of England.

GTR has made sure there will be significant benefits for its Great Northern and Thameslink customers travelling to and from stations between King's Lynn, Cambridge and London, including those using stations on the Hertford Loop via Hertford North.

The December 2025 changes for Thameslink and Great Northern customers include:

Three more peak time services and seats for commuters between Cambridge, Letchworth Garden City and London King's Cross, including a new Letchworth to London King's Cross stopping peak time service, calling additionally at New Barnet.

New departures at Hertford North, Bayford, Cuffley and Crew's Hill in the morning peak. Up to seven minutes faster journey times between London King's Cross and King's Lynn, Ely, Cambridge and stations along this route, including Foxton, Knebworth and Welwyn North.

New early morning peak time service between Peterborough and London King's Cross.

Extra stops at Knebworth on morning peak Thameslink services from Peterborough to Horsham.

More evenly spaced departure times so customers don't need to wait as long for a train.

Provision for all Thameslink and Great Northern services between Cambridge and central London to call at the new Cambridge South station when it opens.

The introduction of the recently acquired fleet of Class 379s will also provide sufficient capacity to release a number of existing Class 387 Great Northern trains to support and strengthen passenger services south of London on Southern and across the South East on Southeastern.

GTR Engineering Director Steve Lammin said: "These extra trains we have started to bring into service are a real demonstration of GTR working with partners across the rail industry to give passengers extra services and better journeys right across the South East. They're supporting our steady recovery from the effects of the pandemic.

"Here, on the route north of London to Cambridge and King's Lynn, we've worked with our partners across the rail industry to develop this new timetable for December 2025 that capitalises on the massive £4bn decade-long investment in the East Coast Main Line.

"For our Great Northern and Thameslink customers travelling to and from stations between London, Hertford North, Cambridge and King's Lynn that will mean more passenger space at peak times where it is needed most, quicker trips to and from London from key destinations and more evenly spaced departure times so customers don't need to wait as long for a train.

"The timetable will also ensure we are ready for new services to be introduced in the future, for example at Cambridge South station when it opens."

Stefan Rose, Chief Investment Officer at Porterbrook, said: "I'm delighted that more of our Electrostars are entering service with GTR. When we acquired the fleet from Akiem last year we were confident that they would be perfectly suited to GTR's requirements, and it's excellent to see them back out on the network to serve passengers for many more years to come."



Photo: Class 379002 and 022 at Letchworth Garden City on its inaugural passenger service with Great Northern. ©GTR

National Rail

On February 7th, Class 47 848 and 47 746 are seen working 1Z95 Reading Train Care Depot to South Marston Euro Terminal and then 1Z96 South Marston Euro Terminal to Milton Keynes. This was a Private Business Charter. GWR will be using the Terminal again for stock storage as work on the new station at Old Oak Common progresses. *Tim Hall and Colin Pidgeon*





On February 7th, Class 57 312 top'n'tail with 57 603 on 5Z57 Reading Train Care Depot to South Marston Terminal GWR empty Sleeper train which returned as 5Z58 South Marston Euro Terminal to Reading Train Care Depot. *Tim Hall and Colin Pidgeon*





National Rail



SB Rail track machine DR77903 sits in Chester Yard on a cold February 6th.
Barry Longson

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Bridge successfully installed at Darlington station as part of £140m transformation

A 50-tonne footbridge has been installed by Network Rail at Darlington station – marking a major milestone in the £140m transport hub transformation.

The enclosed, step-free pedestrian bridge links the existing grade II-listed station with the new platforms 5 and 6 and eastern concourse building.

The bridge was fixed into place over the weekend after arriving on Friday February 21st in two parts – one weighing 32 tonnes and measuring 31 metres in length, the other 18 tonnes and 16 metres.

A hole had to be created in the Victorian station's roof to allow the bridge to slide into place – using a 750-tonne crane which was purpose built at the site by a smaller crane.

Network Rail teams and partners are delivering £98m of Department for Transport-funded rail enhancements as part of the wider £140m scheme. The upgrades include the new platforms, footbridge and eastern concourse building, as well as upgraded track, points and signalling system.

The bridge's installation is a significant milestone in the project to deliver a modern transport hub, ready to serve passengers for decades to come while also celebrating Darlington's proud heritage as the birthplace of the railways.

The project's target completion date is December 2025 – a fitting close to this year's Railway 200 celebrations marking the 200th anniversary of the first passenger journey.

Luke Durston, Network Rail principal programme sponsor, said: "We're at a crucial and exciting stage in this transformational project, and the successful installation of this footbridge is a significant milestone.

"The site as a whole is really taking shape now, and the bridge provides a prominent visual marker of the progress being made.

"We're grateful to passengers and other station users for their understanding during the disruption caused while this work is undertaken."

Matthew Murr, operations director, BAM UK and Ireland, said: "A huge amount of work has gone into reaching this prominent milestone, and it truly stands as a testament to the hard work, dedication, and unwavering commitment of every single member of the team.

"This success has been made possible through a shared vision and collaboration with our partners from the early development stages, through the planning phases, and into the execution of the work itself. BAM is now looking forward to the next stages of work and continuing a transformation that celebrates Darlington's railway heritage."

Tees Valley Mayor Ben Houchen added: "It's great to see Network Rail's side of this vital project is taking shape. Darlington deserves a station fit for the modern day as a gateway to our brilliant region – and this new bridge going in is a significant moment for the overhaul.

"The extra platforms will open the door to better services across Teesside, Darlington and Hartlepool and strengthen our efforts to get more freight on our railways to boost our vital industries.

"I'm proud our work was handed over to Network Rail on time and on budget – and I'm pleased the project is on target to be complete before the end of this important year."

Steve Wilson, head of stations at LNER, said: "As station operator at Darlington, it's great to see such progress being made around us in transforming this historic station to serve the needs of customers in the 21st century.

"At LNER, we're proud to be playing a crucial part in celebrating the bicentenary of the railway, having already unveiled our special 'Darlington' train that continues to travel up and down the country. The completion of the Darlington station project will be a fitting culmination to a wonderful time of Railway 200 celebrations."



On February 6th, Class 66 025 stands at Wigan Wallgate with a Knowsley - Wilton working. *Mark Enderby*

Awe-inspiring project to restore historic West Highland Line viaduct completed



Network Rail has completed a £3.5 million project to refurbish Awe viaduct near Taynuilt on the Oban branch of the West Highland Line.

The three-span wrought iron viaduct, completed in 1879, carries the railway to Oban over the River Awe, south of Taynuilt.

Work began in Summer 2024, with engineers replacing the existing timber deck which supports the track. The old paint was removed to allow repairs to the structure to be carried out. Once repairs were complete, the viaduct was repainted. This work will extend the life of the viaduct and help Network Rail to run a safe and reliable railway.

Owen Ferry, project manager, Network Rail, said: “We’re delighted to have completed this £3.5m project on Awe viaduct on time and on budget while causing as little disruption as possible.

“This significant investment not only improves the structure’s look but will help extend its life. Work on this scale won’t be required for at least 25 years.

“We know the viaduct sits in a much-loved part of the world and we thank our neighbours and visitors for their understanding while we completed this crucial project.”

National Rail

Network Rail rail grinder Nos. DR79301, DR79302, DR79303 and DR79304 trundle through Northampton running as 4Q01, the 09:56 Rugby Depot Access Line to Tonbridge Engineers Siding on February 10th. *Derek Elston*



£8.9 million pound wheel lathe now in full operation at Allerton depot

As part of a joint investment with Northern, the new wheel lathe at the Allerton TrainCare Centre will make train maintenance more efficient. The machine, affectionately named 'Tina', after the Proud Mary singer, allows for the reshaping, balancing and repairing of wheels without needing to remove them from trains, minimising disruption to passenger services. In collaboration with Northern, Network Rail has introduced this advanced wheel lathe to ensure the smooth operation of the train fleet, making sure train 'wheels keep on turning' seamlessly.

The work to bring the wheel lathe into service began in September 2023, with Network Rail contributing £6.8 million as part of the joint investment with Northern.

This upgrade continues Allerton Depot's history of wheel lathe use, dating back to the 1950s.

Clinton Ralphs, Network Rail North west route sponsor for the project, said: "It's fantastic to see the new tandem wheel lathe now operational at Allerton Depot, significantly improving the efficiency of our wheel turning process.

This joint venture with Northern has allowed us to revive a key aspect of Allerton Depot's history, by installing the new wheel lathe equipment at the depot, giving improved capacity, performance and reliability for Northern. After much anticipation, it's wonderful to witness its arrival, which will undoubtedly enhance the engineering capabilities at the depot."

Jack Commandeur, engineering director at Northern, said: "Tina is a very much welcomed addition to the engineering arsenal and will enable us to repair wheels without having to remove them from the train, which makes the process far more efficient.

"Turning wheels on the lathe extends their life and reduces the costs associated with replacing them. The increase in wheel lathing capacity also means trains will spend less time out of passenger service for maintenance.

"This has been a significant project to deliver requiring perseverance and co-operation on all sides and I am thankful to the team at Network Rail, my colleagues here at Northern and our suppliers for delivering this fabulous new capability."

Engineers at Allerton depot have been receiving training on how to use the new wheel lathe in the last couple of weeks and she will now enter regular service.

Cordel AI-supported LiDAR & Video Imaging delivering Infrastructure Measurements for Network Rail customers

#DERBYGBR DESTINATION DERBY

Cordel, the global rail technology company, is supporting Southeastern's fleet upgrade programme, through the installation of AI-supported Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR) and Video Imaging sensors on NR's Infrastructure Monitoring fleet.

The initial 18-month project, following installation by Loram in Derby, will deliver highly accurate Structure Gauging data to the South East Alliance, formed by train operator Southeastern and NR's Kent Route.

This key asset information will also be provided to rolling stock suppliers, as part of Southeastern's aspirations to acquire new or upgraded trains for passengers on Metro routes.

Steve White, MD of Southeastern, said: "To support growing demand, provide better performance and, crucially, improve accessibility, Southeastern are seeking a new (or upgraded) fleet of trains to deliver our Metro services. Cordel will deploy its automated LiDAR capture and AI-processing services to deliver up-to-date, accurate measurements of our Station Platforms which vary in height and curvature. Cordel's AI makes sense of large volumes of data and quickly, getting insight into the hands of the South East Alliance, rolling stock bidders and Network Rail operations and maintenance teams."

The NR Infrastructure Monitoring (NR-IM) fleet is used by Network Rail to collect critical asset condition data, which informs when asset interventions are optimally scheduled, keeping the railway safe and serving customers with as little disruption as possible.

For the fitment, Cordel chose the proven expertise of Loram, who maintain the NR-IM Fleet in Derby. Loram deployed their experience to schedule the successful fitments within the existing vehicle maintenance downtimes, in amongst the multiple technologies deployed and without missing a single data-gathering shift.

Jason Saxon, Network Rail Director Asset Information, said: "This was a great opportunity to use the existing IM Fleet and its existing recording paths, in conjunction with some proven and easy to fit technology from Cordel, selected by our industry partners in South Eastern, to obtain data they needed to procure the next generation of rolling stock in Kent and ultimately improve the passenger experience. At the same time, Network Rail engineers get the same information to help us better manage the rail infrastructure."

Rebeka Sellick, Business Development Director at Cordel, said: "We are enormously proud to have led and underwritten this deployment of our low maintenance but highly sophisticated AI-supported technology on Network Rail's Infrastructure Monitoring Fleet. One pass on any fitted train along the railway at up to 100mph enables us to collect raw data across the rail corridor (and several metres beyond) that we can turn into measured outputs. We are delighted that the Network Rail Technical Authority has already approved our measurements for asset engineers to rely on."

Cordel's autonomous 'Wave 32' hardware was fitted by Loram to an area just above the driving cabs on two of the existing NR-IM vehicles (DBSOs 9702 & 9703), enhancing the data that can be collected by this specialised fleet during its normal duty cycle.

As the IM Fleet traverses the rail network, the Cordel AI-supported geo-location systems capture highly detailed track position measurements (cant, curvature and track centrelines). Cordel then process their "Point Cloud" data into outputs meeting Network Rail's stringent requirements for structure gauging, track intervals, electrification contact wire position and station platform measurements, as well as measuring both profiles and volumes of trackside vegetation and ballast.

The resulting asset information is 'stamped' with date, time and precise reference location and then automatically uploaded to the Cordel Cloud over 4G WiFi; from there it can be swiftly shared with NR's asset engineers and their Train Operating Company customers

National Rail

GTR's 717 passes ETCS software upgrade test with flying colours

Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR), with Siemens Mobility, has successfully upgraded one of its Class 717 Great Northern trains to the latest specification of the in-cab digital signalling, European Train Control System (ETCS). It's the latest milestone to be achieved in the ground-breaking East Coast Digital Programme. On Monday February 3rd, unit 717020 ran for the first time on the Northern City Line between Moorgate and Finsbury Park using ETCS Baseline 3, Release 2. There were no issues in this empty coaching stock trial. It is anticipated the entire 717 fleet of 25 trains will be upgraded within the next few months. GTR is already operating all its services on the Northern City Line in ETCS, and it is planned that the signals will be physically removed in May.

The industry is working towards the introduction of digital signalling on the East Coast Main Line (ECML) as part of the government-funded East Coast Digital Programme (ECDP). This latest specification of ETCS will become the new baseline for all services operated on it by GTR and other operators, enabling them to make use of the latest digital infrastructure.

Jonathan Daniels, Network Rail's ECDP integration lead, said: "This successful upgrade on GTR's Class 717 fleet establishes a new baseline level of ETCS which will be rolled out across all operators and fleets, providing services at the southern end of the East Coast Main Line. Once again, our Northern City Line pathfinder project is helping pave the way towards the ECML becoming Britain's first intercity mainline to operate under ETCS control."

GTR's head of ERTMS Oly Turner said: "The East Coast Digital Programme will eventually bring huge benefits to GTR and passengers, with a more reliable, more sustainable railway, lower emissions, and even better safety for passengers. Working with our industry colleagues, we've been spearheading the introduction of ETCS and now every one of our Class 717 trains is operating in passenger service using the system on the Northern City Line. Now, through the joint work of many GTR departments, Siemens and Network Rail, we've successful trialled this latest specification of the software. This puts us in great shape for 'signals away' on the Northern City Line in May."

Ben Lane, infrastructure lead and ECDP project director at Siemens Mobility, said: "The Northern City Line project is a great example of how our technology continues to transform rail travel and transport across the UK. With our Siemens Mobility Class 717 trains linked to our very own ETCS software, we're showing how to connect track and train with integrated digital solutions. "Working closely with Network Rail and GTR, we've already seen the benefits of introducing ETCS and when we move to no signals in May, these benefits will grow even further, reducing maintenance, cutting disruptions, and delivering smoother, more reliable journeys."



NIS Group secures 500 new jobs with the launch of Transport, Rail and Infrastructure Academy in Aston

A new specialist infrastructure and rail training centre has been launched in Aston, with employers from multiple infrastructure sectors pledging more than 500 new jobs for learners. NIS Group and City of Wolverhampton College officially unveiled its latest Transport, Rail and Infrastructure Academy (TRIA) site in front of more than 100 people, including Cllr Sharon Thompson, deputy mayor of the West Midlands.
Delegates heard how the leading training provider has partnered with the college to develop the academy and jointly invested £250,000 into transforming the building into a dedicated facility, offering a 15-metre high-speed slab track, 30 metres of conventional track, one high speed set of points, one level crossing barrier and training facilities for civil engineering programmes.

Employers - including Buildforce Solutions, Linsco, Randstad and Danny Sullivan Group - have thrown their support behind the venture, guaranteeing opportunities for people progressing through the courses to work on a host of existing and future construction and rail projects across the region.
In addition, ISS and NIS Group have launched the official training and employment partnership, which will ensure learners interested in rail career opportunities will be offered work across the Network Rail infrastructure.

"Everything we do is focused on helping people secure sustainable long-term jobs," said Davie Carns, chief executive officer and founder of NIS Group. The fact we had over 500 jobs pledged by employers before the centre officially opened shows the urgent need for workers in the infrastructure, rail and construction sectors, not to mention the belief these companies have in our ability to train individuals to industry standards."

He continued: "This is such an incentive for people considering a career in this field. They can immediately see that by embarking on the training with us that there is a guaranteed job at the end of it. We'll make sure that by the time they finish with us they will have the base skills, the qualifications and, in some cases, specialist knowledge of certain disciplines to be an immediate success."

TRIA Aston is the third dedicated academy in the NIS Group's West Midlands portfolio and follows its original base at City of Wolverhampton College's Wellington Road campus in Bilston and the Black Country Innovative Manufacturing Organisation (BCIMO)'s Very Light Rail National Innovation Centre in Dudley.

Up to 1000 people will benefit from entry level courses at Aston to give them qualifications required to access site, whilst hundreds more will train on specialist equipment and tracks to help them progress in infrastructure and rail. This includes small plant and NSAR-accredited courses showing NIS Group's continued commitment to the upskilling and retention of the workforce.

Away from rail and in the highways and construction sector, Buildforce Solutions has pledged 100 jobs to the scheme. Jim Fleming, Director, said: "The skills shortage in the construction and infrastructure industries is well documented which is why facilities like this are really important. Our relationship with NIS Group means we have taken candidates out of the TRIA programme and been able to put them on construction sites almost immediately. We look forward to being able to continue this and strengthening our relationship with NIS Group and City of Wolverhampton College."

A strong commitment to inclusivity means NIS Group will aim to help young people, those with mental health and learning disabilities, the long-term unemployed and former Armed Forces as part of this latest investment. The company's trainers and support team are experienced in providing wraparound support, mentoring and assistance to ensure any obstacles to employment can be overcome.

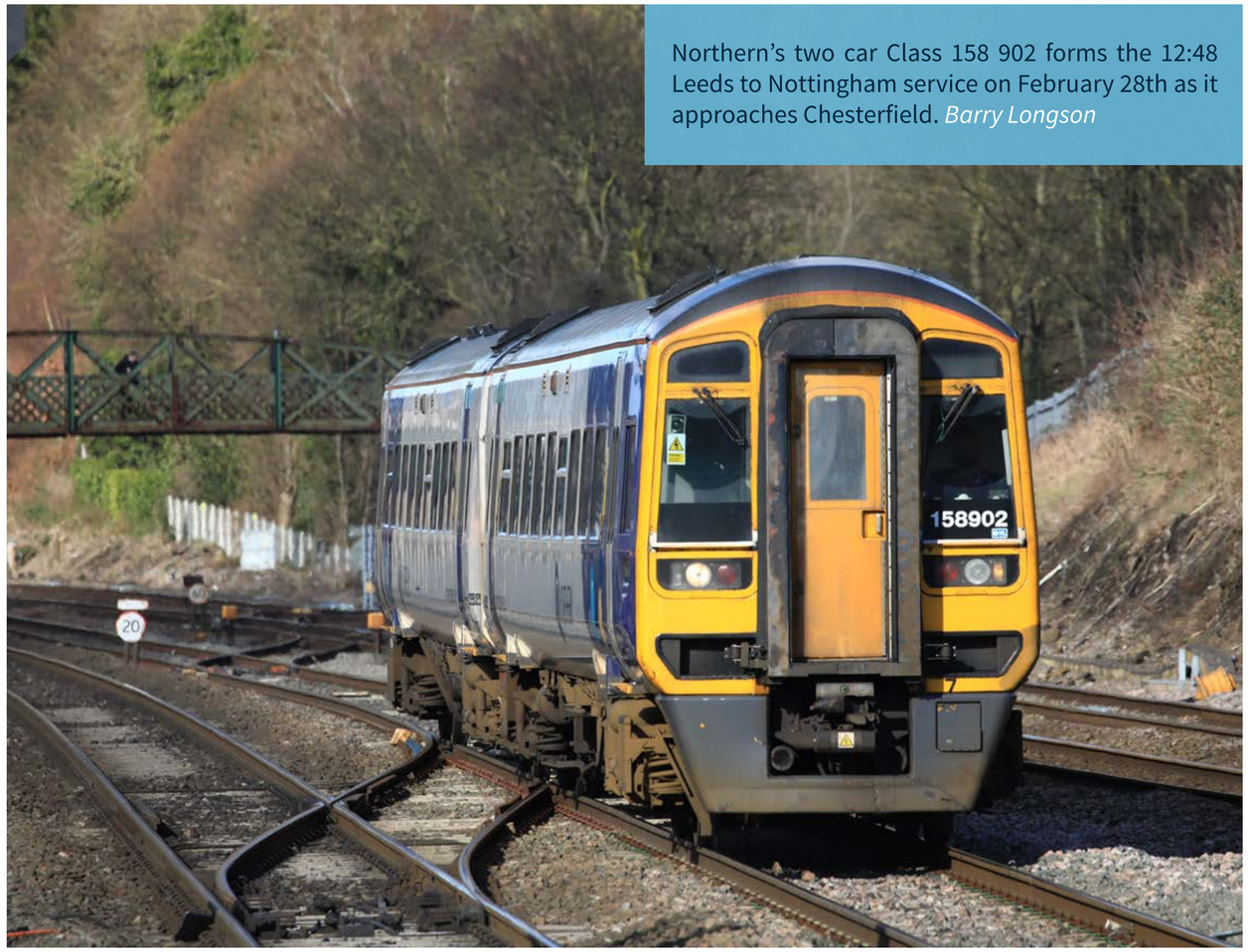
Cllr Sharon Thompson, deputy mayor of the West Midlands, added her support: "We have too many young people out of work in the West Midlands, which is why reducing youth unemployment is a key priority. At a time of huge investment in rail across our region, this academy will get hundreds of young people ready to begin a rewarding career building and supporting the railways of the future."

Peter Merry, deputy principal and chief executive at the college, concluded: "In setting up the Transport and Rail Infrastructure Academy, the partnership between the college and NIS Group is contributing to the regeneration of the region by equipping local people of all ages, abilities and levels of experience with the skills needed to work in the construction and maintenance of train lines, tram routes and stations across the West Midlands and beyond.

"Alongside the existing TRIA sites in Wolverhampton and Dudley, the opening of the third site in Aston is fantastic news as it will enable even more people to access high quality specialist industry-specific training to enable them to work in this priority sector."



Northern's Class 150 105 leads a service from Blackburn to Headbolt Lane into Upholland on March 5th. *John Sloane*



Northern's two car Class 158 902 forms the 12:48 Leeds to Nottingham service on February 28th as it approaches Chesterfield. *Barry Longson*

Vital £15m engineering work to close parts of the Cambrian line for 16 days from mid-March

Passengers are being urged to check before they travel on the Cambrian line from mid-March to early April when Network Rail will be carrying out a range of work across a 16-day period.

As part of a £15 million investment in the railway, engineers will be carrying out multiple track and drainage renewals, a bridge renewal, embankment work, vegetation management and track maintenance across various sites, between Monday March 17th and Wednesday April 2nd.

Buses will replace trains:

Between Newtown and Aberystwyth from Monday March 17th until 9am on Friday March 21st.
Between Machynlleth and Pwllheli from Monday March 17th until 9am on Friday March 21st.
Between Shrewsbury and Machynlleth from 6pm on Friday March 21st until Wednesday April 2nd.

Network Rail and Transport for Wales (TfW) have worked closely together to maximise the amount of work done while the line is closed, reducing the total impact on passengers by avoiding eight days of further line closures over the next three years.

Closing the railway for this period will allow Network Rail to bring forward work scheduled for 2026 and 2027 and deliver multiple key projects at once, minimising future disruption and saving £1.5 million in the process.

During the 16 days the line is closed, Network Rail engineers will be completing a range of work, including:

Track renewals: Replacing the existing, life-expired track at sites between Machynlleth and Dovey Junction, and between Machynlleth and Caersws.
Track maintenance: Carrying out essential maintenance of the track at multiple sites, including between Shrewsbury and Welshpool, and between Caersws and Newtown.
Embankment strengthening: Stabilising the embankment next to the railway near Talerddig by installing rock netting.
Bridge renewals: Refurbishing a railway bridge wall at Glantwymyn, between Machynlleth and Caersws.
Vegetation clearance: Teams will cut back trees and hedges that are either diseased or overgrown and could pose a significant threat to the railway at various sites between Shrewsbury and Aberystwyth.

In addition to the continued safe and reliable running of train services along this busy route, the track renewal at Machynlleth station will pave the way for the introduction of TfW's new Class 197 trains.

Nick Millington, Network Rail Wales and Borders route director, said: "We recognise there is never a good time to close the railway for a significant amount of time, but we have planned this essential work to minimise disruption as much as possible. To maximise efficiency and minimise future disruption, we have brought forward and included work that was scheduled to take place over the next two years. The scale of the work being carried is significant, with £15 million and thousands of hours of work being invested into improving the Cambrian line. We would like to thank passengers for their patience – and urge them to check their journeys before they travel."

Colin Lea, TfW planning and performance director, said: "This work is the result of months of careful planning with our partners in Network Rail to ensure as little customer impact as possible. It's a huge investment in the line, following the major refurbishment of Barmouth Bridge in 2023. As a targeted approach through our Local Railway Partnership we've identified a way of reducing the total time the railway is closed, and to complete the work ahead of the key Easter and summer periods.

Our operational teams have put a dedicated rail replacement plan in place for the duration of the work - customers should check their journey details before they travel."

National Rail

Man jailed after trespassing on one of the country's busiest railway lines

A man has been sentenced to 18 months in prison after trespassing on one of the country's busiest railway lines and causing hundreds of South Western Railway (SWR) services to be delayed or cancelled. On Monday August 19th 2024, Ryan Seymour, 41, trespassed onto the South West Main Line at New Malden in South West London.

The line connects London Waterloo, one of Britain's busiest stations, with destinations in Dorset, Hampshire, Somerset, Surrey and Wiltshire. While being pursued by police he ran across four live tracks where, on an average, trains pass every two minutes. When running to hide in bushes by the tracks, one train driver was forced to make an emergency stop at 75 miles per hour.

To keep Seymour and pursuing police officers safe, Network Rail turned off power to the 750-volt electric rails which powers trains. Four trains were stranded outside of stations as services in the area came to a halt, causing widespread disruption across most of the SWR network.

Power was restored at 4.30pm, however the knock-on impact of trains and crew being out of position meant services were severely delayed for the rest of the day. With so many cancellations and late running services, London Waterloo became overcrowded, forcing station colleagues to put safety mitigations in place.

To avoid further congestion in central London, all services on SWR's suburban lines, from places including Chessington, Guildford and Hampton Court, were forced to end their journeys at Clapham Junction. Disruption then continued into the following day, with four early morning services cancelled.

In total, 921 train services were impacted, with 358 completely cancelled and parts of 81 other services cancelled. 13,178 minutes of delays were accumulated, the equivalent of nine days. These delays cost Network Rail, and the taxpayer, £1.2 million.

Whilst he was able to evade Police on the day, a swift investigation led by the Metropolitan Police, assisted by partners from BTP and Network Rail led to Seymour's identification, and arrest several days later.

At Kingston Crown Court on Tuesday February 4th 2025, Seymour pleaded guilty to:

Driving a motor vehicle dangerously
Intentionally / recklessly causing a public nuisance
Driving a motor vehicle otherwise than in accordance with a licence - endorsable offence
Using a motor vehicle on a road / public place without third party insurance
He was jailed for eight months for intentionally/recklessly causing a public nuisance through the act of trespassing onto the railway, and 10 months for dangerous driving, with the two sentences to run consecutively.

Tom Desmond, Operations Director for Network Rail, said: "This prosecution demonstrates that there are severe consequences for those who trespass on the railway. Ensuring the safety of everyone involved in these difficult events is our top priority, including the safety of those who respond to such incidents. Additionally, the impact on the railway network from these events and our ability to serve our customers cannot be underestimated with the associated widespread disruption and multiple stranded trains. This individual was very lucky to escape unharmed, with the risk of both trains travelling through the area at nearly 100mph as well as the threat of the third rail, which carries enough voltage to kill – instantly."

Dan O'Riordan, Head of Security and Safety Assurance for South Western Railway, said: "Trespassing anywhere on the railway is extremely dangerous. This individual was very fortunate to escape unharmed, with the risk of trains travelling through the area at nearly 100mph as well as the threat of the third rail, which carries enough voltage to kill – instantly. We hope that the sentence passed by the court serves as a warning to others."

Detective Sergeant Tim Deans, from the Metropolitan Police, said: "Seymour caused widespread disruption across south-west London and beyond. The Met's investigation and the sentence handed to him demonstrates we will take action when people deliberately cause misery to others through criminal and anti-social behaviour."



SB Rail grinder No. DR77903 is held at Crewe whilst working 6U16 08:26 Gresty Lane Down Sidings to Guide Bridge B'sde Sidings on February 21st. *Derek Elston*

Two hundred years of railway history celebrated at London's oldest station

The railway in Kent, East Sussex and South East London has kicked off a year of celebration marking the 200th anniversary of the railway with an event at Deptford – the oldest railway station in London. Marking the beginning of a project to create a mural at Greenwich station that tells a story of the history of the railway between London Bridge, Deptford and Greenwich, Southeastern Managing Director Steve White and Network Rail Kent Route Director David Davidson welcomed local councillors as well as members of the Deptford Society and the Greenwich Society at a community event at Deptford station.

A workshop hosted by community art expert Patricio Forrester from Artmongers and the London School of Muralism gave customers and staff the opportunity to get creative and show us their ideas on paper for a mural to be unveiled nearby at Greenwich station later in the year.

Guests and regular passengers also spoke with staff from Southeastern and Network Rail as well as people from the local community, charities and businesses in Deptford. David Davidson, Network Rail's Kent Route Director said: "Network Rail and Southeastern are the proud inheritors and custodians of London's first railway. Together we are playing a leading role in marking Railway 200, through a range of special events, promotions and opportunities for customers, stakeholders and our colleagues to get involved and share their stories. This event marks the 189th anniversary of the start of London's oldest railway, the London & Greenwich Railway, and the birthday of Deptford station itself, as London's oldest railway station. The mural project that we're embarking upon is a fitting tribute to the story of our railway between London Bridge, Deptford and Greenwich and the railways' role in shaping London."

Steve White, Southeastern's Managing Director said: "In 2025 we are using Railway 200 to celebrate the rich heritage of our railway and to showcase the transformational effect that railways can have on communities through economic growth, decarbonisation and social mobility. We are a purpose driven organisation and, during this special year of celebration, we want to work with local communities and showcase opportunities that inspire young people to be a part of rail's bright future and to help write the next chapter in our history. Significant Railway 200 events taking place this year include recognition for the Network SouthEast era, the visit of a special Exhibition Train, the commemoration of our railway's contribution to war and marking the centenary of the electrification of the railway from London to Orpington".

National Rail



Colas Rail track machine no. DR73907 working 6J89 Southall West Junction to Gloucester (Horton Road) heads through Kemble on March 3rd. *Ken Mumford*

Clubs and Societies Apparel























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Did you Know - *Ken Mumford*

Some more of the nations oddities this month:

I came across this note from those great days of steam:-

Sanding was prohibited at London Waterloo in case of a false indication of the track circuits resulted.

Rail Replacement Taxi

Enthusiasts visiting the Maiden Newton to Bridport branch line for a farewell trip on April 7th 1975 - a month before closure - were disappointed to find that a taxi was providing the service in place of the single-unit railcar which had failed!

USA Bound?

During July and August 1963, 0-4-2T No. 1444 was said to be in open store at Oxford awaiting repairs and removal to the U.S.A.

HST Barker

In late 1980 on an Exeter to Paddington HST there was a dog who seemed to be unhappy about travelling at 100 m-p-h in the guard's department. This grievance was made known by barking loudly, to the amusement of this train's passengers, over the public-address system when the guard made an announcement.

London Euston Collision

On September 1st 1930 there was a buffer-stop collision at London (Euston) when the up '*Night Scot*' (consisting of 15 coaches of which 5 were 12-wheeled first-class sleeping cars and weighing some 490 tons) hauled by 4-4-0 No. 5284 piloting 4-6-0 No. 5980. The collision is attributed to misjudgement of speed in dealing with a very heavy train down a falling gradient. The question is raised as to making a compulsory dead stop outside that station, in view of previous buffer-stop collisions on No. 1 line, though it was not considered justifiable to suggest this on account of the inconvenience and delay that would be caused.

A Different View

Believe it or not, this is a colour photo! Class 66 766 is looped at Acton Bridge on an Avonmouth - Clitheroe empty cement tanks working on February 6th. The fog lingered around almost until lunchtime. *Jeff Nicholls*



A Different View

On February 17th, Class 66 594 heads away from Swindon working a very long 4L36 Wentloog to Felixstowe liner. *Ken and Colin*

A Different View

Despite the painted name on this seat it is situated at Leamington Spa as mentioned on the attached plaque. *Derek Elston*

Smartened up for another year, the plant powered No. 52456 replica is located at Leyland station! *John Sloane*

Something a bit different as Class 68 034 passes Stafford on February 18th hauling the 12:13 Daventry to Coatbridge. *Lee Stanford*







HOPETOWN DARLINGTON'S DOUBLE AWARD WIN



Hopetown Darlington has won a specially created award at the annual Heritage Railway Association Awards.

Hopetown Darlington was awarded the Heritage Railway Association (HRA) Railway 200 Special Award, which was created especially at the discretion of the judging panel and the board of the HRA to mark a particular project, scheme, or activity that stands out and celebrates 200 years of the modern railway.

Hopetown Darlington really caught the imagination of the whole judging panel for capturing the spirit and very heart of what Railway 200 is all about - a project which will be a key venue for 2025 bi-centenary anniversary events and putting Darlington and the surrounding region on the world map as being a place to be truly proud of.

The award also recognises Hopetown Darlington's contribution to the development of young people through a heritage educational experience in a fun environment, creating a community hub for the local area and offering opportunities for all residents and visitors to explore Darlington's role in the birthplace of modern passenger rail.

Railway Association Chief Executive, Steve Oates, said: "This is a really special year for railway heritage, both in the North East and across the whole country, as we celebrate Railway 200. It's wonderful to be able to acknowledge some of the fantastic achievements of museums linked to the history of the Stockton and Darlington Railway in 2025.

TheworkthathasgoneintocreatingHopetown Darlington is enormously impressive and the judging panel felt that the project was a very deserving winner of the Railway 200 Special Award. Everyone involved should be congratulated. I hope that the transformed museum will help new audiences to connect with the important role that railways have played in creating the world we know today."

The awards ceremony, which took place at the Hilton Hotel in Gateshead on Saturday February 8th, was a celebration of railway heritage attractions from all across the UK.

Alongside the Railway 200 Special Award, Hopetown Darlington also won the Heritage Railway Magazine Interpretation Award, recognising the way North Road Station Museum at Hopetown Darlington tells the story of the Stockton & Darlington Railway and Darlington's influence on railways across the world.

Robin Jones, Chief Editor of Heritage Railway Magazine, said: "Britain boasts many magnificent railway museums big and small, but Hopetown Darlington, which opened on the eve of the nationwide celebrations to mark the bicentenary of the Stockton & Darlington Railway, has appeared in exactly the right place at the right time, and takes the concept into a third century of the modern railway. An ingenious combination of locomotives, stock and relics from the early decades of steam haulage with fascinating and inspirational 21st-technology high-technology exhibits excels in introducing our proud rail legacy to new generations."

These awards follow on from Hopetown's recently awarded Visitor Attraction Quality Assurance Scheme accolade and the Welcome accolade, both awarded by VisitEngland, the Visitor Economy Award at the County Durham Together Awards and Best Museum or Cultural Venue at the North East Culture Awards.

Leona White-Hannant, Hopetown Darlington's Development Director, said: "Not only is it the bicentenary festival this year celebrating 200 years of the modern railway, it is also the 50th birthday of Hopetown Darlington's North Road Station Museum. Ever since

the museum first opened in 1975, we have continued to proudly tell the story of the Stockton & Darlington Railway to many generations, a story that future generations will hopefully be telling for another 200. This award is a huge well done to our partners that we worked with during the redevelopment and the whole team at Hopetown Darlington who promote our story every day."

Councillor Libby McCollom, Cabinet Member for Local Services, said: "This special award these special awards for Hopetown Darlington reflect how the attraction is excelling in its mission to shout about Darlington's pioneering railway heritage. I am incredibly proud of Hopetown Darlington, our partners and team as it is quickly becoming one of the leading visitor attractions in the region. With an exciting year ahead with the bicentenary celebrations, 2025 will be a great year for Darlington's star attraction."

Hopetown Darlington opened in July 2024 and has welcomed over 100,5000 visitors.

Visitors can plan their visit to the award-winning Hopetown Darlington by visiting hopetowndarlington.co.uk. Site admission is free. Some exhibitions, events and activities carry a separate charge. Pre-booking online is recommended.

Photo:©Jack Boskett

Preserved Railways

The ‘Wensleydale Fryer’ fish and chips trains return to Wensleydale Railway



Wensleydale Railway’s popular fish and chips trains, known as the ‘Wensleydale Fryer’, are back this year, with new dates. Experience a scenic journey through the Yorkshire Dales whilst enjoying locally supplied fish and chips, mushy peas, bread and butter and unlimited tea or coffee served at your table.

The Saturday lunchtime service begins on April 12th, with further trains every month from May to October. The heritage diesel-hauled train will travel from Leeming Bar to Leyburn. You will be seated in an open coach at your own table, set for 1 to 4 people, and if your party is larger, two tables each side of the centre aisle. The railway’s volunteer staff will serve your food and drink as you sit back and relax! A bar service will also be available. On arrival at Leyburn, you will have time for a short comfort break and to stretch your legs before boarding the train for the return journey to Leeming Bar.

Don’t forget to make time for a free guided tour of Leeming Bar’s lovingly restored 1920’s station building. It offers a fascinating window into railway history and what life was like in the early 1900s!

The train will depart Leeming Bar at 13:30 and the journey lasts around two hours. In addition to fish and chips (cod), there will also be the option of sausage and chips and gluten free fish and chips.

Unfortunately the railway’s vintage coaches do not currently have access for wheelchair users. If you have mobility constraints please let staff know at the time of booking and they will do their best to allocate a table close to the access door.

The cost is £35 per adult and £15 for children and includes the rail ticket. Places are very limited and booking is essential.

East Lancs Railway

On February 8th, Class 47 765 approaches Irwell Vale with a service to Bury with 37 109 on the rear. *Michael Lynam*



East Lancs Railway

On what was meant to be its final running day before being withdrawn for an overhaul, Class 33 109 stands at Bury on February 8th with a service for Heywood. The loco was however pressed back into service within weeks following an engine failure on the East Lancs Railway. *Lee Stanford*

East Lancs Railway

Class 47 765 approaches Irwell Vale on February 8th with a Rawtenstall to Bury Bolton Street service. *Michael Lynam*

Class 40 012 is seen arriving at Heywood with 50 015 on the rear on February 8th.
Michael Lynam

Class 50 015 arrives at Ramsbottom on February 8th with a service to Rawtenstall. *Michael Lynam*





East Lancs Railway

Class 08 164 waits to depart Bury Bolton Street with a shuttle to Ramsbottom with MSC 0-6-0 No. 40002 ‘Arundel Castle’ and Class 33 109 attached to the rear. *Michael Lynam*

Class 45 108 waits to depart Heywood on February 8th with a service to Bury.
Michael Lynam

Class 08 164 waits to depart Bury Bolton Street with a shuttle to Ramsbottom with MSC 0-6-0 No. 40002 ‘Arundel Castle’ and Class 33 109 attached to the rear. *Michael Lynam*







Wensleydale Railway

Class 33 035 sits in the station at Leeming Bar on February 19th. *Michael Lynam*



EWS liveried Class 37 250 is seen in the yard at Leeming Bar on February 19th. *Michael Lynam*



Regional Railways liveried Class 143 623 is seen at Leeming Bar on February 19th. *Michael Lynam*



Wensleydale Railway

NCB No. 38 (Class 14 No. D9513) and WL4 and ex Tyne & Wear Metro, Brush built, Rolls Royce engined 0-6-0 are seen at Leeming Bar depot on February 19th. *Michael Lynam*

Class 14 No. D9523 and Class 121 DMU No. 55032 are seen stabled in the sidings at Leeming.v *Michael Lynam*

Former Northern Pacer Class 142 060 arrives at Leeming Bar working a half-term service train on February 19th. *Michael Lynam*







Keighley and Worth Valley Railway

LMS Black Five 4-6-0 No. 45212 stands at Oxenhope having arrived with a service from Keighley on February 1st. *Brian Dobbs*

Severn Valley Railway

On February 15th, BR Class 4MT No. 75069 is seen during a photo shoot at Hampton Loade.
Phil Martin

Severn Valley Railway

Ruston & Hornsby 0-4-0 shunter, works No. 319290 is seen in the yard at Bewdley on February 21st.
Derek Elston

From the Archives

Green liveried Class 03 No. 2054 sits inside York North shed roundhouse on May 20th 1972. *John Sloane*



From the Archives

Class 31 306 is seen at Grantham with a failed DMU on November 2nd 1985. *John Sloane*



Class 60 078 on an Eastleigh to Westbury engineers train passes Stockton between Salisbury and Warminster in the eighties. *Michael Bennett*



A pair of Class 33s on the Saturday's only Brighton - Exeter service are seen departing Southampton in the eighties. *Michael Bennett*



From the Archives

NCB N2 (works No. HC 1857/52) crosses a highway during shunting movements at NCB North Gawber colliery on September 8th 1969.
John Sloane

From the Archives

In May 1991, Class 86 228 ‘Vulcan Heritage’ is seen at a sunny Crewe before departing with a short formation of TPO vehicles.
Lee Stanford

Chiltern liveried Class 68 013 hauls failed DB Class 90 034 and 90 019 ‘Multimodal’, running three hours late, with 4M74 Mossend to Basford Hall as they pass through Wigan North Western on November 13th 2019. *Paul Senior*

Class 47 706, still in Scotrail livery, departs Andover on a London Waterloo - Exeter service in the late eighties. *Michael Bennett*

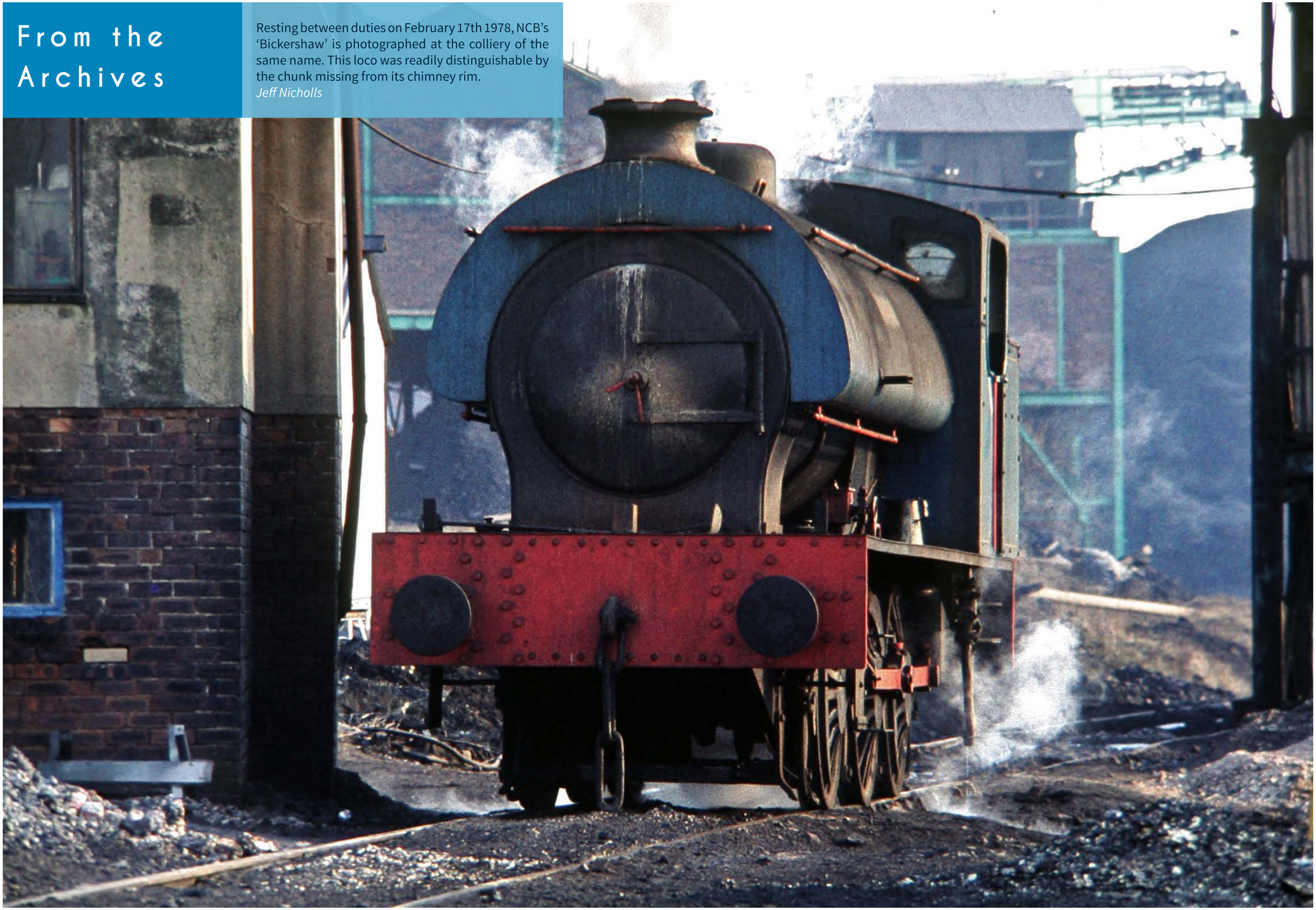






From the Archives

Resting between duties on February 17th 1978, NCB's 'Bickershaw' is photographed at the colliery of the same name. This loco was readily distinguishable by the chunk missing from its chimney rim.
Jeff Nicholls



From the Archives

Class 37 229 leads 37 029, 37 607 and 37 612 past Standish with an intermodal working from Mossend to Daventry on April 26th 2003. *John Sloane*



First Great Western power car No. 43016 arrives at Plymouth North Road from Penzance on October 16th 2004. *John Sloane*



Class 87 035 heads a London Euston to Glasgow service past Docker on September 10th 2004. *John Sloane*



From the Archives

Class 85 040 stands at Stafford in April 1990 on an up parcels/mail working. Of note is that the doors on the non platform side of the first TPO vehicle are open! *Lee Stanford*

The Class 87 electric locos were initially treated as mixed traffic locomotives often to be found double heading on freight trains on the West Coast Main line and on September 23rd 1989, Class 87 033 and sister 87 025 are seen waiting for the road at Crewe. *Lee Stanford*

NCB's 'Respite', complete with patched up Giesl ejector, ghosts off shed at Bickershaw Colliery in October 1978. In the background 'Warrior' pauses during a shunting manoeuvre.
Jeff Nicholls







From the Archives

LMS No. 6201 ‘Princess Elizabeth’ departs Rainhill with a ‘North Wales Coast Express’ from Liverpool Lime Street to Llandudno on August 22nd 2010. *Brian Dobbs*



Class 31 408 heads north on a Manchester Victoria to Blackpool peak period commuter service, seen at Agecroft on June 30th 1993. *Barry Longson*



Class 20 207 and 20 225 pass Dunfermline with a rake of HAA wagons on August 10th 1982. *Barry Longson*



From the Archives

BR 2-6-4T No. 80098 speeds past Burrs Country Park with a service from Bury to Rawtenstall on March 1st 2009. *Brian Dobbs*

The Class 56s were built for heavy freight traffic and the introduction of longer trains. Here Class 56 105 runs past Clay Cross on April 16th 1982. *Barry Longson*

Class 37 233 rumbles through Newport with loaded steel coil from Llanwern to Margam, on a cloudless May 5th 1982. *Barry Longson*







From the Archives

Sound and Fury as 'Warrior' and 'Bickershaw' attack the bank out of Bickershaw Colliery towards the exchange sidings with a long rake of 16T mineral wagons on February 13th 1978.
Jeff Nicholls



From the Archives

A group of Western hydraulics are seen at Plymouth Laira depot on September 15th 1974.
John Sloane



From the Archives

Darlington built Class 25 No. 5164 sits out the weekend at Carnforth stabling point on July 1st 1972. *John Sloane*