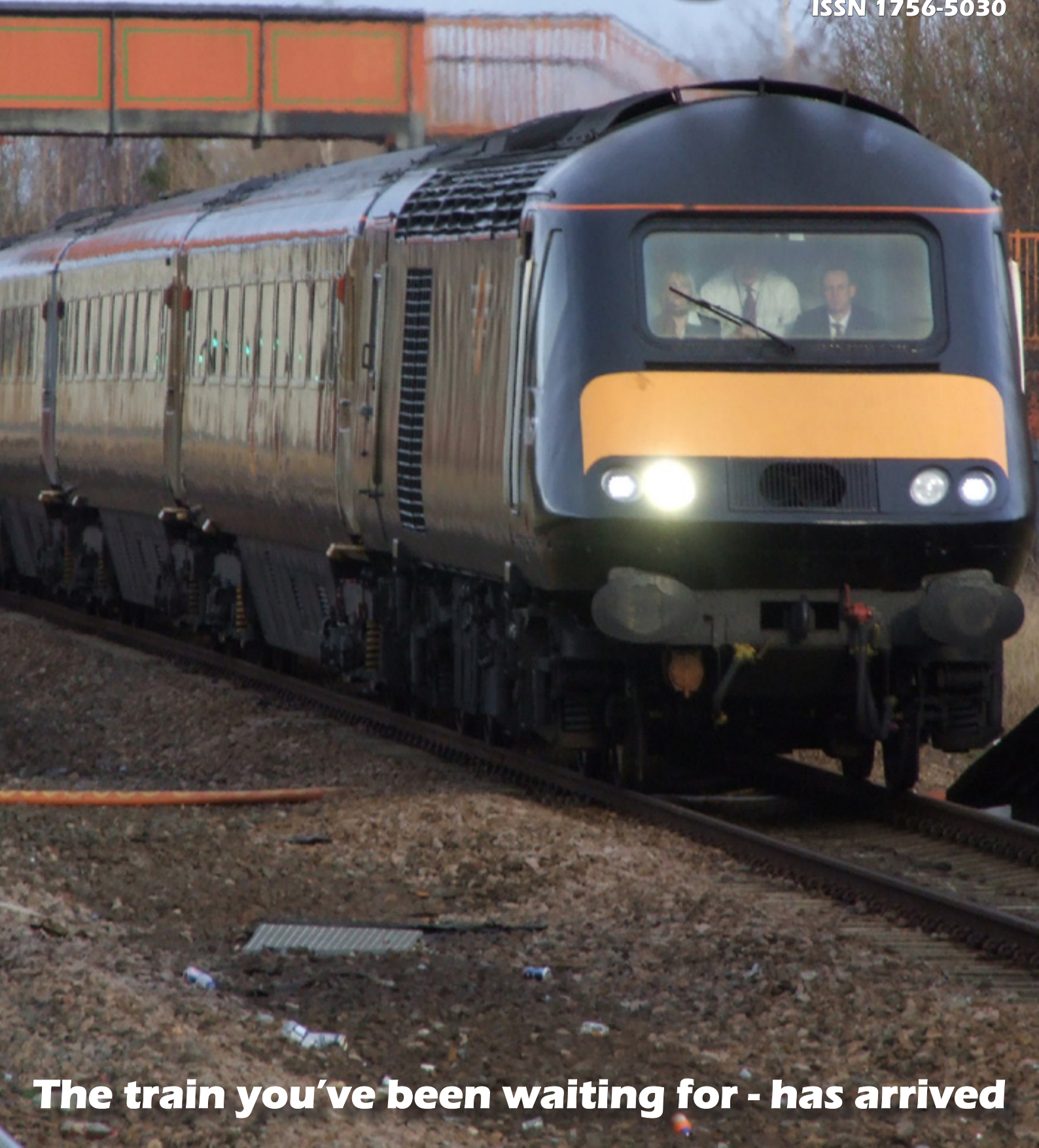


Railtalk Magazine

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The train you've been waiting for - has arrived

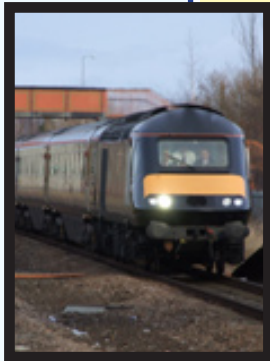
Front cover

One of the highlights of the year has to be Grand Central,

Now operating between London and the North-East.

43067 is seen here arriving at Stockton.

James Stoker



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Submissions

Please give a brief description, your name and the date. Pictures and news can be entered through the forum, or by email us at

entries@railtalk.net

When is it published

Railtalk Magazine is published, the first Monday of each month.

More information can be found by visiting Railtalk forums.

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From The Editor

Well, I was going to start this month's review by saying what an excellent railtour the Class 87 farewell was, but I can't. Once again the punters who have paid good money up front, were sadly let down.

For the people waiting at Wolverhampton and Stafford, at least they were kept up to date on what was happening, however at Crewe the situation was a disgrace with several passengers not having a clue as to what was happening.

Who can we blame?, and would it do any good, this tour was about a loco that cannot operate in 2008, it cannot be re-run, so it's no good saying we'll reschedule or offer an alternative.

As most of us know, this was not the first tour to have stock problems and therefore more care should have been taken to ensure that the stock was ok. It is a shame, as so many people on the day put a lot of effort into trying to get the tour to run, but someone must take responsibility and own up.

With Christmas over and 2008 just starting, there is plenty of change going on at present, just have a look at our photo pages to see a multitude of different liveries that are now starting to appear, the National Express East Coast looking like an eye catcher, but will it keep clean.

We are very pleased that Grand Central have at last started running and we had an opportunity to sample one of their services recently. The staff are very friendly and welcoming, the HST's sound brilliant and the stock is, well ok, I have to say that because, although it has supposed to have been refurbished, I did find that it was poorly finished in parts. Not that this is Grand Central's fault, but like the stock problems on the 87 tour, does anyone care enough in the UK nowadays to do a really good job and take pride in their work.

Things did go well for the Christmas Market tours to both Lincoln and York, and have swelled our Charter Scene pages this month. Who would have thought that so many people would want to travel to these events, but they did, and in their thousands. Well done to all the operators involved.

Finally I would like to wish all our readers, new and old, a very Happy New Year, and we look forward to seeing and hearing from you during 2008.

As always, thanks to everyone who have contributed this month especially the following:

Richard Hargreaves, David Mead, David Dawson, Jonathan McGurk, James Stoker, Brian Battersby,

Derek Elston, Yorkie, Ian Furness, Dave Harris, Steve Patten

David, Co-Editor

37422 is seen blasting through Bagillt with 6F18 on the 1st December.

Getting this shot was due to it being put out behind a stopping service.

How lucky can you get?

David Dawson



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Charter Scene

This months round up of the British Charter scene

Welcome to the January issue of Charter Scene, as part of Railtalk Magazine. Charter Scene aims to document charter movements during the month, although we need your help. If you have any images or accounts you would like included please contact us via the usual address.



Above: 67006 and 67029 work the 1Z69 Liverpool Lime St. circular "Posh-Nosh" past Cosford on the 11th December. Carl Grocott



GWR steam loco 4965 worked a charter to York on the 1st December, for the annual Christmas Market. Andy



On the 1st December there were no less than four charters, all calling at York for the Christmas Market, many were top and tailed and also marked to return of 60019 Bittern to the main line. On this and the next page we see all the locos from these tours, some which remained at York for the day and some went on to other destinations. Also this marked one of the last tours for 47703, which has since been retired until it is fitted with OTMR equipment. Andy





One week later, the action switched to Lincoln, where it's famous Christmas market is also an annual event.

Also a big crowd puller the charters came from all over the country, East Midlands Trains hired in a West Coast set, with top and tail Class 47's, and a Luxury Dining train came from Salisbury hauled by 50049.

On the previous day, similar trains operated and included an appearance of Deltic 55022 on a service from Scotland.

Here are three photos from Saturday. Class47



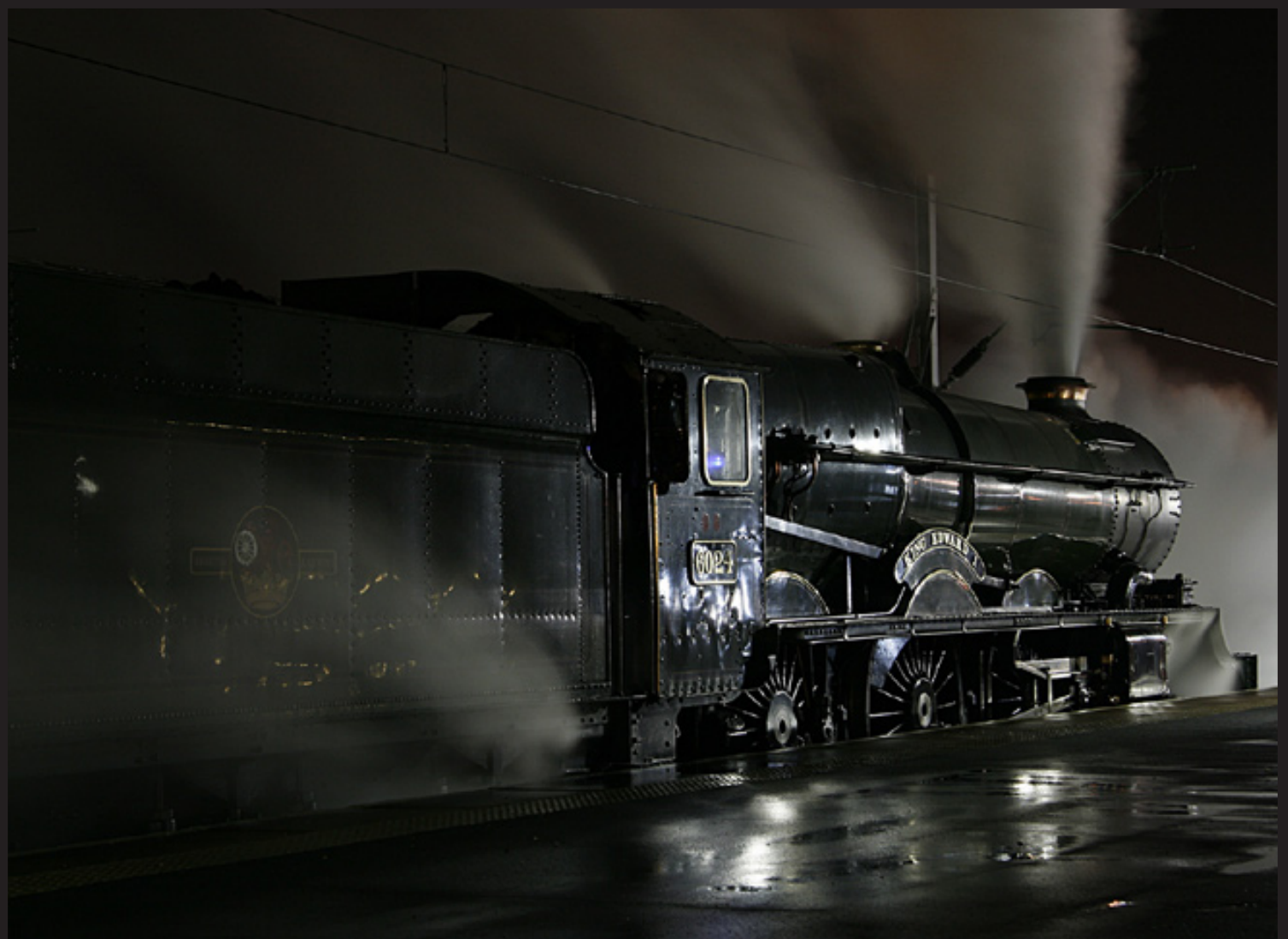


37410, now with black headcode boxes, and 37417 storm away from Whitchurch with 1237 Swindon - Leeds 'The Festive Yorkshireman', on the 1st December . David Dawson





A King comes to Chester. On the 22nd December, the annual "Chester Chuffer", produced 6024 King Edward I. Here are two photos from the tour, the first taken as it is stabled on Chester depot, the second is on the return leg of the journey and was taken during a water stop at Crewe. Richard Hargreaves





Above: With the cessation of the DRS RHTT traffic, attention this month has been on Royal Mail additional trains. Every year there are additional services to cater for the Christmas Post and this year was no exception.

Above: A surprise return for mail vans and an EWS Class 90 working on the West Coast route seen here at Preston with 90028 on the 17th Dec. Ian Furness
Below: Class 325 are the normal Royal Mail vehicles used and here we see 325017, what's so special?, well this was a Saturday working. Class47





Above: Probably one of its last workings in the UK, as next year it is destined, with other members of its class for Bulgaria, 87028 powers through Acton Bridge on the 18th December 2007. Brian Battersby

Below: DR 73904 made a very rare and unexpected visit into Glasgow Central High Level station on Sunday 23rd December 2007. It was diverted into the station while travelling from Paisley - Carlisle to do unknown work down there. The driver kindly gave me the headcode of the train which was 6T42 and departed Glasgow Central High Level station at 12.05. The reason for it being diverted was because there is engineering works going on at Eglington as work is starting on the Glasgow Airport Rail Link and also signalling engineering works are taking place in the area. Jonathan McGurk





*Above: After transfer from EPS to DRS, 37604 found itself working a few services around the country before ending up at York in December. The loco is seen here on the 15th just a couple of days before it was collected by 37601 and 37603 and taken to Brush works for overhaul and repaint. **Class47***

*Below: Following the end of the RHTT season, a few loco's have been placed into store, 92017 passes through Stafford with Class 67's 67013 and 67015 which were heading for store on a sunny 10th December. **Richard Hargreaves***





The changing face of GNER into NXEC is seen by these two pictures, both taken at Doncaster.

Above: 91109 in the interim livery, which consists of replacing the red band down the centre of the train with a white stripe, and white numbers applied. [Class47](#)
Below: Just one HST set has been fully reliveried, Looking spotless (but for how long?) 43300 is seen in the new "national express" corporate livery. This will be applied to both East Coast and Anglia franchises The good thing about this livery seems to be large white numbers that are easily readable. [Class47](#)





Above: Not to be outdone in the livery stakes, CrossCountry is also undergoing a transformation as ownership has transferred from Virgin to Arriva. In glorious sunshine the only fully reliveried Class 220, 220017 passes Colton Junction on the 1st December. Andy
Below: On the 10th December, 221141 shows off its subtle livery change at Stafford, but the previous owner is still obvious. Richard Hargreaves





*It's not just the big boys that have changed liveries in the last few weeks, there have been a lot of units changing colours as well.
 Top left: Ex Midland Mainline and ex Central and displaying signs of both still 170108 now in CrossCountry ownership seen at Derby. Class47
 Top right: Just one previous owner, low miles, etc, ex Central Trains 170523 also now with the CrossCountry branding applied. Class47*

Middle: Looking very smart is this 153. Now in Stagecoach ownership and branded East Midlands Trains, 153355 waits at a very wet Nottingham. Class47

*Bottom left: One of the best liveries out at the moment is London Midland. 350114 is seen in the new livery as it approaches Stafford. Richard Hargreaves
 Bottom right: Now that all the 175's are in service with Arriva, corporate colours are now being applied, 175008 is the first to be painted. Richard Hargreaves*





*Top: Ever popular for photography are the DRS operated freight services on the West Coast main line. 66405 powers through Stafford on the 10th Dec.
Richard Hargreaves*



*Middle: How many of the veteran Class 86's will survive in 2008, still very popular with many enthusiasts.
On a cold, frosty morning, 86609 works light engine from Crewe Basford Hall to Crewe Electric Depot. Brian Battersby*



Bottom: The 158's do get about. This South West Trains 158 is on hire to East Midlands Trains, and is seen at Nottingham working a service to Norwich on the 8th December. Class47



Above: The train you have been waiting for finally arrived in December, Grand Central started it's east coast service from Sunderland to London Kings Cross. This shot is of 43 067 on the rear of the York bound service on the 19th December. Brian Battersby

Below: Monday 17th December and Class 37 197, 66 410 and 66 423 are at Springburn station. Class 37 197 was released after an overhaul at Glasgow Works, Springburn along with Class 66 410 getting bogie maintenance. Class 66 423 picked up the two locomotives at Glasgow Works travelling up from Carlisle Kingmoor at 09.00. The train ran down to Carlisle Kingmoor From Glasgow Works running as 12.16 0Z60 Glasgow Works - Carlisle Kingmoor. Jonathan McGurk





*Above: 47830 heads 442 412 & 442 414 as 5Z80 Eastliegh to Wolverton Works at Cheddington on Monday 3rd December. Derek Elston
Below: Whilst the Grand Central train services have started, we still await the Hull Trains Class 86 service starting. Despite testing and driver training taking place, no dates have yet been announced. 86101 is seen at Doncaster on the 19th December, having worked up from London. Brian Battersby*





Above: Class 156 458 is seen coming into Glasgow Central High Level Station burning up fuel because of the cold weather working the 13.37 2R13 Whifflet - Glasgow Central High Level service on the 19th December. Jonathan McGurk



Left: The Manchester Metrolink has been around for quite some years now but doesn't seem to attract much attention from the photographers despite running through some photogenic areas. This is 1002 seen departing GMEX. Richard Hargreaves

Bottom Right: 67029 Royal Diamond heads the Royal Train, en-route from Windsor to Liverpool, through Cheddington on Mon 3rd December. Derek Elston





Its not often that we get two pictures of the same train, but these were both very good shots and with a loco at both ends, then why not!. The other question we asked ourselves was, should it be in our "charter scene" section, that we're not too sure on.

Above and below: 67005 leads the 1Z51 footex from London Euston - Blackburn on the 23rd December and is seen here passing Winwick Jct. The rear 67 at this point is 67024. Dave Harris





Above: Standing in the shadows at Crewe on the 29th December was Fastline freight's Class 56 302. These loco's now are starting to make regular appearances in the area and quite often are stabled in the station over the weekend.

Below: Standing in the shadows part 2, The sun nicely sits on the side of the ever clean, Virgin Thunderbird 57315 as it waits for a new mission. Both: Andy



Record rise in train services for First GBRf

First GBRf, the award winning freight haulier, has increased commercial services by a third in just one month and smashed prior train run records, achieved only two months before in September. Latest performance figures show a total of 1089 train journeys took place from 11 November to 8 December, an addition of 235 services on the previous record of 854 and 33% more than the preceding month.

Commenting on the report, Jonathan Moser, First GBRf's Business Development Director said: "I think these figures speak for themselves

and demonstrate FirstGBRF's continual steady growth in all areas of the UK rail freight market. During the past month we have started running aggregate trains from the Midlands to East Anglia and we have also commenced operating our first coal trains between Teesside and Drax in addition to the trains we already work from the Port of Tyne. On top of this we have further new flows due to commence in the new year as well". Such high levels of services in November have been achieved following increased demand from customers, including the decision by Metronet to double the amount of train services required, with services taking place on four consecutive weekends and an extension on supplying extra mail trains, previously introduced to clear the back log of letters following postal strikes, for Royal Mail. Running over a thousand trains in a four-week period reflects a high level of customer satisfaction and comparing the figures to the same period in 2006 shows a 74% rise on the amount of journeys undertaken. Such rapid growth makes 2007 the most successful year yet for the freight organisation. Info from First GBRF Website

Top: First GBRF 66726 Working 6Y19 Gypsum train to Southampton Docks, seen passing Fleet on the 13th December 2007.

Bottom: GB ED's 73205 Jeanette and 73209 Alison Working an engineers train. Seen here coming off the Botley line towards Eastleigh. Both © James P (73109)



SILVERLINK TRAINS - and then it got WORSE

Day off, and I'm up at 0700 for the 0805 train from Watford North to Watford Junction.

0750 I arrive on Watford North Station, about 5 other people join me at a later point.

0805—No train... 0820 and most of us have worked out the train isn't coming.

Being as inquisitive as I am, I ventured to the little orange information box and pressed the information button... it then reads out the date in a very stuttered computer voice. An automatic message plays twice... "Silverlink Trains are pleased to report all services on the St Albans Abbey branch are running normally and to time..."

How frustrating... So I walk off the platform to see the bus just leaving. I then walk all the way to the top of the road and wait 10 minutes for another bus, it comes and it is the same number, so I could have got it from Watford North station.

10 minutes and 70p less later and I'm at Watford Junction.

I receive my ticket and politely ask "sorry, do you know what happened to the last St Albans abbey service" I get a reply which suggests there is no harm in the cancelling of three trains: "Oh yeah we cancelled the last three" and a very large smile just to top it off. "Oh it's just I was waiting at Watford North for it" and I get the reply "don't worry the next one will run though!" and the same almost irritatingly happy smile.

So about 45mins late I am finally at Watford Junction (a 2 minute train ride away from Watford North)

Thanks one hell of a lot London Midland



National Express East Anglia

First Group, since one of their first rail franchises (First Great Eastern) been naming their franchises after the region they are operating in and of course their company name.

National Express claim that they now feel in a secure enough position to brand their services with their own name, which does reveal quite a lot about names such as "Silverlink" and "c2c", but one must ask, why didn't they start of with National Express Midland as opposed to Silverlink, and just work on building a good reputation?

'One' would prove this theory correct, as it was an advance towards the truth of the parent company, with the 'n' and 'e' standing for National Express.

But this new company... the livery change, the name change, a costly and quite un-forecast event.

National Express aim to have the entire 90+MKIII+DVT fleet in the new livery by February, and next putting anything that was not in 'one' livery in to new National Express livery.

The 'one' livery and refresh of the class 315 units would therefore appear to be a large expenditure only resulting in complete change of the colour scheme required on these units.

All 'one' stock should be slowly becoming unbranded, however, will this be the great success National Express hope for, or will it be a failure where the commuter remarks "I much preferred 'one'"?

It is rather ironic that the shortest train company name has been exchanged for this mouthful!



What "One" wants..

'one' Railway have been very eager for a number of things during the life of the franchise so far. Many of which they have achieved with their determination. Whether it be the mark II replacement programme or the redevelopment of the 'one' café service.

There is one outstanding rumoured hope they hold, which the new branding may enable. This is the acquiring of c2c class 357 units to replace their class 321 units.

c2c passengers were known to protest against the class 321's being put on their line when 'one' spot hired a few as part of a chain of unit loans when Silverlink were short, c2c passengers feared the class 321s would be exchanged for the class 357s and they knew they would therefore have the worse end of the deal.



With the new branding incorporating c2c and 'one', it would appear National Express would be able to exchange the units with little fuss. Similar colour interiors and an identical outside livery would diffuse the complaints and controversy caused by passengers, and most wouldn't even realise unless they were being specifically careful to find discrepancies, in which case it doesn't matter much, because they are clearly too interested!

There have been a few problems pointed out with this swap taking place, but it is just a possibility that they may want to try out particularly to get the more modern fleets on the GEMM preventing the mainline services being held up by slower class 321s.

Of course, this wouldn't be an overnight process, therefore particularly for rail enthusiasts it would be particularly obvious well in advance if the decision should be made!

Underground TV!

When I travel to Euston, I usually use the Northern line from Waterloo, as that is where I tend to be travelling from.



On this occasion I happened to be using the Victoria line, and thank goodness I did! This exquisite development of projected news and information adverts which apparently was on trial in the disused platform at Holborn, is now a permanent fixture at Euston on the Northbound Victoria Line platform.

I have no knowledge of such technology anywhere else on the tube, but perhaps there is?

Class 180's for National Express??

National Express / 'one' run a number of 3car class 170 units on the London Liverpool Street—Lowestoft and Peterborough routes. Many of these trains are full and standing in the London area.

Clearly, platform extensions and route knowledge and perhaps even other developments are required, but it could be possible, particularly for the 2012 Olympic Games.

Only a handful of the fleet would be needed to replace current work done by the class 170s, and the much needed boost in capacity would be seen as a great success.



COMMENDATION FOR 'ONE' RAILWAY'S ALAN PERRY

Alan Perry of National Express Group's 'one' railway, has been given an award by the British Transport Police for his part in a crackdown on fraudulent credit card transactions which took place between February and October 2007 on their Stansted Express route.

Alan who has received an 'Area Commander's Commendation,' was praised by the British Transport Police for his 'dedication, attention to detail, professionalism and co-operation during the evidence gathering stage of a complex fraud crime'. Alan's knowledge of railway procedure was vital in gathering the necessary evidence and documentation to prove the fraudulent credit card transactions had taken place and therefore prove a conspiracy to steal.

Nick Brook, Acting Detective Chief Inspector CID commented:

"This award represents well-deserved recognition of Alan's knowledge and expertise together with his dedication and commitment to helping the police. Alan's input was integral to a very high profile police investigation and I would like to further congratulate and thank him for his contribution."

The awards took place at The Great Hall of the Apothocaries, Blackfriars in the City of London. 24 people were given Area Commanders Commendations at the recent awards ceremony and 22 of these were given to BTP officers. It is quite a rare honour for such awards to be given to civilians

Andrew Chivers, Managing Director for 'one' railway said:

"I would like to congratulate Alan on receiving this award. His dedication to the job is outstanding and his efforts have made our network a safer, more secure place for passengers and staff alike."

Photo right: Chief Superintendent Mark Newton, Area Commander for the London North Area of BTP presents Alan Perry with his award



A crackdown on alcohol fuelled anti social behaviour at stations is being launched in the Rhondda Valley.

Arriva Trains Wales, British Transport Police, South Wales Police and the Rhondda Cynon Taf Community Safety Partnership have joined forces in an initiative aimed at raising awareness of the current railway bye laws. The partnership is using the bye laws in a bid to discourage the culture of loitering and drinking at stations, which often leads to more serious crime being committed against passengers, staff and railway property.

Railway bye-laws state that it is an offence for "any person travelling on the certain services to be in possession of intoxicating liquor or to attempt to enter any of the above trains with intoxicating liquor". It also states that "no person shall enter on the railway where such person is unfit to enter or remain on the railway as a result of being in a state of intoxication".

The initiative, which is an extension of the successful Operation Anvil, will run for a trial period of 6 months and target hot spot stations known for anti social behaviour. New signage is being introduced to highlight the bye-laws, which will prohibit the consumption of alcohol on any station or train between Pontypridd and Treherbert.

Ian Bullock, customer services director for Arriva Trains Wales, said: "While under the influence, individuals who take part in this activity are putting themselves in danger, creating an intimidating environment for passengers and staff, and harming the environment.

This initiative is about setting new standards of acceptable behaviour and creating a safer environment for the travelling public."

ONE RAILWAY WINS GREEN BUSINESS AWARD FOR FLEET MANAGEMENT AT THE INTERNATIONAL GREEN BUSINESS AWARDS

2007

National Express Group's 'one' railway has won the Best Fleet Management Award at the international Green Business Awards run by World Business magazine and the INSEAD Business School. The awards recognise best practice in environmental strategy across the business sector.

The Best Fleet Management Award focuses on transport operations and looks for progress in the areas of innovation, reduced energy usage, cost effectiveness, employee involvement and the transferability of the approach to other companies.

'one' railway has taken a rigorous and proactive approach to energy efficiency, with a wide range of initiatives including :

- Operation of regenerative braking on its Class 360 trains – thereby reducing electricity requirements from that fleet's operation by 16% (as the train brakes the energy created is converted back into electricity which is fed back into the electricity grid)
- The implementation of an energy efficient driving programme for the company's drivers using its state-of-the-art driving simulators at its Customer Service Academy in Stratford (East London)
- Trialling the use of fuel additives on its diesel fleet to reduce fuel consumption
- Switching off power when trains are not in service to avoid unnecessary electricity use for heating/lighting
- Upgraded systems for controlling heating/cooling on trains (including adjusting settings for automatic doors to minimise the power used to maintain the ambient temperature)
- Installing more efficient lighting and heating systems at train maintenance depots saving up to 25% of electricity requirements
- Reducing the power used to heat/cool carriages, by asking conductors (and other employees) to close windows on trains

These actions are part of a coordinated Energy Efficiency Plan developed and led by the company's Head of Operations Development Phil Barrett, who was presented with the award at a ceremony in London.

The judges praised the "impressive commitment and action of the company" in the development and delivery of its energy efficiency plan.

GOLDEN SPANNER AWARD FOR 'ONE' RAILWAY'S CROWN POINT DEPOT

National Express Group's 'one' railway has won two awards at the prestigious 'Golden Spanners' awards, organised by the respected rail industry monthly journal Modern Railways and their Industry & Technology Editor Roger Ford.

The annual 'Golden Spanner Awards' recognises improvements in rolling stock reliability across the UK rail industry taking into account the different classes of trains operating throughout the network and comparing their reliability ratings.

'one' railway's Crown Point Depot team won a Golden Spanner for operating the best new generation diesel multiple unit for the Class 170 trains (in partnership with train manufacturer Bombardier). These trains operate on the services between Lowestoft and Ipswich / London and Peterborough and Ipswich / London. The overall miles per technical casualty (MPC) has improved and on a moving annual average (MAA) was a class leading 14,617 MPC at the end of last period. For our passengers this improvement translates into fewer delayed journeys. In fact the delay minutes generated on the network due to technical failures on this fleet has steadily decreased and is currently 40% better than at the same point last year.

In addition, the Norwich-based Crown Point Depot team won a Silver Spanner for most improved intercity fleet for the Class 90 locomotives and Mk3 carriages, which operate 'one's Norwich to London intercity services. The improvement over last year has been achieved by the development and implementation of a suite of reliability modifications by the technical team. The MPC MAA on this fleet has more than doubled and is now 9,952 MPC compared with 4,734 MPC at the same point last year.

These changes have contributed to an improvement in the moving annual average punctuality across 'one' from 87% to 89% with more passengers enjoying more 'on-time' journeys.

Commenting on these awards, Mike Watkins, Fleet Manager for 'one' railway at Crown Point said:

"The significant improvement in the reliability of our fleet of Class 90 locomotives and Mk3 carriages is a great credit to the maintenance team at Crown Point. I'm delighted that their efforts in delivering high standards of engineering excellence have been recognised. Our passengers are enjoying a more reliable train service as a result of their efforts. I am also pleased that our joint partnership with Bombardier in delivering a high quality standard of reliability for the Class 170 trains has also been recognized."

Andrew Chivers 'one' railway's Managing Director commented:

"Over the last year we have been making great efforts to improve the service we offer our customers. These awards are recognition of the contribution that the team at our Norwich Crown Point Depot have made towards these improvements. I would like to congratulate the Crown Point team on their success. Our services are now the most reliable that they have been since the beginning of the franchise and the team at Crown Point are an important part of this improvement in trains."

Pendolino train naming marks Treaty of Union anniversary

A Virgin Pendolino train has been named "Treaty of Union" at Glasgow Central station to mark the anniversary year of the parliamentary Union of Scotland and England in 1707.

The new nameplate was unveiled on the side of Pendolino number 390 009 on behalf of The Scotland Office by Mohammad Sarwar MP, whose Glasgow Central constituency includes the station. He was accompanied by UK railways Minister, Tom Harris, MP for Glasgow South. The train then ran to London on the 0939 service, the current fastest on the route with a schedule of four hours 25 minutes. It is convenient for Glasgow area MPs on their way to Westminster, who reduce their carbon footprint and gain uninterrupted working time during the journey by going by rail instead of flying to London. Virgin Pendolino trains emit on average 76 per cent less carbon dioxide on average than cars or domestic flights.

Freightliner Heavy Haul supplies drivers to TransPennine Express

Freightliner Heavy Haul Limited (FHH) have been awarded a contract to supply drivers to TransPennine Express (TPE), a division of First Group, following an extension by the DfT to TPE's route offerings. An invitation to tender was extended at the beginning of this year, and in September 2007, FHH were awarded the contract to supplement TPE's own pool of drivers for their new Manchester to Glasgow and Edinburgh routes. TPE drivers will run the trains between Manchester and Carlisle, where FHH drivers will then complete the journey. FHH will supply up to 6 drivers per day, seven days a week. The dedicated employees were all given the appropriate Class 185 unit training and route knowledge, and have been supplied with TPE uniforms which they will wear whilst operating TPE services. The drivers will exclusively work for TPE whilst driving TPE trains. David Israel, Commercial Director, FHH, commented: "This partnership is a post privatisation first for a freight operator and follows on from the successful completion of the class 185 & 350/1 Siemens Desiro UK commissioning projects, and leads Freightliner Heavy Haul into an exciting new era of railway operations." Gary Jenkinson, Project Manager - Franchise Expansion, TPE added: "Following the successful commissioning and testing of the brand new class 185 Desiro units in 2006, we look forward to further developing our partnership with Freightliner Heavy Haul in this new venture."

News in brief

Seasonal rail services for Royal Mail

EWS Network, the logistics rail provider, was contracted to provide two mail trains a day for the Royal Mail over the Christmas period.

The ten van train operated from the Royal Mail's Princess Royal Distribution Centre (PRDC) in London, and then called at Warrington and Shieldmuir, just outside Glasgow. The train then worked a return service from Shieldmuir via Warrington to PRDC.

Stuart Boner, EWS Network Managing Director, said: "Royal Mail is a multi-modal logistics user and at their busiest time of the year they require additional resources from all modes. EWS Network is delighted to provide a rail solution that can be integrated into their plan, and looks forward to transporting mail in the days leading up to Christmas."

South West Trains wins award

Our maintainers at Salisbury depot have scooped another award, this time at the annual 'Golden Spanner' awards.

The awards celebrate excellence in train maintenance and, for the third year running, we have won the category of "Most Reliable British Rail Era Diesel Multiple Unit" with its Class 159 train.

Throughout the year the fleet has been undergoing refurbishment to provide CCTV, a controlled emission tank, improved air conditioning system, enhanced lighting and internal improvements such as new tables and new seat coverings. Despite undergoing refurbishment these trains have maintained their reliability.

c2c wins top train award again

c2c's fleet of Class 357 Electrostar trains has scooped the prize for the best modern era electric multiple unit in the country for the third year in a row.

c2c's fleet of Class 357 Electrostar trains has scooped the prize for the best modern era electric multiple unit in the country for the third year in a row. Our fleet of 74 trains has averaged over 45,459 miles over the last 12 months before developing any fault leading to a delay of more than 5 minutes, making them the most reliable main line electric trains in Britain.

c2c received the accolade at the third annual 'Golden Spanners' awards held at the Modern Railways / Railway Forum 'Fourth Friday Club' lunch last week.

c2c Managing Director Mark Hopwood said, "Our trains are among the most modern in the country and have been key in putting c2c at the top of the league for punctuality which currently stands at 97% average for the year."

North Berwick Station crowned top of the pots

North Berwick Station in East Lothian has been crowned 'top of the pots', following the judging of the Best Unstaffed Station competition for the East of Scotland.

The competition was run as part of First ScotRail's Adopt a Station scheme and included Edinburgh Park and Camelon stations, which have been enhanced through the installation of a large stained glass window and a customer assistance facility, respectively.

The attractive environment at North Berwick, which now has a heated waiting room with a ticket vending machine and kiosk, is thanks to members of North Berwick in Bloom who have worked hard to enhance the overall setting through the installation of floral displays and richly coloured planters.

Their work was fully supported by First ScotRail who got behind the venture and provided 21 flower tubs, which have been planted by the ticket office and along the platform and 10,500 bulbs which have gone in on the south side of the track. Staff also got involved in the work itself and helped replant a flower bed at the buffer end and introduced a new flower bed next the virtual ticket office.

To mark their achievement, John Yellowlees, external relations manager at First ScotRail presented the group with a certificate in recognition of their efforts, along with the offer of a complimentary return rail ticket to anywhere in Scotland for each station 'adopter'. A copy of the certificate has been framed and mounted on the wall at the station.

Art comes to Virgin Trains' First Class Lounges

Virgin Trains customers using First Class lounges at Euston and Birmingham New Street will soon be able to enjoy viewing bespoke pieces of art while they wait for their trains.

A partnership with Hedz Limited, the Midlands leading creative art and design company has given an opportunity to young people to display their talents with canvas based artwork in a very public arena. One of the company's principal activities is the running of youth engagement workshops that can produce original designs and concepts that meet the needs of commercial organisations large and small.

The partnership between Virgin Trains and Hedz has been forged by Virgin Unite, a corporate social responsibility team that drives similar initiatives large and small throughout the Virgin group of companies world-wide.

The project launches in Euston's First Class Coffee Lounge, but the canvasses commissioned will shortly transfer to more permanent locations in the lounge at Birmingham New Street and the 1st Floor lounge overlooking the main concourse at Euston.

Both the artists whose work goes on display from today are known by their pseudonyms, "Risk" and "Style One" and were present at today's unveiling.

Gypsum trains to Gascoigne Wood will start in January

Daily freight trains loaded with gypsum will operate to Gascoigne Wood in Yorkshire early next year. EWS Energy will introduce regular freight trains in the New Year for British Gypsum, transporting gypsum from Drax power station to Gascoigne Wood for onward delivery by road to British Gypsum's plant at Sherburn. The site at Gascoigne Wood is owned by UK Coal and by using this extensive rail facility over 11,000 lorry movements per annum will avoid travelling on the road network.

NATIONAL EXPRESS SETS NEW PACE ON INTER CITY EAST COAST

Transport business National Express Group ("the Group") signalled a new era in passenger rail services with the launch on the 9th December of its National Express East Coast franchise which will provide services on the East Coast Main Line between London, Yorkshire, the North East of England and Scotland. This new franchise, which runs until 2015, will become the standard bearer for the Group's explicit promise to passengers to 'make travel simpler'. To deliver that promise the Group will invest almost £44 million to grow the business and significantly improve the total customer experience.

National Express Group Chief Executive Richard Bowker said: "We are privileged to be taking over Inter City East Coast, Britain's premier railway, which is known for the quality of its service by its many loyal customers. Our combined strengths of industry-leading operational performance, excellent customer service, innovation and sheer hard work give us confidence that we can make National Express East Coast a truly world class railway."

From Day One customers on the service will enjoy an improved passenger experience. For the first time WiFi internet access will be provided free in Standard Class (as well as First), whilst a 100-day joint improvement plan, already agreed with Network Rail, is set to significantly improve the punctuality of services. Within months of launch, on-board catering will feature a more contemporary range of dishes and snacks, complementing the option of restaurant dining with hot food served at seat in Standard.

Innovations in ticketing and information will make it simpler for customers to get the right ticket at the right price and to plan journeys more effectively. Plans include: real time running information accessible by mobile phone; print at home tickets; a website which will enable total journey booking (including parking and onward connections) in a single visit; and Smartcard ticketing.

Additionally, more and faster services are scheduled. From 2010, with the addition of five more trains to the fleet, there will be a further 25 services providing 14,000 extra seats each weekday. London-Leeds will take 2 hours and London-York 1 hour 45 minutes, whilst the London-Edinburgh services journey time will be reduced to less than 4 hours 20 minutes on key services

Photo: National Express



New wagons ordered for rail freight haulage in Britain and France

English Welsh & Scottish Railway Holdings Ltd has placed an order for 255 new rail freight wagons for services in Britain and France.

105 low-sided box wagons have been ordered by EWS Network to support its seven year infrastructure haulage contract with Network Rail. These 90 tonne wagons are being manufactured in Poland by Greenbrier.

The first set of 15 wagons is currently receiving extensive testing in Poland, and should arrive into Britain during January. The remaining wagons will be sent from Greenbrier to EWS Network in batches, with the final wagons expected by late spring 2008. The wagons have been fitted with Axiom Rail's AMIII suspension systems.

Stuart Boner, Managing Director for EWS Network, said: "Network Rail is an important customer for EWS Network and we are delighted to be receiving new wagons early next year to support our services for them."

In France, Euro Cargo Rail has received the first stage of an order for 150 aggregate wagons. The first 44 wagons were delivered to Euro Cargo Rail in early December and immediately entered into service. The remaining 106 wagons are expected to be delivered early next year.

These 90 tonne capacity wagons are being built by Arbel Fauvet Rail at Douai in northern France.

Alain Thauvette, Director-General of Euro Cargo Rail France, said: "These new wagons will help Euro Cargo Rail France to continue delivering the high levels of reliability and punctuality that our customers expect. They are an important addition to our fleet as we expand across France. We look forward to winning more new to rail traffic as these wagons are delivered."

IMPROVED PERFORMANCE AND REDUCED COMPLAINTS AT 'ONE' RAILWAY

The most recent National Rail Trends just published by the Office of the Rail Regulator (ORR) show that punctuality performance improved and customer complaints declined at 'one' railway during the period from June – September 2007.

The number of complaints received from customers also reduced from the previous year, with a 44% reduction in the rate of complaints per 100,000 passenger journeys (down from 59 per 100,000 journeys to 33 per 100,000 journeys). The reduction has been driven by improved punctuality, upgrades to trains (which have improved the on-train travelling environment) and more reliable air conditioning.

The results show that the train operator has continued to make progress in improving its service to passengers.

c2c leads London commuter punctuality league by a mile

Top-performing train company c2c has, once again, topped the latest league table of punctuality for London train companies according to National Rail Trends released by the Office of Rail Regulation.

In the months July, August and September c2c ran 97.8% of all its morning and evening peak services within five minutes of schedule – some four percentage points better than the next best operator and a staggering 26.8% better than the worst performing operator of London commuter services.

Managing Director of c2c Mark Hopwood said "We are really pleased with this result which is by far the best punctuality of any London commuter operator. More than 97% of c2c peak hour trains run on time and this sort of performance has been achieved consistently – in hot weather, in thunderstorms and even when the leaves fall from the trees! Indeed, our performance now exceeds that achieved in highly acclaimed overseas nations such as Netherlands and Switzerland and is close to Japanese standards. I would also like to pay credit to the hard work and professionalism of all my staff in c2c who work tirelessly to ensure we run the most punctual service to and from London. We also recognise the good work of Network Rail's East Anglia team who have helped us maintain this great performance."

Chairman of London TravelWatch, Brian Cooke, said "We are really pleased to see c2c setting the standard for rail travel into London and commend the entire c2c team on their hard work and commitment to achieving such great results for their passengers."

Twenty seven new trains for London Midland

A brand new fleet of trains for a brand new train company has come a step closer, with London Midland signing a deal with Bombardier and train leasing company Porterbrook for twelve 2-car trains and fifteen 3-car Turbostar trains.

The new trains, known as Class 172, are part of the multi million pound investment London Midland is making in new trains in the first years of its new franchise which started on 11th November.

These new trains will be the second new fleet the company will introduce and will replace some of the oldest trains in the current fleet, the Class 150s which operate on the London Midland City routes in the West Midlands. Manufacturers Bombardier will produce the light, modern diesel trains in Derby. The new fleet will boast state of the art technology as well as environmental advances.

London Midland Managing Director Steve Banaghan says the deal will bring a whole new quality of service for passengers in the West Midlands:

"We are very pleased to be able to confirm the order for new trains for London Midland today. This is part of the £243 million we are spending in order to bring our passengers a more reliable, more comfortable and more modern rail service. When we launched the franchise three weeks ago, we promised to take our passengers somewhere new - and that means a new generation of trains. "The new Turbostars are efficient, reliable, comfortable and set new standards for environmental performance, both in their manufacture and in their operations."

The new Turbostar trains are due to come into service in two years' time. From the end of next year, London Midland will be introducing its first new fleet, the Class 350 "Desiro" trains, which will operate on the longer distance London Midland Express routes to London, Birmingham and Liverpool.

Parry People Movers for Stourbridge branch line

A new era of environmentally-friendly transport has been ushered in with the signing of a contract worth over £700,000 to supply a pair of revolutionary railcars to run passenger services on the branch line between Stourbridge Junction and Stourbridge Town in the West Midlands.

Transport operator London Midland, train leasing company Porterbrook and supplier Parry People Movers have come together to bring two 'PPM 60' railcars into operation from December 2008.

The new vehicles feature lightweight construction and a hybrid system using flywheel energy storage, which dramatically reduce energy consumption and carbon dioxide emissions compared to conventional trains. The light axle loads of the railcars will also cause less wear and tear to the railway track. The order follows the successful experimental operation of a prototype railcar on the same branch line in 2005-06, which led to Govia including the technology in its successful bid to operate the new London Midland rail franchise, which started operation of train services throughout the West Midlands and express services to London and Liverpool on 11th November 2007.

Once the new railcars are in service, London Midland will re-deploy the single coach train, previously employed on the service, elsewhere to improve capacity on other parts of its network. Steve Banaghan, Managing Director of London Midland said, "We are pleased to be working in partnership with Parry People Movers and Porterbrook. Investing in new fleet is a key feature of the changes we are making to rail services across the London Midland network, of which this is just one part. Over the next two years, we will be investing over £240 million in new trains."

TAKE OFF FOR EAST MIDLANDS PARKWAY

Passengers across the East Midlands will soon have more choice in how they travel after Network Rail kicked off the construction of the new East Midlands Parkway station this week. The £25m project, primarily funded by Network Rail with a contribution of almost £1m from East Midlands Development Agency (emda), will see a brand new station constructed near junction 24 of the M1 at Ratcliffe-on-Soar.

Dyan Crowther, Network Rail Route Director said: "The investment into East Midlands Parkway signifies our commitment to improving the rail network. Parkway will be a world class station which will provide real choices for passengers and tempt motorists from the nearby M1 to try a greener form of travel.

As well as connections to London and all of the major regional centres the station will provide easy access to the nearby East Midlands Airport."

East Midlands Parkway will open in December 2008 and will be situated just off the A453 at Ratcliffe-on-Soar, 1 mile from the M1. It will include four platforms, step free access, a station building with ticket office and other facilities, staffed and managed by East Midlands Trains as well as 850 car parking spaces.

East Midlands Trains Managing Director, Tim Shoveller added: "We're really pleased that building of the station is now underway. When it opens next year, East Midlands Parkway will be an example of a high quality, accessible station and we're eager to play our part in delivering a first class station and service for our passengers. Our timetable will provide the station with fast, easy links to London, and other destinations on the East Midlands Trains network. We're hoping that more people will be persuaded to leave the car behind and take the train."

Anthony Payne, emda's Land and Development Director, commented: "The Regional Economic Strategy emphasises good transport. That's why emda has invested in East Midlands Parkway and we're pleased to hear that construction of the station is now underway and is on track for completion by the end of next year."



Eco-Mode saves 1.8m litres of fuel for the Class 185 fleet

An environmental improvement initiative developed by First TransPennine Express and Siemens Transportation Systems, has slashed the fuel consumption of the Class 185 Diesel Multiple Unit by 7% and reduced engine running time by 80 minutes per vehicle per day, saving over 1.8m litres of fuel per year.

Eco Mode has been introduced without incurring any delay minutes on the First TransPennine Express network or compromising on passenger comfort. It has been developed through train control modifications, selective engine use, evaluation of route-by-route fuel consumption rates and analysis of driving techniques – all with the overall objective of reducing CO2 emissions.

One of the key features of the Eco Mode is reduced engine idling time by automatically shutting engines down when trains are stationary and through using just two of the three engines on selected routes. Meanwhile, Eco Driving guidelines to optimise coasting – developed following comprehensive modelling of train performance over the geography of the core route – have been introduced. First TransPennine Express has consulted and involved its drivers to ensure they are fully engaged in and supportive of the initiative.

Nick Donovan, engineering director at First TransPennine Express, said: "We take our responsibility to operate our business in a way which minimises our carbon footprint very seriously. This pioneering scheme will deliver scheme a long term reduction of at least 11% in fuel use without significant capital investment in the fleet – just initiative and hard work jointly between First TransPennine Express and Siemens. Our goal is to increase the fuel savings from the already achieved 1.8 million litres per year to at least 2.5 million litres per year."

CELEBRATING THE RAILWAY IN THE NORTH OF ENGLAND

THE biggest train operator in Britain is publishing a new booklet on the fascinating role that the railways have played in creating today's society. Northern Rail, which runs 2,500 daily services in the North of England, will divide the money raised from sales of the booklet between the Railway Children charity and community rail projects.

The booklet, called Northern Heritage, charts the growth of railways in the North of England and their impact on society, covering the start of railways through to their vital role during World War Two, with graphic images of bomb damage on the network, then on to the great change from steam engines to diesel and electric trains and then to privatisation in the 1990s.

Heidi Mottram, Managing Director, Northern Rail, said: "We are a modern train operator providing a vital service to the North but we're also very aware of our heritage and this booklet is a celebration of the vital role that rail has played in building the economy of the North."

"We've been delighted with the response to the booklet from our own employees and school pupils who have used it as part of their history lessons."

Dr Paul Salvesson, Head of Government and Community Strategies for Northern Rail wrote the 24-page booklet. It costs £3.50 including post and packing and can be obtained from Association of Community Rail Partnerships, or ACORP (to whom cheques should be made payable) at The Rail and River Centre, Civic Hall, New Street, Slaithwaite, Huddersfield HD7 5AB.



This colourful looking beast will presumably soon be reliveried. This is the Class 08 at Bletchley, now London Midland owned. Tom Loader

YORK STATION'S 'MR CAR PARK' RETIRES

POPULAR car park attendant Walter Bell retires this week after almost 17 years at York Railway Station.

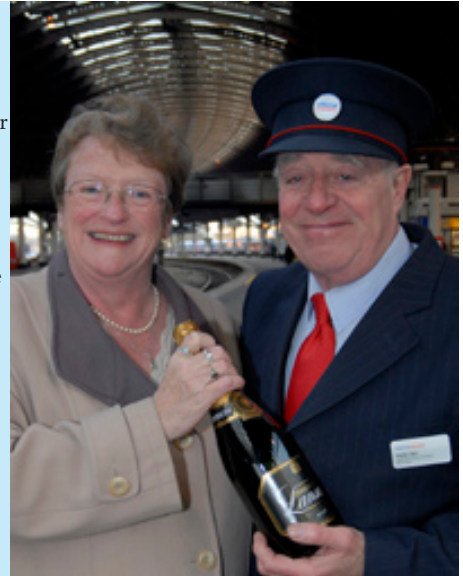
Walter started work at the station as a cleaner but began greeting the regular travellers who use the executive car park 12 years ago. He retires on Friday 21 December and celebrates his 65th birthday two days later.

Walter moved to York and began working at the station after the docks where he had been employed for 29 years in his home city of Hull closed down.

The part of his car park duties he enjoys most is speaking to and getting to know the regular users. "Irrespective of the weather, there was always something to talk about," he says. "Many of them treated me as a friend and have introduced me to their children when they've been here on family trips, and so I've been able to see them grow up over the years."

But he says he will not miss having to get up at 4am in readiness for starting work an hour later.

Among the many customers who have appreciated Walter's services over the years is Yorkshire Tourist Board chairman Judith Donovan, (seen left with Walter Bell) who typically travels by train once or twice a week.



HRH THE PRINCESS ROYAL PRESENTS SOUTHERN WITH PRESTIGIOUS SAFETY AND SECURITY AWARD

Her Royal Highness, the Princess Royal has presented Southern with an award for its commitment to station, passenger and staff security at an awards event hosted by the Secretary of State for Transport, Ruth Kelly.

Southern won the award for its commitment to the Secure Stations scheme which has resulted in 106 of its 162 stations being accredited. The scheme is run by the Department for Transport and the British Transport Police.



The awards event recognised those working to create a safer travelling environment across the UK's railway network.

Transport Secretary, Ruth Kelly said: "While crime levels on the railway are relatively low, we need to do all we can to create a safer travelling environment for passengers."

She added: "Maintaining and improving passenger safety is an essential part of our commitment to the public."

Chris Burchell, Southern's managing director said at the ceremony: "To receive this special award is a testament to the hard work put in by everyone involved with the scheme at Southern. Passenger and staff security remains one of the key issues for the railway and we are delighted that the efforts of Southern's secure stations team have been recognised in this way."

Freightliner is delighted to announce signing track access agreements

Freightliner Group Ltd is delighted to announce that over the last few days it has signed two new long term track access agreements with Network Rail.

The agreements for Freightliner Limited and Freightliner Heavy Haul Limited last until December 2016 and give our business and our customers security of access to the Network going forward and confidence to make investments in rail freight. These are the longest track access agreements ever held by Freightliner and they enable access to the Network nationally for Freightliner services.

Lindsay Durham, Head of Rail Strategy said "The signing of these agreements cement our excellent relationship with Network Rail and we are looking forward to working with them in the future to continue to grow our business. These agreements demonstrate further support for the future of rail freight in the UK following the publication of the White Paper – Delivering a Sustainable Railway published by government in July 2007. The Office of Rail Regulation, Network Rail and Freightliner teams have worked closely together over several months to finalise the detail of these important agreements. We appreciate all parties hard work to reach the final goal."

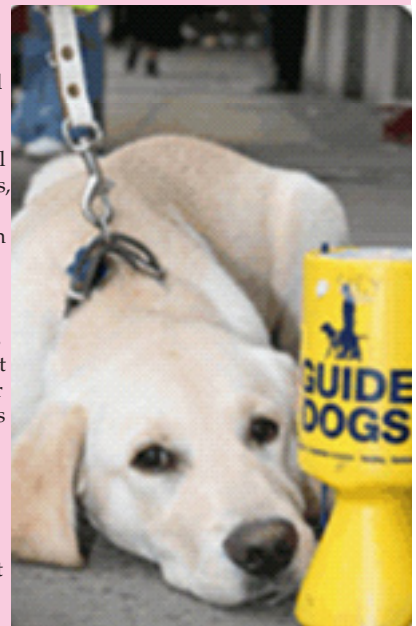
Newport railway station has been lit up by a festive Christmas tree in a partnership between Guide Dogs for the Blind, Arriva Trains Wales (ATW) and Hurrans Garden Centre.

The tree was a focal point for fundraising and awareness raising activities by volunteers from Guide Dogs' Newport branch in the run up to Christmas.

Throughout South Wales, there are 250 guide dogs, providing freedom and mobility to local blind and partially sighted people.

Diana Mager, corporate regional account manager for Guide Dogs, said: "We train around 50 puppies at our centre in Cardiff each year and also have a number of volunteer 'walkers' who help care for and educate a puppy during the first 12 months of its life. It can cost £5,000 to support one puppy through its first year and up to £35,000 throughout its life."

She continued: "Many visually impaired people rely on public transport and this fundraising will help us continue to support guide dog owners in the Newport area."



PARTNERSHIP PROVIDES NEW BENEFITS FOR STATION CAR PARK USERS

National Express Group's 'one' railway has signed a new partnership agreement with National Car Parks (NCP) to provide a comprehensive contract management service of all 'one's 62 pay car parks at the train operator's stations in London and across East Anglia.

NCP will invest over £1m in improvements and directly manage the car parks on behalf of the train operator, providing 'one' railway customers with a range of new and additional benefits designed to ensure that rail users receive high standards of service and safety, and innovative new ways of paying for tickets, offering passengers a more seamless level of service.

NCP will provide customer service staff during the evening period at 21 key stations, whose duties will include escorting lone travellers from the station forecourt to their vehicle.

A TENDER BEHIND

Overhaul of famous engine "Oliver Cromwell" now on the home straight as tender is put together.

The return of a steam age icon, British Railways powerful "Oliver Cromwell" engine is almost complete. In late December volunteers at the Great Central Railway put the tender back together, craning the tank onto the frames which support them. This is the latest step on a four year restoration project which has cost hundreds of thousands of pounds. The tender for carrying coal and water is one of the last few bits to complete on the engine, apart from the boiler. Engineers are now tackling this part and the engine should be in steam in early 2008.

"Oliver Cromwell" starred at the final curtain call for British Railway's steam back in 1968. It pulled one of the very last steam trains to run in this country and then became part of the national collection based in York. Its return to service is deliberately timed to mark the 40th anniversary of the end of steam. Robert Crew, general manager of the Great Central Railway said, "Assembling the tender is another key step on the road to completing the restoration of the engine. Enthusiasts up and down the country are getting excited by the return of this iconic engine. It's a huge machine which will look at home on our double track main line heritage railway. Our volunteers and full time staff are working almost seven days a week to see the project to the finish line.

In August of 2008, Oliver Cromwell will star in a recreation of that very last train in 1968 and before that will appear at an important festival at the National Railway Museum in May. The museum made the restoration possible and have been supporting the return to steam of the engine all the way. The Great Central Railway would like to acknowledge the work of all the partners and sponsors involved in the restoration of the engine. These include the National Railway Museum, the Readers of "Steam Railway Magazine" who sponsored the overhaul, 5305 Locomotive Association and Loughborough Standard Locomotives Group (LSLG) Limited.

SOUTHERN EXTRAVAGANZA FOR GREAT CENTRAL WINTER GALA

(26th and 27th JAN 2008 - WITH NIGHT PHOTO SHOOT ON 25th JAN)

MEMORIES OF THE SOMERSET AND DORSET REVIVED FORTY YEARS ON WITH TWO VISITING ENGINES

Two large visiting engines will bring a distinctly Somerset and Dorset feel to the Great Central Railway's spectacular January Gala. With up to six engines in steam (including a National Collection engine in the shape of Southern Railways 'King Arthur' class, no. 30777 "Sir Lamiel") it will be a spectacular double track main line show.

The two visitors are Southern Railways 'West Country' class, no. 34007 "Wadebridge" and London Midland and Scottish Railways 4F, no 44422. It's the "spam cans" first ever visit to the railway and the first time for many years the class has been seen at the GCR. The 4F has visited before and is making a much anticipated return after many years. They'll be joined by up to four others from the home fleet including 8F no 48305 and the King Arthur, which has recently returned to the GCR from main line duties.

"People have been asking us to do a Somerset and Dorset event for years," said the railways general manager Robert Crew, "so we're responding to the demand! With a West Country, a 4F and an 8F it's going to feel pretty authentic - not to mention our mixture of double and single track main line formation. With the presence of the King Arthur I suppose it might also feel a little like the platforms of Salisbury in the early 60s as well. It will of course be a great show and the one to visit in January."

The famous Somerset and Dorset route closed in 1966, the same year a through service on the Great Central came to an end. The line between Bath and Bournemouth was used for Summer holiday trains besides local traffic and was much loved by enthusiasts.

To go with the engines, visitors can expect an exciting intensive service of passenger and freight services. There will be a run with the travelling post office train and it's hoped to lay over an engine at Leicester North for part of the day to add to the variety. There's even a possibility the Pines Express will make an appearance on a 'non stop' run...

On the Friday night before the event there will be a special line up of the engines at Loughborough Central shed, posed for photographers. The railway is in talks to sign up another special guest locomotive which will be very appropriate to the theme and help provide a unique spectacle.

Food will be available on board trains during the day and a souvenir programme with locomotive details, full working timetable and notes about the Somerset and Dorset railway will be on sale.

Your preserved railway's news could appear on these pages, contact the editor at the address on page 2.

Great Central twins with ZLSM in Holland.

The Great Central Railway has twinned with the ZLSM steam line in Holland (Zuid Limburgse Stoomtrein Maatschappij) Directors from the Dutch line recently visited Loughborough following an invitation.

The railways hope to work together to stimulate tourism on both railways. Members of their respective supporters clubs are set to receive discount travel on the other line as part of deal being worked out.

Tony Sparks, a director of the Great Central Railway who pioneered the twinning said, "In many ways the ZLSM is similar to the Great Central, offering a great day out in superb rolling countryside, and with large steam locomotives. They also run "Thomas" events and have dining trains - so it seemed a natural fit. We're delighted to be twinned with them, and look forward to welcoming their supporters at the GCR."

2008 SPECIAL EVENTS AT THE GREAT CENTRAL RAILWAY

January 26th - 27th	Winter Steam Gala
February 2nd - 3rd	Pancake Festival
February 14th	Valentines Dining Train
February 16th - 17th	Days Out With Thomas
March 2nd	Quorn Swapmeet
March 14th	Diesel Running Day 1960's
March 15th - 16th	1960's Gala
March 21st - 28th	Easter
April 25th - 27th	Diesel Gala
May 3rd - 5th	May Day Special Weekend
May 24th - 26th	Days Out With Thomas
June 1st	Quorn Swapmeet
June 14th - 15th	War Weekend
June 28th - 29th	Edwardian weekend at Rothley
July 26th - 27th	Mail By Rail
August 23rd - 25th	Days Out With Thomas
September 7th	Quorn Swapmeet
September 13th - 14th	Diesel Gala
September 26th - 28th	Real Ale Weekend
October 11th - 12th	Steam Railway Gala
October 18th - 19th	Wizards Weekend
October 31st	Halloween
November 5th	Bonfire Night
Nov 29th-December 24th	Santa Specials
December 26th - 31st	Mince Pie Specials
December 31st	New Years Eve Dining Trains

Class 334 038 is seen coming into platform 1 of Bellgrove station reflecting off the driver glass mirror working the 11.38 2V68 Dalmuir - Springburn service on the 17th December. Jonathan McGurk





Above: Spot the Pendolino! A general view of Class 318 270 A End drivers cab. With the refurbishment programme finished on all 21 Class 318s, refurbished by Brush Barclay Works, Kilmarnock, Ayrshire a more spacious cab in all sets has been made, taken on Saturday 23rd December 2007. [Jonathan McGurk](#)
 Below: This picture is fantastic, the boats on the river really make this scene. Class 320 312 works the 12.08 2H23 Drumgelloch - Helensburgh Central crossing Dalreoch Viaduct on the 22nd December. [Jonathan McGurk](#)



In a year when the Severn Valley Railway has had more than it's fair share of bad luck, it is good to see that limited services are still running, when they could so easily have given up. Lets hope that a successful 2008 can get them back on track. Richard Hargreaves





Three photo's from the Gloucester and Warwickshire's gathering over the festive period.

Above: 73129 approaching Winchcombe still in its old Network SouthEast Livery.

Below left: Recently returned to service is Class 24 081, seen here at Toddington.

Belo right: 37215 passes 47105 and 24081 at Winchcombe. All: Richard Hargreaves





Above: One for the Irish traction fans here. On the 28th July 2007 083 formed a rare working on the 21:45 stopping service from Dublin to Kildare and 22:53 return, seen here after terminating at Dublin Heuston. This train was formed of 6 Mk3 coaches (including a generator/guards van) and is now operated by a DMU. Yorkie

Below: The trams of Krakow in Poland, provide an interesting sight especially for the heritage enthusiast. This is car 787 seen on service 18. Steve Patten





Once again we hope that you will like these photographs from David Mead, this month we have a couple that are a bit more up to date than previous, and some "golden oldies" as well, it just goes to show how things have changed on the railway scene over the years.

Above: 14th March 1990 47 348 St. Christophers Railway Home on a trip freight at Hasland - Chesterfield. (You can see the crooked spire in the background).
Below: Again on the 14th March 1990 and 56 014 is pictured on a mgr coal train at Stenson Junction, Derbyshire. Both : David Mead





*Above: Glorious sunshine on a spring day, 14th March 1990, 47 828 works 14.20 Brighton - Manchester Piccadilly at Fosse Way, Leamington Spa. David Mead
Below: 1st May 1982 45 063 on 10.20 Nottingham-Glasgow Central at Sheriff Bridge, north of Settle.. David Mead*





On 26 July 1970, I was able to join a tour of enthusiasts around Crewe Locomotive Works. Here are a couple of the more interesting shots I took. Above: The Southern's EDL fleet were sent to Crewe for overhaul. E6109 seen here. These locos were employed mainly on Continental "Boat Trains" - Victoria - Folkestone Harbour and just for a short time on Waterloo - Southampton Docks Ocean Liner Expresses (later for the Cruise Ships as well). The reason for this was that they were passed for 90mph running on the third rail and were also capable of hauling the stock at albiet reduced speed on the non-electrified sections.. *David Mead*

Below: Now Class 47's, but in 1970 still known as the Brush Type 4 D1713 inside Crewe Works having previously been involved in a collision. *David Mead*



Deja vu, once again Riviera Trains blue liveried 47805 'Talisman' features on our back page, this time passing Stafford with a weekend Royal Mail working.
Richard Hargreaves

