

Railtalk Magazine

Issue 4
January 07

Railtalk magazine is brought to you monthly with all the latest News and Pictures



Virgin
competition

GNER
"The end"

Network rail
News

"One In
One Out"

S.W.T.
Review

Front cover

Steam Loco - 45321 hauls 1Z90 Cathedrals Express Charter to Kent, 73107 is on the rear of the train. The train is seen here at Grovesnor Bridge.

Picture: Juliang



About the magazine

Railtalk is the monthly magazine from Railtalk forums. Covering news and pictures, the magazine will also hold all the site and forum news.

Site/Forum

For more information please contact any admin on Railtalk.net

Submissions

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

Railtalk magazine team

Andy - Editor
Robert K - Head of news
James P - Head of freight news

When is it published

Railtalk magazine is published, the Sunday closest to the end of each month.

Railtalk magazine is published by Railtalk forums.

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Merry Christmas and a Happy New year from
Everyone at railtalk magazine



Three quality pictures of 37's in the snow by Richard Hargreaves

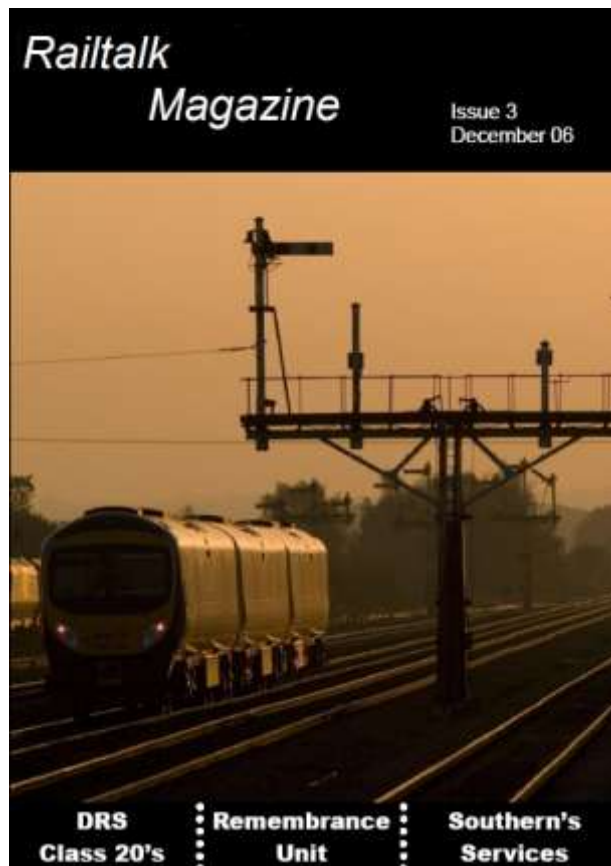
Welcome to issue 4 of Railtalk Magazine if there is anything you want to say or write for the next edition please let us know.

Many thanks to all who have contributed this month.

We apologise that the scheduled update to the forum didn't take place owing to a bug in the new software.

Big news! You can now send us your email address so that we can email you as soon as a new issue is out. This means that you will never miss another issue ever again. Just contact an administrator or see the website for more information.

New ways to access the site and forum. The site and forum can now be accessed by visiting any of these addresses railtalk.net, railtalk.info and railtalk.org



Win the fantastic Virgin Trains 2007 Calendar or Mouse Mat



Simply send us an email marked with the subject as competition and attach a picture of a Virgin Trains service taken by yourself anywhere across the rail network to: comp@Railtalk.info
Replacing the AT with @.

The winner will be selected on 12th Jan 2007. The 1st prize is the Virgin Trains 2007 calendar. There is also 6 runners up prizes of a Virgin mouse mat. Prizes will be sent out 1st class. All the winning pictures will be published in February's issue. The winning picture will be on the front cover.



Above: Cotswold Rail's 47828 and 47813, pictured here at Denchworth, between Swindon and Didcot. Hauling the 1Z47 Gloucester round trip using 3 x First Great Western coaches, 1 x Virgin coach and the Cotswold Rail buffet coach. The tour went via Yate, Bristol Parkway, Bath Spa, Newbury, Reading, Didcot, Swindon, Westbury and then back to Bristol and up to Gloucester. [Picture: Jamie Squibbs](#)



37194 and 37229 arrive at Shrewsbury with Pathfinders YO HO HO Tour on the 29th December
[Picture: dave36](#)



82213 pictured here leaving Peterborough with a service for Bradford Forster Square. Picture: [Oll Smith](#)

Below : 67002 heads up 67011 as they double head the daily 6M33 16:23 Avonmouth to Wembley 'Enterprise' service past the site of the station at Henbury on the Bristol Parkway - Avonmouth branch. This train can be anything from 4 to 15 wagons. The station closed in November 1964 Picture: [Dave Higson](#)





Above: Two of the ubiquitous, anonymous class 220 Voyagers pass at Bristol Parkway on November 30th 2006 on North East - South West services whilst waiting in the background for the Voyager to pass, is 57004 FREIGHTLINER QUALITY (ex 47347) on the 4O51 Cardiff Wentloog to Southampton freightliner. [Picture: Dave Higson](#)



92212 departs Kidderminster December 2000. © [Richard Hargreaves](#)

Class 458's

If over the last few years, South West Trains hadn't been constantly trying to find excuses to remove these beauties from service, they may have noticed that they are in fact extremely good units.

On behalf of South West Trains, it is obvious that after the units disappointing start and reputation, they obviously won't be on South West Trains' most adored unit list. They took off to a formidable start on the London Waterloo to Alton line. After which they were sent to the Reading line, on which a vast improvement was noted.

However, South West Trains until recently were supporting the elimination of these units from



their rails. Losing eventually from someone in the planning department who obviously has a major attraction to the class 458 JOP type units, and of course the facts that class 450 supplies were running low, and the reality was, that the class 458 fleet was in fact becoming less prone to failure and more hard working.

Overall, the class 458 units at present have until 2010 to comply with regulations or they once again face an extinction...

The maximum recorded time of no class 458 operation is probably in the region of 2-3 weeks, regardless of the fact they were supposedly stored or removed from service twice.

Within the fleet, each unit has a very varying history from that of the others, as each unit had its own defects and has had its own interesting eventful life story.

Unlike the class 450 units, these were not a tale of putting five units together in one week and sending them off for delivery!

These units are unique and therefore have a charm about them which many deny now, however in the future, when the units finally have a stable position in or out of service the charm will become apparent to all.

Robert k

Picture: James P

A year on South West Trains

A brief overview of the year on South West Trains

, The most important thing possibly is that this year Stagecoach remained holders of the South West Franchise ,



South West Trains began to receive and refurbish class 158 ex-TPE units and have begun to send the class 170s to Trans-pennine, Although it has been announced 2 units will remain with 'SWT'



South West Trains began to reduce the number of class 442 units in service, at first un-successful in the attempt to remove 2416, however in the last half of the year many have gone.



South West Trains reached the half way point on class 455 refurbishment scheme, finished class 455/7 units and have moved on to class 455/9 units. As well as a minor derailment of a class 455/9



South West Trains accepted 450101 in to service and 17 more new class 450 desiro units to begin the Class 458 (at the time) replacements.



With supposedly the FINAL deadline for class 458 running occurring about 3 times this year, the units will be back in service full time as of the new timetable... a success for all! All: Robert K

West Coast franchise deal is platform for massive growth

Virgin Rail Group (VRG) today announced that it has agreed formal terms for a reinstated contract with the Department for Transport (DfT) for its West Coast rail franchise as it continues a period of massive increases in customer numbers.

The franchise deal starts immediately and will run until March 2012, replacing the Management Agreement (Letter Agreement 2002) which has been in place since July 2002 following the collapse of Railtrack plc.

Under the deal, VRG plans to increase the number of passenger journeys from 20m a year in 2006/07 to more than 30m a year in 2011/12 on the West Coast routes between London Euston and the West Midlands, the North West, Cumbria and Scotland. Under separate proposals, VRG is discussing with the DfT the feasibility of adding two extra cars to each of its 53 nine-car Pendolino trains, which would provide a further 10m seats to meet expected demand.

Already the West Coast is showing some of the biggest rises in customer numbers on the rail network, and there are plans for even greater growth when thousands more train services a month are added from December 2008, once Network Rail has completed the last stage of the West Coast Main Line modernisation project.

In 2005/6, customer numbers grew by 21 percent, the biggest increase in the rail industry, and similar growth figures are continuing on much of the West Coast.

From December 2008 the number of daily train services will increase by 32 percent, and there will be around 10m extra seats available a year compared to now. Three trains an hour will operate from London to Birmingham and London to Manchester (currently two per hour). A new hourly service will operate from London to Chester with more - and faster - trains from London to Scotland and Birmingham to Scotland. In addition, from December 2008, weekend services will change massively, with almost double the number of trains operating on Sundays subject to final agreement with Network Rail. © Virgin Rail Group

Top accolade for Virgin's Pendolino trains

Virgin Trains' Pendolinos have scooped the accolade for the most improved inter-city train fleet at the second Golden Spanner Awards, organised by Modern Railways magazine. The award recognises the close working relationship between Virgin Trains and ALSTOM which has seen a 148% improvement in reliability over the past twelve months. The moving annual average (MAA) average is now at its highest level since the Pendolinos entered service in 2002, with the trains regularly achieving in excess of 10,000 miles per five minute delay caused by a technical problem.

ALSTOM built and maintains the Virgin Trains fleet of 53 state-of-the-art tilting 125mph Pendolino trains which operate Virgin's West Coast services between London and the West Midlands, Manchester, Liverpool, Cumbria, North Wales and Scotland. The improvements in train reliability have contributed to the best ever

performance on West Coast services, which has been running at over 90% this year – the first time in over ten years that the 90% barrier has been broken. Passenger satisfaction is also at its highest level and passenger numbers continue to grow at 11% year on year. © Virgin Rail Group



First Great Western

19 December 2006

Train operator First Great Western is cutting the cost of local train travel within South Wales from the beginning of next year.

From 2 January 2007, Standard Day Return, Cheap Day Return and weekly season tickets on First Great Western train services will be reduced in price, some by more than 50 per cent.

For example, a Swansea to Cardiff Standard Day Return will fall in price from £10.60 to £6.50 and a weekly season ticket between Bridgend and Neath will be reduced from £24.20 to £12.00.

Tom Stables, First Great Western's Commercial Director, says: "We're determined to offer good value for money and offer a wide range of fares to give our customers choice and flexibility. These price cuts really are an excellent deal for our customers in South Wales and this underlines our commitment to the region. © First Group



Network Rail

NETWORK RAIL AWARDS CONTRACT FOR FIRST ERTMS IN-CAB SIGNALLING SYSTEM

Tuesday 19 December 2006 12:00

Network Rail today announced that it has awarded Ansaldo the contract for the first stage of a £60m project for the implementation of the European Rail Traffic Management System (ERTMS) in the UK.

This new in-cab signalling system is based on information being relayed directly to the train via a digital radio instead of by lineside signal. With this new system, the time and distance needed to safely separate trains is managed dynamically, allowing for greater capacity on the line as well as efficiency and reliability improvements owing to the removal of the old signalling systems.

The plan is to replace the old signalling system on the Cambrian route between Shrewsbury and Aberystwyth and Pwllheli with the new in cab system. Ansaldo will work with the Network Rail to draw up designs for implementation.

The first stage contract is for the design of the system and it has been awarded to Ansaldo because of its significant experience in designing and implementing ERTMS systems in Italy, Spain and France. The design work will commence immediately and is expected to be complete by summer 2007.

Network Rail's Director, Major Projects & Investment, Simon Kirby, said:

, This is an exciting time for the Cambrian route. Network Rail is committed to enhancing and improving performance and this project could bring big benefits to the line while allowing us to learn more about ERTMS.

After a very close examination of the competing bids, we felt that Ansaldo has the relevant experience and also demonstrates the best overall value.

Mike Bagshaw, commercial director for Arriva Trains Wales, said:

, The installation of modern signalling that will deliver increased reliability on the Cambrian route is good news and Arriva Trains Wales welcomes the opportunity to participate in the development of this system. © Network Rail

MODERN TRAINS TO IMPROVE SERVICES

Rail passengers are to benefit from more modern, spacious trains on Wales' long-distance services from Monday 11 December 2006.

Arriva Trains Wales is running 11 additional 'Coradia' trains from Monday, providing modern, comfortable carriages. The trains will operate on the company's long-distance routes between Cardiff and Holyhead and West Wales and Manchester and will boost seats available by 10 per cent.

The new additions mean that around a quarter of the company's trains are from the Coradia fleet and offer:

- the best of a new generation of trains reaching speeds of up to 100mph
- modern, air-conditioned carriages with additional leg room
- seats for up to 186 passengers (three carriage train)
- on train CCTV
- disabled toilet and baby changing facilities.

Mike Bagshaw, commercial director for Arriva Trains Wales, said: "Our long-distance services between Cardiff and Holyhead and West Wales and Manchester, launched last December, are providing a real alternative for travellers making journeys by road. In providing newer trains and better comfort for passengers, Arriva Trains Wales is delivering an economically viable, practical alternative to the car."

"As well as providing improved comfort for long-distance journeys, communities along these routes using services to travel to work or for leisure will also benefit from the increased seating capacity that Coradia trains provide."

From Monday, rail passengers travelling between Wrexham and Bidston will benefit from more spacious and reliable services as four sprinter trains enter service on the line replacing older trains. Four sprinter trains will also enter service on South Wales valley routes for use on the restored Ebbw Valley Line from summer 2007. The sprinter trains have been made available with funding from Welsh Assembly Government.

Andrew Davies, Minister for Enterprise, Innovation and Networks in Wales, said: "The addition of the extra 11 Class 175 Coradia trains, takes Arriva Trains Wales' long-distance fleet of these comfortable, modern, high speed trains to 27, a most welcome improvement in comfort and journey quality."

"The additional Class 150 sprinter trains will double daily capacity on the Wrexham to Bidston Line, and should also improve reliability on that service. The others will form the fleet for the new Ebbw Valley Railway when it opens next summer. This represents additional investment from my rail budget of some £4 million annually. It is additional to my investment in extra rolling stock on the Cambrian and Heart of Wales lines earlier this year and is further evidence of my commitment to improving rail services across all parts of Wales." © Arriva

'one' to make trains more energy efficient

East Anglian train operator 'one' railway is to make rail travel more environmentally friendly, with the completion of testing on its fleet of modern Class 360 Desiro electric-multiple unit trains, to enable the introduction of energy-efficient "Regenerative braking" or , Regen as it is known in the industry.

This , green initiative allows these trains to generate electricity whilst they are slowing down, by converting the energy created as the train brakes back into electricity - which is then passed back into the energy supply system, thereby providing electricity for these trains or others using the network to utilise.

The environmental benefit of this initiative is a reduction in the amount of electricity used and therefore overall energy consumption. Estimations suggest that it could result in a reduction of as much as 16% in electricity use from the operation of the Class 360 fleet. This is possible because the Class 360 Desiro trains use a modern 3-phase AC traction motor system. It also reduces the effect of friction braking which reduces brake wear and cuts down on brake dust levels.

The 21 x Class 360 Desiro four-carriage electric-multiple unit trains were originally designed to use the , Regenerative braking facility. However, the infrastructure in the region was initially not fully compatible with its operation. Recent upgrades completed by Network Rail have now enabled 'one' railway to make use of this feature.

So far, nine of the Class 360 fleet which operate on services from London Liverpool Street to destinations including Braintree, Chelmsford, Clacton, Colchester, Ipswich and Harwich, have been "switched on" for , Regen and the remainder of the fleet will follow with completion expected by the end of January 2007.

Dominic Booth, Managing Director for 'one' railway commented:

, Customers rightly expect us to ensure rail travel is as , green as possible. The introduction of regenerative braking on our Class 360 fleet of trains is a major step-forward in reducing energy levels to provide a far-more efficient and environmentally friendly method of powering this type of train. 'one' railway is one of the first train operators to implement such a project, which is part of our overall strategy to manage energy use in a sensible and considerate way. © N.E.G.

Hull Trains is in Seventh Heaven with new weekday service

Hull Trains is celebrating an early Christmas present today as the company announces the introduction of an additional weekday service each way between Hull and the Capital, taking its total number of weekday services to seven in each direction.

This is a major coup for Hull Trains as it has worked tirelessly to secure a service which will bring significant benefits for passengers travelling for both business and pleasure.

The seventh service will provide a later departure for passengers travelling both north and southbound. Hull Trains will be operating a 19.18 departure from Hull to Kings Cross and a 20.27 departure from Kings Cross to Hull, Monday to Friday inclusive.

The company has been granted contingent rights by the Office of Rail Regulation to continue this service for a period of one year, with expectations that this right will be extended at the end of 2007.

Hull Trains' managing director, Mark Leving, commented on this good news: , Everyone at H ull Trains is delighted that we will be able to provide an additional weekday service to cater for the needs of more passengers than ever before. © Hull Trains

Good old GNER....not

Our local paper has had an offer recently, for cheap tickets on GNER. Fantastic, you might think, Cheap trips to London possibly???, not a chance.....

Have a look at a couple of the t&c's

You can travel between Wednesday 3rd January and Sunday 11th March, 2007 (excluding 10th - 25th February 2007).

Seats are available on off-peak services with limited availability on Friday and Saturday afternoons. There will also be limited availability when major events are taking place. Please note that engineering work will take place on some weekends during this promotion that may affect journey times

However every weekend during the whole of January there is a bus for the large part of the journey. Whatever happened to diversions using Class 67's? And if people wanted to travel by bus would they not choose National Express.

To take advantage of this great offer, just collect the appropriate number of tokens as shown in your newspaper. Up to four people can travel together with one set of tokens. You must take the tokens with you, as you will be asked to produce them for inspection on the train.

That is simple enough,

Bookings open on Saturday 2nd December and close on Saturday 30 December, 2006.

You must book at least two weeks in advance of outward travel. Seats are subject to availability, so please book early to avoid disappointment. At these great prices, we are expecting the biggest demand for travel at weekends - if you can travel mid week, you will have more choice.

Obviously if you want to travel midweek then finding a train should be simple enough, but lots of people have had trouble getting onto the website, and then constantly being told that the train does not exist. It seems that booking seats is a bit of a lottery,

This is a Quote from the GNER WEBSITE:

We cannot find any services that meet your request.

Possible reasons and solutions are listed below. You can try and search for another journey by clicking on the back button:

The services you have asked for may not be available yet.

You can usually book on train services up to 3 months in advance. However some services may be made available at shorter notice for example, when engineering works are taking place.

There may not be any trains running when you want to go (fewer trains run off-peak, during the night and Bank Holidays).


If possible select different travel times or dates. Please note we do not provide information on overnight Sleeper services.

But, hang on a minute.

These tokens are an offer for up to 4 persons to travel for £16.00 return each.
No railcard discounts apply.

The normal GNER apex 1 fare to London is £9.50 each way (£19.00 return)
Assuming you don't normally buy the paper with the tokens in , and there are 8 tokens to collect.

Marketing ploy or real bargain....?



GNER "hand back the keys"

The Department for Transport today announced it is inviting Expressions of Interest to operate services on the InterCity East Coast Mainline. It is expected that the operator for the new franchise will be in place in 12 to 18 months.

Until that date, the Government has entered into agreement with the current operator GNER, to operate the franchise on the Department's behalf under a temporary 'Management Agreement'. Under this agreement, GNER will continue to deliver train services and will help ensure a smooth transition to the holder of the new franchise. Most of the net worth of the company passes to the Government and GNER has agreed to cover the Department's costs of re-letting the franchise early. Companies with an interest in running the franchise have been asked to submit expressions of interest to the Department by 15th January 2007.

Short listed bidders will later be asked to bid against a specification based on a consultation published today. It proposes that current services are maintained and that the Leeds half hourly service continue.

For passengers and staff, services will continue to operate as normal. All tickets will be valid and passengers can book and reserve tickets in exactly the same way they do today.

Secretary of State for Transport, Douglas Alexander said:

"The Government made it clear that rail operators that fall into financial difficulty should expect to surrender the franchise and not receive financial support. To do otherwise could set the precedent that we are willing to bail out operators at extra cost to the taxpayer.

"This agreement protects the interests of both passengers and taxpayers. It will ensure services operate as normal until a private sector franchise operator can be put in place."

Shortlisted are expected to be Virgin Trains, First and Stagecoach, However it is not clear at this point if either First or Virgin would be considered as a monopoly on services would then exist.

Eastleigh to be storage facility

158842/3/4/5/8/9/850/851/853 are due to go off lease and for , warm storage at Eastleigh,

ATW are taking the ex-CT units off lease now that they have more 175's

It's worrying that modern-ish stock in the form of 158s has gone into store, whilst Pacers remain. I guess this reflects the lower leasing costs for Pacers forced through in the last year.

In addition to the 158s in store at Eastleigh, there are also 4 x 153s off lease from FGW. All the stored units are in need of a refurb before commencing work for a new operator, weather that will happen or not remains to be seen.

Hopefully, Angel trains will come round to dropping lease charges for 158s, rather than have no income whatsoever from some of them, in addition to the cost of storage.

FGW has sent 8 x 150/2 to ATW which, along with the 175s from First Trans Pennine has allowed the 158s to be stored.

Sources also says the SWT 442s will go into warm store at Eastleigh as they come off lease, pending a new user.



Chester Chuffer

The annual Chester Chuffer arrives at a very pleasant and sunny Chester on the 16 Dec with 6201.

Picture: [dave36](#)



'one' in 'one' out

There is talk that 'one' railway which has been mocked since the beginning of the franchise for its name, may be having a make-over.



Officials at National Express have been consulting changes that could occur, as the name one doesn't reflect the National Express brand.

National Express are currently looking across the board at all their franchises and deciding upon changes that could occur, so 'one' may not change, however after reading a number of articles it is well known now that National Express group are considering the re-naming of its East Anglia franchise.

Recent evidence on trains points to this being true, as 321442 and an un-identified 315 EMU have been spotted wearing First Great Eastern colours with stickers portraying the name one and the rainbow stripes. Therefore there is obviously preparation for change that could be happening within 'one' at the moment.

Robert k



YORK FOG

You know its winter when the Network Rail 86's appear back at York.

This year they are under the control of DRS who won the contract from Freightliner. These locos go out at night and , clean the wires to prevent ice build up .

Of course if they ran electric hauled freights through the night then perhaps they would not be needed, but that's another story. (and it would deprive us of can thrash!!!)



86901 and 86902 in there first week back at York, stand in platform 1.

Above: 37038 stands in the parcels siding at York

Lincoln Christmas Market

Central trains ran top and tail 47's between the east midlands and Lincoln for the traditional Christmas market on weekend 09 December .

Left: West Coast liveried Class 47. 47245 on arrival at Lincoln

Middle:
47712 and 47709 (at rear) with the Blue Pullman at Lincoln.

Below: Intercity 47826 which was top 'n tailing with 47245 at Lincoln, also in this picture is one of the magnificent signal gantries that are due to be replaced soon.

Bottom Left: 67003 worked a VSOE charter to Lincoln on the 09 Dec

[All: dave36](#)



It seems to be a singular pastime of the British to grumble about their railways.

Are other countries so vehemently critical of their rail systems?

Do Brits put the airlines under a similar microscope?

I can say that, here in Canada (indeed, North America), with a comparatively tiny amount of main line train travel on offer, the railways are largely ignored with a quiet yawn. People vote with their feet and here they either drive or fly.

We're a country that boasts its creation in great part upon the transcontinental railway. But today the railways are viewed, when viewed at all, with fond romanticism (= tourism) rather than practicality. Ludovic Kennedy's "Great Railway Journey", coast to coast, first aired in 1981, is still a good précis of current passenger rail travel on this Continent. And San Francisco, with a population of 0.8 million, still has no mainline rail service, nor does Calgary, Alberta, arguably one of the most booming cities on the planet. Railways here are about freight. The permanent way is largely owned by the freight companies, so guess which traffic dictates the timetable? You may not be pleased when your train pulls in minutes late. Imagine arriving hours - or even days - late! And imagine it being accepted with a resigned shrug of the shoulders.

My point is this: use it or lose it. If you do lose it, the chances of a rail service returning, once gone, is slender indeed. They say we get the government we deserve and the same is true of the railways.

Lastly, if we're to have a "Grumbles" section in this excellent Railtalk Magazine, I think it only fair to have a "Praises" section, too.

And I'd like to kick it off by saying that I think Britain has the best darned railway system in the world. It always has, since its inception over 200 years ago.

In my experience, it's fast, frequent and (jobsworth's notwithstanding!) friendly.

Congratulations, Britain, on showing the world how to move a lot of people around efficiently, by rail!

(Now I've torn it.....)

John Grimley,
Toronto



Thanks to John for that, remember if you want to grumble or praise the railway system or its workers, then please let us know at Railtalk and you could appear on this page.

In response to Johns request i'll start off the praise section by suggesting Virgin trains staff, as on the weekend before Christmas, they were dressed up in Christmas gear and getting into the spirit of things, also on offer was free Quality Street to all its customers. We have even seen Voyager displays saying , Merry Xmas .

Did anyone see any other toc's that made an effort over christmas. ??



Above: 1116 111-4 arrives at Bisschofshofen 22 Feb 2006

Below: 1142 614-5 at Attang-Puchheim 21 Feb 2006 [Pictures: dave36](#)





Above: Tram Number 31 at Innsbruck 21 Feb 2006

Below: Preserved Steam loco 93 1379 at Schwarzach-St. Viet 20th Feb 2006 [Pictures: Andy Patten](#)



Anyone with some spare time or thinking of where to go on holiday in 2007 are highly recommended to try Austria.

The scenery is superb, loco-hauled trains are plentiful and freight is not only frequent but train lengths can be immense.

Locations such as Linz, Salzburg and St. Polten have excellent facilities and the thing is at most locations, you never know what to expect. A good example is the picture on the left, where a steam loco is mounted on track outside the station.

Also worth a look outside most stations is to see if there is some trams like the one above. Whilst there are some towns getting new ones, then many have old ones like this, it would not look out of place on Blackpool sea front.

60010 leads 6M46 Redcar M.T. - Hardendale
Empty lime hoppers out of the east end of Tees
Yard. [Picture: John Day](#)

