



Railtalk Magazine

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Submissions & Contributions

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

Photographic Contributions

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

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

Welcome to Issue 196

A Happy New Year to all our readers and contributors, we have had an excellent 2022 for variety both on the mainline and in preservation so let's hope that 2023 is just as good.

However we start with some not so good news this month, that the Office of Rail and Road has reported that freight volumes fell between July 1st and September 30th. The regulator said the drop had been caused by strikes. Total freight moved was four billion net tonne kilometres, which was 6.4 per cent lower than in the same three months a year earlier.

The chief executive of the industry lobby group Rail Partners, Andy Bagnall, has warned that the decline underlines the 'negative impact industrial action is having on rail freight demand, despite not directly involving the freight companies'. He continued: 'Some customers are already losing confidence due to the disruption and switching from rail to road. There is a very real risk that if resolution is not achieved quickly, more customers will choose less environmentally sustainable modes in the long term. This not only puts the potential growth of the sector at risk, but it also undermines the ability of rail freight to contribute to wider economic growth and support the achievement of net zero targets.'

And more bad news as Great Western Railway has confirmed that it is to

hand back all nineteen of the Class 769/9 multi-system 'Flex' multiple-units to leasing company Porterbrook at the end of their current lease agreement in April 2023. The move forms part of an overall contraction in the operator's rolling stock fleet, with service cuts expected during 2023. GWR has concluded that there is no likelihood of the trains entering service in the short term.

The decision comes following significant expenditure on the Flex programme by both the Department for Transport and Porterbrook. The promoters had hoped to develop a low-cost fleet by converting redundant Class 319 dual-system EMUs into electro-diesel trainsets. The project was launched as a response to concerns within government about the affordability of a rolling programme of electrification and a perceived reticence from the supply industry to manufacture new DMUs.

The bi-mode Class 769 trainsets used by Northern Trains have suffered from poor reliability since their introduction. The GWR sets were the third variant of the Flex concept. Eight Class 769/0 and Class 769/4 sets have been delivered to Transport for Wales, which uses them in diesel mode only. Another eight Class 769/4 sets are working for Northern Trains, where they switch between diesel and overhead 25 kV 50 Hz traction.

Both of these fleets have suffered from reliability issues with TfW refusing to accept a ninth trainset after deciding it did not meet acceptable standards, while Northern took half of its fleet out of traffic for a period earlier this year. Both the Welsh and Northern fleets continue to record very modest reliability figures.

Fleet problems are being exacerbated by the phased withdrawal of the shortened IC125 trainsets, branded 'Castles' which GWR is expected to withdraw 16 of these sets by December 2023 and now the lack of Class 165 Turbo DMUs for redeployment to regional services in southwest England which were being replaced by the Class 769s.

'With the loss of the Castle sets as well as the expected 165/166 sets we are really squeezing things quite a lot', the GWR insider confirmed. 'Which does concern us, but we will have to work to make the best with what we have.'

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

Andy

This Page

GBRf's latest acquisition is CB1001 which will be renumbered to 66 306 once it is converted to UK specification. On December 23rd it was to be found at Roberts Road waiting to be unloaded. [Lee Stanford](#)

Front Cover

Catching the last of the dwindling afternoon sun, Stanier 4-6-0 No. 46115 'Scots Guardsman' approaches Clapham heading back to base in Carnforth from York with an empty stock working on December 9th. [Gerald Nicholl](#)





Class 60 047 passes Winwick on December 6th with a Drax Biomass working. *Jeff Nicholls*

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Charter Scene Vintage Trains

The Christmas White Rose

GWR 4-6-0 No. 7029 'Clun Castle' threads through the new infrastructure at Colton in Yorkshire mist with 'The Christmas White Rose' excursion to York on November 29th. *Gerald Nicholl*



Charter Scene Saphos Trains

Pennine Moors Christmas Cracker

LNER B1 4-6-0 No. 61306 'Mayflower' dives into the shadows blasting up Houghton Bank with the 'Pennine Moors Christmas Cracker' to Blackburn on December 21st. *Gerald Nicholl*



Charter Scene Saphos Trains

Pennine Moors Christmas Cracker

LNER B1 No. 61306 'Mayflower' departs from Warrington Bank Quay station on December 21st with Saphos Trains' 'Pennine Moors Christmas Cracker'. The train could be heard for a spine tingling good five minutes after it departed. *Jeff Nicholls*



Charter Scene Saphos Trains

Pennine Moors Christmas Cracker

LNER Thomson Class B1 No. 61306 'Mayflower' speeds passed Wigan Springs Branch Junction, with the Saphos Trains, 08:55 Leicester to Blackburn 'Pennine Moors Christmas Cracker' raitour on December 21st. *Paul Senior*



Saphos Trains

Pennine Moors Christmas Cracker

▶ On December 21st, LNER B1 No. 61306 passes through Pleasington working the 1Z60 excursion from Leicester - Blackburn with Class 47 810 on the rear. *Michael Lynam*

▶ Class 47 810 is seen on the rear of the tour as it passes through Rishton on December 21st. *Michael Lynam*

▶ Class 47 No. D1924 (47 810) passes Standish on the rear of the Leicester to Blackburn charter on December 21st. *John Sloane*



Charter Scene Saphos Trains

Pennine Moors Christmas Cracker

Thompson B1 No. 61306 'Mayflower' is now part of the LSL operational fleet and on December 21st it is seen approaching Winwick Junction in lovely winter sunshine working the 08:57 Leicester to Blackburn. *Lee Stanford*



Charter Scene Saphos Trains

Pennine Moors Christmas Cracker

Class 47 810 and 47 805 top'n'tail the 1Z60 Leicester - Crewe where 'Mayflower' would take over for the trip to Blackburn, seen here at Stafford on December 21st. *Richard Hargreaves*



Charter Scene Steam Dreams

Bath Christmas Market

On December 5th, LNER A4 No. 4498 'Sir Nigel Gresley' arrives for a water stop at Newbury Racecourse station whilst heading 1Z90 London Victoria to Bath Spa. *David Lindsell*



Charter Scene Statesman Rail

Edinburgh Christmas Statesman

Class 47 614 (47 853) and 47 593 head past Coppull on November 30th with a Chester to Edinburgh charter. *John Sloane*



Charter Scene Midland Pullman

Edinburgh Christmas Pullman

Power car No. 43046 'Geoff Drury 1930-1999' stands at Northampton with 1Z45 06:20 Watford Junction to Edinburgh on December 8th. *Derek Elston*



Charter Scene Midland Pullman

Edinburgh Christmas Pullman

The Blue Pullman HST set with power cars Nos. 43055 and 43059 head past Haydock Branch Jct. with 1Z61 Cardiff - Edinburgh on December 20th. *Dave Harris*



Charter Scene Midland Pullman

Edinburgh Christmas Pullman

Power cars Nos. 43059 and 43055 head through Warrington Bank Quay on December 20th with 1Z61 Cardiff - Edinburgh. *Jeff Nicholls*



Charter Scene Belmond British Pullman

Belmond British Pullman

The British Pullman running from London Victoria to Bath passes Andover on November 30th behind Class 67 007. *David Lindsell*



Charter Scene Belmond British Pullman

Belmond British Pullman

Class 67 007 and 67 021 top'n'tail the 1Z82
London Victoria to Salisbury past Wyke farm
on December 15th. *Michael Bennett*



Charter Scene Railway Touring Co.

The Sherborne Christmas Carol

The 1Z82 Railway Touring Company's 'The Sherborne Christmas Carol' is seen at Wyke near Andover at behind Black 5 No. 44871 with West Coast's Class 47 813 on the rear of the 10 coach train. The train started from London Victoria and headed for Yeovil Junction stopping at Sherborne for the Carol Service.

David Lindsell



Charter Scene Railway Touring Company

The Bath and Bristol Christmas Market

'Duchess of Sutherland' working the 1Z82 London Victoria to Bristol Temple Meads races through Andover on a very cold morning of December 10th. *Michael Bennett*



Charter Scene Northern Belle

Northern Belle

Class 57 313 and 47 812 pass Walcot on December 9th with 1Z10 12:06 Coventry to Chester. *Keith Davies*



Charter Scene Pathfinder Tours

The North Eastern Christmas Markets

On December 3rd, Class 40 No. D345 passes through the Amber Valley at Wingfield Park with Pathfinder's 'The North Eastern Christmas Markets' raitour, 1Z40 06:25 Swindon - Newcastle. *Mark Pichowicz*



Charter Scene Pathfinder Tours

The Whistling Geordie

Class 40 No. D345 stands at Newcastle ready to return to Burton on Trent with Pathfinder's 'The Whistling Geordie' railtour on November 12th. *Mark Pichowicz*



Charter Scene ECS and Light Engine Movements

Stanier 4-6-0 No. 46115 'Scots Guardsman' is seen near Eldroth on December 9th with a York to Carnforth ECS working. *Gerald Nicholl*



Charter Scene

ECS and Light Engine Moves

▶ Class 47 812 and 57 313 pass at Kempsey with the 5Z84 08:35 Carnforth to Landore Swansea on December 6th. *Keith Davies*

▶ Battle of Britain Class 4-6-2 No. 34067 'Tangmere' passes through Northampton as it heads home for Christmas on December 20th running as 5M43 10:27 Southall Wcr to Carnforth Steamtown. *Derek Elston*

▶ On December 8th, Black 5 No. 44871 heads for home at Northampton running as 5M43 10:40 Southall Wcr to Carnforth Steamtown. *Derek Elston*



Charter Scene

ECS and Light Engine Moves

▶ Class 87 002 and 90 002 pass Charnock Richard on December 13th on a Crewe to Carlisle working for ice breaker duties. *John Sloane*

▶ Class 90 002 hauls 87 002 and 86 101 past Euxton as they return to Crewe from Carlisle following ice breaker duties on December 17th. *John Sloane*

▶ Class 86 101 passes Bradley as it returns to Crewe from Carlisle on December 19th. *John Sloane*



Charter Scene

ECS and Light Engine Moves

▶ Class 47 593 heads through Stafford on December 14th with a Crewe - Southall ECS working. *Brian Battersby*

▶ On December 22nd, Class 37 688 'Great Rocks' is seen stabled in the Horse Landing Sidings at Crewe. *Michael Lynam*

▶ Class 40 No. D345 (40 145) passes Standish on a move from the ELR to Carnforth on December 4th. *John Sloane*



Charter Scene

ECS and Light Engine Moves

▶ Class 47 812 leads the Northern Belle stock south through Acton Bridge on December 6th. *Brian Battersby*

▶ Class 47 812 leads an empty stock working from Carnforth to Swansea past Leyland on December 6th. *John Sloane*

▶ Class 57 313 'Scarborough Castle' brings up the rear of a Carnforth - Swansea ECS working lead by Class 47 812 through Leyland on December 6th. *John Sloane*



Charter Scene ECS and Light Engine Movements

Class 57 313 is seen on the rear of a Northern Belle ECS working through Winwick on December 6th. *Jeff Nicholls*



On December 13th, LSL owned Class 87 002 leads 90 002 towards Winwick Junction on a light engine move from Crewe to Carlisle for ice breaker use on the OHL the following morning.
Lee Stanford





Avanti West Coast serves up special brownie with taste of Wigan delicacy

Avanti West Coast has teamed up with local suppliers to recreate a recipe by one of its staff that champions a traditional Wigan delicacy which will be served on board.

Working with Flintshire bakery The Pudding Compartment (who supply cakes and biscuits to Avanti West Coast) and traditional sweet company, Uncle Joe's, the intercity operator has produced a bespoke bake - Uncle Joe's Mint Balls Brownie - for its latest seasonal First Class Menu.

Based on a recipe by Preston-based Train Manager, Helen May, the brownie celebrates Uncle Joe's Mint Balls - a popular mint-flavoured sweet manufactured in Wigan using the same traditional methods as when it was originally made in 1898.

The classic combination of chocolate and mint showcasing a local confectionery was selected as a sweet treat for customers following an internal baking competition to create a limited-edition product that can be served in First Class.

As a Wigan resident, Helen wanted to create something local to her, so incorporated Uncle Joe's Mint Balls, which are synonymous with the town, into her brownie. Helen spent weeks perfecting her signature brownie recipe, which was tried and tested by her partner and chieftaster, Rory (also an Avanti West Coast Train Manager) as well as staff at his depot in Manchester, to beat competition from colleagues across the West Coast.

When Helen's winning bake was being upscaled to 15,000 portions, Uncle Joe's helped The Pudding Compartment and Avanti West Coast replicate the unique mint taste by supporting with their secret recipe, which has been passed down through family generations.

The familiar flavour of the traditional sweet can now be savoured by customers travelling between London, Scotland, and Holyhead with the limited-edition brownie.

Helen said: "Mint and chocolate go together perfectly, so with the renowned Wigan sweet being local to the West Coast Main Line I thought it was a great idea to use the unique mint taste in my brownie. I'm delighted it was selected as the winning recipe and have loved seeing my

bake come to life thanks to the efforts of The Pudding Compartment and Uncle Joe's. I feel so proud my Uncle Joe's Mint Balls brownie has been made into a product for customers across our route to enjoy and hope they like the taste of the popular traditional sweet."

Steve West, Managing Director of The Pudding Compartment, said: "Working with Uncle Joe's to bring Helen's vision and product into reality was exciting. Many people in North West England are familiar with the taste of Uncle Joe's so making sure we could capture that flavour while upscaling the winning brownie recipe was a challenge we thoroughly enjoyed. To see how appreciative and pleased Helen was with the result made it all worthwhile. We love what we do and it's fantastic to work with Avanti West Coast who like to champion local produce and flavours. We hope customers along the West Coast enjoy this latest bake."

Antony Winnard, joint Managing Director of Wm Santus & Co who make Uncle Joe's Mint Balls, said: "We are very proud that people up and down the West Coast will get to sample our Uncle Joe's Mint Balls in Helen's excellent brownie."

"We're flattered that as a Wigan resident, she's chosen to include this Wigan delicacy in her winning bake and I'm sure those travelling on an Avanti West Coast train will love it."

"It tastes great and we are delighted to support The Pudding Compartment, which is another small business on the West Coast route, with a supply of our secret ingredients so they could turn Helen's bake into something everyone onboard can enjoy."

Rob Taylor, Food and Beverage Development Lead at Avanti West Coast, said: "Helen's brownie had something different - a unique flavour of a local sweet - which is one reason why it was selected to be made into a product for customers onboard our trains. By using locally produced confectionery, it's allowed us to bring together two small businesses who are only hundreds of metres from parts of our route. It has been great collaborating with The Pudding Compartment and Uncle Joe's to replicate Helen's winning recipe and we hope customers as far as Holyhead, London and Scotland enjoy eating it as much as we've enjoyed being involved in its development."

Avanti West Coast

▶ Class 390 046 working a Glasgow to London Euston service passes Winwick on December 8th. *John Sloane*

▶ Class 390 124 with a service to London Euston passes Euxton on December 17th. *John Sloane*

▶ Class 390 040 running on strike day December 13th, approaches Charnock Richard with a service to London Euston. *John Sloane*



Avanti West Coast

On December 7th, Class 221 122 and 221 113 pass Rugeley Trent Valley, working the 11:35 Milton Keynes to Barton Under Needwood ECS, which ran to Stafford for reversal. *Barry Longson*



Avanti West Coast introduces ban on e-scooters across its route

Avanti West Coast becomes latest train operator to ban e-scooters

E-scooters no longer permitted at stations or onboard trains along West Coast

Policy introduced from December 27th following safety concerns

Avanti West Coast is introducing a ban on electric scooters at its stations and on its trains across its network following safety concerns.

From Tuesday December 27th, electric scooters (e-scooters) are no longer allowed onboard Avanti West Coast trains or at its 16 managed stations because of the risk posed by the Lithium-ion batteries that typically power these devices.

Lithium-ion batteries can produce a vapour of toxic gases and lead to a fire or a risk of explosion, if damaged or overheated.

The intercity operator's policy covers e-scooters and hoverboards only. Mobility scooters, electric wheelchairs

and e-bikes are exempt from the ban.

Customers travelling with mobility scooters and electric wheelchairs are advised to contact Avanti West Coast's Assisted Travel Team to arrange assistance for their journey.

Dave Whitehouse, Safety and Security Director at Avanti West Coast, said: "At Avanti West Coast the safety of our staff and customers comes first.

"The risks associated with e-scooters are a significant

concern and are why we're banning them at our stations and onboard our trains. This temporary ban is to preserve the safety of our colleagues and customers until there is greater regulation on e-scooters. We ask our customers to adhere to these new rules and be kind to our staff helping to enforce them, so we can keep everyone safe."

Caledonian Sleeper

▶ Class 92 023 stands at London Euston at the head of ECS working 3M11, the 08:37 to Wembley InterCity Depot on December 3rd. *Derek Elston*

▶ Class 92 018 stands on the blocks at London Euston having arrived with 1M11 the 23:40 sleeper from Glasgow Central and Edinburgh on December 3rd. *Derek Elston*

▶ On December 3rd, Class 92 010 is seen at London Euston having arrived with 1M16, the 20:45 sleeper service from Inverness and Aberdeen. *Derek Elston*



Class 70 805 passes Bradley with a diverted Preston Docks to Lindsey on strike day, December 14th.

John Sloane



Colas Rail

Presumably diverted because of strike action, on December 13th the Lindsey - Preston Docks loaded tanks travelled via the Chat Moss route. Class 70 805 is seen with the working at Culcheth Crossing. *Jeff Nicholls*

Class 56 094 with a Longport to Crewe Basford Hall working arrives at Stafford on December 21st. *Richard Hargreaves*

On December 13th, the 07:30 Lindsey to Ribble Rail (Preston Docks) bitumen tanks were diverted to run through Manchester as a result of industrial action and are seen approaching Guide Bridge running 81 minutes late behind Class 70 805. *Lee Stanford*



Colas Rail

Class 70 805 winds its way round the reverse curves at Mossley in winter sunshine as it leads the 10:07 Ribble Rail to Lindsey empty tanks.
Lee Stanford



Colas Rail

▶ Class 70 808 works a 6Z59 08:24 Jarrow to Lindsey oil refinery tank train through Colton Junction, York, on October 14th. The train was retimed owing to a rail strike on that day.

Neil Scarlett

▶ December 14th was a strike day, but some freight trains ran, many by obscure routes. Here Class 70 805 is seen at Guide Bridge (a long way from its normal route via Copy Pit) working 6Z42 10:07 Ribble Rail to Lindsey empty bitumen tanks. *Barry Longson*

▶ On December 9th, the 6O26 Hinksey Sidings to Eastleigh East Yard passes Worting Junction with Class 70 817 hauling 66 850, 66 849 and 66 702. *David Lindsell*





On December 14th, returning via the Chat Moss route, Class 70 805 climbs through a frosty Kenyon Cutting with the empties from Preston Dock to Lindsey.
Jeff Nicholls



CrossCountry

Away from their normal route on a strike day, Class 220 022 and 221 120 approach Burnage on December 16th, working 1Z27 14:27 Manchester Piccadilly to Birmingham New Street. *Barry Longson*



DB Cargo

A wintry scene at Peak Forest on December 12th sees Class 20 007, 20 205 and 60 065 lined up in the fuelling siding awaiting their next tasks. *Lee Stanford*



DB Cargo

▶ Class 66 004 on 6E26 Knowsley - Wilton binliner approaches Warrington Bank Quay on December 29th. *Mark Enderby*

▶ Class 66 115 passes through Northampton on December 8th with 6M45 06:53 Dollands Moor Sidings to Daventry International Railfreight Reception Rfd water train. *Derek Elston*

▶ On December 29th, Class 66 158 is seen at Sankey Bridge on 6M13 Dollands Moor - Ditton. Freighters on the Fiddlers Ferry line are now a rarity (especially in daylight). Shame that decent locations are now either all fenced in or overgrown. *Mark Enderby*



DB Cargo

▶ Still retaining EWS livery, Class 60 065 'Spirit of Jaguar', which is normally found on shunting duties at Toton, had escaped its confinement and is seen approaching New Mills South Junction on December 9th working the 12:59 Dowlow to Ashburys. *Lee Stanford*

▶ On December 5th, the 6M78 Tytherington Quarry to Quainton Railhead passes Enborne behind Class 66 142. *David Lindsell*

▶ Class 90 039 and 90 021 pass Acton Bridge on November 8th with a Mossend to Daventry working. *Brian Battersby*



DB Cargo

▶ Class 90 037 and 90 021 pass Acton Bridge on December 20th with a Mossend - Daventry working. *Brian Battersby*

▶ Class 66 095 passes Leyland on December 6th with the 4M25 intermodal service from Mossend to Daventry. *John Sloane*

▶ Class 66 057 passes Charnock Richard with a Mossend to Seaforth working on December 13th. *John Sloane*



DB Cargo

On December 7th, Class 60 011 approaches Settle working the 6E96 empty box wagons from New Biggin (British Gypsum) - Tees Docks. *Michael Lynam*



DB Cargo

▶ Class 66 006 is seen at Euxton with a Daventry to Grangemouth working on December 17th.
John Sloane

▶ On a foggy December 1st, Class 60 074 is seen at Peak Forest on aggregate loading duties at Cemex Cement. *Michael Lynam*

▶ Class 66 047 runs light engine through Acton Bridge on December 15th, heading south.
Brian Battersby



DB Cargo

▶ Class 66 182 passes Winwick working a Knowsley to Wilton binliner on December 8th.
John Sloane

▶ Class 66 095 finds itself standing in for the usual pair of class 90s on December 7th, trying to make up lost time working 4M2507:03 Mossend to Daventry, seen passing Rugeley Trent Valley.
Barry Longson

▶ Class 90 021 and 90 037 head through Charnock Richard cutting on December 13th with the 4Z25 Mossend to Daventry. *John Sloane*



DB Cargo

▶ Class 66 095 passes Winwick with the 4M25 intermodal from Mossend to Daventry on December 8th. *John Sloane*

▶ On December 5th, the 6M78 Tytherington Quarry to Quainton Railhead passes through Newbury with Class 66 142 at its head. *David Lindsell*

▶ On December 23rd, Class 60 024 heads through Swindon working the 6B33 oil tanks. *Ken Mumford*



Direct Rail Services

▶ Class 68 017 and 68 002 pass Winwick on December 6th with a Daventry bound intermodal working. *Jeff Nicholls*

▶ On December 22nd, Class 66 428 passes through a wet Stafford working the 6X94 Crewe - Bescot engineers. *Michael Lynam*

▶ Class 68 002 and 68 017 head south past Coppull with the 4M27 service from Mossend to Daventry on November 30th. *John Sloane*



Direct Rail Services

▶ Class 88 005 comes out of the shadows at Rugeley Trent Valley, in charge of 4S44 12:16 Daventry to Mossend on December 7th. *Barry Longson*

▶ Class 68 003 and 68 018 head north through Acton Bridge on December 20th with a Daventry - Mossend working. *Brian Battersby*

▶ Class 68 017 and 68 002 are seen at a foggy Farington Curve Junction with the 4M27 intermodal service from Mossend to Daventry on November 29th. *John Sloane*



Direct Rail Services

▶ Class 68 003 and 68 002 are seen at Charnock Richard on December 13th with a Daventry to Mossend intermodal. *John Sloane*

▶ Class 68 009 and 68 006 with a Mossend to Daventry working head through Stafford on December 21st. *Richard Hargreaves*

▶ Class 66 122 and 66 434 roar through Coppull with a huge northbound Tesco service on November 30th. *John Sloane*



Direct Rail Services

Class 68 017 and 68 002 pass Winwick Junction with a late running 4M27 from Mossend to Daventry on December 8th. *John Sloane*



East Midlands Railway

Class 170 270 is seen stabled at Crewe on December
14th. *Brian Battersby*



Freightliner

▶ Class 66 522 eases through Northampton working 4L59 08:21 Crewe Basford Hall S.S.M. to London Gateway on December 20th.

Derek Elston

▶ Class 66 617 heads through Acton Bridge on December 20th with a Hardendale to Tunstead working. *Brian Battersby*

▶ Class 66 504 ambles through Northampton working 4035 09:31 Crewe Basford Hall S.S.M. to Southampton M.C.T. on December 7th.

Derek Elston



A view of Doncaster Up Decoy Yard on December 9th featuring, from left to right, Class 66 538 on a container train and waiting to depart, GBRf Class 66 756 'Royal Corps Of Signals' and Freightliner's Class 66 526 on engineers trains. On the left are the East Coast Main Lines and at far left are lines into the Royal Mail terminal and sidings. *Neil Scarlett*



Freightliner

▶ Class 66 614 approaches Winwick with the Hardendale to Tunstead stone train on December 8th. *John Sloane*

▶ On December 5th, the 7A09 Merehead Quarry to Acton 'Jumbo' stone train passes Enborne behind Class 66 414 and 59 201. *David Lindsell*

▶ Class 66 415 working the late running 6012 Woking stone train heads through Whitchurch on December 15th. *David Lindsell*



Freightliner

▶ Class 66 568 has a full load of containers on 4M81 08:01 Felixstowe North to Crewe Basford Hall, seen at Rugeley Trent Valley on December 7th. *Barry Longson*

▶ Class 66 416 passes through Swindon on December 23rd with the 7B12 Merehead to Wootton Bassett. *Ken Mumford*

▶ Class 66 594 hauls a fresh air liner through Stafford on December 21st, heading to Crewe Basford Hall. *Richard Hargreaves*



Freightliner

▶ Class 66 593 passes through Highbury and Islington with a Felixstowe to Crewe liner on November 22nd. *John Sloane*

▶ Powerhaul liveried Class 66 420 passes through Northampton with a lightly laden 4M94 07:50 Felixstowe North F.L.T. to Lawley Street F.L.T. on December 20th. *Derek Elston*

▶ On December 5th, the 6058 Banbury Road to East Usk stone empties runs along the loop at Grove foot crossing near Wantage behind Class 66 509 'Josiah's Wish'. *David Lindsell*





Freightliner Co-sponsors New Children's Book Raising Awareness of Diversity and Inclusion in the Rail Industry

On November 24th, Freightliner, a subsidiary of Genesee & Wyoming Inc. (G&W), joined other co-sponsors at Wolverhampton Station to celebrate the launch of a new children's book, 'My Mummy Is A Train Driver', aimed at breaking down gender stereotypes in the rail industry. As well as representatives from co-sponsor companies – Freightliner, GB Railfreight, West Midlands Railway, London North-western Railway, DB Cargo UK Ltd, MTR Elizabeth line, Arriva, South-eastern Railway, Great Western Railway and C2C – young pupils from local Graiseley Primary School joined the celebrations and were treated to a reading of the book by co-author Jason Bryan. Women train drivers from co-sponsor freight and passenger rail operators were also in attendance to talk to the children about their journeys to becoming train drivers.

"We were delighted to co-sponsor this book with other members of the rail industry. The initiative also supports some of the other initiatives that Freightliner has been involved in, both in the UK and Europe, to support education of our younger generations both on our industry as a career and also safety on the railway," commented Freightliner's HR Director, Glynis Appelbe. "Only when we can reach people early in their career, or at a young age, can we really start to influence and affect positive change."

Produced by independent publisher Butterfly Books, 'My Mummy Is A Train Driver' is the ninth installation in a series of children's books that aim to promote diversity and inclusion and tackle gender biases across a myriad of industries – from plumbing and nursing to

engineering and firefighting. My Mummy Is A Train Driver is a culmination of the personal insights and perspectives of a diverse group of people working in the rail industry. The aim is to inspire young children to consider a future career in rail and to showcase the welcoming and inclusive work environment the rail industry continues to foster.

Kerrine Bryan, co-author and founder of Butterfly Books, commented: "As an engineer by profession, I've worked in a sector that has long given the impression that it's a dirty, manually difficult career almost exclusively for white elderly men. In reality, there are many roles within engineering, and working on sites is just a tiny element of that. The rail sector faces similar misconceptions when, in reality, the industry has done much to improve

diversity and inclusion through various initiatives. Today, there are many roles that women assume within the industry, including train drivers, and this deserves recognition and support."

Attracting highly skilled and diverse talent to Freightliner has been an ongoing priority. With a stronger focus on diversity and inclusion in the last few years, the company is slowly starting to reap the benefits, especially with the recruitment of females into frontline operational roles, including train and truck drivers. Freightliner is also an established member of WORK180 as an Endorsed Employer for Women. WORK180 pre-screens employers before they can advertise jobs against a set of criteria; including pay equity, flexible working, women in leadership and paid parental leave.

Freightliner

Class 66 542 leads the 4035 09:31 Crewe Basford Hall S.S.M. to Southampton M.C.T. through Northampton on December 8th.
Derek Elston



▶ Class 66 765 eases its load through platform 3 at Stockport on December 8th, while in charge of the 08:13 Hams Hall to Hindlow empty box wagons. *Barry Longson*

▶ Class 66 304 passes Acton Bridge on December 6th with a Hams Hall - Mossend working. *Brian Battersby*

▶ Class 66 305, hauls a Hams Hall to Mossend intermodal past Charnock Richard on November 29th. *John Sloane*





▶ Class 60 047 restarts its load at Guide Bridge having dropped off a pilot on December 14th, while working 6Z26 from Olive Mount to Drax via Manchester Piccadilly. *Barry Longson*

▶ Class 60 026 passes Helsby on November 1st with a Penmaenmawr to Tuebrook working. *Brian Battersby*

▶ Class 66 759 passes Bayston Hill with the 6V75 09:24 Dee Marsh Reception Sidings - Margam TC on December 1st. *Keith Davies*



▶ The village of Greenfield sits beneath a snow topped hillside as Class 60 095 approaches Mossley on December 14th working the 09:30 Drax to Liverpool Biomass terminal.
Lee Stanford

▶ Class 66 760 glints in the afternoon sun as it passes Burnage, working 4Z80 07:28 Southampton to Trafford Park on December 16th. *Barry Longson*

▶ Class 66 760 passes All Stretton with 6V75 09:24 Dee Marsh Reception Sidings - Margam TC on December 9th. *Keith Davies*



▶ Class 66 701 passes Barrow upon Trent with 6E34 05:57 Southampton Western Docks to Doncaster iPort on December 10th.

Mark Pichowicz

▶ Class 66 766 passes Bayston Hill with the 6V84 Clitheroe Castle Cement - Avonmouth Hanson Sidings on December 28th. *Keith Davies*

▶ Class 66 796 passes through a wet Stafford on December 21st working the 6V84 Clitheroe Castle Cement - Avonmouth Hanson Sidings.

Richard Hargreaves



On December 7th, Class 66 735 passes through Settle with the 6M37 Arcow Quarry - Pendleton aggregates train. *Michael Lynam*

On December 11th, Class 60 002 leads 60 026 and 60 095 on 6Z51 Drax - LBT through Warrington Bank Quay. *Mark Enderby*

Class 66 715 eases through Acton Bridge on December 29th with a Liverpool - Drax Biomass working. *Brian Battersby*



▶ Class 66 737 passes Walcot with the 6M42 09:20 Avonmouth Hanson Sidings - Penyffordd Cement on December 7th. *Keith Davies*

▶ Class 66 707 passes Coppull with a Clitheroe to Avonmouth cement train on November 30th. *John Sloane*

▶ On December 22nd, Class 66 796 passes through Crewe station working the 6Z90 empty cement tanks from Avonmouth - Clitheroe. *Michael Lynam*



▶ Class 60 021 'Penyghent' takes a 6Z45 Tyne Dock to Drax power station train through Colton Junction, York on December 14th. *Neil Scarlett*

▶ Class 66 741 passes Bradley with a special MOD working from Carlisle to Kineton on November 29th. *John Sloane*

▶ Class 66 305 and 66 733 head through Charnock Richard cutting on their way from Mossend to Rugby on December 13th. *John Sloane*



▶ Class 60 087 heads down the Haydock Branch to Hanson Aggregates with 6F67 loaded stone from Harrison's Quarry Shap via Tuebrook on December 9th. *Dave Harris*

▶ Class 66 760 passes through Stafford on December 14th with an intermodal working to Hams Hall. *Brian Battersby*

▶ Class 66 745 is seen at Coppull with a special Longtown to Kineton MOD working on December 8th. *John Sloane*



On December 20th, Class 60 096 'Impetus' formally named 'Ben Macdui' in another life, takes the Haydock Branch with 6F67 loaded stone from Tuebrook to Hanson Aggregates.

Dave Harris

Early doors at -2.5° at Mill Hill on December 12th as Class 66 796 powers 6V84 Clitheroe to Avonmouth with shrieks from its high pitched continental horn. *David Hollowood*

On December 7th, Class 60 087 is seen approaching Hellifield with the 6F69 Ribbleshead - Tuebrook aggregates train. *Michael Lynam*





Grand Central

A Sunderland service roars through Alexandra Palace on November 22nd. *John Sloane*



Greater Anglia

Class 720 541 and 720 118 head south through Northampton working 5Q28 13:01 Rugby Udt Signal Rn4184 to Wembley InterCity Depot on December 20th. *Derek Elston*



Great Western Railway

Castle HST power cars Nos. 43040 and 43088 working the 2U10 06:39 Par to Cardiff are seen arriving at Newport on December 6th. *Richard Hargreaves*



L.N.E.R.

Azuma Class 801 230 heads for London King's Cross as it races through Alexandra Palace on November 22nd. *John Sloane*



PICTURE PERFECT WAKEFIELD CELEBRATED IN NEW VIBRANT STATION ARTWORK

London North Eastern Railway (LNER) has unveiled a new piece of artwork at Wakefield Westgate railway station which celebrates the city, its heritage and culture.

Wakefield Cathedral, the city's art gallery, The Hepworth, and the Yorkshire Sculpture Park are just some of the landmarks and attractions featured in the special painting by Yorkshire based artist Tom Wriglesworth. The original vibrant canvas, painted with acrylic, will go on display in the First Class Lounge, with a larger replica mural taking pride of place in the station's main concourse.

Claire Ansley, People and Customer Experience Director at LNER, said: "We are proud of the communities we serve. This new piece of art showcases Wakefield's

attractions and celebrates the history and heritage of the area. We hope it provides a warm welcome for customers using our services and the station but also shows just some of what the city has to offer. Thanks to our regular direct services between Wakefield Westgate and London King's Cross, there are plenty of opportunities for people to come and explore the city and surrounding area."

The artist behind 'Wonderful Wakefield' is primary school teacher, Tom Wriglesworth, who says he is honoured to have been asked to create the artwork: "When my sister and I were little, we visited Wakefield with our parents, going to Sandal Castle, The Hepworth, the National Coal Mining Museum and the Yorkshire Sculpture Park. All these places feature and I hope I have

done them proud. My great-grandfather and great uncle both worked on LNER trains years ago, so to have the Wriglesworth name associated with the company once more is really special to me."

The artwork is the latest to feature at Wakefield station and forms part of LNER's investment in its stations to provide customers with the best possible experience. LNER continues to have the largest recovery of franchised operators as customers return to rail, topping the table for sixth consecutive quarter. Data published recently by the Office of Rail and Road (ORR) shows that LNER passenger journeys are now at 105 per cent when compared with the same period for 2019.



▶ Class 800 202 speeds through Alexandra Palace with a London King's Cross - Leeds service on November 22nd. *John Sloane*

▶ A LNER Azuma creeps into Alexandra Palace on its way to Bounds Green Depot for servicing on November 22nd. *John Sloane*

▶ Class 801 216 zooms past Alexandra Palace heading towards London King's Cross on November 22nd. *John Sloane*



Class 68 001 passes near Ingatestone on a very cold and crisp December 10th hauling the Saturday's RHTT service with Class 37 401 on the rear. *Charlie Robbins*



Network Rail

▶ Class 56 078 and 56 094 top'n'tail the 3S31 Cheltenham Lansdown Road to Swindon Transfer through Swindon on December 6th.
Colin Pidgeon

▶ MPV No. DR98952 leads a leaf clearance working returning to base at Springs Branch as it passes Winwick on December 8th.
John Sloane

▶ December 7th saw HST power car No. 43299 lead sister 43274 through Rugeley Trent Valley on 1Q29 12:31 Crewe Pottery Lane to Derby RTC.
Barry Longson



Network Rail

▶ Class 37 099 leads a Derby RTC to Carlisle test train through Acton Bridge on December 20th. *Brian Battersby*

▶ Class 37 175 approaches Standish on the rear of a Derby to Carlisle test train hauled by 37 099 on December 20th. *John Sloane*

▶ Power car No. 43274 leads a test train working from Derby to Carlisle as it roars out of the sun through Leyland on December 6th. 43299 was on the rear. *John Sloane*



Network Rail

On December 5th, and making its third foray into North Lincolnshire on the RHTT, Class 56 105 is seen heading through Scunthorpe station and towards Scunthorpe West Jct. on 3S14 Grimsby Town - York Works, with a filthy 66 847 on the rear.
Steve Thompson



On December 9th and it's the last throes of the RHTT season, and at long last we get some 37s! An extra job from York to Retford, Worksop, Gainsborough, Brigg and Barnetby then reversed and formed 3J51 to Goole, later continuing back to York. Here is 3J51, soaking up some low winter sunlight, approaching Scunthorpe station in the care of Class 37 425 top'n'tailing with 37 422. Our prayers answered! *Steve Thompson*



Rail Operations Group

▶ The 5Q86 worked by Class 37 884 hauling scrap units 315 838 and 315 848 from Ilford to Newport Docks passes Grove foot crossing near Wantage on December 5th.

David Lindsell

▶ On December 23rd, Class 37 884 hauls Class 315 856 through Swindon heading for Lydney and the Dean Forest Railway, from where the unit will be heading for a preserved railway near Llanelli. *Ken Mumford*

▶ On December 10th, Class 37 800 approaches Bidston working from Birkenhead North depot to Crewe Basford Hall. *Class47*





Rail Operations Group

Delayed due to problems further south, Class 37 510 'Orion' crawls up to another red signal at Northampton with C2C's Class 720 604 in tow as 5Q75 09:14 Derby Litchurch Lane to Wembley InterCity Depot on December 7th. *Derek Elston*

Class 37 510 passes through Stafford on December 14th with an Oxley - Crewe light engine move. *Brian Battersby*

On December 10th, Class 37 800 approaches Bidston working from Birkenhead North depot to Crewe Basford Hall. *Class47*



TransPennine Express

The first reported working of a class 68 in passenger service on the South Pennine route took place on December 8th. Class 68020 is seen on Stockport viaduct with 1B78 13:18 Manchester Piccadilly to Cleethorpes service and it was well loaded. *Barry Longson*



TransPennine Express

On December 8th, and the first revenue-earning service by one of TPE's Class 68+MkV stock on the Cleethorpes - Manchester route, sees Class 68 020 and set TP02 at Manchester Piccadilly upon arrival from Cleethorpes.

Steve Thompson

On December 14th, Class 185 105 and 185 136 pass through Guide Bridge working the 11:30 Manchester Piccadilly to York service.

Barry Longson

On December 8th, Class 68 020 and set TP02 using spare DVT No. 12814 is seen at Scunthorpe heading to Cleethorpes. *Steve Thompson*



TransPennine Express

The long awaited use of loco hauled trains on the Manchester to Cleethorpes services started on December 8th when the 13:18 from Piccadilly had Class 68 020 in charge. On the second day of operation the same loco was again used and can be seen powering past New Mills South Jct. on December 9th in dull winter conditions. *Lee Stanford*



Transport for Wales

Class 153 303 working the 2K62 Shrewsbury to Crewe service stands at Shrewsbury on December 10th. *Richard Hargreaves*

Class 197 015 is seen stabled at Chester on December 14th. *Brian Battersby*

Class 175 005 passes Winwick on December 8th with a Llandudno to Manchester Airport service. *John Sloane*



Transport for Wales

▶ The new order for Transport for Wales are slowly entering service and on December 21st, Class 197 013 was seen with sister 197 006 soon after passing Winwick Junction whilst working the 10:25 Manchester Airport to Llandudno Junction service. *Lee Stanford*

▶ Class 150 227 passes Bayston Hill on December 1st with 1W91 09:31 Manchester Piccadilly - Carmarthen service. *Keith Davies*

▶ Class 150 236 is seen at Bidston on December 10th working a service to Wrexham. *Brian Battersby*



Transport for Wales

▶ Class 158 831 departs Chester on December 10th with a service to Shrewsbury. *Class47*

▶ Class 67 022 is seen at Newport on December 6th with a service to Cardiff Central. *Richard Hargreaves*

▶ Class 231 007 is seen at Cardiff Central on December 6th. *Richard Hargreaves*



Units: DMUs and EMUs

▶ New West Mids EMU Class 730 014 stands at Crewe on December 7th, awaiting departure time before another test run to Nuneaton.

Barry Longson

▶ New and not so new LNWR units meet at Stafford on December 23rd as Class 350 102, waiting to depart for Crewe, is seen alongside 730 016, appropriately in the orange zone, which was on a test run from Nuneaton to Crewe.

Lee Stanford

▶ Class 730 016 arrives at Stafford on December 16th on a test run to Nuneaton.

Richard Hargreaves



Units: DMUs and EMUs

▶ On a sunny but cold December 9th, South Western Railway's Class 455 No. 5703 passes St. Denys running over 40 minutes late on 10:01 Wimbledon Depot - Bournemouth Depot stock move which runs on an as required basis. The driver is holding his arm above his eyes to try and reduce the glare from the low sun.

John Goodrich

▶ On December 8th, Merseyrail's Class 507 014 on a service to Liverpool Central and Northern's 769 458 on a service to Alderley Edge are seen at Southport. *Michael Lynam*

▶ Royal Mail's Class 325 001 and 325 009 head south through Northampton with 1M41 05:34 Shieldmuir Mail Terminal to Willesden PRDC mail on December 7th. *Derek Elston*



Units: DMUs and EMUs

Merseyrail's Class 507 027 approaches Bidston on December 10th heading towards Liverpool with a West Kirby line service. *Class47*

Merseyrail's Class 507 013 is seen at Bidston on December 10th with a service to West Kirby. *Brian Battersby*

West Midlands Railway's Class 730 018 and 730 016 call at Stafford on December 22nd running as 5Q03 Nuneaton - Crewe on driver training and mileage accumulation duties. *Michael Lynam*



Units: DMUs and EMUs

On a sunny but cold December 15th, Class 455 No. 5706 is seen passing Saxon Road Bridge, Southampton on 10:01 Wimbledon Depot - Bournemouth Depot. It returned that afternoon accompanied by 5866 on 14:32 Bournemouth Depot - Wimbledon Depot. *John Goodrich*

West Midlands' Class 730017 arrives at Stafford on December 14th with a Crewe - Bletchley test run. *Brian Battersby*

The area around Warrington Bank Quay is now lit up at night and on December 21st, Northern's Class 195 019 and 195 020 enter the station with the 16:29 Chester - Leeds service. *Jeff Nicholls*



Units: DMUs and EMUs

▶ One service running during the rail strikes was from Liverpool Lime St. to Manchester Airport. Northern's Class 331 015 and 331 002 are seen in Kenyon Cutting, near Newton le Willows, on December 14th with the 09:32 from Manchester Airport to Liverpool Lime St. *Jeff Nicholls*

▶ C2C's Class 720 609 is seen at Northampton on December 7th working 5Q91 11:05 Rugby to Wembley Receptions 1-7 running some 30 minutes late. *Derek Elston*

▶ Great Northern's Class 717 005 calls at Palmers Green with a Moorgate to Stevenage service on November 22nd. *John Sloane*



Units: DMUs and EMUs

Merseyrail's Class 507 016 calls at Aintree with an Ormskirk to Liverpool Central service on November 19th. *Paul Senior*

Thameslink's Class 700 148 speeds through Alexandra Place on November 22nd. *John Sloane*

Thameslink's Pride liveried Class 700 155 is seen near Finsbury Park on November 22nd. *John Sloane*



Units: DMUs and EMUs

▶ Northern's Class 156 402 calls at a very cold and frosty Appley Bridge, with a Manchester Victoria to Southport service on December 10th. *Paul Senior*

▶ Merseyrail's Stadler built Class 777 001 and 777 003 are pictured stabled at Southport on December 10th. *Paul Senior*

▶ The Hazel Grove to Blackpool service which utilised Northern's Class 331 units is a casualty of the December timetable change with the servicenowhavingbeendivertedtoManchester Airport. On a chilly December 7th, Northern's Class 331 019 leads 331 013 into Davenport with the 09:29 from Blackpool. Of note is that the timetable change also brings to an end the regular use of EMU's on the electrified section to Hazel Grove. *Lee Stanford*



Units: DMUs and EMUs

▶ The service from Southport to Alderley Edge using Northern's bi-mode units now terminates at Manchester Oxford Road following the December timetable change. On a sunny December 7th in the final week of operation Class 769 431 slows for its Levenshulme stop with the 12:15 from Southport. *Lee Stanford*

▶ Thameslink's Class 700 010 approaches Alexandra Palace with a stopping service to London King's Cross on November 22nd. *John Sloane*

▶ Royal Mail's Class 325 009 speeds south through Stafford on December 21st, heading to Willesden PRDC. *Richard Hargreaves*



Units: DMUs and EMUs

Some mail is on the move at Warrington Bank Quay on December 20th as the 05:34 Shieldmuir - Willesden via Warrington Royal Mail Terminal heads into Platform 1. In the background, a loaded Biomass train hauled by Class 60 047 approaches. *Jeff Nicholls*

Great Northern's Class 700 126 sweeps through Alexandra Palace with a Peterborough service on November 22nd. *John Sloane*

Merseyrail's Class 507 019 stands at Chester on December 10th with a service to Liverpool Central. *Richard Hargreaves*



Units: DMUs and EMUs

▶ South Western Railway's Class 159 108 and 159 101 working the 1L25 London Waterloo to Salisbury service passes Wyke farm on December 15th. *Michael Bennett*

▶ Merseyrail's Class 507 013 stands at Hamilton Square on December 10th. *Richard Hargreaves*

▶ West Midland's Class 196 012, 158 826 and 196 107 are seen stabled at Shrewsbury on December 6th. *Richard Hargreaves*



Units: DMUs and EMUs

▶ C2C's Class 357 022 is approaching Shadwell with an LTS service on November 22nd as another unit heads away towards Fenchurch St. *John Sloane*

▶ A pair of Northern Class 195s pass Winwick on a Chester to Leeds service on December 8th. *John Sloane*

▶ Great Northern's Class 387 125 runs through Alexandra Palace with a Cambridge to London King's Cross service on November 22nd. *John Sloane*



Units: DMUs and EMUs

▶ Class 66 796 on an Avonmouth to Clitheroe working waits for the road at Lostock Hall Junction as Northern's Class 150 150 passes with a service to Colne on December 10th.

John Sloane

▶ Northern's Class 331 022 calls at Leyland with a Blackpool to Manchester Airport service on December 6th. *John Sloane*

▶ Great Northern's Class 387 107 passes Alexandra Palace with a Cambridge line service on November 22nd. *John Sloane*



Blackpool Trams

The then new, Blackpool Bombardier Flexity tram No. 001, passes Heritage Balloon tram No. 723 at North Pier on May 2nd 2016.
Paul Senior





Greater Anglia customers donate almost 1,000 meals' worth of food to help people in crisis

Greater Anglia customers have donated almost 1,000 meals' worth of food to help people in crisis this winter. Customers donated around 500kg of food and toiletries, including hot water bottles and blankets, between November 1st and December 12th at Bishop's Stortford, Harlow Mill, Harlow Town, Sawbridgeworth and Stansted Mountfitchet stations. The donations were then dropped off at Bishop's Stortford and Harlow food banks on December 15th. The initiative was organised by Greater Anglia's Michael King, who works as a relief ticket office clerk at Sawbridgeworth and Stansted Mountfitchet.

Michael said: "I'd like to say a massive 'thank you' to all our customers who donated – to give almost 1,000 meals' worth of food, it's amazing. It has shocked me how generous people have been considering the cost-of-living crisis at the moment: it's an absolutely fantastic thing that people have done. We donated three or four bags from Harlow Town station, while Stansted Mountfitchet station had customers donating boxes – it's outstanding how much we got in the end. That's all thanks to our customers and our colleagues, who donated too."

The Harlow food bank is supported by the Trussell Trust.

Samantha Stapley, chief operating officer at the Trussell Trust, said: "Thank you to Michael at Greater Anglia, and customers across the region, for their support. As the cost-of-living crisis continues, more people than ever are likely to need a food bank's help this winter. Food bank volunteers are working tirelessly to ensure help continues to be available. But ultimately, no one in the UK should need a food bank – all of us should have enough money for the essentials. The support of Michael and the Greater Anglia customers will help food banks within our network continue to provide the lifeline of emergency support for local people in crisis, while we work in the long term to build a hunger-free future. Thank you so much."

A spokesperson at Bishop's Stortford food bank added: "Thank you to everyone who has donated. We're so very busy, especially at this time of year, so every donation helps."

Earlier in 2022, Greater Anglia staff also helped organise an appeal that saw customers donate over 450 chocolate eggs for the children's wings at the Princess Alexandra Hospital in Harlow and Addenbrooke's Hospital in Cambridge.

Fares Advice with RailUK

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

Excess fare refused

Q: Last month I bought an anytime single from Sturry to Ashford International. During my journey, my plans changed and I needed to go to Stratford. I got off the train and went to the ticket office on the other side of the gate line. I explained I needed an excess fare on top of my current ticket to take me to Stratford International. The guy said I couldn't do that and I'd have to buy a new ticket. If he is correct, why instances would a proper "excess fare" be offered if this wasn't a valid case?

A: The problems are:

1) The ticket expired at the point where you asked for an excess fare; it can potentially be argued that once the ticket has expired there can be no expectation of an excess being issued (with perhaps some exceptions e.g. starting at an unstaffed station, buying the wrong ticket such as a single instead of a return and having no prior opportunity to correct the matter)

2) An overdistance excess procedure does exist but it is difficult to compel staff to follow it, as there is nothing in the contract that says staff must do so.

That said, I think a customer-focussed member of staff who took a pragmatic approach would issue it; a lot of on board staff would do this (e.g. OBMs/Guards) but finding ticket office staff who are helpful can be a bit of a challenge...

Scotrail Single versus Return ticket price

Q: I was recently in Glasgow and travelled from Glasgow Queen St to Bishopbriggs at around midday. I bought a single from a ticket office and this cost me £2.80.

I was later informed that I should have bought a Super Offpeak Return or Offpeak Return costing £1.90 / £2.60, both cheaper than a single (which are the prices offered on the Scotrail website).

Is this typical of Scotrail ticket prices (returns are cheaper than singles) ? When buying a single should I always ask if a return is cheaper ? Why was I not offered the cheaper ticket ?

A: The single is an Anytime - ie valid during peak hours. The returns are, as you have put, Off-peak - so are cheaper.

I believe this applies throughout the Strathclyde fares area, that no off-peak singles are offered and the Off-Peak Day Returns (valid after 0900 Mon-Fri) are typically only 10p or so cheaper and Super Off Peak Returns (valid after 11am, which is when you travelled) are cheaper than the Anytime Single fares offered. Thus day returns end up being cheaper or fractionally more expensive than the only available single fares depending on the exact type.

For completeness, the Anytime Return fare is £4.40.

In my experience, ScotRail staff are very proactive at mentioning the return is often only 10p dearer for example if a single is requested for a destination where no off-peak single is available. My most recent journey into Glasgow Central (from a local Strathclyde area station), the guard actually said to a passenger who asked for a single - 'are you sure you don't want a return? It's only another ten pence.'

Ticket Advice for All

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

On December 5th, A4 No. 4498 'Sir Nigel Gresley' powers up Enborne Bank with the Steam Dreams special.
David Lindsell



How do Greater Anglia's trains handle all weather, including the cold?

Did you know that Greater Anglia's new trains are tested in extreme weather conditions and have special features so passengers can enjoy comfortable and reliable journeys all year round?

From being sent to an industrial freezer to being blasted with water to check for leaks, no stone is left unturned to ensure that the company's new fleet of 191 trains will perform as reliably as possible. Being ready for winter and bitter temperatures is a key focus of the whole of the rail industry in the UK - and Greater Anglia is no exception. As part of the rigorous testing requirements for a new set of trains, a carriage is transported to Vienna, Austria and put into a special chamber in a process called 'climatic testing' to ensure it can withstand a freezing chill.

The chamber is taken down to a temperature of -25°C, with ice forming on the carriage windows and bodywork while engineers, wrapped up in hats, scarves and gloves, check that all systems work as expected. Checks are carried out on CCTV cameras, heating and cooling systems, electronic information displays inside and outside the train, windscreen wipers, demisters, motors, brakes and doors to make sure they can work in sub-zero temperatures.

All of Greater Anglia's new trains are also equipped with snow brakes. This system applies the brakes very gently on each set of wheels throughout the train in turn automatically, like dominoes, ensuring that heat is put into the brakes and that they can still stop the train very quickly on the coldest of days. Couplers, which allow two trains to be joined together, are also heated to prevent delays when another train is attached. Meanwhile, modern heating systems inside the train keep customers warm and comfortable. It isn't just the winter that can pose a challenge though. Torrential rain can hit at any time in the UK and to test how a train handles it, every train undergoes an extreme wet weather check. The company's new commuter trains, for example, pass through a specially designed rig which blasts water at it from a variety of angles at high velocity, with engineers checking panels and systems inside the train for leaks.

Spring and summer can bring warmer, sometimes sweltering conditions, but customers can remain nicely cool with air conditioning that circulates cold air throughout the train every six to nine minutes.

Underfloor heating on Greater Anglia's new commuter trains stops any cold spots forming. The system is self-monitoring so automatically adjusts the temperature to help with comfort inside the carriage. The heating and air conditioning system on the Stadler-built trains that run on services between London - Norwich, London - Stansted Airport and the regional network from Ipswich and Norwich, Cambridge and Marks Tey is also controlled automatically by the train. On all of the new trains, the air conditioning system also balances the mix between fresh air and recirculated air to help use less energy.

Autumn, too, can sometimes bring its challenges through slippery rails. As thousands of leaves fall onto the tracks, they stick to damp rails and passing trains compress them into a thin, slippery layer on the rail which - much like black ice on the roads - can affect braking distance, reducing grip and acceleration. This can ultimately cause delays as train drivers have to brake and accelerate more gently than normal. All of Greater Anglia's new trains are fitted with the very latest Wheel Slide Protection (WSP) systems which have been thoroughly tested and developed over many years to be optimal and makes our trains resilient to the effects of slippery rails. Like ABS in cars, WSP helps the trains' wheels to brake more evenly in slippery conditions and stops them from locking up and sliding, preventing wheel damage and wear. Modern traction control systems stop the trains from slipping when accelerating too. The trains come with an automatic sanding function that works when the brakes are applied, which releases sand, giving the steel wheels more grip in slippery conditions and making the brakes even more effective. The company's trains on the regional, Stansted Express and London to Norwich routes are also fitted with spring-loaded blocks on the wheels, similar to that on a mountain bike, that continually rub against the wheel, cleaning it of any debris.

Martin Beable, Greater Anglia's engineering director, said: "It's fantastic to have new modern trains that are tested so very vigorously to withstand everything that the British weather throws at them and with special features which keep customers comfortable in all seasons. We are one of the best performing train companies in the country and we - as always - will work hard to maintain these high standards, while we continue to bring the rest of our excellent new trains into service."

Loco Fleet List Ten

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

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

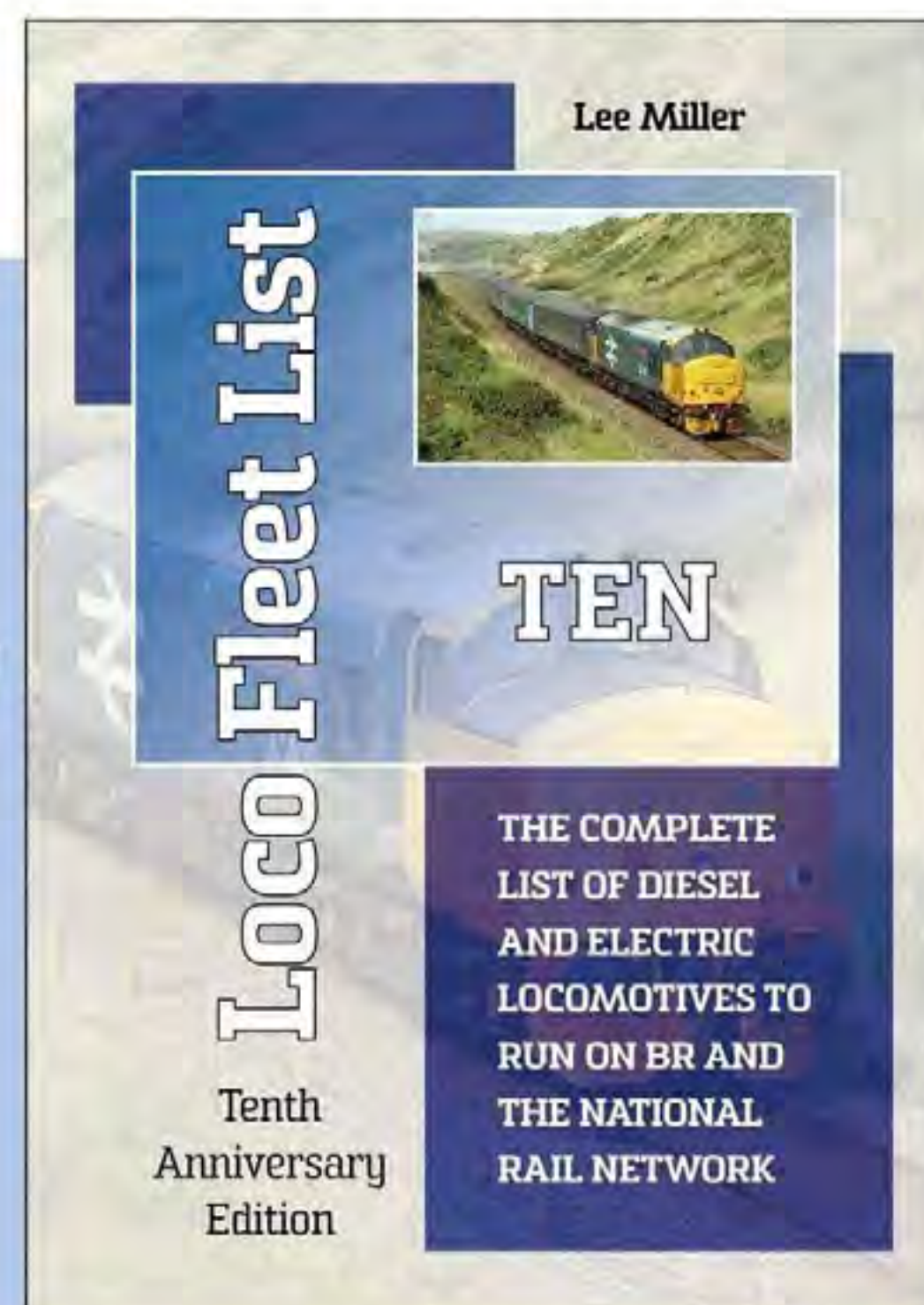
Features:

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

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

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

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

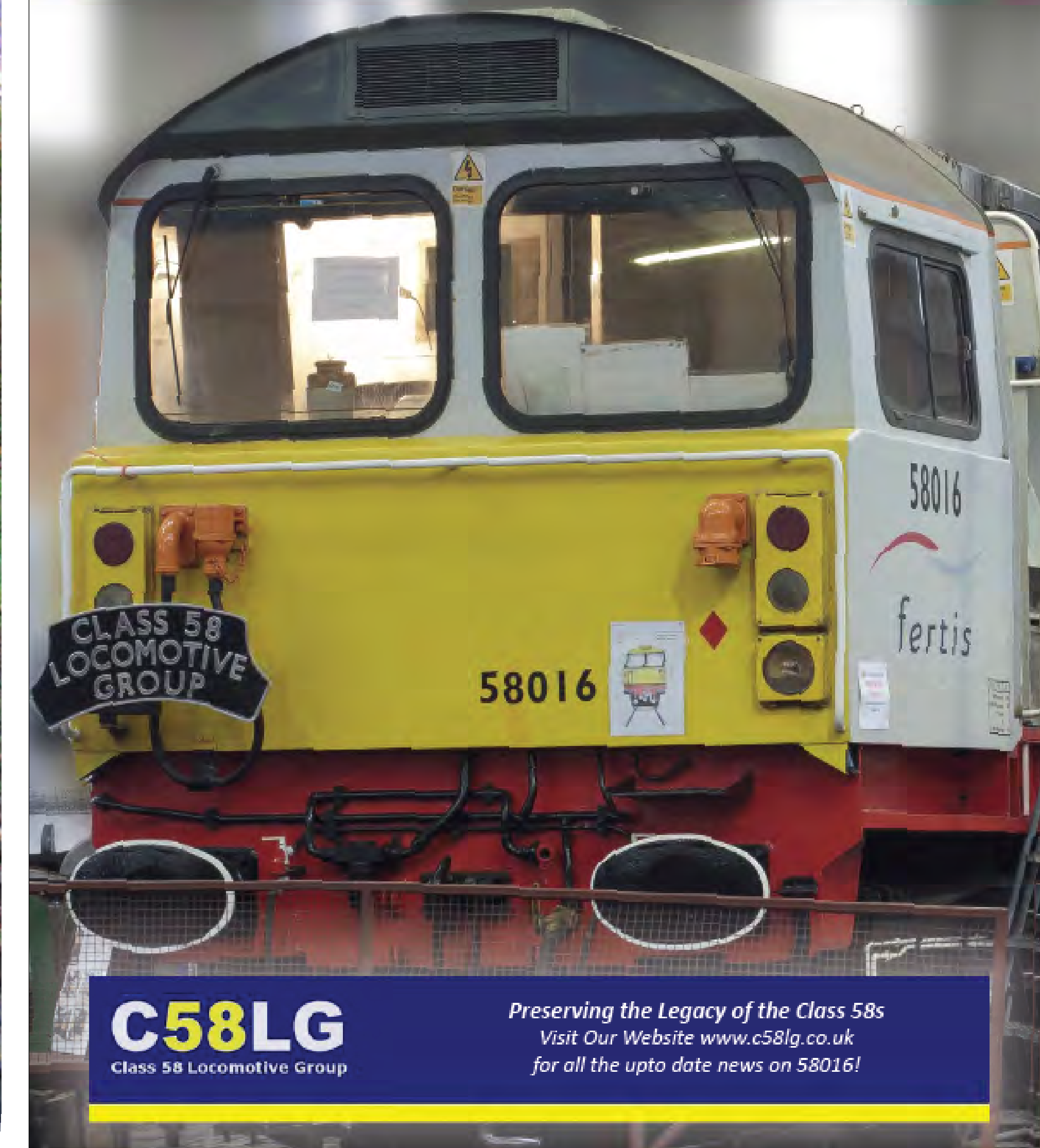




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Greater Anglia's Norwich Crown Point Depot celebrates 40 years

Greater Anglia's Norwich Crown Point Depot is celebrating 40 years of servicing Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex's trains. The depot, which employs over 100 staff, has seen many changes over the years, most recently undergoing an extensive redevelopment to accommodate Greater Anglia's new train fleet.

The work began in 2018, with Greater Anglia investing over £80 million in the project to transform the depot with better facilities to maintain and clean the company's 58 new Stadler trains, as well as a new train washing facility, improved servicing equipment and the ability to store and dispense more fuel.

The work included the installation of an £8.7 million new bogie drop facility - which allows engineers to repair, remove and replace components on the underneath of train carriages, such as the wheelsets and underframe equipment. New equipment transfer turntables and support offices were also added.

Greater Anglia now operates the depot in partnership with Stadler, the manufacturer of the new fleet of trains. The landmark project ushered in a new era for the region's railways and secured the depot's future with train maintenance expertise staying in Norwich to continue the city's long-standing crucial role in the delivery of the region's train service.

That presence is valuable to the local and regional economy, with benefits for Norwich and Norfolk both from having employees based at the depot and from the linked supply chain.

Greater Anglia's Managing Director, Jamie Burles, said, "The depot has been vital to ensuring we provide the best possible service to passengers across East Anglia since 1982 and will continue to play that crucial role well into the future. The team there does a fantastic job day-in, day-out, and I would like to thank them for their dedication to providing a reliable and punctual train service for the region."

Crown Point Depot was officially opened on October 27th 1982, by the chairman of the British Railways Board, Peter Parker.

It replaced Norwich engine shed and allowed InterCity trains that had been serviced at Great Yarmouth to move to a central location. It was electrified in 1985, along with the Great Eastern Main Line. As part of the privatisation of British Rail, in 1997, it was taken over by Anglia Railways. It has since passed with the East Anglia franchise to One Railway, National Express East Anglia and now Greater Anglia. New branding is due to be unveiled to mark the depot's 40th birthday and the completion of the redevelopment work.

Top model company Hornby making miniatures of Greater Anglia's new trains

Greater Anglia's new Stadler bi-mode trains, which run on diesel and electricity, were the first of their kind to run on the UK rail network – but did you know that they will also be the first of their kind to run on model railway manufacturer's Hornby Hobbies' OO model railway gauge?

Hornby is making both versions of the full-size train – the three-carriage and four carriage trains, which run on Greater Anglia's regional routes in Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire and Essex.

Each model is being made with meticulous attention to detail – and some of the process of manufacturing a model train mirrors that of making a full-size train, including testing the trains before they either go into passenger service or are released onto the railway model market.

Hornby started work on the model Greater Anglia train in 2021, when they obtained blueprints of the full-size trains from Swiss train manufacturer, Stadler. They then visited Greater Anglia's Crown Point depot in Norwich in June 2021 to photograph and take measurements of the Class 755 trains, looking at details on top of the train, underneath it and inside it.

Steve Merry, senior product designer at Hornby Hobbies, set to work designing a 1:76 scale model of the trains at Hornby HQ in Margate using CAD (Computer Aided Design). He spent months working on all the detail – from the arrangements on the roof such as fans, exhausts, GSM aerials, electric cabling and the pantograph to the toilet tanks on the undercarriage of the train.

The train's large picture windows – ideal for views of the East Anglian countryside in the full-size version – presented a few challenges to Steve as not only did he have to pay attention to the train's interiors, adding seating, tables and even passenger information screens, but it made it more difficult to hide the motors which power the model train.

A 3D print out was made of the train so that Steve could run it on a test track at Hornby HQ to make sure that his design worked. During the testing phase, he discovered problems with the small motor and the articulated bogie – where the wheels are mounted on the model train. He then spent some time modifying the design – and testing his modifications until he was happy that the model would be reliable. This included designing a new bigger motor and trying to hide it from people looking

into the model train through the model windows and re-designing part of the bogie.

Chris Reilly, sound and electronics engineer at Hornby Hobbies, visited Greater Anglia in October 2022 to record all the sounds on the trains, both at the depot and by taking a couple of rides on them. He recorded everything from the horn and the diesel engine to automated announcements on board and a conductor going through the train asking for tickets. The sounds will play through a tiny speaker hidden in the model trains.

After over 18 months of working on the design, the train is ready to be made by Hornby's manufacturer in China and should be in the shops in 2023. The models are available to pre-order, with prices starting from £362.99.

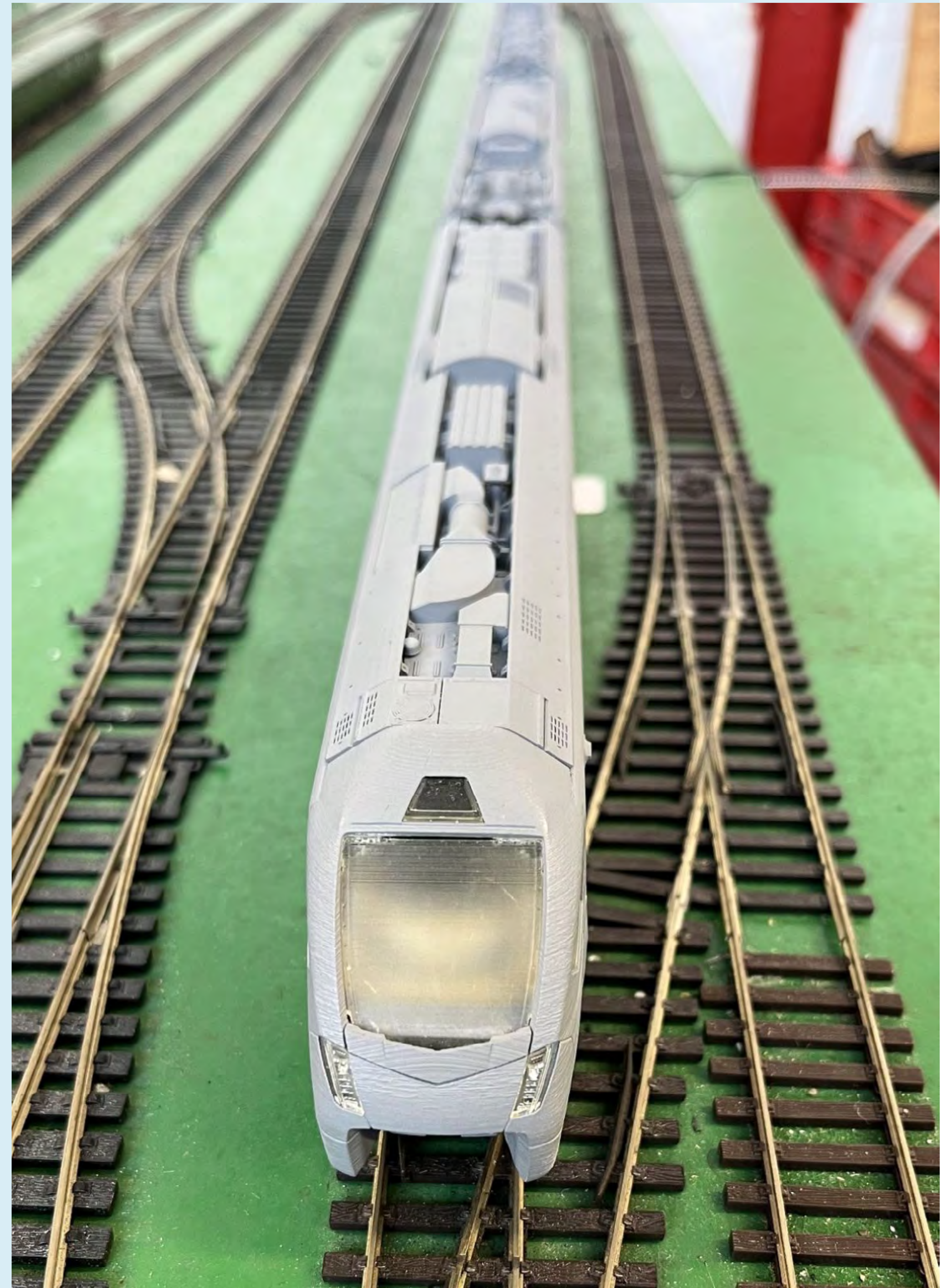
Martin Beable, Greater Anglia engineering director, said: "It's fascinating to see how much work goes into producing a scale model of our new trains. Just as we have worked hard and taken time to make sure the new trains are reliable and the highest possible standard – the team at Hornby has obviously approached their project with the same level of dedication and determination to produce fantastic new trains, as we have."

Simon Kohler, marketing and product development director at Hornby Hobbies, said: "Greater Anglia's Stadler Class 755 trains are a radical design for the UK railway which we understand have caused a lot of excitement among rail passengers in East Anglia.

"It's a radical design for us too and one we were very excited to reproduce in 1:76 scale. We took our 3D model to a railway model exhibition and it got the full thumbs up. The railway modellers community are excited about being able to get them running on their tracks.

"We take great care with every model we produce. Railway model enthusiasts are an exacting community who expect our models to be exact scale reproductions of trains – down to the number of fans on top of a train and rivets on the bodywork."

Photo: 3D print out of a bi-mode. © Greater Anglia



National Rail

Class 66 791 heads the Eastleigh - Hoo Junction engineers past a misty Worting on December 20th. *Dennis Rowland*



Greater Anglia wins 'most reliable train' accolade for second year



Greater Anglia's new four-carriage bi-mode trains have been crowned "most reliable train of their type" in the country in independent industry awards for the second year running. Greater Anglia, along with their maintenance partner Stadler, scooped three industry reliability awards for the train operator's new trains at the annual Golden Spanner Awards, held by Modern Railways Magazine.

Martin Beable, Engineering Director, Greater Anglia, said: "Our new trains have transformed rail travel in the region, and we're thrilled they have been recognised with these awards. The fact that we have received a gold, silver and bronze award shows we are making good progress in all aspects of fleet performance, from having a low number of technical incidents, to getting trains moving again and recovering quickly from incidents that do occur, to wider improvements in overall fleet performance. I would like to thank the teams at Greater Anglia, Stadler and Rock Rail who were all integral to these notable achievements. These awards are testament to the hard work of our colleagues, who work around-the-clock to keep trains running."

The four-carriage Class 755 trains, which operate on rural lines in Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex and Cambridgeshire, were named the most reliable train of their type in England, Scotland and Wales based on the 'miles per technical TRUST incident' (MTIN) statistics – which cover faults that cause a delay of three minutes or more. These bi-mode trains, which are powered by diesel and electricity, recorded an average of 17,676 miles between incidents – the best in the country and improving from 14,767 miles between incidents last year.

Paul Patrick, managing director of Stadler Rail Service UK; said: "Stadler trains are safe, reliable, with a focus on comfort and green technology. The performance of the fleets we built for the East Anglia network and maintain at Crown Point are testament to effective partnership working with Greater Anglia and our shared commitment to continuous improvement for the benefit of passengers."

As a result, the trains, which were built and are maintained by Stadler, won the golden spanner in the category of new diesel trains. There was also recognition for Greater Anglia's three-carriage bi-mode trains, which won a bronze spanner for the lowest average delay per technical incident. In addition, Greater Anglia's Class 745 intercity trains which operate between Norwich, Ipswich, Colchester and London picked up a silver spanner award, meaning they are the most improved train of their type, with a 126.9% year-on-year improvement.

Greater Anglia is currently in the process of replacing all trains in its fleet with brand new ones, which are all longer, with more seats, USB and plug sockets, fast free Wi-Fi, air conditioning and improved accessibility features as well as dedicated cycle spaces.

Photo: Greater Anglia bi-mode train. ©Greater Anglia

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Delay repay fraudster given prison sentence

A man who fraudulently claimed £35,000 in delay repay compensation from Greater Anglia in just two weeks has been given an eight-month prison sentence, suspended for 18 months.

Michael Parker, 24, of Godstow Road, Greenwich, London, claimed delay repay compensation multiple times using the same ticket during a period of disruption on the Greater Anglia network in December 2019.

Fraud investigators at Greater Anglia uncovered the scam when they were analysing delay repay claims during the pandemic and found that Parker had used multiple aliases when making the claims.

The British Transport Police investigated the case, leading to prosecution. Parker pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to commit fraud at Inner London Crown Court, sitting at the Royal Courts of Justice.

He was given an eight-month prison sentence, suspended for 18 months, a 25-day community order and 50 hours unpaid work.

Kim Bucknell, head of revenue protection at Greater Anglia, said: “We want customers who genuinely are delayed if their journey is disrupted to claim delay repay compensation, but we will not tolerate people who abuse the system. In the last two years we have recovered £500,000 from people who have fraudulently claimed delay repay.

“During the pandemic, when we had fewer customers, we analysed claims from the whole of 2019 and early 2020 and pursued everyone who had put in a false claim. Since then we have also tightened up our delay replay compensation process to make it more difficult for people trying to make fraudulent claims and have rejected tens of thousands of pounds of false claims.

“Claiming fraudulently is the same as stealing from Greater Anglia – and it leaves the company with less money for investment which could result in fares going up for everyone.”

GTR completes first tranche of Southern fleet modernisation

Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR) has completed a comprehensive modernisation programme for Southern Railway’s 75 “Class 377/4” trains. New features include passenger priorities such as information screens and at-seat charging and power points, as well as high-tech engineering features designed to streamline maintenance and improve reliability.

The 75 trains represent a key milestone in a five-year, £55 million programme funded by the trains’ owner Porterbrook, the Rolling Stock Leasing Company (ROSCO) from whom GTR leases the trains. Porterbrook’s investment in the programme could rise to £100 million with further upgrade elements being considered.

The train operator and ROSCO are “levelling up” a total of 270 trains - the UK’s biggest fleet of ‘Electrostars’ - to the same standards of modern passenger facilities and technical equipment. The 377/4s are the largest “sub-class” in the fleet, and at 18 years are among the oldest. The Electrostar is the most common type of electric-powered train built since rail privatisation in the 1990s. The Derby-built, Alstom air-conditioned trains have been very successful and GTR’s Electrostars have been in service for up to 21 years. The oldest have run over 2.4 million miles in service.

GTR’s own engineering team is carrying out the upgrade programme at its Selhurst depot in South London, using technical processes designed by Alstom. Beside the new power sockets and information screens, enhancements include energy-saving LED lighting and

passenger-counting technology. Passenger priorities were identified in research led by Transport Focus and funded by Porterbrook.

GTR’s engineers have now begun the same package of improvements for the slightly older 377/1 trains. There are 62 of these, also in service on Southern routes.

The upgrade programme will include all 214 of Southern’s 377s, ranging in age from eight to 21 years, and 56 six-to-eight-year-old Class 387s, currently working on Great Northern and Gatwick Express routes. Porterbrook’s investment in the programme could rise to £100 million with further upgrade elements being considered.

As well as better meeting passengers’ expectations for on-board facilities, bringing every train up to the same modern standards, with common features across the whole fleet, allows GTR’s engineers to streamline routine maintenance and repairs. That keeps each Electrostar out in service for longer, reducing delays and cancellations. To accelerate maintenance and improve reliability still further, a new “smart” On-Train Data Recorder helps predict and diagnose faults, which means that some problems can be fixed without returning to the depot. New forward-facing CCTV cameras will film the track in front of the train to help analyse incidents that delay the service.

GTR’s Engineering Director Steve Lammin said: “These Electrostars are great trains. Taking on board our passengers’ feedback, this comprehensive upgrade

will provide an even better on-board experience and more reliability. With collaboration from Alstom and Porterbrook, our team at Selhurst Depot has developed and streamlined a process of stripping out a train’s seats, interior panels and old wiring, installing all the new features, refitting seats and panels, testing and returning to service, at a rate of just one week per train. Well over a quarter of the fleet has now been through the programme, and more and more passengers will notice the benefits over the coming years. I’m really pleased that GTR is working with Porterbrook and Alstom to build a better railway for our customers.”

Ben Ackroyd, Chief Operating Officer at Porterbrook said: “Porterbrook’s £100m investment programme to upgrade the Electrostar fleet, operated by GTR, highlights our commitment to providing an improved passenger experience with better information displays, more access to plug sockets and efficient LED lighting. The installation of Automated Passenger Counting now provides insight into real time demand on service. From an infrastructure perspective, Forward-Facing CCTV and enhanced GPS feeds enable remote monitoring of track conditions. This can help deliver improved network performance and reliability by reducing the need for dedicated track inspection vehicles and allows rail staff to assess conditions flexibly.”



Peter Broadley, Managing Director of Services at Alstom UK & Ireland said: “It is great to see the Electrostars get a new lease of life, fit for purpose for the next phase of their operations. Working closely with our partners at GTR and Porterbrook we have created a great product which significantly enhances the customer experience across the GTR network. I’m looking forward to successfully completing the project in a little over two years from now.”

Photo: Stripped out at Selhurst: GTR engineers remove seats to install new features in Southern’s Electrostar fleet. ©GTR



Network Rail plans major week of engineering between Faversham and Dover Priory to protect route

Network Rail engineers will be undertaking major work to prevent potential landslips at six sites on the railway between Faversham, Canterbury East and Dover Priory, this February. Passengers using the line are advised to plan ahead and leave more time to complete their journeys between Saturday February 11th to Saturday 18th - half term week - while engineers carry out £3 million upgrades to stabilise several cuttings and embankments. Work will involve removing thousands of tonnes of earth from sections of cuttings to reduce the steepness of the slopes leading down to the track, and installing rock netting to prevent rocks and earth from falling onto trains. Cuttings are where the tracks are cut deep into hillsides, and embankments were conversely built to carry the tracks across valleys – reducing the gradients trains have to face on their journeys. The line opened in 1860 when civil engineers knew much less about how steep to make their slopes and what materials to build embankments from.

Fiona Taylor, Network Rail's Kent route director, said: "We'd like to thank passengers for their patience while we carry out this essential work to prevent future landslips. The change in weather patterns means that we're experiencing drier summers and much wetter winters, and this has a huge impact on a railway that was largely designed and built in the Victorian era when the understanding of construction materials and geology were less

advanced than today. We constantly monitor embankments and cuttings to keep passengers safe, cautioning trains when sensors detect any movement, however, this has an impact on the punctuality of services. The work we are planning over February half-term provides a long-term solution to the risk of landslips on this section of track and allow trains to run at full speed and will also improve the reliability."

A 30-metre reinforced concrete wall will also be installed at the bottom of the cutting at Selling Tunnel – one of the most at-risk sites for landslips, which will help protect and keep the railway safe. Sections of collapsed drainage will be completely rebuilt to stop flooding damage the track and signalling equipment which will minimise delays. Alongside this work, some stations along the line will be deep cleaned and refurbished.

Scott Brightwell, Southeastern's operations and safety director, said: "We'd like to thank our passengers for their patience while Network Rail carry out this essential work which will result in a more reliable train service. Passengers should check before they travel for replacement bus timetable information at southeasternrailway.co.uk and allow more time for their journeys."

End of an era for Birmingham New Street's iconic signal box

After safely getting tens of millions of trains to where they need to be over 57 years, the Network Rail team at Birmingham New Street's iconic railway signal box has moved its last service on Christmas Eve. And while its 'Brutalist' external appearance has divided opinion over those seven decades, what's less well-known is how integral its insides have been to run Britain's railway. With signallers inside capable of directing up to 1,200 trains every day, the Grade II listed Birmingham Power Signal Box (PSB) has been at the heart of the country's railway network since it started operation in 1966.

It uses a huge telephone exchange linked to mechanical relays controlling signals and points, with staff manually setting safe routes for trains through Britain's busiest station outside of London. When it first opened it controlled trains between Hampden-in-Arden, through Birmingham and towards Stourbridge and was one of four power signal boxes in the region. But since 2005 the other boxes closed and the panels in the Birmingham PSB got smaller and smaller as sections of the signalling system were modernised.

Despite its age much of the equipment has been working constantly since it was installed with some components never needing any maintenance. However the 1960s technology has become increasingly difficult to maintain with spare parts often in short supply, so since January 2021 all of Birmingham New Street's signalling equipment has been converted to digital in line with the rest of the region.

Over the last 23 months, Birmingham New Street has seen:

- 114 new signals (traffic lights for trains),
- 232 axle counters (sensors which detect where trains are on the track)
- and 230 miles of cabling installed;

taking more than 750,000 hours to complete.

From end of service on Christmas Eve control of this equipment was switched from the PSB to the West Midlands Signalling Centre in Saltley during the festive railway shutdown. And while this marks the end of an era for the 1960s signal box, it's the final piece of a £700m

jigsaw to digitalise the West Midlands railway network and make it fit for the next seven decades.

Denise Wetton, Network Rail's Central route director, said: "While some may be sad to see the Power Signal Box operate for the final time, the transfer of signalling control to our state-of-the-art signalling centre in Saltley marks a new dawn for the West Midlands' railway network. Now the 17-year long project to digitalise the signalling system is complete, we are ready to face whatever the future may bring as we encourage more people back to using the railway as a safe and green way to travel, and provide reliable journeys for our passengers and freight customers."

As one of the last remaining power signal boxes of its kind, finding spare parts to repair Birmingham PSB has been problematic in recent years, as it's the only surviving signal box to use the Westpac Mk 1 signalling system. It was built as part of the West Coast main line route modernisation in the 1960s and was one of four power signal boxes in the West Midlands, replacing 64 manually

operated signal boxes. It was given Grade II listed building status in 1995 because of its 'dramatic and exceptional architectural quality' and 'strongly sculptural form'.



Barmouth Viaduct reopens to rail passengers and pedestrians as second stage of major refurbishment work completes

The railway and footbridge across the Grade II* listed bridge reopened on Saturday December 10th, as Network Rail prepares for final metallic upgrades in 2023.

Network Rail and contractors Alun Griffiths have successfully carried out a number of essential upgrades to Barmouth Viaduct in 2022 as part of the structures biggest and most ambitious refurbishment, ever.

During two four-week closures this autumn and winter, teams have worked day and night to strengthen and replace timber beams, foundation support structures (piles), and the metallic straps that help hold the viaduct together. The closure of the railway allowed Network Rail to also upgrade a kilometre of track through the nearby Tywyn station. Barmouth Station's canopy was also refurbished.

The work was scheduled to take place outside of the peak summer tourist season to minimise disruption to the local community, with the viaduct reopening during October half term.

The viaduct reopened with a normal train service on December 10th so local communities and tourists can fully enjoy the spectacular wooden structure and its surrounding natural beauty during the festive period.

Nick Millington, interim route director at Network Rail Wales and Borders, said: "We'd like to thank the local community for bearing with us this autumn and winter as we carried out the latest stage of this essential restoration project. We'll be returning in 2023 to replace the metallic elements of the bridge, which will secure the future of this important rail link for many years to come."

Photo: Barmouth. ©Dom Vacher





Knareborough station's historic canopy given new lease of life

The 132-year-old canopy at the main entrance of Knareborough station has been repaired and restored to keep it looking its best for future generations.

Network Rail has carefully repaired the Grade II listed canopy to preserve the station's rich heritage for years to come. The structure has seen a complete roof renewal and redecoration throughout, including a fresh lick of paint in its traditional white and green colours.

Before refurbishment began, scaffolding was temporarily installed to reinforce the station canopy, protecting passengers and the local community.

With the refurbishment now complete, the structure matches the platform canopies which were also restored back in 2016. The scaffolding has also now been safely removed, allowing the people of the town to enjoy their local station once again.

The station, which was awarded the Urban Heritage award at the National Heritage Awards last year, has benefitted from other major improvements

over the last few years, including a £150,000 upgrade to the station roof in 2019.

Robert Ellams, Route Engineer for Network Rail's North and East Route, said: "The revamped entrance has made a real difference to the station, giving it a vital upgrade whilst retaining its historic look. The crucial repair work will not only improve passenger experience, but it will also help to protect the Grade II listed building for future generations. I'd like to thank passengers, our partners and the community for their patience and hope they continue to enjoy the station's connections to York, Harrogate and Leeds for years to come."

Andrew Jones, Member of Parliament for Harrogate and Knareborough, said: "This is great work from Network Rail and is part of a greater programme of investment in our stations and railways. It is also an investment in our heritage as this is a Grade 2 listed structure. The Network Rail team were really responsive when the Friends of Knareborough Station approached me wanting the work completed quickly. They prioritised it and now we have a fantastic looking station with brilliant businesses on the platform to go with more and better rail services."



National Rail

Class 66 004 passes Acton Bridge on December 29th with a Knowsley to Wilton working. *Brian Battersby*



Virtual reality headsets teach children about railway safety

Virtual reality is now being used by Network Rail to teach school children about the dangers of trespassing on the railway. The goal is to drive down the number of railway trespass incidents in the North West by combining sport and railway safety sessions using the high-tech headgear. Since November 2021 there have been 2,127 trespass incidents across Network Rail's North West route.

Between March 2021 and March 2022 there were 19,408 trespass incidents on Britain's rail network - with a quarter of those involving under 18s. To tackle those numbers Network Rail has teamed up with the Stockport County Community Trust to work with young people in Greater Manchester. Since the summer the two organisations have been working together

to encourage healthy play and railway safety awareness.

Chris McLaughlin, Network Rail community safety manager, said: "There's a real buzz from the children when they use the headsets, and however hard I try I never get a reaction like that from my Powerpoint presentations. Combining the lessons with the football sessions feels like we're onto a real winner."

Working with a sporting team like Stockport County Community Trust has so much more influence and it really helps us to deliver our important railway safety message alongside an agency which people already respect, love and trust."

Matthew Bailey, Stockport County community partnership manager, said: "It's great to be teaming up with Network Rail so we can both promote the work we do for local communities. The feedback we've had so far from schools and groups taking part has been really positive, with the virtual reality and football mix proving to be a real hit with the children."

The students were shown two different scenarios through the headsets leading up to a dangerous outcome. This included being in the train cab with a driver as they approached a trespasser on the track, and then from the perspective of a group of teenagers leading up to one of them touching electrified steel rails on the ground which power trains.

Driver fined and banned from driving HGVs for 6 months after jamming lorry under Coulsdon railway bridge, causing massive delays in London, Surrey and Sussex

A driver who jammed his HGV under a bridge carrying the Brighton Main Line through Coulsdon has been banned from driving lorries for six months as a result. The incident on July 7th this year happened at around 2.30pm on the A237 Brighton Road, just outside Coulsdon South station. The lorry became wedged under the iron girder bridge that carries the fast lines for express trains to Gatwick Airport, Haywards Heath and Brighton. The nature of the bridge meant it had to be closed until the lorry could be removed, leaving just two tracks open for the whole Brighton Main Line.

In fact it was 8.45pm before the lorry could be removed, meaning trains were disrupted right up until the end of the day as far afield as Eastbourne in the south and Bedford and Cambridge in the north.

The driver appeared before the South East Traffic Commissioner in late November to receive a six-month HGV driving ban, following an earlier court appearance where he was fined a means-tested £715 and given six points on his licence for driving without due care and attention and contravening a traffic sign.

Network Rail's route director for Sussex, Katie Frost, said: "Well over 400 trains and thousands of passengers from across the South were disrupted by this single error of judgement, and it brings home how important it is for professional drivers to check the heights of their lorries and their routes before setting off."

"Network Rail seeks to recover costs for incidents like this one and we work closely with the Office of the Traffic Commissioner and Metropolitan Police to tackle drivers who damage our bridges."

"The fine and the ban won't make up for the costs of the disruption but they send a message to other drivers that it's never worth running the risk."

Sergeant Alex Burlison from the Commercial Vehicle Unit at the Metropolitan Police Service said: "Far too often we are deploying resources to deal with these incidents which are wholly avoidable with each collision having the potential for fatal consequences."

"These drivers are entrusted to drive some of the largest vehicles on the road and it is only right that should they be involved in a collision with infrastructure of any description that they are placed before the courts."



National Rail

Astbury Light Railway near Congleton is a short miniature railway with a ferocious 1 in 16 gradient. *Mark Enderby*



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Did you Know - Ken Mumford

Some more of the nations oddities this month:

Bridge Strength

When the Forth rail bridge was designed in the wake of the Tay Bridge disaster, it had to be strong enough to resist a wind pressure up to six times that which Thomas Bouch had allowed for in his ill-fated structure.

Snow Patrol



84 Snow in North Devon, January 1963; Class 700 0-6-0 No 30689 had gone out from Exmouth Junction to force a way through snow-drifts, and itself became snowed in near Sourton, on the north side of Dartmoor. This picture shows it having been dug out four days later, being rammed by

Class N 2-6-0 No 31846 to break the ice from its mechanical parts, while Fitter Reg Lang of the same depot (with steel bar) and his mate Albert Davey observe intently. After seven hefty collisions, under the supervision of Chief District Motive Power Inspector Sam Smith, it was free to move. *Western Morning News, Plymouth*

A Different View

Merseyrail's Class 507011 approaches Hamilton Square on December 10th. *Richard Hargreaves*

Refurbished station board at Settle station. *Michael Lynam*

CrossCountry's Class 220 024 stands in low winter sunlight at Stafford on December 21st. *Richard Hargreaves*



A Different View

A different view at Wigan North Western, with Wigan Parish Church in the background, as the conductor of Northern's Class 158 785, waits for the road with the 12:56 service to Leeds, on a cold and frosty December 8th.
Paul Senior





Image of 257 Squadron by David Cable

Bring your childhood dreams to life at the Spa Valley Railway in Tunbridge Wells, Kent as you step onto the footplate of a full-sized, fully operational steam locomotive Bulleid Pacific No. 34072 '257 Squadron' and take control of this magnificent engine.

A driving and firing experience on the Spa Valley Railway is exactly that, a chance to drive and fire a real life steam locomotive! The following dates are available to take part in this once in a lifetime experience: 25th & 26th February and 4th, 5th, 11th & 12th March 2023.

Participants will learn all about the locomotive and controls, spend time on the regulator with our Driver, the shovel with the Fireman and even have a go on the green flag with the Guard as part of the crew. This is a full day experience which includes joining the locomotive crew from 07:00 (or 09:00

if you prefer) preparing Battle of Britain No. 34072 '257 Squadron' for service, enjoying shared opportunities to drive and fire the locomotive throughout the day plus Guard and ride on the train being pulled.

Jonnie Pay, Commercial Manager at the railway said: "During this hands-on, intensive, full day experience, we'll take you behind the scenes of the Spa Valley Railway, showing you things that the general public never gets to see and of course, the best bit is a lot of it will be from the footplate!"

"This is a full day's experience with the railways driver and fireman and is exactly like it is on a day when the railway is hauling trains for the public.

"This experience isn't just a return trip this is a complete experience from oiling up, to driving, firing, waving the flag and to putting the engine away afterwards.

"After a light lunch it will be time to get behind the controls of an incredible steam locomotive, to fire, guard and drive the train yourself."

This unique experience is £500 per person and four guests can come along to ride as a passenger on the train from lunchtime on the same day. Everyone taking part will take home a commemorative certificate and complimentary membership to the Spa Valley Railway and don't forget a camera as no doubt you will want to look back on this special day.

The Spa Valley Railway Bulleid Pacific Driver & Fireman Experience includes:

Book on duty at 07:00 with the Driver and Fireman if you would like to see how the locomotive is prepared for service, have a go at oiling up, you can arrive later at 09:00 if you'd rather have a lie in though!

After a full safety briefing with the crew, spend a day with the engine and train including helping with disposal

Try your hand at coupling and uncoupling

Drive and fire Bulleid Pacific 34072 '257 Squadron' on a passenger train and light engine (on its own), a total of 10 miles driving and 10 miles firing, 20 miles on the footplate and 20 miles on the train!

Guard and travel on the train hauled by 34072 '257 Squadron'

Visit the Signal Box at Groombridge whilst 34072 runs around its train

Participants must be aged 18 or over and in good health at the time of the experience, persons under 18 cannot take part in this experience but can ride on the train.

Up to four guests are permitted to ride on the train, these trains will operate from lunchtime (timings will be emailed to all participants) and the guests must not arrive at the same time as the participant.

To book this 'once in a lifetime experience' for you or as a gift visit www.spavalleyrailway.co.uk/product.php/5540/bulleid-pacific-driver-fireman-experience

Keighley and Worth Valley Railway

With the main 'Elf Express' Christmas train being operated by Class 20 031 and Black 5 No. 45212, the Worth Valley's stalwart Class 101 DMU was operating in the other path, with all-stations stopping service. The DMU is seen climbing away from Haworth with a late-morning run to Oxenhope on December 11th, through the snow which covered the upper-end of the valley on the Sunday morning. *Ben Bucki*



Keighley and Worth Valley Railway

A flurry of wintry weather the preceding day had left the upper end of the Keighley and Worth Valley Railway blanketed in snow, lending a pleasantly festive atmosphere for the trains the next day. On December 11th, Class 20 031 hauls a mid-day 'Elf Express' Christmas service away from Oxenhope, with Black 5 No. 45212 (back for the winter from its usual railtour duties in Scotland for Ian Riley) on the rear. *Ben Bucki*



Keighley and Worth Valley Railway

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Telford Steam Railway

Peckett works No. 1722/1926 'Rocket', Andrew Barclay 0-6-0 steam engine No. 2138 'Swordfish', and Class 08 511 are seen at Horsehay during 'Polar Express' season on December 21st.
Richard Hargreaves



Severn Valley Railway

Always sad when a loco comes to the end of its boiler ticket, and it is time up for No. 1501. On December 29th, the loco is seen at Bridgnorth on one of its final days in service.
Richard Hargreaves

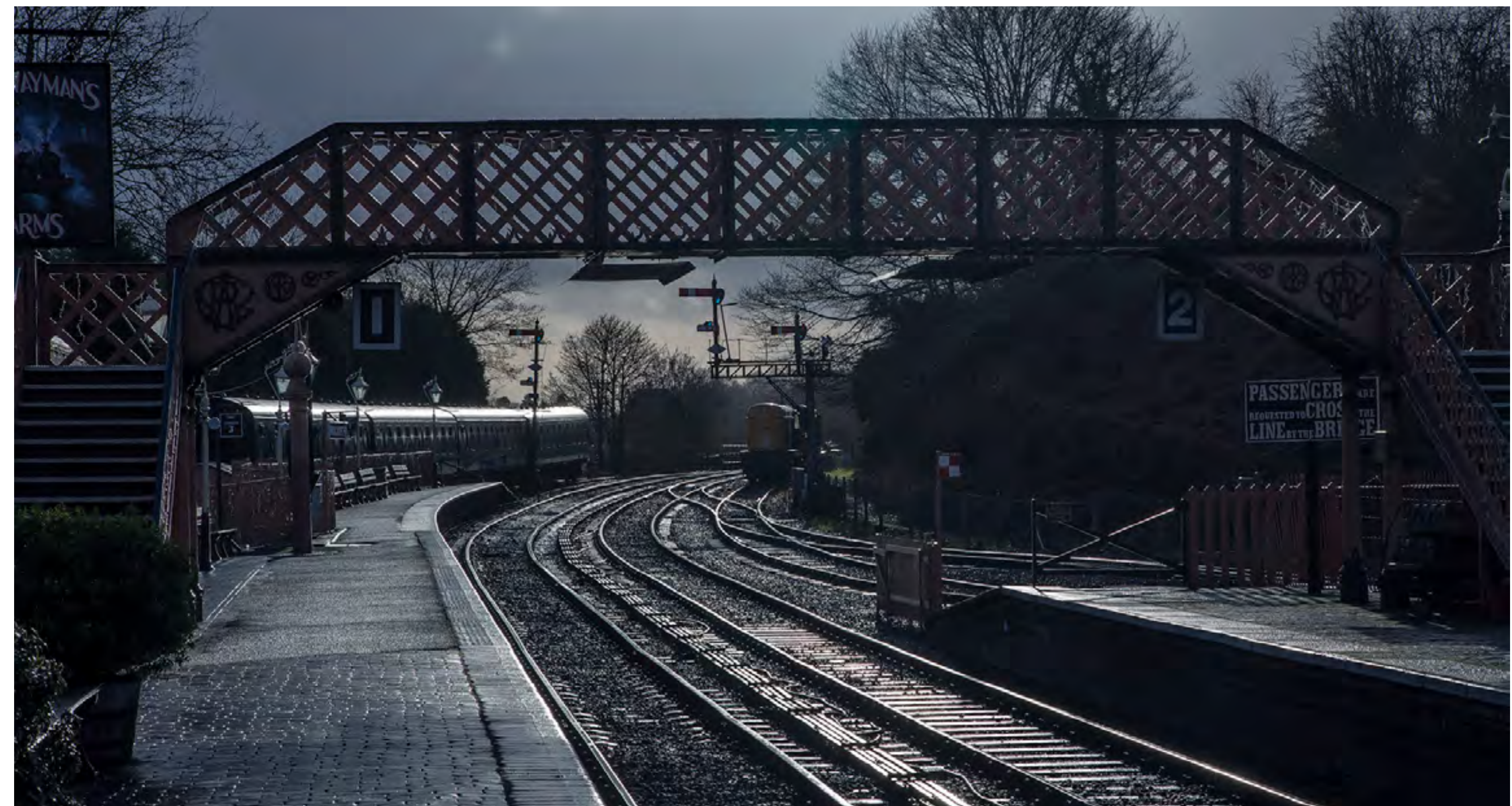


Severn Valley Railway

▶ GWR Pannier 0-6-0PT No. 1501 waits for the arrival of Class 40 106 at Bewdley on December 29th. The signalman is standing in front of the loco to collect the token from the Class 40.
Richard Hargreaves

▶ Class 20 048 is seen in the headshunt at Bridgnorth on December 29th.
Richard Hargreaves

▶ GWR Pannier No. 1501 approaches Kidderminster on December 29th having run round its train from Bridgnorth.
Richard Hargreaves



From the Archives

▶ NCB Bo-Bo electric loco No. 14 on the NCB Harton Railway at Westoe Colliery on June 23rd 1978. *John Sloane*

▶ Class 45s Nos. D87 and 76 are seen stabled at Derby depot on June 16th 1973. *John Sloane*

▶ On March 13th 1999, Pathfinder Tours 'The Merchant Sailor' worked by blue liveried No. 35005 'Canadian Pacific' between Didcot and Southampton Eastern Docks is seen at Southampton. *David Lindsell*



From the Archives

▶ Class 86 241 speeds through Winwick with a northbound Intercity service on September 15th 1990. *John Sloane*

▶ Class 85 013 is seen at London Euston station in 1986. *Michael Bennett*

▶ DRS Class 20 302 heads across the River Lochy on July 17th 2009 passing Old Inverlochy Castle ruins as it heads the final leg of Spitfire Tours 'West Highlander' from Preston to Mallaig. *Lee Stanford*



From the Archives

▶ Class 50 019 'Ramilies' passes Tisbury Gates with an Exeter to London Waterloo service in 1987. *Michael Bennett*

▶ Class 142 014 waits to depart Preston with a service to Ormskirk on June 17th 1990. *John Sloane*

▶ Shunter 08 445 draws the Barton Dock to Felixstowe container train out of the now closed Barton Dock terminal on April 12th 2011. The section from Barton Dock to Trafford Park utilised a shunting loco owing to weight restrictions on the route. *Lee Stanford*



From the Archives

▶ Class 47 309 approaches Newark with a northbound rake of 'Cargowaggons' on May 26th 1990. *John Sloane*

▶ Class 58 021 is seen with a MGR working at Knottingley on February 27th 1996. *Brian Hewertson*

▶ Class 50 034 rounds Crofton curve with a London Paddington to Penzance service in the eighties. *Michael Bennett*



From the Archives

▶ A Class 47 passes through Cholsey with an Oxford to London Paddington service in 1983.
Michael Bennett

▶ Back in the day and at the time operating for Northern, Class 180 106 passes the now demolished signal box at Kirkham North on July 24th 2011 as it runs ECS from Blackpool to Preston to form a service to Hazel Grove.
Lee Stanford

▶ Swindon built Stanier 8F No. 48470 drifts down towards Wigan from Standish Junction and crosses the down Whelley loop line with a Heysham to Stanlow oil tank train on June 30th 1967. *John Sloane*



From the Archives

Class 03 shunter No. 2137 is seen in Doncaster engineer's yard on New Year's Eve 1970.

John Sloane

Class 37 401 erupts as it passes through Stalybridge on March 7th 2007.

Brian Hewertson

Class 33 119 on a London Waterloo to Exeter service is seen departing Andover in 1989.

Michael Bennett



From the Archives

▶ Class 55 006 approaches Newark with an express to London King's Cross on December 31st 1974. *John Sloane*

▶ Class 25s Nos. D7634 and D5264 catch the early evening light at Springs Branch shed on November 22nd 1969. *John Sloane*

▶ At Southampton Eastern Docks on June 5th 1994, B4 No. 96 'Normandy' with three Queen Mary Brake Vans operated shuttles in connection with the 50th Anniversary of D Day celebrations. *David Lindsell*



From the Archives

▶ Class 127 parcels units Nos. M55985 (formerly 51619) and M55975 (51615) stand at the rear of a service at Manchester Victoria on May 5th 1988. *John Sloane*

▶ Class 58 020 'Doncaster Works' is seen at Shirebrook depot on December 28th 1987. *John Sloane*

▶ Load Bank loco, No. ADB968021, formerly Class 84 009 is seen at Crewe Basford Hall on August 27th 1995. *John Sloane*

