

Railtalk

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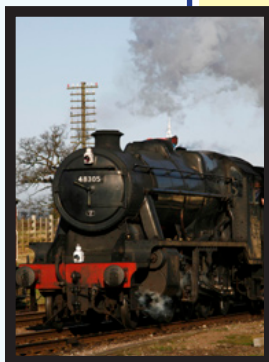
Spectacular Great Central's "Oxford" Steam Gala

Front cover

One of the highlights of January was the Great Central steam gala entitled "Shades of Oxford".

This is 48305 as it races through Quorn with a rake of mineral wagons.

Richard Hargreaves



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Submissions

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

entries@railtalk.net

When is it published

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

More information can be found by
visiting Railtalk forums.

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From The Editor

Welcome to issue 17 of Railtalk Magazine, we aim to bring you all the latest pictures and news, every month, but we do need your help, please send us your pictures and news and we'll try to include as many as possible.

January has not been a particularly busy month for charters and railtours, but it certainly has been for Cotswold Rail, who have been "clearing out the cupboard" so to speak. Some DRS loco's have also been stored pending OTMR fitment and other companies are reviewing their options.

Big news this month was that after many months of debating, January brought us the start of the Hull Trains diagram with Class 86 101.

This diagram operates between London Kings Cross and Doncaster, working Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

Friday: 20:22 Doncaster to London Kings Cross

Saturday: 09:34 London Kings Cross to Doncaster, 19:11 Doncaster to London Kings Cross

Sunday: 10:42 London Kings Cross to Doncaster

We have had a couple of trips behind the Blue Beast so far, and can't wait to do some more, the loco and stock ride superbly and are a credit to their owners, the AC Loco Group and Cargo-D.

On the preserved scene, we had a trip to the Great Central railway for their "Shades of Oxford" steam gala this month and can say that it was one of the best steam galas we've been to in a long while, especially as the sun was out, and with over 3000 visitors, the Great Central themselves must be pleased. We have, I'm afraid, included quite a few pictures from the event, hopefully not too many.

There have been a couple of accidents this month, which the media have in general covered fairly well. The first was when 37515 hit a lorry load of potatoes on a crossing in Scotland. Fortunately the Class 37 cab stood up well to the impact and provided good protection for the driver. Something that could not be said for the second accident, when a lorry knocked a foot-bridge onto the Midland Mainline at Barrow-on-Soar, whilst an attempt was made to stop all trains, a Class 158 ploughed into the bridge badly injuring the driver. Not that I'm saying that the 158's are not safe, but a locomotive does provide much more protection.

If you have any suggestions for the magazine, any topics that you would like us to cover or anything that you would like us to change, please get in touch with one of us at the address below. We aim to respond to every email as quickly as possible.

Andy Patten

Many Thanks this issue go to:

Richard Hargreaves, Jon Jebb, Brian Battersby, Ian Furness, Carl Grocott, Nick Green, David Dawson, James Stoker, Jonathan McGurk, Dave Harris, Derek Elston, Lee Scott, Michael J Alderdice, Jim, Peter Cheshire and David Mead.



One of GBR's Class 66's in Metrolink livery stabled at Doncaster on the 5th January.

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Welcome to the January Edition of Charter Scene, from Railtalk. January saw the start of a new and hopefully exciting year for charter operations in the UK railway scene. January was a quiet month for charter operations. After the cancellation of the Electric Scot Farewell in December we are all hoping for a positive 2008.

Charter Scene

January 2008



Above 67029 at the head of the "Preston Docker" railtour, operated by Hertfordshire Railtours, ran from London Euston to Heysham Harbour here pictured near Warrington in what was described as non stop rain. **Dave Harris**



Left 37401 stands at Preston, in the rain on the Preston Docker railtour

Mike Byrne

Charter Scene

Published monthly Charter Scene, from Railtalk Magazine aims to publish your photos of the British Charter Scene plus anything else related to railtours such as reports or reviews. To get your photos of the February Magazine email us at: charter.scene@railtalkmagazine.co.uk Feel free to ask us any questions you might have and thanks!



After months of training and the inevitable will it or won't it speculation, Hull Trains has started to use the AC Loco Group's Class 86 together with the Cargo-D Mk3 coaching stock. This photo was taken Sunday 27th January at Retford station, 86 101 is working 5G02 empty stock from Doncaster to Bounds Green. It is pictured taking the curve as it enters Retford station from the North. **Nick Green**



Above: Well travelled this month is Class 31 454, having been in Scotland, the South West, and the North East 31 454 is seen here pulling out of Long Marston working the 5Z68 Long Marston - Gloucester Horton Road, on the 29th January. [David Dawson](#)

Below: One of the first London Midland Turbostars to be refurbished is 170 504, seen here at Shrewsbury on the 14th January. The branding London Midland City has been applied and as the inset shows, the interior is finished to a high standard in matching green. [Richard Hargreaves](#)





Above: Class 66 411 "Eddie the Engine" has not been very well of late, but at last it seems that the engine problems have been sorted and we hope that once again it will be a reliable performer. Not long out of repair, the loco is seen working the 4Z44 Haverton Hill - Carlisle Kingmoor passing a very sunny Stockton on the 16th Jan. [James Stoker](#)

Below: Cotswold Rail clearout #1. Cotswold Rail have had a clear-out of locomotives recently, with quite a few of them going to Thompsons at Stockton for scrap. 47316 and 47033 are seen here arriving at Thompsons on the 30th January. [James Stoker](#)





Class 31 454 and Class 31 601 are seen inside Glasgow Central High Level station working the 17.54 1Q18 Glasgow Central High Level - Polmadie via Motherwell, Whifflet and Coatbridge Central mentor test train on the 23rd January. **Jonathan McCurk**



Above: Two shots where the sky dominates the picture, in a month that has seen some extremes of weather. The first location is Winwick Junction, and a Virgin West Coast (nearly typed Cross-Country!) heads south to Birmingham on the 12th January. [Dave Harris](#)
Below: Then, two days later on the 14th January, with the sky still dark, Class 60 034 heads a southbound Steel train through Shrewsbury. [Richard Hargreaves](#)





It is amazing that the Class 319's have carried so many different liveries and numbering schemes in their relatively short life.

During a recent trip to London the opportunity was taken to see how many different ones could be seen and we are amazed at the result.

At the top we have a 319/0 in Southern livery, then there is a 319/4 in the new First Capital Connect livery, on the left is a 319/3 in old Thameslink livery. At the bottom on the left we have a 319/4 in something that looks similar to the old Class 350 livery and on the bottom right is plain blue.

All: Brian Battersby





Top: Class 314 212 is seen departing Glasgow Central High Level station working the 12.35 2M72 Glasgow Central High Level - Newton service on the 9th January.

Class 314s are expected to be scrapped in 2009 with new sets replacing them.

The new replacement sets are unknown but First ScotRail been rumoured to have been in touch with Bombardier, Derby to build 38 new 4 car EMUs in time for the Glasgow Airport Rail Link for which building work has starting on the project.
Jonathan McGurk



Middle: DVT 82 218 with Class 91 117 on the front of the train are seen going through into Glasgow Central High Level station working the 07.00 1S05 London Kings Cross - Glasgow Central High Level.

Most of National Express East Coast services are now branded in the white stripe.
Jonathan McGurk



Bottom: On the 19th January, Class 90 028 is seen inside platform 9 inside Glasgow Central High Level station having worked the Friday night First ScotRail Caledonian sleeper service 23.45 1S44 From London Euston.
Jonathan McGurk



Above: After December's Farewell to the Class 87's railtour, that didn't run, 37038 was used to take 87022 back to Wembley. Running as 0Z87 Oxley - Wembley the pair, complete with wreath, are seen here passing through Banbury on the 2nd January. Later in the month, all three Class 87's at Wembley were taken to Long Marston for storage until possible reuse in Bulgaria. [Derek Elston](#)

Below: Merseyrail Class 507/508's are still being repaired external of the 3rd rail system and to facilitate transfer, Class 67's and barrier vehicles are frequently used. On the 7th January 67014 departs Chester with 507019. [Brian Battersby](#)





Top: The last two First Great Western HST Valenta power cars, arrived at Brush Works, Loughborough in January, 43002 and 43003 are seen shortly after arrival at the works and in just a few weeks will emerge with brand new MTU power units, and other modifications. [Class47](#)

Middle: I think that this is the first 5 car Class 158 that we've ever seen. In order to transfer vehicles between TOC's 158964 was utilised to bring 3 Class 158 centre coaches to Derby on the 5th Jan. [Class47](#)

Below: Pure chance, isn't that what they say about most good shots. Freightliner's Class 66 621 waits at Sheffield in January, this view is taken from the Tram platform on the upper level of the station, whilst we were waiting for a tram. [Class47](#)





Will they live or die?. Three photo's of scrap or not?

Above: Recently sold by EWS are Class 37's 37429 and 37418, this view of them at Toton in January does little to reveal the state that they are in internally, but the bodywork on 429 does look to be in good condition. [Andy](#)

Left and Below: Cotswold Clearout #2. Cotswold Rail also have put in to store several locos that were either due repair or not OTMR fitted. Various locations have been used, but one of the more unusual locations was the Wensleydale Railway at Leeming Bar. These two ex - Fragonset Class 47's were seen there in January. Subsequently Class 47 703 (below) has been advertised on Ebay, and it is thought that 47715 (left) is to be preserved at the line.

*These pictures were taken shortly after arrival at Leeming Bar during a supervised visit.
Both: [James Stoker](#)*





We are certainly impressed with the ages of these veterans. These three loco's combine to an age of over 100 years, and it seems like there's no stopping them. Above: 31105 and 31601 are seen working the 2Z08 Salop - Llandeilo passed Kemps Eye on the 9th January. [Carl Grocott](#)
Below: Recently returned from store and it's last working before a repaint back into EWS colours is 37401. The veteran 37 is seen here working the 6D19 Arpley - Holyhead RTZ as it passes Helsby on the 25th January. [Carl Grocott](#)





Above: Class 57 005 hauling a Barrier Coach and HST Power Car 43290 on the 5Z66 Craigentinny – Loughborough (Brush). Freightliner Class 57's first appearance in Newcastle upon Tyne, passed through at 14:16hrs 17th January. This locomotive has now transferred to Advenza Freight. [Michael J Alderdice](#)
 Below: First Great Western "Local Lines" livery is being applied to units as they undergo refurbishment. This is 153305 in the new livery waiting to depart for Bristol Temple Meads on the 4th January. [Jim](#)





Above: Birkenhead Corporation Tramways number 69 is pictured outside the tramway museum at Birkenhead on the 12th January. The museum is open most weekends throughout the year and is well worth a visit. The tram runs from the museum to Woodside Ferry, near Hamilton Square station. Class 47

Below: Under a threatening sky Class 175003 approaches Shrewsbury with a service to Cardiff on the 14th January. Richard Hargreaves





Above: Cotswold Rail has applied Advenza Freight logo's on to 47 237. The loco is seen here at Stockton-on-Tees on the 30th January, having brought some scrap locos to Thompsons Yard. James Stoker

Below: West Coast Railways took delivery of some stored Class 37's from Healey Mills on the 17th January. The convoy is seen at Preston with 47245, 37717, 37706, 37685 and 57601 waiting the road. Ian Furness



Tonbridge Station and Tonbridge West Yard



Tonbridge station is about a 40 minute journey from London, on either a 465 Networker or a 375 Electrostar.

As you approach Tonbridge you will see the West Yard before the station. It is about a 10 min walk from the station, turning left out the main station is the quickest route, you will find the yard on the outskirts of a housing estate.

The most common resident of the yard are the Class 73 electro-diesel locomotives.



In these shots we have 73204 and some GLV de-icing units far right centre is 73212 & 73213. 73207 and RT rail 73107 left, 66722 73205 73209 on the far side. There is a footbridge above the yard which offers an excellent view.

Right: Tonbridge yard often gets other visitors for example above we have two network rail MPV.



Left: Ready to depart GBRF 73204 Janice is being used as a power source for the GLV's on a Test run to Ashford

Middle: A frequent sight at Tonbridge at the moment is 73s with GLV's. Here we see 73204 wedged in between three GLV's on a test run to Dover Priory the ED was used as a source of power for the GLV.

Bottom: Hoo Junction, freight yard is not far away from Tonbridge so you can quite often see Engineers passing through Tonbridge station, Both EWS and GBRF run Engineers trains from Hoo Jn. All: [James P](#)





Above: The view of the yard from Tonbridge station, 73212 & 213 clagging away as they move around the yard, after the GLV test train departed 73212 and 73213 were named Shiney and PMT after management of GBRF. [James P](#)

New ownership for 73107 Spitfire



Fragonset sold 73107 to a Small company who specialise in class 08 shunters called RT rail, they contracted St Leonards TMD to refurbish the loco.

After Several test runs 73107 now in a new livery entered service with GBRF 73204, since then it has worked several trains including (pictured below) a loco move to Eastleigh for work at Portsmouth & Southsea station.





Campbell Road, Eastleigh

Campbell Road, just south of Eastleigh station, is a good location for photographs for mainline workings, also being the main road to Eastleigh Works means while you are there you can have a look in the works.

The View north looks upon the Station itself, Eastleigh often gets steam charters to Weymouth or Southampton, so again Campbell Road bridge produces some interesting photographs.

Below: 158889 on a Romsey to Salisbury service passes under the bridge and (bottom) 66125 on a liner towards Southampton.



Class 450 Desiro's now used on Southampton/Poole Stoppers

Since December when the new timetable started, South West Trains Class 450's can now be seen on the Waterloo - Poole Stopping services. A long way from the Suburbs of London



National Express East Anglia.....



Contrary to popular understanding, it appears that the first Class 317 unit being placed in to the new National Express livery will not be 317649, 317650 or 317651 which have been the last remaining units to carry WAGN outer suburban livery.

The unit currently being put in to new livery could be seen recently should you have passed Ilford E.M.U depot on the Great Eastern mainline, and is definitely either a class 317/5 or a class 317/8.

What does this suggest about the future of the last survivors in WAGN livery? Will they last yet another length of time with no signs of a change in livery?

It is suspected that due to the likeness of the new National Express livery and the WAGN livery depicted, they aren't candidates which need to be changed as quickly as possible, unlike everything else in the striking 'one' livery!

London Midland Review.....

I am writing this having just unsuccessfully finished searching for a document which allows London Midland to just run the trains whenever and however they feel on the day at the time.

Seems odd... well as a fairly regular traveller on most of the London area of the franchise, I must express my disappointment at the attitudes held (or seemingly held) by London Midland.

The staff seem to have either been trained to be far ruder or just aren't keen on London Midland themselves. I have heard from various other people that the staff are rude, so it isn't just my opinion making me think the staff are rude. There also seems to be no recognition of a timetable. When London Midland published these fancy new little professional looking timetables, for some reason separating the Bedford and St Albans Abbey lines from the main document unlike before, my opinion was high.

Now it seems as though their copy of particularly the St Albans Abbey line service has completely disappeared. I may have mentioned before about my disappointment when a mid-morning train failed to turn up.

Unfortunately this sort of occurrence appears to have become regular on the line.

They do need to sort themselves out!



Class 450/5 fails to impress.....



Unfortunately South West Trains' new class 450/5 units fail to impress me.

For a start, it really doesn't seem much has been done. The aim of replacing First Class with Standard Class is has been achieved. It would have made more sense to leave it though. What's the problem with two routes or so having declassified First Class? I don't see much of a problem, just results in a problem ... being an extra sub-fleet to plan for.

The removal of a few more seats has also happened, but this really isn't going to be greatly effective.

The fact they are in Suburban Blue livery still shows how cheap and rushed the overall scheme is in general.

Advice would be stick with the "normal" arrangement until the money is around to do it more completely including colour scheme, or replace the entire class 455 fleet and with extra trains to make it slightly better.

Crime on the Line, Don't do it.....

If you have ever witnessed a crime and not reported it, don't be proud.

I have always had a major hate for graffiti and vandalism. One of the most aggravating things being all the you tube videos these mindless fools seem to enjoy uploading.

Graffiti is always particularly unwelcoming when it's actually inside the train, but just a train coming in with graffiti all over it gives a bad impression of the company.

Particularly on some companies it is more apparent than others, which sometimes is due to no fault of their own, just the operating area.

Interestingly, vandals and graffiti "artists" seem to be those who are annoyed most when their train is cancelled due to vandalism!

One recent experience of mine is being on a train which is full up with a group of 4 what may as well have been 10 year olds pointing out to each other their marks on the walls as the train passed.



NEW TICKET GATES FOR MANCHESTER OXFORD ROAD

Northern Rail will install new automatic ticket gates at Manchester Oxford Road station over the next few weeks.

The six new ticket gates will help reduce congestion at peak times, improving customers' journeys through the station. The gates will also help reduce the number of people travelling without a ticket, estimated to cost the rail industry £210 million every year.

Work is underway to install the ticket gates near to the booking office. The ticket gates will be operational from early March.

Posters and leaflets explaining how the ticket gates work are available at Manchester Oxford Road station.

Jamie Ross, Area Director West, Northern Rail said: "These new ticket gates are simple to use and I'm sure customers will soon start to see the benefits with reduced congestion during peak hours. They are also proven to reduce anti-social behaviour helping to maintain a more secure environment. The gates won't be replacing people though and our station team will continue to be on hand to advise and assist customers."

ARRIVA TRAINS WALES CUSTOMER SATISFACTION CONTINUES TO INCREASE

Overall customer satisfaction for Arriva Trains Wales services has gone up year on year according to the latest Passenger Focus National Passenger Survey. With customer satisfaction at 85% Arriva Trains Wales ranks two per cent above the national average satisfaction rating for the regional train operating companies.

Customer satisfaction was improved in all but one of the 19 categories. ATW also improved in more than half the station related categories.

Punctuality and reliability attained the biggest increases but there were also significant improvements on cleanliness and upkeep and repair of trains.

Arriva Trains Wales customer services director, Ian Bullock said "The national passenger surveys, together with our own regular feedback sessions with our customers, are valuable tools. They give us with the opportunity to look at issues of concern and seek ways to improve and enhance our service.

"Throughout last year we continued to focus on punctuality as well as improving the ATW fleet through refurbishment, deep cleans and repairs.

"While we are delighted with the results of the current survey, we have noted that there are still areas of concern for customers, particularly on stations. We will strive to improve our services still further and continue to work with Network Rail to deliver investment to our stations."

Consider your fellow passengers

The Mayor of London, Ken Livingstone, has launched a campaign to encourage people to be more considerate to one another when using public transport in London.

"We can take responsibility for our actions", David Brown, Transport for London's Managing Director of Surface Transport

The campaign launched with a specially commissioned short film by Oscar-nominated British director Mike Figgis, which will be shown at cinemas across the Capital.

The campaign will also involve posters on buses and at Tube stations throughout London encouraging people to be considerate to their fellow passengers, summed up as 'A little thought from each of us. A big difference for everyone'. The posters will feature five characters making specific pledges ranging from 'I will offer my seat' and 'I will not play my music out loud' to 'I will try to remember what it is like to be 14 again'.

The cinema film, set on a London bus, shows the effects that behaviour like playing music out loud, shouting on a mobile phone or eating a take-away lunch can have on other people's journeys.

Half a million seats to London for £17 or less!

East Midlands Trains has released half a million seats for travel to London priced at just £17 or less from selected stations including Sheffield, Derby, Nottingham and Leicester. The seats are available for travel up to the middle of April.

David Horne, Commercial Director for East Midlands Trains said: "We have a great range of value for money fares but there is a perception that these tickets are few and far between. We have genuinely released 500,000 seats to London with a maximum price of just £17. We wanted to make a specific number of seats available, so people know that by booking early and being flexible, they are likely to get a fantastic value for money ticket with us.

"I'd urge people who haven't travelled with us before to take advantage of this great offer to visit London, or perhaps even make an onward connection with Eurostar!"

New Managing Director for c2c

c2c, the country's most punctual railway, welcomes Julian Drury as new Managing Director leading a new management team for parent company National Express.

Julian has extensive railway industry experience starting his career 27 years ago with British Rail in Liverpool as a Graduate Management Trainee and since working in various railway roles predominantly in operations, commercial, general and business management.

Julian has been a key figure within National Express for the last seven years as Route Director of both Silverlink County and West Anglia, including Stansted Express but more recently as Bid Director for the East Midlands bid and project manager on the UK division integration of buses, coaches and trains.

As Managing Director for c2c, Julian is now tasked with looking after National Express' most punctual train operating company which has also recently achieved an enviable third place in the National Passenger Survey.

Commenting on his new position Julian says, "It's an exciting prospect when taking over a company operating as successfully as c2c and I'm confident that we can build on this success to improve our business still further.

This is a time of great opportunity for c2c because of the levels of growth we are experiencing along the Thames Gateway, the continued development of London Docklands and preparation for the Olympic Games in 2012.

As a National Express company we are committed to making travel simpler for our customers and I'm really looking forward to the exciting opportunities we have to remove the obstacles that over-complicate current journeys. I'm totally committed to the idea of multi modal travel and how, at c2c we are already leading the way in making it easier to hop from train to tube and bus and other national rail services. We will be focusing all our efforts over the coming months on making travel a little simpler for all our customers."

Julian heads an experienced senior management team at c2c consisting of Kevin Frazer; Head of Operations, Steve Rees; Director of Engineering, Bob Houghton; Director of Business Development, Alan Bray; Head of Sales and Marketing Amarjit Kang; Finance Director, Katy Newman; HR Manager, Sheila Julian; Property Manager and David Evans; Head of Safety.

National Express adds extra Friday train to busy East Coast route

TRAIN operator National Express East Coast has added an extra Friday evening train service to its East Coast route linking London with Yorkshire and the North East.

The additional train leaves London King's Cross at 7.27 pm, calling at York (9.12 pm), Darlington (9.53 pm) and Durham (10.12 pm) before arriving in Newcastle at 10.30 pm.

National Express East Coast managing director David Franks said: "We're delighted to be able to provide this additional Friday evening train service, which will help to create more space on the preceding 7pm northbound train from London.

"At National Express we plan to attract many more passengers to the East Coast Main Line, with extra services reaching out to new destinations, including a brand new direct service to Lincoln from 2010."

The new Friday evening train from London to Newcastle brings the total number of weekday services operated by National Express East Coast to 137. It adds a minimum of 530 additional seats to the route.

National Express East Coast began operating trains on the East Coast Main Line on 9 December 2007, with an explicit promise to passengers to "make travel simpler".

From day one, it has provided free onboard WiFi internet access in Standard Class as well as First Class accommodation, while a joint improvement plan agreed with Network Rail is set to improve train timekeeping.

The new National Express East Coast website, www.nationalexpresseastcoast.com, is also attracting praise for its simplicity and clarity, including a five-star review from Web User magazine and a 'site of the week' accolade from New Media Age magazine

REFURBISHMENT OF CLASS 170 TURBOSTAR TRAINS BEGIN

CrossCountry has begun the refurbishment of its 29 Class 170 two and three-car Turbostar trains with entry into service on Wednesday 30 January of the first two-car set in the company's striking and distinctive new livery.

The warm black front ends, red doors and bold logo branding will make the trains easily recognisable to customers at stations on the routes between Cardiff and Nottingham and Birmingham New Street and Stansted Airport. Exterior repainting, due as part of scheduled overhaul, is being carried out at the EWS Toton Depot, near Nottingham and Marcroft Depot, Stoke-on-Trent, and will be completed by December this year.

Interior refurbishment to provide bright and fresh accommodation with more seats and luggage space will begin in April at Transys Projects Ltd's depot in Clacton-on-Sea, Essex. Seats will be retrimmed, new carpets fitted and at-seat power points installed in the two-plus-one seating of the First Class accommodation on every train.

To avoid train shortages while they are being refurbished the work is being phased to coincide with scheduled maintenance, so some coaches will be in service temporarily with reworked exteriors or interiors only until the programme is completed.

CrossCountry Managing Director Andy Cooper said: "Our Class 170 trains, which serve some of our busiest routes through Birmingham, are being refurbished to a standard of the highest quality. They will make a significant contribution to our commitment to provide up to 35 percent more seating and additional luggage space across our network."

DEAL SIGNED TO OVERHAUL HIGH SPEED TRAINS

The multi-million pound contract to refurbish ten High Speed Train (HST) power cars for use on CrossCountry services has been awarded to Brush Traction, which will carry out the work at its workshops in Loughborough, Leicestershire. The power cars, five each of which are leased from Angel Trains and Porterbrook, will receive a complete overhaul and be repainted into the striking CrossCountry livery before being introduced into service. They will be fitted with new MTU-built engines to increase reliability, improve fuel efficiency and produce lower emissions.

CrossCountry Managing Director Andy Cooper said: "We're really excited that work is starting on the overhaul of these trains. This is a major step towards meeting our commitment to provide 35% extra seats and increased luggage space on CrossCountry services."

Commenting on the work, Brush Traction Managing Director John Bidewell said: "We are delighted to be working with CrossCountry on this project to improve services and help safeguard the environment."

The work is scheduled to be completed in time for the December 2008 timetable change and the HSTs will be introduced on the Edinburgh to Plymouth route to provide extra capacity along the busy corridor through Leeds.

A contract will be let shortly for the overhaul and refurbishment of the passenger carriages for the five trains. Each will run in service with two power cars and eight carriages.

News in brief

VANDALS ATTEMPT TO DERAIL TRAIN IN PONTEFRACT

British Transport Police is appealing for any information after a large pile of wood was placed on the railway line at Pontefract East junction in the Ferrybridge Road area of Monkhill, Pontefract at around 20.50hrs on Monday 28 January. The 20.04 Leeds to Knottingley Northern rail service passing through the area struck the pile of wood. Luckily no one was injured and no damage caused to the train or line.

Sergeant Mark Burgess of British Transport Police "This was a reckless act of vandalism I cannot emphasise strongly enough the dangers associated with this type of crime. It's vital that we find those involved in this incident in order to point out the possible catastrophic consequences of these actions. Luckily no-one was injured.

I would urge anyone who was in or around that area on Monday evening to contact BTP if they saw the anything suspicious or have any information that may help us with our inquiries on Freephone 0800 405040 quoting incident number 615 28/10/2007, all calls will be dealt with in strict confidence".

NETWORK RAIL SWOOPS TO BRING SPECIALISTS IN-HOUSE

Key employees of Elec-Track Installations Ltd (ETI) have been invited by Network Rail to join the infrastructure owner. Around 50 employees of the Kent-based firm – which is in administration – are specialist supervisors for the installation of overhead electrical equipment for the railway.

The talks follow the recent announcement by Network Rail that it was seeking to bring more specialist engineering resource in-house to boost its ability to carry out this specialist area of work rather than rely on agency personnel.

Super off-peak fares - our cheapest rates at the quietest times of day

Chiltern's bargain Super Off-Peak fare is available for a number of longer distance journeys on Chiltern Railways. It is the cheapest ticket for travel between the West Midlands and London, available at the quietest times of day. It's a turn up and go ticket - so no need to book in advance!

It is valid on trains scheduled to arrive into London Marylebone after 1345hrs Mondays to Saturdays and leaving London Marylebone after 1100hrs Mondays to Saturdays (except between 1559-1959hrs Mondays to Fridays). There are no time restrictions on Sundays. The return journey can be made the same day or within a month

Macclesfield scoops Best Station award

Macclesfield railway station, operated by Virgin Trains, has been named as the Best Staffed Station in Cheshire, as part of the country-wide Cheshire Best Kept Station competition.

The award was presented to Station Manager Karen Grimshaw by BBC journalist Felicity Goodey at a special awards ceremony on 22 January.

John Hulme, organiser of the competition said: "We make at least three visits to each station, two of which are unannounced. Karen Grimshaw and her team at Macclesfield should be proud of this achievement. The level of service of the staff was outstanding and looking around the station, it obvious the staff care for the station as though it is their own home. The judges were unanimous in declaring Macclesfield as Cheshire's Best Staffed Station". Virgin Trains' Station Manager Karen Grimshaw said: "The award recognises that professionalism, commitment and pride in the station shown by all of my station team. What the judges saw was the same top class service that we give to all of our customers. This is the second year running that Virgin Trains has scooped the Best Staffed Station Award. Last year it was Stockport station that took the accolade.

The Competition was re-launched five years ago by Mr. Hulme, This year's awards were sponsored by Cheshire's Year of the Gardens which has brought much focus to the Competition.

Deutsche Bahn announces acquisition of Laing Rail

The German rail operator Deutsche Bahn AG (DB) is pleased to announce the acquisition of Laing Rail, owners of Chiltern Railways and joint owners of London Overground Rail Operations Ltd and Wrexham, Shropshire and Marylebone Railway Ltd. This transaction remains subject to approval from the Department for Transport, Transport for London and the Office of Rail Regulation.

Chiltern Railways will become part of DB Regio AG, the division of Deutsche Bahn responsible for operating regional and local services. This announcement ends months of speculation and marks Deutsche Bahn's entry into the competitive UK passenger rail market.

As the current holders of the National Rail Awards "Passenger Operator of the Year" award, Chiltern Railways is regarded as one of the most successful and customer orientated train operators in the UK. DB has confirmed that the trusted Chiltern Railways identity and name will remain unchanged and that Adrian Shooter and his management team will remain in control of the company.

Widely respected for its reliability and safety, Deutsche Bahn AG is Europe's largest passenger operator carrying some 5.1 million passengers daily (2006). DB has a well deserved reputation for providing high quality, integrated transport services.

London Overground Rail Operations Ltd is a 50/50 joint venture between Laing Rail and The MTR Corporation of Hong Kong. Launched in November 2007 it runs services on lines previously serviced by Silverlink Metro and from 2010 it will run the refurbished and extended East London Line which will be renamed the East London Railway.

With services due to start in spring 2008, Wrexham, Shropshire and Marylebone Railway Ltd is the UK's newest long distance rail operator. It will run regular services from Wrexham and Shropshire to London Marylebone providing North Wales and Shropshire with a much needed direct link to the Capital.

Dr Karl-Friedrich Rausch, Member of the DB Management Board and Chairman of the Passenger Transport Division said: "We will now be operating large-scale passenger transport outside of Germany. It will allow us to substantially strengthen our position in the European market along with providing the basis for further growth."

His comments were echoed by Ulrich Homburg, Chairman of the Management Board of DB Regio, operators of local and regional services in Germany, who said:

"This acquisition gives us great scope for further growth in the UK rail market. We intend to enter into a long-term commitment in the United Kingdom and make continuous investments in the quality of our services."

Adrian Shooter, Chairman of Chiltern Railways said:

"I am looking forward to working with DB to share knowledge and best practice so that both companies can continue to offer better services to our passengers."

SOUTHERN CELEBRATES OVER 100 SECURE STATIONS

Epsom has become the 100th Southern station to be accredited with the Department for Transport Secure Station accreditation.

To celebrate this landmark, an event was held at Epsom station to mark the achievement of 100 secure stations across the Southern network.

The Mayor of Epsom and Ewell, Councillor Jean Steer, Shadow Secretary for Work and Pensions, Chris Grayling MP, and British Transport Police Assistant Chief Constable, Steve Thomas were guests of honour at the event. representatives from the Department for Transport, London TravelWatch Chairman, Brian Cooke and Southern's Crime Task Force were also among those present.

Other Southern stations that have been accredited within the Epsom and Ewell Borough boundary are Ewell East and Cheam. Southern now has 102 of its stations accredited to the scheme, and is currently working towards accreditation at five further stations. It is expected that these stations will be accredited by April 2008.

The Secure Station scheme is directed by the Department for Transport and the British Transport Police (BTP). In order to achieve accreditation, a station must satisfy all of the following criteria:

- The design of the station must conform to standards judged by the local BTP Crime Reduction Officer to prevent and reduce crime and improve passenger perceptions;
- The management of the station must be able to take steps to prevent crimes, respond to incidents, and communicate effectively with passengers;
- Crime statistics for the station over the twelve months prior to the inspection must show that crime is being managed; and
- A survey of users must show that, on the whole, passengers feel secure when using the station.



PLEASE LOOK AFTER THIS BEAR

It was a whole half century ago that Paddington Bear, in his trademark duffle coat arrived from Darkest Peru and was found at Paddington Station in London.

Fifty years of marmalade sandwiches later, he still remains one of Britain's favourite bears!

To celebrate this very special 50th birthday, BBC Radio 4 and Network Rail are placing 50 Paddington bears in prominent places in train stations around the UK wearing the label 'Please Look After this Bear'. The bears will be in place and ready to be found by a prospective owner from 9.30am on Tuesday 22nd January.

In exchange for taking the Paddington bears home, the finders will be asked to call BBC Radio 4 and leave a special birthday message about the well loved bear.

On Saturday 1st March in a special one off programme on BBC Radio 4, children's author Michael Morpurgo will talk to the finders, hearing how and where they found the bears, their favourite Paddington memories and what Paddington means to them. Interwoven with these stories, we'll hear from Paddington's creator Michael Bond about how he came to write A Bear Called Paddington in 1958 and why he thinks the character has stood the test of time.

We'll also hear archive from the unlikely recipient of the first Paddington Bear soft toy – Top Gear presenter Jeremy Clarkson - whose mother, Shirley, made one for him at Christmas and then went on to run the only factory in the world licensed to produce them.



More delays for Grand Central

In an open letter, Tom Clift, Managing Director for Grand Central writes,

We were hoping to introduce our full timetable of services this month (January), but unfortunately this will not now be possible because of further delays in the delivery or commissioning of vehicles from the organisations undertaking their refurbishment.

Frustratingly for all of us, these delays mean that we cannot at this stage accurately predict when we will have enough reliable rolling stock to introduce the full timetable.

Whilst we currently have two train sets in working condition, we still have no back-up vehicles delivered, or available, should anything go wrong, and we cannot entertain introducing further services until that position improves.

We have been looking at the possibility of hiring-in, on a short term basis, other trains capable of the required top speed of 125mph, though that is not an easy task.

Our contingency timetable (shaded yellow in our publicity) will therefore continue until we get some more vehicles in service.

On a more positive note we would like to thank all those of you who have taken the time to contact us since we launched our services last month. We have had many, many messages of an encouraging and supportive nature about our trains, our staff and our excellent value for money.

As with any start up there have been initial problems, for which we apologise, but the overall message we are getting from passengers is most definitely positive.

Thank you for travelling with us. We will do our best to keep you informed of developments.

Heritage repaint for Island Line trains

The Island Line's trains are celebrating their seventieth birthday with a new paint job. The six units are being decked out in the heritage colours of burgundy and cream, which they sported in their former life as London Tube trains.

HSBC Rail (UK) Ltd sold the rolling stock for just £1 to Stagecoach South Western Trains Ltd - which operates a 10-year Stagecoach franchise made up of the Island Line and South West Trains. At the time the rolling stock leasing company also promised the funding for the repaint, which cost £80,000.

On Friday January 18, unit 004 was the first of the great vintage trains undergoing the year-long programme to go back into passenger service.

Stewart Palmer, our Managing Director said: "These units have done a sterling service of ferrying passengers to their destinations for decades – in fact they celebrate their 70th anniversary this year – and I think you'll agree with me that they don't look bad for septuagenarians."

Thank you to everyone who has made this possible – HSBC Rail (UK) which funded the programme, Specialist Compliant Coatings which carried out the repaint and our own Island Line engineering team which worked hard to get the bodywork ready for the repainting."

Representatives from the Isle of Wight Community Rail Partnership, which encourages greater use of the eight-and-a-half-mile railway, also attended.

The Class 483 rolling stock, which originally entered service with London Underground in 1938, comprises 2-car electric units which run 68 services a day between Ryde Pier and Shanklin with each unit capable of covering up to 70,000 miles a year.

megatrain.com partnerships with laterooms.com

Stagecoach Group, has signed a website partnership deal at megatrain.com with late-availability hotel room specialist, LateRooms.com, to give customers using its budget coach and rail services direct access to discount accommodation.

When booking low-cost travel through the megabus.com and megatrain.com websites in the UK, you can search and book hotel rooms direct from the websites. The partnership will give you access to over 6,500 hotels with reductions of up to 70% off standard prices.

megabus.com and megatrain.com offer 500 daily departures to more than 50 locations across the UK from just £1 (plus 50p booking fee) and LateRooms' technology enables true last-minute booking for hotel rooms in destinations covered by the travel websites. South West Trains' passengers can travel to 13 different destinations using the megatrain.com service including Southampton, Portsmouth, Bournemouth, Salisbury and Bristol.

Duncan Barraclough, Partnerships Manager, LateRooms.com, said: "Customers want the best deal for their travel, so adding the option of booking best value accommodation on the same site provides a complete cost-effective travel package. To ensure the best booking experience, it's important that the savings customers make through booking with megabus.com and megatrain.com are not wiped out by extortionate hotel prices at their destination."

'ONE' RAILWAY INVESTS IN ADDITIONAL TICKET MACHINE AT NORWICH STATION

National Express Group's 'one' railway has invested a further £30k in providing an additional new automatic ticket machine at Norwich station, increasing the number of machines at the station to three.

The Scheidt Bachmann ticket machines offer a full range of tickets for cash, credit and debit card transactions and are conveniently situated at the station in the ticket office foyer area and on the concourse.

The ticket machines offer a quick and convenient alternative to purchasing tickets from the Travel Centre at the station, offering passengers greater choice and in helping to reduce queuing times in the busy Travel Centre.

Clive Morris, Business Director Rural for 'one' railway said: "The investment in three modern ticket machines at Norwich station complements our busy Travel Centre at the station helping to reduce queues and provide passengers with greater choice in purchasing tickets."



First GBRf and BBCJV announce record breaking new contract

First GBRf has been awarded a new contract by the Balfour Beatty Carillion Joint Venture (BBCJV) working on behalf of Transport for London (TfL) as part of the £10 billion Investment Programme to upgrade the rail network in and around London.

The contract, which will run from January to the end of October 2008 will see First GBRf working in partnership with BBCJV to transport construction materials to convert London Underground's East London Line between Whitechapel and New Cross into part of TfL's London Overground rail network. The line closed to passengers just before Christmas 2007 to enable preparations for the conversion to begin.

Phil Amos, Business Development Manager at First GBRf said: "We are delighted to have won this prestigious contract for the upgrade of part of London's rail network. In the solution package we presented to BBCJV, we were able to demonstrate First GBRf's key strengths of reliability and flexibility and offer a competitive package that was tailored to the specific requirements of the project. We are now looking forward to delivering the contract and establishing First GBRf's reputation further in this market."

With the East London Line having no direct link to Network Rail, all First GBRf locomotives and freight wagons have had to be delivered to site by road and craned on to the ELL infrastructure. First GBRf, renowned for providing flexible and innovative solutions for its customers were seen as the perfect partner for the project over the coming months.

Zip on board with Oyster

"Free photocards for over 11s - touching in with the card to become compulsory"

"Free travel is a vital investment in London's future" Ken Livingstone, Mayor of London

The Mayor of London, Ken Livingstone, has launched the Zip card, a free Oyster photocard that will have to be used by 11-18 year olds who qualify for free bus and tram travel in the Capital.

The new Zip card scheme means that from 1 June young people will have to touch in on buses and trams and show their photocards on request.

This will clarify the free travel privilege and make it easier to catch those few individuals who seek to abuse the scheme.

Zip will bring together the different young persons free travel schemes under one recognised branded card.

The Mayor of London, Ken Livingstone, said: "Free travel is a vital investment in London's future, making London accessible for thousands of families by improving young people's access to education, sport and leisure.

"Young people who want to benefit from free travel on buses and trams must make sure they have a Zip card, and they should also be aware that any youngster that abuses this privilege, for example by anti-social behaviour, will have their card taken away."

RAIL INDUSTRY APPEALS FOR CABLE THEFT INFORMATION

The hunt is on for cable thieves who disrupted hundreds of rail passengers by stealing cables from the railway at Ardsley, between Leeds and Wakefield. Around 50metres of cable was stolen around 6pm on the 29th January 2008, which disrupted services for around four hours while engineers worked to replace it. Network Rail, in partnership with the charity Crimestoppers, is already offering a reward of up to £1,000 to people who help to catch cable thieves in Wakefield. Dyan Crowther, Route Director for Network Rail, said: "The selfish and dangerous actions of these thieves have, once again, resulted in major disruption to passengers. We're also estimating it will have cost around £26,000. We are doing all we can to stop these thefts but we need the support of the community to be our eyes and ears on the ground.

"I would ask anyone who sees people acting suspiciously near the tracks to report it immediately - and anonymously - to Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111."

Detective Chief Inspector Danny Snee of British Transport Police added: "After the threat of terrorism, the theft of cable is one of BTP's biggest challenges. Those who steal cable are not just risking a prison sentence, they are risking their lives.

"BTP have dedicated cable squads that undertake regular operations including round the clock patrols targeted at hotspot crime areas in Wakefield. Those involved can expect us to use every means to target them. We are working hard to catch and prosecute culprits in an attempt to eradicate this problem."

Malcolm Brown, Area Director, Northern Rail said: "Cable theft is one of the single biggest cause of delay to our services at the moment resulting in disruption and inconvenience to thousands of customers. We welcome any information anyone can give to help catch the offenders and help eliminate this problem."

Andy Cooper, Managing Director for CrossCountry, said: "The disruption and delay to passengers caused by these criminal actions is unacceptable. Our staff remain vigilant and will do everything possible to assist the BTP in bringing to justice those responsible for vandalism and theft on Britain's rail network."

David Franks, Managing Director, National Express East Coast said: "We fully support Network Rail and Crimestoppers in their efforts to tackle cable thefts on the railway. Not only are the thieves risking their own lives, but a single incident like this can cause disruption for thousands of passengers along the East Coast Main Line

Virgin Trains is best train operator

Virgin Trains has been listed as the Best Train Operator in a survey by the Institute of Customer Service (ICS). Virgin Trains scored a rating of 73% putting it in fourth place within the Transport Sector. Top in the transport sector category was sister company Virgin Atlantic.

The Online survey of 6,000 people, carried out by the ICS asked people to score different aspects of customer service, before giving companies an overall rating out of 100. The survey focused on customer priorities such as complaint handling, professionalism, quality, delivery time; and competence and delivery of staff.

Hot on the heels of the ICS survey results is the announcement that Virgin Trains has jointly topped the Passenger Focus National Passenger Survey for long distance train operators, with an overall score of 86% satisfaction for its West Coast operation.

The National Passenger Survey also reveals 6% increase, to 59%, in the number of Virgin Trains customers who say their ticket offers value for money. Virgin Trains also tops the table in Frequency and Punctuality of trains; and also in providing customer information.

Completing a hat-trick Travel Weekly magazine has named Virgin Trains Best Rail Company. The award was voted for by Travel Agents and the travel trade.

Virgin Trains Chief Executive Officer Tony Collins said: "We are delighted with these scores, which come direct from our customers. They recognise the importance that Virgin Trains places on customer service. It is also encouraging that customers now appreciate the value for money they receive, as awareness of our book-ahead Value Advance ticket range increases. We are also pleased that a sister Virgin company tops the transport sector for customer service, but will do all we can to put Virgin Trains at the top of the table when the next Institute of Customer Service survey takes place."

Penny the Pendolino becomes 'One in a Million'

A Virgin Trains' Pendolino tilting train, designed, built and maintained by Alstom, has become the first of the 52-strong fleet to clock up a million miles.

Train No. 390022, named Penny the Pendolino, clocked up the magical million miles on Tuesday 8 January 2008, as it worked the 17:15 from London Euston to Glasgow.

The train clocked up its million miles just south of Bletchley in Buckinghamshire.

Passenger numbers on Virgin's West Coast routes have increased by 40% since the introduction of Pendolino trains in 2003. Almost 21 million passenger journeys are now made with Virgin Trains every year. In travelling one million miles, Penny the Pendolino has travelled the equivalent of two return trips to the moon; or over 1,230 return trips from Glasgow to London.

The popularity and intensive use of the Pendolino trains means that they will each clock up a million miles in around half the time trains took a decade ago. In providing a 24/7 maintenance regime for the Pendolino fleet, Alstom ensures that the trains can meet their demanding schedule every day.

The state-of-the-art 125mph Pendolino trains emit on average 76% less carbon dioxide per seat than domestic airlines and are also saving energy and reducing pollution as they return energy to the electrical feeder stations every time they brake. The 52 tilting trains, designed, built and maintained by Alstom, are fitted with electronic control systems that cause the traction motors to provide braking effort by generating electricity back into the supply system. The generated electricity which is put back into the supply system achieves an overall energy saving of 17 percent.

TRAIN OPERATOR WELCOMES ANNOUNCEMENT OF EXTRA CARRIAGES

First TransPennine Express has welcomed today's news from the Department for Transport.

Vernon Barker, managing director of First TransPennine Express, says: "We welcome today's announcement to introduce extra capacity to the rail network and we are working with the Department for Transport on the detail of the plan to introduce additional carriages to the First TransPennine Express network."

"Since February 2004, when our franchise began, passenger journeys on First TransPennine Express trains have increased from 13.5 million to nearly 20 million a year and extra capacity is badly-needed."

The company has recently introduced 51 three-car diesel trains at a cost of £250 million and has supplemented this fleet with an additional nine trains which have been refitted and refurbished.

Overall the First TransPennine Express train fleet has increased from 139 carriages in 2004 to 171 carriages in 2008, but more capacity is needed to meet current demand and forecast growth in passenger numbers.

BANK SLIP NEEDS LONG-TERM FIX

Around 100,000 tonnes of material will have to be removed from a bank in West Yorkshire which has caused disruption to rail services on the Hebden Bridge to Wakefield line.



Already 40 tonnes of trees and earth have slipped down the bank at Elland after the heavy rain recently. Specialists have been on site removing that material and some freight services have been able to run. Passenger services are still being diverted where possible and replaced with buses where no diversion is available. The situation is under constant review and services will be resumed when it is safe and practical to do so.

Engineers estimate it could cost around £4m to get a permanent fix and rail services are likely to have some disruption for several months.

Dyan Crowther, Route Director for Network Rail, said: "Although this site was not a problem for us during the floods last summer, engineers were already investigating what action was needed to stabilise the bank and a speed restriction had been placed on the lines to ensure safety."

"We have teams of specialists on site who will continue to work around the clock to implement a long-term solution. In the meantime safety remains our number one priority. While we have re-opened one of the lines to freight, further work is needed to ensure that it is safe to run lighter passenger services. We are doing all we can to get passengers to where they want to be and -

where possible - have put in diversionary routes. I apologise to passengers who have been disrupted and assure them that we are doing all we can to minimise the impact of extreme weather across the network."

The site is difficult to get to as it is a considerable distance from any access points, and down a steep bank (40-45 degrees) which is covered in vegetation. A layer of weathered mudstones, perhaps 4 or 5 metres deep, is moving towards the railway. The rate of movement is dependent on the presence and volume of water. If we have more heavy rainfall it may be necessary to fully re-close the line for safety reasons.



'ONE' RAILWAY OPENS NEW TICKET OFFICE AT ATTLEBOROUGH STATION AS NORWICH TO CAMBRIDGE LINE SUCCESS STORY CONTINUES

National Express Group's 'one' railway has opened a new ticket office at Attleborough station in Norfolk on the successful Norwich to Cambridge line.

The opening of the new office restores ticket office staffing at Attleborough for the first time in decades and reflects the continued success of the Norwich to Cambridge train services since the introduction of direct train services on the route in 2002. Passenger numbers have consistently grown since the service commenced and 700,000 passengers now use the route each year, with stations such as Attleborough proving increasingly popular for commuting to Norwich and Cambridge.

The ticket office is open from 07.00 – 11.00am Mondays to Fridays and also for Norwich City FC home matches at Carrow Road.

This is the latest initiative by 'one' to restore ticket office services at previously unstaffed stations in response to growing passenger numbers. Part-time staff are already employed at Brundall (on the Norwich to Great Yarmouth / Lowestoft line), North Walsham (on the Norwich to Sheringham line) and at Wymondham (on the Norwich to Cambridge line).

Clive Morris, Business Director Rural for 'one' railway said: "The opening of the new ticket office at Attleborough station is another endorsement of our approach to invest in our rural lines network. As well as assisting the on-train conductors with ticket sales, the provision of a staff member helps to raise customer service standards at one of our increasingly popular stations.

We will look to identify other opportunities to restore staffing to previously unstaffed rural stations where we can."

RAILWAY CABLE THIEVES YOU'RE IN FOR A SHOCK



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Call anonymously with information about crime

Network Rail

1960s London buses have been brought out of a museum to cover for cancelled trains in Glasgow.

First ScotRail is so desperate for vehicles it's hired three of the classic double-deckers. The buses, which date from 1966, are usually at Beith Transport Museum in North Ayrshire. They have been drafted in to take rail passengers between Glasgow Central and the South Side during engineering work which has shut down of parts of the rail network.

The classic Routemaster buses were withdrawn from service in London more than two years ago after transport chiefs said they were unsuitable for disabled people and push chairs, and the rear platforms may be dangerous. But because First ScotRail was struggling for vehicles as rail replacements services, they've drafted in three of the buses from Beith, as well as a 30-year-old coach. Matt Henderson, 25, who was in town said: 'I thought I was seeing things. It looked like something from a museum and it is.' Neil Clifton, 33, from Pollokshields, said: 'People might say it's like stepping back in time. But it got me into the city centre in about 10-15 minutes, so that's all that matters!'

All three are owned by Glasgow Corporation Transport, a company which collects vehicles and houses them at Beith Transport Museum.

Laurence Hayward, fleet engineer at Glasgow Corporation Transport, said: 'First Group got in touch three weeks before Christmas and asked us if we could help out. We've had a really good response from passengers. 'Our buses are maintained to a high standard and must pass emissions tests like modern buses.'

One of the buses was used recently for a TV advert for chain store Next.





Above: A glorious sunset at Alexandria Station looking Towards Renton on the 11th January. [Jonathan McGurk](#)

Below: A time exposure of 78019 at the Great Central railway produces some interesting results. Taken at Leicester North station. [Andy](#)





The Great Central held a brilliant steam gala on the 26th and 27th Jan, entitled "A hazy shade of Oxford", when several star locos appeared. The Railtalk team went along to catch some of these locos in action and over the next couple of pages we are pleased to bring you a collection of shots from it.

Above: Glorious sunshine for the passing of LMS 48305 at Quorn with a freight service. [Richard Hargreaves](#)

Below: When I first saw this I thought it was a Black and White shot, but it is actually full colour, GWR Prairie 4141 waits at Quorn station. [Andy](#)





Above: GWR, designed by Charles Collett and completed in 1929, 4953 "Pitchford Hall" looks as good to day as ever. [Class47](#)
 Below: Yes we've had one shot of it already, but we couldn't resist another. Fairly new loco as it wasn't built until 1946!, but still looks and sounds great today, 4141 pulls into the station at Quorn, the station is very well preserved with many original features. [Andy](#)





Above: 30777 "Sir Lamiel" was probably something of a very rare visitor in steam days, seen here working the "Travelling Post Office" train on the Great Central. The use of High-Vis jackets does tend to spoil some of today's pictures but a good digital image software program could easily remove them. [Jon Jebb](#)
 Below: Fabulous night shot of 44422 on Loughborough Shed. Excellent lighting and correct exposure make all the difference. [Richard Hargreaves](#)





Above: Last one from the Great Central gala. One of the best features of the Great Central Railway is the use of its mineral wagons to create an authentic train. Another fine location on the line is here, at Rothley where 48305 is seen approaching. [Jon Jebb](#)

Below: D5580 (31162) stands at Sheringham (NNR) having worked her last round trip on the day of her Boiler Farewell Charter on Saturday 5th January 2008. With the steam valve being released on the pipe for atmospheric affect, this is a scene not to be seen for a good few years. [Lee Scott](#)





Above: The Llangollen Railway held a photo shoot at Llangollen station on the 19th January. DMU LO 262 recreates a night service to Ruabon. *Carl Grocott*
 Below: Another shot from the photo shoot is of Class 25 313 on a freight service. These locos were very popular in North Wales. *Carl Grocott*





January at the Severn Valley Railway saw the last runs from 48773, which is due an overhaul. It will, in due course re-appear, but such is the waiting list for steam loco overhauls at the valley, it may be some years before she runs again.

Above: Seen approaching Bridgenorth on the 12th January, 48773 hauls one of its last trains for a while. [Jon Jebb](#)

Below: Too good to refuse!, another shot of 48773 in Bridgenorth, with the sun shining on the telegraph wires, it's day almost over. [Richard Hargreaves](#)



CLASS 40 IS GCR GUEST DIESEL

D212 "Aureol" will move to Leicestershire line in March.

The Great Central is announcing another addition to its express engine line up for 2008 in the shape of Class 40 D212. The locomotive, owned by The Class 40 appeal group and resident at the Midland Railway Centre will move down the road to Loughborough in March.

"We're very please the engine and its owners are joining us for the season," said General Manager Robert Crew, "We're looking forward to seeing a 40 on the double track."

The engine, in green livery with small yellow warning panels should arrive (subject to completion of contract details) in time to star in the three day 1960s weekend (14th, 15th and 16th March) which has a mixed traction line up. It will also work during the April and September diesel galas.

"We're hatching plans for the loco to work at other times as well." concluded Robert, "With Tornado, Oliver Cromwell and a Class 40 there's a vague 'Eastern Region' flavour emerging, so we might look at an additional special weekend."

Of course, we'll also have three type 4's on the line together – which could prompt another 'off the cuff' event..."

WINTER GALA WOWS THE CROWD

Full trains, immaculate engines and a packed lineside were the hallmarks of the Great Central Winter Gala 2008. The Leicestershire based heritage line estimates it welcomed around 3,000 visitors.

Takings for the event came very close to the Winter Gala held at the same time of year in 2007.

This wasn't quite a record breaker for us," said General Manager Robert Crew, "but it came close. I'd like to thank everyone who turned out and supported us. Without an audience there would be no point doing it! We were fortunate with the weather which meant the busy show we put on was appreciated by photographers and passengers alike."

The event was a successful conclusion to the railway's financial year. New innovations like including the gala programme with a full price runabout ticket, a new location for the real ale bar and day lineside passes (which were accompanied with a 30 minute safety briefing) seem to have been successful and popular. "I'd like to publicly thank the owners of the 4F, No. 44422 and Dr John Kennedy who owns GWR Hall, 4953 Pitchford Hall for their assistance with the event, not to mention our resident loco groups. Everyone who worked on the event deserves to take the credit," said Robert.

GREAT CENTRAL MARKS 75th ANNIVERSARY OF FATAL RAILWAY ACCIDENT AT LOUGHBOROUGH

Seventy five years ago, in a railway accident whose cause remains a mystery, an express passenger train hurtled through Loughborough Central station and ploughed into a freight train which was shunting into a siding. A fireman who tried to leap to safety was killed. On the weekend of the 2nd February, the Great Central Railway is bringing together relatives of those directly involved to remember and pay tribute. The accident happened on Jan the 31st 1933 close to Empress Road bridge in Loughborough, which is now where the preserved heritage line has its engine sheds. "This was a tragic accident," said the modern day General Manager of the Great Central, Robert Crew "but one which has slipped not only from the minds of the nation, but locally as well. We are welcoming the relatives of the fireman who was killed and also the engine driver who heroically tried to slow down his train and prevent the accident from happening. They're going to tour the site at Loughborough, see where the accident happened and then take a ride along the Great Central to see it as it is today". The accident involved an express train from London to Bradford hauled by a Great Central class B2 locomotive no. 5423 "Sir Sam Fay", and a freight train working north to Nottinghamshire. As was common practice, slow running freight trains were 'set back' into sidings to clear the main line for faster express passenger trains. While this was carried out, signals behind the freight train should present other trains from approaching. It was never established why the Bradford express overran the signals. Driver, Tom Webster, realised there would be a crash as he came through Loughborough station. He could see the freight train shunting ahead of him and managed to slow his train down to around 30 miles and hour when it smashed into the freight train. The fireman on the express, 37 year old Francis Tarron from Sheffield leapt from the engine but was killed. Passengers on the express train were not injured, nor were the driver and fireman of the freight train. "What makes this accident so vivid today is the fact that all the structures survive."

The paint brushes have been out at the Severn Valley this month, giving 73101 a new coat of Pullman livery. Looking superb it is seen here at Bewdley.





The East Lancashire Railway also held a steam gala in January, featuring some of the giants that are in steam today. Above 4771 Green Arrow and 4936 Kinlet Hall rest in Bury Yard after a hard days work on the 25th January. [Ian Furness](#)
Below: 6201 Princess Elizabeth and 71000 Duke of Gloucester stand in Bury station on the 26th January. [Ian Furness](#)





Above: The unmistakable outlines of the “Goggles” Czech Republic’s finest diesel loco?. 754 066 has just arrived at Brno on a chilly winters morning.

Below: Several of the “Goggles” have now passed into private ownership and are starting to appear on various freight workings all over the Czech Republic, these locos are also regular performers in Italy and Slovakia, 753 719 waits at Kolin with a train of petroleum tankers.





Some pictures this month from our good friend Peter Cheshire, who like David Mead has been taking photographs for a number of years, and has gathered quite a collection. We think that you will like what we have chosen, and if you want to see some more, keep watching, there's plenty to keep us going for a bit.

Above: The year is 1985 and 47703 stands at Glasgow Queen St. ready to work a push-pull service to Edinburgh, who would have thought that this loco would have survived into the next century. Now part of the Cotswold fleet it has recently been stored awaiting OTMR fitment.

Below: Another loco that still survives is 73001, seen here at Waterloo in 1983. Now preserved at the Dean Forest Railway. Both : [Peter Cheshire](#)





Above: Class 303085 is seen at Glasgow Central station in 1985 wearing the striking orange colours of Strathclyde Transport. Peter Cheshire

Below: On 5th April 1970, the Class 33's were still known as Crompton Type 3's as the classification had not been invented - D6532 is seen on a diversion train (engineering works) between Romsey and Eastleigh - then double-track - unlike the very much overgrown single track railway as today. The loco was hauling TC 402 and REP 3011 on the 09.56 Bournemouth-Waterloo. In those days, the Type 3's were plentiful and the full service could be maintained by simple push-pull and reversals at Romsey and Eastleigh which of course was non-electrified. Today, the location, Pound Lane is completely overgrown, the line is single and impossible to access. 1st May 1982 45 063 on 10.20 Nottingham-Glasgow Central at Sheriff Bridge, north of Settle.. David Mead





Above: An unusual occurrence took place on 22nd July 1978, when a railtour was allowed to enter Marchwood Military Port's rail system. Here, double diesel electric multiple units - Nos 1313 and 1306 had trundled down the Fawley Branch before being allowed inside the military layout. I had permission from the MOD and was security screened to allow me to photograph the train inside the compound. [David Mead](#)

Below: The Class 33's were used on all varieties of traffic and one of their duties was to cover on the Fawley Refinery tank trains. Here 33 016 is seen on 11 March 1977 at Marchwood with the 09.48 Fawley - Tiverton Junction loaded short wheelbase tanker train. There was an inland storage depot at Tiverton, providing some fuel supplies for Devon and Somerset. [David Mead](#)



*A very filthy 31408 waits at the unmistakable Blackpool North on the 6th April 1994, working a "club" train to Manchester. These locos and stock, part of Regional Railways North West, were liked by both passengers and enthusiasts.
Richard Hargreaves*

