

Railtalk Magazine

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Spitfire meets Napier

Front cover

One of the highlights of February was seeing Class 55 022 out on the East Coast main line once again.

This shot is as it approaches Edinburgh on the 23rd Feb with the Deltic Pioneer railtour.
Jonathan McGurk



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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 last Sunday of each month.

More information can be found by visiting Railtalk forums.

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From The Editor

Welcome to issue 18 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.

February has really kicked the year off for the charter scene, with January having been a slow month for charters. We have seen a Deltic, a Western and many Class 47's, Class 37's and steam tours this month. We think the biggest news, and Charter, this month was Spitfire's Deltic Pioneer, from Liverpool to Edinbrough. Things nearly went wrong at the first hurdle though when the ECS for the tour arrived into Liverpool over 40 minutes late. A superb run on the outward leg saw the Deltic claw much of the loss back. However, the tour did get delayed on the return, this time by late running services ahead of it from Newcastle. After all their problems with the Class 87 farewell tour we hope this is the start of a bright future for Spitfire and they can continue to run great tours, for years to come.

Apart from the tours, this month we have seen many preserved railway crank into action and run their spring steam and diesel galas. Although technically I should be talking about next month, the 1st and 2nd of March saw the Nene Valley railway diesel gala. The main loco at the event was the First Capital Connect class 03, which sadly suffered engine failure on the Saturday, and therefore could not run on Sunday. An excellent day out though and the gala was very well attended.

EWS, or should I say DB Schenker had a very interesting way of launching their new brand in the UK. Class 60, 60 074, emerged from Toton in a shroud of secrecy, rumours abound about a refurbishment and re-engining program and ran under cover of darkness to the NRM at York. DB/ EWS didn't stop there though, as when it arrived at the NRM, it was placed under a large red sheet covering the whole loco and placed behind a metal fence. All this just to stop people seeing/taking pictures of the loco seemed a bit odd.

The EWS clearout has continued in February. One of the major loco's to go to scrap this month, and we have been surprised at how many Class 37/4's have been scrapped. Our own favourite scrapped this month was 37 429, stalwart for many years on the North Wales Coast.

This month saw the start of the route learning, for the Wrexham and Shropshire service working out of London Marybone to North Wales, and Shropshire. The company plans to start running late on this year. The 13 new train drivers and train managers have been chosen and they are currently, working on the necessary training needed.

Andy Patten

Many Thanks this issue go to:
Richard Hargreaves, Jon Jebb, Ian Furness, Carl Grocott, David Dawson, Jonathan McGurk, Dave Harris, Derek Elston, Jim, Peter Cheshire, David Mead, Tom Loader and Mark Widdop.



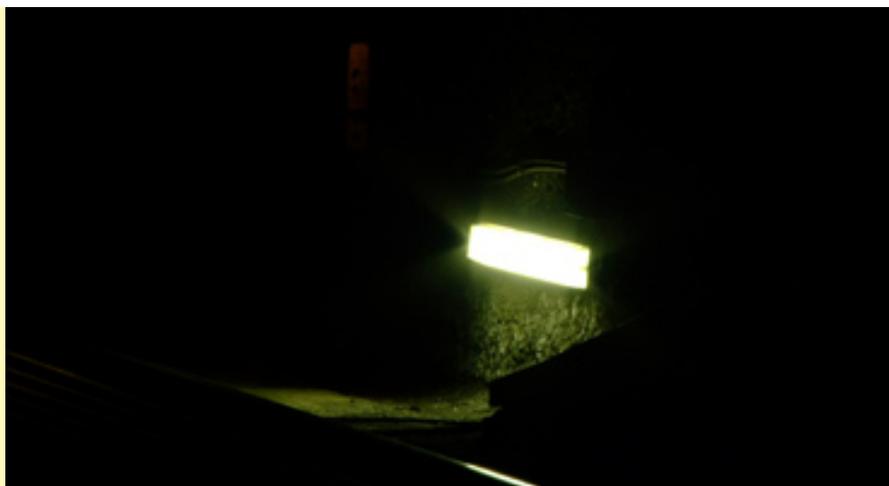
From Jonathan McGurk:

"A photograph of one of few lights turned on inside the railway tunnel that leads you to Glasgow Queen Street Low Level station from Charing Cross station.

The light is very powerful and it lights up the tunnel a little. I have never come across a time out of the three years I have been travelling the railway system that I have been passed through this tunnel and seen all of the lights illuminated inside the tunnel.

Though speaking to one of my train driver friends from Airdrie he was doing route learning and he has seen the tunnel lit up and he said it aint a pretty sight. All kinds of animals and other things are in the tunnel he said! "

Oooh err!!!!



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Charter Scene

This months round up of the British Charter scene

Welcome to the March edition of Charter Scene, from Railtalk Magazine.

February has seen some excellent tours, setting the scene for what appears to be a very busy year in the charter market. The main two tours this month have been D1015 visiting Holyhead and 55 022 visiting Edinburgh, but as you will see over the next few pages, there was much much more.

So keep the shots coming and we'll try to keep you as up to date as we can.



Above: Pathfinder's Buffer Puffer 6 started the month with a jaunt round London, this is 37 401 on the 2nd Feb . **Tom Loader**

Below: Fabulous shot of 71000 'Duke of Gloucester' at Arnside working the 'Cumbrian Mountain Express' Preston to Barrow to Carlisle on 9th February 2008 **Ian Furness**





What a load of excellent shots we got for the Wizzo visiting Holyhead, sorry that we can't show them all, but we hope that you will like what we have chosen.

Left: D1015 at Bangor on a sunny Saturday 16th Feb working the Irish Mail, from Ealing Broadway to Holyhead and return.

Richard Hargreaves

Right: D1015 worked 1Z15 "The Irish Mail" on the 16th February.

This is Rhyl, on the North Wales Coast, not known for sunshine even in summer, so the pleasant blue sky was a real bonus.

Richard Hargreaves

Below: The loco worked the tour throughout and put in an excellent performance. This is it arriving at Chester on the outward leg.

Dave Harris





Above: Last one for the Wizzo is a stunning shot from Abergele . As previously said, D1015 working 1Z15 Ealing Broadway - Holyhead on the 16th February.

Carl Grocott



Left: "The Cotton Mill Express", a series of charters with 76079 working from Manchester Victoria to Blackburn and return on the 9th February. Seen here at Sowerby Bridge, note Round 2 chalking on smokebox door

Derek Elston



Above: Another shot of "The Cotton Mill Express", series of charters with 76079 working from Manchester Victoria to Blackburn and return on the 9th February. This time the location is at Standege.

Derek Elston



Middle: 57 601 and 47 826 worked 1Z89 Manchester Piccadilly - Reading passing Penkridge on the 2nd Feb.

Carl Grocott

Below: Same train, seen here at Old Milverton, near Leamington Spa is the WCRC Charter with Cargo D stock and 57 601 still at the helm.

Mark Widdop





Above: "The Deltic Pioneer" railtour marked Spitfire Railtours long awaited entry into the charter market, taking 55 022 from Liverpool up to Edinburgh. Seen here arriving at the Scottish city on the 23rd Feb.

Jonathan McGurk

Below: The Pennine Limited worked from Hereford to Hellifield with 47804 and 47826 and with Steam 6201 working Hellified-Settle-Carlisle-Shap-Carnforth. 47 804 seen at Shrewsbury on the outward journey. **Carl Grocott**





Left: Rear of the Deltic Pioneer railtour was West Coast's 47 787, whose main purpose was to power the ECS moves in and out of Lime St. Still attached to the train, it had a run up to Edinburgh and back, "just in case" anything should happen to the Deltic.

Jonathan McGurk



Four from the rugby. In previous years, when Wales played at the Millennium Stadium in Cardiff, there would be additional trains to take the crowds into Cardiff, and this year it was solid Class 67 haulage. On Saturday the 9th Feb working trains were, in no particular order, 67024/67029, 67005/67006 and 67002/67028. all photographed by *David Dawson*





Top: Another main line Class 86 appeared in February with 86 259 "Les Ross" being certified. Its debut was on the 1st March when it worked 1Z86, seen here at Golbourne Junction on the WCML.

Dave Harris

Middle and Bottom: The DRS rake of stock received a rebranding as the Stobart Pulman and the regular Class 47's 802 and 712 both received names. Looking immaculate it is seen working The Settle & Carlisle Winter Wonderland London King's Cross - Carlisle.

Class47



Featured in our Charter Scene for its trip to Holyhead this month, but this photo is a worthy addition to the section. Looking splendid in the spring sunshine, D1015 waits at Holyhead with the return charter on the 23rd February. [Richard Hargreaves](#)



Above: A Class 185 is seen working the 1P22 Manchester Airport - Middlesbrough at Standege Tunnel, on Saturday 9th February. *Derek Elston*
Below: What started out as a trip working from Doncaster to Immingham and return on the 23rd February, ended in disaster for 37 411, when it derailed at Immingham. Nothing too serious, as it was back in action a few days later. This picture is on the outward leg passing through Doncaster station. *Jon Jebb*





Above: The new "Frenchgate" shopping centre at Doncaster gives an excellent view of the works (or what's left of it) and looking here you can see how diverse the repairs are, including HST power cars and trailers, underground stock, and Class 158/159 refurbishment. Combined with the current wagon repair contracts, it is easy to see that this is a very busy place. *Class47*
Below: With the National Express East Coast livery now applied to several power cars and coaches, the mix and match has begun!. 43110 in "old" livery leads a set of refurbished and reliveried vehicles.





Semi-Battery operated power car 43089 Hayabusa, is now a regular performer on Network Rail's NMT. Seen at Chesterfield on the 9th February. [Class47](#)



Above: The WBB Mineral wagons are perhaps one of the more photogenic wagons on the network today. The inclusion of a class 91 in this picture gives it an added interest. [Class47](#)

Below: A DRS loco, Class 66 409, not that rare, surely?. Well this is the 4Z61 Grangemouth - Daventry. WH Malcolm's inter-modal service for their Tesco contract at Winwick Jct. on February 3rd. Quite rare on a Sunday. [Dave Harris](#)





Left: With an unknown future is Class 37 079, seen at Barrow Hill in February. Once part of a preservation bid, it was found to have had its traction motor cables stolen and subsequently the buyer pulled out of the sale. Class47

Middle: Thought by many to be going for scrap was Class 37 057. Sounding exceptionally well considering its external condition, and seen running at Barrow Hill, it would seem that another one lives!.Class47

Bottom: We don't think that this one will be returning! Seen during a recent trip to C F Booth's and deviod of many parts is Loadhaul beast Class 37 513. Ian Furness





Above: Class 320 307 is seen approaching Dalreoch station passing through the farm fields working the 11.53 2E74 Balloch - Airdrie service on the 18th February. Jonathan McGurk

Below: Class 320 308 is seen crossing Dalreoch viaduct coming into stop at Dalreoch station from Carberry's Scrap Yard working the 11.38 2H21 Drungelloch - Helensburgh Central service. Could more scrap yards be filled with cars waiting to be destroyed in the future if the more members of the public travel by rail?? Jonathan McGurk





Above: Not all track is on the level!. As can be seen with this shot of a Cross Country Class 220 service on the single line at Old Milverton, near Leamington Spa on Saturday 2nd February. Mark Widdop

Below: Class 60 020 waits at Telford Central station with an engineers train on the 17th February. The work site was just out of shot behind the loco. Jon Jebb





Above: Starting to look very rough is this Class 66, which is advertising a partnership with Shanks. Come on Freightliner, get the paint pots out, not a good advert for your customers. [Andy](#)

Below: A very misty and foggy view from Dalmeny station looking towards North Queensferry and the Forth Rail Bridge, which can just about be seen in this shot. [Jonathan McGurk](#)





Above: Class 158 716 is seen in the old 'ScotRail' National Express livery, one of few units still left in the colours and awaiting to be repainted into the new First ScotRail 'Barbie' livery. Class 158 716 is seen calling at Dalmeny station while working the 12.18 2G27 Edinburgh Waverley - Cowdenbeath service on the 11th February.



Left: East Coast "Thunderbird" Class 67 026 is seen in the locomotive sidings at Edinburgh Waverley station awaiting its next working on the 11th February. Jonathan McGurk

Bottom: Still attracting large attention and deservedly so is the Grand Central HST's. About to implement their full service, we look forward to seeing more of these quality trains taking to the rails. Andy





Above: Advenza liveried Class 7237 working the 5Z60 Derby - Laira passes Elford on the 15th February. Carl Grocott

Below: HST 43 208 and 43 367 depart Edinburgh Waverley station working the 09.52 1E14 Aberdeen - London Kings Cross on 23rd February. Jonathan McGurk





*Above: The driver of 47 812 and 47 815 opens up "good and proper" whilst working the 0Z47 Driver Training run on the 15th February. David Dawson
Below: An unidentified First Great Western HST passes over the river near Trowbridge on the 9th February. Jim*





Above: Recently refurbished Class 508 211 stands in the sun at Paddock Wood, waiting to form the 11.01 to Strood on the 19th February Jim
Below: Class 60 059 passes the scenic location of Stokesay on the 13th February with a southbound steel working. Peter Cheshire





Above: The spread of Northern livery continues, Class 323 223 is the first of the class to be outshopped in February. Richard Hargreaves

Below: Could this be the future of EWS, Class 60 074 stands outside the NRM in York, with the logo DB SCHENKER on the cab, described as looking not unlike the old British Steel Blue, we wait and see how long it will last in this guise. Class47



Oozlum Bird 2 Raitour

On Saturday 9th Feb UK Raitours ran the Oozlum Bird 2 Raitour to Alresford on the Watercress line.



The tour ran from London Victoria via Wimbledon, Clapham Jn, Redhill, Guildford, Ash, and Alton.

The tour then made its way onto the Watercress Line where D6593, the lines preserved Class 33 was added to the back of the train.



Left:
The 73's clag away up the Watercress line

For the Return trip to London Waterloo, it ran via Alton, Ascot, Feltham, Willesden SW Sidings where 37422 was added to the rear of the train, and then on to Kensington Olympia and London Waterloo.



The Class 73s ran light loco to Hoo Jn, and worked a ballast train on the Sunday, note the Electric Blue-Bird Headboard. A very enjoyable tour and would certainly hope that GBRf run more railtours with the 73s in the future, it was worth every penny.





Since the official launch of the rebranded 'one' Railway, I took a day off, to go out on National Express.

The trains that I went on all had the new Julie Berry announcement system on them and it was clear and gave a very much needed professional feel to the train Environment, and both 360115 and 90003 and appropriate coaches were noted in operation.

90008 had National Express livery as well, and the buffet car was also in the striking new livery.

First impressions of the set up were generally very good.

My question now would be, do they intend on having a standard announcement voice for the whole franchise?

I know there is one woman at Liverpool Street, good old Digital Dorris at Stratford and Julie Berry on the trains, so will this remain?

It is interesting to see that most of the stations in the London area had the new "stripes" on, and all announcers included the name "National Express" where appropriate.

It will be interesting to see how quickly trains are put in to the new livery as of now, and whether the professional standards currently on display remain.

One member of staff I saw had retained their 'one' railway uniform, whilst all others wore the red tie and most even had keychains with "national express" in the infamous red and blue on them!

I may sound over impressed, especially with so short time in to the new regime.

However, I have experienced London Midland, and most of the above *still* isn't in practise on there, including uniform!

Well done National Express, keep up the good work!



West Coast Mainline ... problem

It is not a regular circumstance that the normal ticket holder can travel between Watford Junction and Euston on a Class 390 without being liable to goodness knows how much penalty fine.

However, yesterday when the wires were down and a freight train "offloaded" at Bletchley and it seemed only 6 or 7 Pendolinos were south of Hemel Hempstead where the blockage started, the days service comprised of a shuttle service calling at Watford Junction then Hemel Hempstead.

I was pleased to experience this comfort for once and speed. It was rather worrying when I got to the concourse at Watford and about 5 trains worth of customers came through the barriers all shouting down their phones "YEAH THEY HAVE CANCELLED ALL THE TRAINS", which wasn't strictly true!

The Southern service from Watford was one good thing to have under such circumstances, but this rarity of Class 390s on pretty much short outer suburban runs was not to be missed!

Because of the blockages, London Midland couldn't get a train out of Bletchley to run the Abbey Flyer, which severely annoyed me, but thanks to bus travel and friendly staff on the ticket desks at Watford Junction, I was able to avoid most possible disruption.

Although this does begin to make one question, the "agreement" between London Midland and London Overground with regards to "a Class 313 and staff being able to run the Abbey Line if there was no Class 321 available!

High Capacity Class 450 experience

My Hounslow service formed of a 4 car class 450/5 on Saturday was packed...

I sincerely hope that these class 450/5s can hold a significant amount more people than the normal class 450s, as either there was a mistake when the formation was produced for this service, or the train was not living up to "high capacity standard".

If adding extra poles in and removing a few seats makes a train "high capacity" I would quite frankly like my money back, because it just makes overcrowding more obvious and uncomfortable, and most of the poles are positioned along side seats, so you end up touching someone's head with your hand holding on to the pole while your lower body is in their face because the pole is so close to the seat and the aisle is so narrow.



321416 and 426 update

Quick update for those who want to know...

321416 and 426 are London Midland Class 321 units which seem to have been permanently transferred to National Express East Anglia now.

321416 has recently been working Upminster shuttle services... let me think when did non-standard stock last work the service on a regular basis? That would be the 322s! So effectively Nat Ex have a couple of spare units around

321426—unknown. May be requiring attention from Ilford.

It would make sense, (speculating) for National Express to keep these two units as cover for when the Class 321 "refurbishment" scheme starts up soon.



Ok... there's a campaign to try and leave the car at home, but lets face it:

1) When your local TOC seems to assume no-one wants to travel on a Sunday so runs about 1/4 of the trains, it's going to be pretty difficult trying to get the train

2) When you find out that about 50% of your local TOC is closed for engineering works, it's going to be pretty hard to get the train

3) When you then find that a large amount of the central London tube line is suspended, it's pretty hard to get around.

4) When you find that you don't get any information about services from you local station, and you have to GUESS based on the colour of the track as to whether a train is running on the line, you could be less likely to get the train.

5) Ok, maybe some people are lucky and this doesn't apply to them? Are their many?



NATIONAL EXPRESS TRAIN OPERATOR 'ONE' RAILWAY ACHIEVES MOVING ANNUAL AVERAGE PUNCTUALITY OF 90% FOR THE FIRST TIME

The annual average punctuality of train services on routes operated by 'one', part of National Express Group plc, has now reached 90% - the highest level of the franchise so far and one of the best figures for a large train operator running trains over many routes.

Over the last year 90.10% of services arrived at destination "on time" (within 5 minutes of the published arrival time for all services except intercity services - where the national measure is within 10 minutes).

Official figures (which measure all trains every day) released by the principal train company for the East of England, show that the specific route groups have now achieved the following annual average punctuality levels :

Metro services from Southend/Shenfield - London	88.3%
Mainline services - Norwich/Ipswich/Harwich/Clacton/Colchester/ Braintree/Chelmsford - London	87.9%
Stansted Express services - Stansted Airport to London	89.2%
Rural services - Norwich to Cambridge/Sheringham/Lowestoft/Gt. Yarmouth and Ipswich to Cambridge/Peterborough/Lowestoft/Felixstowe	91.9%
West Anglia services -Cambridge/Harlow/Hertford/Enfield/Chingford - London	92.8%

The company has fulfilled the commitment in its Joint Performance Improvement Plan with Network Rail (launched last March) to reach a Moving Annual Average (MAA) of 88% punctuality last summer and then improve still further to reach a MAA of 90% - building on the progress already achieved between April 2004 and March 2007 from 84.96% to 86.94%. As highlighted above, both the West Anglia (92.8%) and Rural (91.9%) routes have now achieved excellent MAA results. The next challenge is to push the Mainline, Metro and Stansted Express annual results over 90%, although there are already positive signs. Over the last 4 week period (to 5 February), the Norwich - Ipswich - Colchester - London intercity services achieved their most punctual period since the start of the franchise so far at 90.5%.

'one' and Network Rail are developing plans to maintain the positive trend in train performance and deliver even higher levels of punctuality, building on the success of last year's Joint Performance Improvement Plan.

Commenting on the performance figures, Andrew Chivers, Managing Director for 'one' said :

"We're glad to be able to report a real improvement in punctuality over the last year up to a Moving Annual Average of 90% - fulfilling our commitment made last year and providing some of the best performance across the region ever recorded.

We know we have more to do to deliver higher standards of performance on a more consistent basis across all our routes, but there has been real, tangible progress over the past 12 months. I would like to thank our employees and those in Network Rail for their work since March 2007 to provide customers with a better service. We will continue to work hard to improve punctuality still further, minimising the occasions when problems do occur and ensuring we handle those incidents more effectively."

London Midland to Europe with one through fare - c'est magnifique!

New train operator, London Midland, has teamed up with Eurostar to make travel to the continent even easier from three of its key stations. The deal means you can now buy through-tickets from Northampton, Milton Keynes and Watford Junction to Paris, Disneyland Resort, Brussels and beyond direct from the London Midland website (www.londonmidland.com) or the Eurostar booking line (08705 186 186). Prices start at just £69.80 return and include your London Midland journey to Euston, tube transfer to the newly restored St Pancras International and Eurostar travel to Europe.

London Midland Commercial Director, Alex Hynes, said:"London Midland's station at Euston is less than an hour from Northampton and even less from our other stations and just down the road from Eurostar's St Pancras International station. "There are frequent departures to Euston, many of which are operated with our new Desiro trains, which feature a smoother ride, at-seat tables, air conditioning and more comfortable seating. Weekenders and other leisure travellers can also choose to travel first class all the way." Eurostar runs up to 17 trains a day from St Pancras International to Paris and 10 trains a day to Brussels.

Open Day Announcement

GRESTY BRIDGE DEPOT - CREWE Saturday 19th July 2008 10.00 to 16:00 (All entry must be accompanied by a valid ticket)

All applications must be made to gresty.openday@drsl.co.uk, clearly stating your full name and full postal address. (Each application is valid only for one applicant. Family application can be made by clearly indicating it's a 'family group' and the maximum number for a family group is two adults and two children. Alternatively you can post your application to:

Direct Rail Services Ltd
Open Day Application
Kingmoor Depot
Etterby Road
Carlisle
Cumbria CA3 9NZ

In support of DRS' charitable work, we would like to propose a minimum contribution of £2.00 for each ticket issued and this will be payable on entry to the depot. (Please do not send in any money with your ticket application). All contributions will be put into our Sponsorship and Donation Fund which will be distributed to various charities and local communities to facilitate their chosen projects.

The closing date for applications will be Sunday 22nd June 2008. All applications received after that date will not be processed.

In the interests of fairness, tickets will be randomly picked after the closing date and successful applicants will be informed within 2 weeks of the closing date.

2nd 'Merry-Go-Round' prototype wagon offered for sale

Moving coal by rail is a traditional operation, and one which has evolved to enhance customer service.

EWS is the market leader for delivering innovative customer service to the coal sector, and has done so through new high capacity wagons, electronic customer ordering systems, track and trace operations and the creation of a specific customer focused business unit for the electricity supply industry called EWS Energy.

In the 1960s, the movement of coal by rail in Britain was revolutionised through the introduction of new coal hoppers, called 'Merry-Go-Round' wagons. They received their name as the wagons operated round the country delivering coal to power stations in a manner that maximised the efficiency of the wagon fleet.

The first prototype of the 'Merry-Go-Round' wagon (HCA Wagon 350000) resides with the National Railway Museum.

EWS is making the second prototype (HCA Wagon 350001) in this historic fleet available for sale. Due to the historic nature of this wagon EWS has decided that it should be offered for sale to preservation societies and enthusiasts. It is the intention of EWS that wagon 350001 will be sold to a buyer who will ensure it is kept complete.

Wagon 350001 was built as the second of two prototype 'Merry Go Round' coal hoppers at Darlington Works in 1964.

Charlie Maddocks, EWS Disposals Manager, said: "EWS Energy is the market leader for delivering coal by rail, and continually looks forward to deliver innovative service. The Merry-Go-Round wagon transformed the movement of coal by rail in Britain and set the foundation for the coal by rail market we see today. We are honoured to respect our heritage by offering for sale the second prototype to preservation groups and enthusiasts.

Full Grand Central service to begin on Saturday 1st March

Grand Central's full service of three high speed trains in each direction per day from Sunderland to London Kings Cross begins on Saturday 1st March.

Weekday departures from Sunderland to London will be at 06.46, (06.53 on Saturdays), 12.30 and 17.30, with northbound services from Kings Cross to Sunderland at 08.04 (07.57 on Saturdays), 11.27 and 16.50. On Sundays the services from Sunderland will be at 09.10, 13.42 and 18.42, returning from Kings Cross at 08.55, 13.45 and 18.20

All Grand Central's Sunderland to London services call at Hartlepool, Eaglescliffe (for Teesside), Northallerton, Thirsk and York.

This long awaited launch of the full service follows delivery of Grand Central's sixth and final Power Car, as well as the first three carriages for its third High Speed Train ("HST") set.

The Company currently has two complete HST sets in service, each of which comprises two power cars and six passenger coaches. One of these is operating the interim timetable already in place, whilst the other is undergoing final acceptance trials.

Following launch of the new timetable it will now be possible for the first time for travellers from the South East to make a day trip to Tees-side and Wear-side, without the need for one or two changes of train en route. On-board facilities will shortly include a full restaurant service on all services, open to both first and standard class travellers. Until its launch, passengers can enjoy an at-seat catering service in first class and a buffet car open to all passengers.

For passengers living or working in York, the Grand Central's city centre ticket and information shop is now open at River House, 17 Museum Street (close to Lendal Bridge and next door to Pizza Express). The shop is open from 09.00 & 17.00 Monday to Friday.

Tom Clift, Managing Director of Grand Central Railway Company, comments:

"After lengthy delays while the overhaul work on our rolling stock fleet has been completed, I am delighted that we have finally reached the position of being able to launch our full timetable.

Since launch of our interim service on 18 December, we have had a great deal of positive customer feedback about how spacious the carriages are, the friendliness of our staff and the excellent value for money we offer. I am confident that we will now be able to further broaden the appeal of Grand Central services with a far greater range of journey opportunities and a simple fares structure, where passengers pay the same price for a journey, whether they book in advance or buy on the day of travel."

News in brief

Transport for London signs new train leasing contract

"This contract gives us all the best features of a new train fleet, including reliability, extra capacity and cleanliness." Ian Brown, Managing Director of London Rail Transport for London has signed a leasing contract for its new London Overground fleet of electric trains. Leasing, rather than borrowing to buy the fleet of 188 vehicles, will avoid a capital expenditure of £250 million and release millions of pounds for reinvestment in the Capital's transport network. The overall costs of leasing or buying the fleet remain approximately the same, but with a leasing arrangement Transport for London will not bear the cost of the depreciating value of the fleet and the risk of a loss if selling second hand rolling stock. Trains for the new London Overground network will be leased from QW Rail Leasing Ltd, a joint venture between National Australia Bank and Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation.

Freightliner Ltd invests £4m in 2 new cranes at it's Manchester Terminal

Following the announcement last year to replace it's rail head gantry cranes at Birmingham, Freightliner Ltd have made a further £4 million investment in two new cranes for it's Manchester terminal.

As part of a similar deal to the two Birmingham cranes on order, Liebherr Container Cranes Ltd, the leading manufacturer of container cranes in Europe will soon begin production of a further two rail head gantry cranes. These are due for installation at Freightliner's terminal in Trafford Park in Spring 2009.

Peter Maybury, Managing Director, Freightliner Ltd:

"Our terminal network and associated equipment clearly differentiates the Freightliner product from other rail borne offerings in the market and is key to our position as market leader. It is therefore crucial that we continue to invest in our terminals, to ensure that our customers receive the highest standards possible, and these new cranes are evidence of this."

NORTHERN RAIL WINS RAIL BUSINESS OF THE YEAR

Northern Rail has been crowned 'Train Operator of the Year' and 'Rail Business of the Year' at the prestigious 10th annual HSBC Rail Business Awards. The judges praised the north of England operator for its innovation and hard work in making a real difference to the communities it serves since it started three years ago. Northern, which is owned by a joint venture of Serco Group plc and NedRailways, has successfully attracted more than £60m of external investment to help improve trains and stations and passenger numbers have risen by nearly one-quarter to 80 million per year.



Wrexham set to join Virgin Trains network

Virgin Trains' Chief Operating Officer Chris Gibb has announced that Wrexham will join the Virgin Trains network later this year.

Speaking at the inaugural meeting of the All-Party Rail in Wales Parliamentary Group, held at the House of Commons, Chris Gibb confirmed plans to run the Wrexham-London Euston service from December, 2008, subject to the completion of the West Coast Route Modernization work.

The Virgin Trains service will run on Mondays-Fridays with a departure around 07:00 from Wrexham. The return journey will leave London at 18:10. Journey time between Wrexham and London will be around two-and-a-half-hours.

The service is being introduced on a trial basis, and more services on weekdays and weekends have not been ruled out if it is successful.

Plans to introduce the through service have been welcomed by Wrexham MP Ian Lucas who said: "This is a tremendous vote of confidence in Wrexham".

Chris Gibb added: "The service would be operated by modified Super Voyager trains, with a first class service which is comparable to that provided on our Pendolino trains. The Wrexham trains will run at 125mph with tilt operational over the West Coast Main Line between Crewe and London."

The operation of this through train has been made possible through the allocation of a fleet of diesel Super Voyager trains to Virgin Trains, which will be used on the new hourly London to Chester service.

The Wrexham train will be an extension of one of the Chester services.

'ONE' RAILWAY WINS GREENEST BUSINESS (TRANSPORT) AWARD IN 'SUFFOLK - CREATING THE GREENEST COUNTY' 2008 AWARDS

National Express Group's 'one' railway has won the Greenest Business Award in the transport category at the 'Suffolk - Creating the Greenest County' Awards held at the 'Suffolk - Creating the Greenest County' conference hosted by BT at its leading technology and innovation park in Martlesham Heath, near Ipswich, Suffolk.

The awards celebrate the environmental excellence of businesses and organisations across Suffolk, and highlight how the County's businesses, communities and schools are leading the way on a range of environmental areas, from transport to biodiversity.

'one' railway operates one of the most energy-efficient train fleets in the UK, and initiatives have included the introduction of regenerative braking on the fleet of Class 360 trains that operate some services on the mainline to Ipswich, saving around 2,000 tonnes of carbon a year and reducing energy requirements for that fleet by around 16%. Regenerative braking enables trains to generate electricity whilst they are slowing down, by converting the energy created as the train brakes back into electricity - which is then returned into the energy supply system for use by other trains or back into the national grid.

Another major initiative to improve energy efficiency is the training of all of drivers in energy-efficient driving practices using state-of-the-art driving simulators located at the company's Customer Service Academy. Other key actions implemented to help reduce energy usage include: improved efficiency of heating and lighting controls on trains; station-specific action plans to reduce energy usage and station energy audits; an internal campaign, backed up with posters and publicity, to make everyone aware of energy efficient practices; work to recycle more newspapers left on 'one' trains and stations; appointment of energy champions for each route, and a review of non-passenger train workings to minimise energy usage.

Andrew Chivers, Managing Director, 'one' railway said: "I am delighted that the efforts 'one' railway is making in developing a positive and effective approach to the management of energy-efficient practices across our business, has been recognised by this prestigious award. It demonstrates that the company is making sound progress in this important area, not just in Suffolk, but across London and throughout the East of England where our train services operate."

c2c wins top public transport award

c2c is celebrating the win of a prestigious London Transport Award following a ceremony at the Hilton Hotel, Park Lane. c2c's East Ham Depot team won the Public Transport - Transport Team/Partnership of the Year award beating both Docklands Light Railway and One Railway (now National Express East Anglia) and was highly commended in the Public Transport Operator of the Year award.

On the same evening, c2c came runner up to sister company, National Express East Anglia (formerly One railway) at the HSBC Rail Business awards in Environmental Innovation of the Year category for its regenerative braking project.

Julian Drury, MD for c2c commenting the results said:

"The teams have worked tirelessly this year to deliver a punctual and reliable service for our customers and so can take pride in a well deserved award and runner up positions. Everyone at c2c takes great pleasure in receiving this award and we're looking forward to meeting the challenge to build on our successes next year."

Scottish beauty on track for the model way to travel! Miniature prices make travel simpler on award winning website

Former Miss Scotland, Aisling Friel, shows small is definitely beautiful as she dazzles travellers at Edinburgh Waverley station with her new eye-catching outfit.

Aisling, 25, was on hand with a miniature model of a National Express East Coast train crossing some of Britain's best loved landmarks to launch a new campaign to promote value fares to great destinations.

Heads turned on the platform as Aisling, sporting a mini dress made up of rail tickets, posed for pictures.

Alongside the pretty Scottish model was the tiny train, mounted on a three-dimensional map of Britain featuring popular landmarks on the East Coast route including the iconic Forth Rail Bridge and even the Loch Ness Monster!

The model train, which was specially made by famed model railway makers Hornby, stars in a series of advertisements launched this week along the East Coast route to promote the miniature prices available exclusively at www.nationalexpresseastcoast.com.

Says Aisling: "The train is so realistic, and the model landmarks on the map show how easy it is to get to some great places without breaking the bank".

National Express East Coast spokesman Angela McKenzie said: "We wanted a model way to tell everyone about the miniature prices available on our website, where all advance bookings attract a ten per cent discount.

"Aisling is a well-known figure across Scotland - and as someone who travels regularly with National Express East Coast, she knows that the only small thing about us is our advance purchase fares!"



NETWORK RAIL'S ROCK SOLID INVESTMENT IN NEW BALLAST CLEANER

Network Rail has taken another significant step in its drive to improve the way it carries out engineering and maintenance works this month by ordering a new ballast cleaning system.

Built by Austrian rail engineering firm Plasser and Theurer, the 800 metre, 3,200 tonne High Output Ballast Cleaner works on the tracks' ballast foundation and will significantly reduce the time it takes to renew ballast. It will be the third such system to operate on the network.

The huge yellow machine slashes the time it takes to clean and replace track ballast, and is capable of cleaning around 600 hundred yards of track ballast during a typical midweek eight-hour night-shift.

Ballast cleaning is essential for the safe running of the railway as it helps drainage and maintains correct track levels and alignment making journeys smoother for passengers.

The £41.7m order forms part of a major £101m investment programme to bring more new engineering technologies to the railway in Britain. This will allow Network Rail to be more efficient in maintaining, renewing and enhancing the network.

As part of the programme, Network Rail will also soon be ordering another high output track re-laying train to speed up the time it takes to carry out track renewals.

Network Rail's Director, Infrastructure Investment, Simon Kirby, said: "This major investment in new technology will reduce the time it takes to carry out important ballast cleaning work. It forms part of an exciting programme which will bring more innovative engineering equipment and ways of working to our network.

"We are always looking for ways to carry out maintenance and engineering work quicker, smarter and more efficiently and keep any disruption to passenger and freight services to a minimum."



MAJOR STATION IMPROVEMENTS UNDERWAY AT COLCHESTER

National Express Group's 'one' railway has commenced a major improvement scheme at Colchester station in partnership with Network Rail.

The work includes an investment by 'one' of £265k to completely refurbish the passenger subway at the station including new walls, flooring, stairs and lighting to transform the look of the subway area to provide a more pleasant environment for customers.

New visual displays and CCTV improvements will also be a feature of the refurbishment project on completion.

'one' railway Station Manager Neil O'Hare said: "The subway has remained largely unaltered since the station was remodelled in the 1960s and has become increasingly difficult to maintain and properly clean giving a poor first impression of the station. The refurbishment project is designed to vastly improve the passenger subway and we look forward to unveiling a bright, more customer-friendly area in mid-March.

"Customers using the subway at present will be aware that access is necessarily restricted while the works are in progress, and we are grateful for their on-going patience and co-operation during this time."

The contractors have approached the works in a creative way to achieve the desired results whilst keeping the subway open to customers.

In addition to the subway works, a £60k refurbishment of the customer toilets has recently been completed and other significant improvement work includes repairs to the stairs providing access to the car park, resurfacing of large areas of the platforms and new lighting throughout the station.

This work complements the installation of new passenger lifts at the station last year.

ALL ABOARD AS 'ONE' BECOMES NATIONAL EXPRESS EAST ANGLIA

Customers using rail services across the East of England are set to benefit from a programme of service improvements it was announced, as the train operator 'one' is renamed National Express East Anglia. National Express Group Chief Executive Richard Bowker unveiled the first three trains in the new National Express East Anglia livery at London Liverpool Street station, and events to mark the occasion took place in Norwich and Cambridge. National Express East Anglia is set to implement a programme of improvements to raise standards of performance, on-train comfort, information provision, ticket purchases and station facilities. During 2007 punctuality rose to over 90%, and the train operator is putting plans in place to increase punctuality further with initiatives including:

- Extra spare trains and train crew to enable faster recovery in the event of disruption
- Recruitment of more engineers to enable quicker repairs for trains
- Additional resources in the Control office to enable a better response to incidents

At the launch, Richard Bowker explained what the changes will mean for customers, "The transition from 'one' to National Express East Anglia is more than a change of name and livery, it's about how we do things. Directly tackling those issues which matter most to customers through additional investment in customer-focused activities is where we can make a real difference to our customer's lives through travel".

"We are currently integrating our businesses across the UK into one division and having undertaken customer research we believe that giving greater clarity on who we are and where we operate will help us deliver our promise to customers of making travel simpler. We wanted a brand that makes sense to our customers and is easily recognisable as National Express – whichever of our services they travel on" Richard continued.

Following extensive research with employees and customers, the National Express name was developed for buses and trains. The coach business has operated under the name National Express since the 1970's, it is a recognised 'Superbrand' and more than 90% of the UK population has an affinity to the name.

Richard continued, "Our research shows it will make our customers' travel decisions simpler and it will benefit employees as they will be part of one of the biggest travel brands in the UK.

We are now fulfilling our commitments set out in late 2007 of delivering a programme of customer service improvements directly tackling those issues which matter most to customers – punctuality, information provision, on-train and station facilities, car parking and the ease of buying tickets."

The programme of investment revealed at the rebrand launch will also include major enhancements to customer information and station facilities with key projects such as:

- Upgrading the customer information systems at stations
- Extra station hosts at key stations at the busiest times
- Free Journeycheck text alerts to customers to advise them of service changes
- Upgrading station facilities including installation of 13 toilet refurbishments, 51 automatic ticket machines, and improvements to car park lighting at 20 stations.

NETWORK RAIL ON A ROLL

Network Rail together with support services and construction company Carillion (previously Alfred McAlpine) took a major step forward in a £15 million project at Manchester Airport by rolling a new road-over-rail bridge into place two days ahead of schedule and reopening a main road into the airport five days early. Outwood Lane, which leads to/from Terminals 1 and 3 will open on Wednesday 27 February instead of on Monday 3 March.

The concrete bridge has been built alongside the existing station at the airport and is a crucial milestone in the programme to build a third platform. This will relieve congestion and improve operational flexibility, leading to better punctuality and reliability of trains.

Peter Strachan, Route Director from Network Rail said: "Completing this section of the project five days early means no more delays to passengers travelling by road to and from the airport. Careful project planning and close liaison between us and our contractor has paid dividends."

Bob Longworth, Capacity Planning Manager at the Airport said: "The third rail platform will play a significant role in the future of Manchester Airport's overall transport infrastructure and this essential work has been carried out speedily and effectively."

"We are very pleased to be able to open the Outwood Lane early causing our passengers the minimum amount of disruption as they travel to and from the airport."

David Cochrane from GMPTE's Infrastructure Projects added, "This is fantastic news and reflection of how well the project is being managed by the Network Rail team on behalf of the funders and stakeholders."

Outwood Lane at the airport passes over the ends of the station platforms so an additional bridge section had to be constructed to take the road over the new platform.

The new bridge, similar in shape to an upside down letter U, was built using poured concrete, then raised up on a 64-wheeled transporter before being rolled inch by inch into place in the dead of night.

Having successfully completed the roll, the area around the new structure was back-filled, allowing the road to be resurfaced and reopened.



National Express East Coast to relocate to new HQ in York

York-based train operator National Express East Coast is to relocate its headquarters to new premises in central York this summer, reaffirming its commitment to the city.

The company, which started running rail services on the East Coast Main Line last December, currently occupies less than a third of its Victorian HQ building in Station Road, after Northern Rail and Network Rail vacated, but will become the sole occupier of new, more contemporary offices at Albion Wharf. The move is expected to happen during June, following an interior re-fit. Longer-term, the landlord of National Express East Coast's current HQ wants to convert the building into a 5-star hotel.

The new HQ for National Express East Coast at Albion Wharf is a 5-storey building with basement, occupying 22,300 square feet of office space, and is positioned on the riverfront near Skeldergate. It will be supplied by green tariff electricity, which is a practice adopted at all National Express premises.

The office block will house the sales & marketing, commercial, finance, operations, engineering, procurement, information technology, compliance, customer service, safety & environment, human resources and communications teams.

The learning and development team within the HR function will remain in The Studio, National Express East Coast's training complex at York station. The company's national Control Centre will continue to be co-located with Network Rail, Northern Rail and TransPennine in purpose-built premises near the railway station.

David Franks, managing director of National Express East Coast, said: "Our new HQ will provide spacious, open-plan, modern accommodation and an improved working environment for our high-calibre HQ team."

"During the franchise competition last year we said that, if successful, we would be based in York. We are delighted to honour that promise, reaffirming our commitment to this great railway city."

BIRMINGHAM GATEWAY UNLOCKED AS FUNDING FOR NEW STREET GETS GREEN LIGHT

Passengers across the West Midlands and UK are set to benefit from an even bigger and better New Street Gateway after the Government's decision to back plans to transform Birmingham New Street station with almost £400m of funding.

The scheme, developed by Birmingham City Council, Network Rail, Advantage West Midlands and Centro-WMPTA, will see the current 1960s built station transformed into a bright, modern 21st Century transport hub for the entire region. It will also regenerate large parts of Birmingham city centre and create thousands of jobs. Cllr Mike Whitby, chair of the New Street Gateway steering group said: "The West Midlands spoke with one voice and we thank people for backing this important bid for funding. With the support of business, local politicians, and most importantly, the general public, the Government has responded to our call for a better station for Birmingham. "This is not an overnight job. However, from 2011 passengers and the general public will enjoy the first benefits of this transformation."

Mick Lavery, Chief Executive Designate at Advantage West Midlands, said: "The New Street Gateway scheme will be a catalyst for major regeneration. Furthermore, the future prosperity of the West Midlands economy will be helped enormously by Birmingham having a station which creates the right first impression." Iain Coucher, Chief Executive, Network Rail added: "Network Rail is delighted the Government has given the green light to create a station fit for the passengers of Birmingham, the West Midlands and beyond. This is a much needed scheme and is among a raft of projects that Network Rail is looking to take forward to expand and develop Britain's rail network in the years ahead."

Gary Clarke, Chairman of Centro-WMPTA said: "Passengers across the region have been calling for something to be done about Birmingham New Street and that's why we made it a priority."

"Today's announcement is great news and we are proud to play our part in creating a Gateway to the Midlands that passengers can be proud of."

The project to rebuild New Street will take place in two phases, keeping the station open for passengers and train services throughout construction. The first phase, at the north end of the station will see a part of the new concourse opening in 2011. The second phase is due to be completed by 2013.

THE END OF A MYTH - FORTH BRIDGE PAINTERS SET TO HANG UP THEIR BRUSHES

- New £18.5m annual contract will bring painting work to a close by 2012
- No disruption to passenger or freight services

Network Rail is set to mark the end of a modern myth, when the painting of the Forth Bridge comes to an end in 2012.

Announcing a new £74m contract with Balfour Beatty in Edinburgh, Iain Coucher, Network Rail's Chief Executive, outlined the plan to complete the remaining restoration and painting work. He said:

"The Forth Bridge is a working monument to the genius of British railway engineering. The work currently being undertaken will restore the bridge to its original condition and preserve the steel-work for decades to come.

"The team currently working on the bridge has now completed some of the most difficult work and they have already overcome the most significant challenges that this project posed.

"For that reason, we have taken the decision to accelerate the work, increasing the annual investment from £13m to £18.5m with the aim of generating long-term financial savings.

"The restoration work has been ongoing since 2002 but, due to years of underinvestment during the 70s and 80s, the scale of the job was initially unclear. Only now are we in the position to name a completion date of 2012."

The work currently being carried out on the Forth Bridge includes a series of phases. Scaffolding access is erected and screened off from the environment before old layers of paint applied over the last 120 years are removed using an abrasive blasting technique. Steelwork requiring maintenance is then repaired before the new paint is applied in three protective layers.

Marshall Scott, Managing Director, Balfour Beatty Regional Civil Engineering, commented:

"Working on the Forth Bridge presents a number of unique challenges and conditions. Over the past six years, the partnership, which Balfour Beatty and Network Rail, together with our sub-contractors have established, has resulted in world-wide interest from engineering groups working on projects of a similar scale.

"Despite the demanding conditions, we have now worked in excess of 2.4 million hours on the bridge over six years without a serious accident and our methods have been adopted across the country as examples of best practice.

"We now look forward to taking this project to completion in 2012, and, with the removal of the scaffolding, the restoration of this remarkable bridge will return it to near pristine condition."



The future's bright for First GBRf as longest ever track access contract is confirmed

Following a record breaking year First GBRf has secured ongoing success in the future by signing its longest ever track access contract with Network Rail.

Under the new agreement, which was signed on 29 January 2008, First GBRf have been granted access to the network for another eight years, until December 2016.

The new contract marks another important milestone for the freight haulier, who have enjoyed phenomenal success over the last few months, including increasing commercial services by a third in just one month, from 854 trains journeys in October to 1089 in November 2007.

Andy Moyle, Head of Procurement at First GBRf said: "We are thrilled with the new long term track access contract, which will allow us to continue to build on our recent success.

Its eight year length will not only give us the ability to bid for long term sales contracts but will provide security and confidence to potential and existing customers within the rail freight market."

The contract, which will commence on 18 June 2008, was secured following a collaborative effort between Network Rail, The Office of Rail Regulation and First GBRf, who worked together over a number of months to successfully negotiate the new agreement.

Gordon Cox, Customer Relationship Executive at Network Rail said: "Network Rail are delighted that a new long term track access contract has been agreed with First GBRf and we look forward to working closely with them throughout the next eight years."

Artistic flair at Stoke station

Virgin Trains has teamed up with students from Staffordshire University's Art, Media and Design department to provide an artistic welcome to customers using Stoke-on-Trent station.

During the last five months students from the BA(Hons) Photography course at Staffordshire University were invited by Virgin Trains to come up with a series of images that would enhance the environment of the newly refurbished Stoke-on-Trent Railway Station. An exhibition, appropriately entitled 'The Waiting Room', and documenting the everyday life and work of the station, is now on display in the Waiting Room on Platform 1 at the City's station. Additionally, examples of jewellery and ceramics, created by the students and reflecting the rich craft traditions for which Stoke-on-Trent is rightly famous, are also on display in the First Class Lounge.

Virgin Trains Station Manager, Karen Grimshaw said: "It has been a pleasure working with the students from Staffordshire University. The results of many hours of work are now available for everyone to enjoy as they pass through the station. Virgin Trains is pleased to support the students as part of their BA(Hons) Photography and Crafts courses."

The correlation between the act of photographing and waiting is often fundamental in the process of 'seeing the picture' as the students involved have realised throughout the project.

Kyle Gibson's sequence of photographs demonstrates how the familiar surroundings of advertisements, station structures and colour once isolated from their accepted contexts, make for visual play. In contrast to such play, Harriet Denson's work relates more to a documentary quality of photography; this is what the station and the platform look like.

Substantial package of benefits including £29 million investment agreed for First Great Western passengers

After discussions with the Department for Transport (DfT), First Great Western (FGW) has agreed a comprehensive package of passenger benefits to address poor performance in relation to cancellations and the subsequent contravention of the Franchise Agreement.

FGW acknowledges that its performance has fallen short of its own standards and the expectations of passengers. FGW is committed to improving performance and taking the necessary action to ensure that cancellations and delays are minimised. Following discussions with the DfT, FGW has agreed to make additional investments to provide an enhanced service for passengers and agreed a plan to improve operational performance.

FirstGroup has invested more than £200 million in FGW since the start of the franchise. This announcement commits a further £29 million to deliver customer service and performance improvements including:

- Increasing rolling stock by leasing five additional Class 150 units to release Class 158 units for use in strengthening the Cardiff-Portsmouth service from May 2008 which will increase capacity by 40% on most services on this route.
 - A further £7m investment to enhance the Customer Information System (CIS) at stations. This will bring our total investment in CIS to £15 million and provide improved consistency of systems, coverage of more stations and a greater capacity to provide information during times of disruption.
 - Additional investment of £5m on improvements to the London and Thames Valley fleet. A total of £6.1m will be invested in this fleet, including £1.1m already committed.
 - A further commitment has been made to increase the amount of compensation available under the Passenger's Charter by 50 per cent for claims arising between 27 January 2009 and 26 January 2010. This is in addition to the doubling of the amount of compensation available to customers during 2008, announced in January.
 - The provision of an additional 500,000 FGW tickets at the most discounted rates to popular destinations for off peak travel. We will actively participate in the study and development of fares simplification proposals involving single journey pricing.
 - A £4m enhanced customer service training package for FGW's passenger facing employees.
- In addition, we have developed and agreed a comprehensive plan to improve performance and minimise delays and cancellations, including:
- Recruit new drivers, guards and technicians to improve customer service and reliability. In addition, we have established a new performance directorate to improve management of disruption alongside Network Rail.
 - We have developed a package of additional fleet and depot improvements to enhance reliability. In addition, to ensure resilient operating performance, we will provide an additional high speed train.

Moir Lockhead, FirstGroup Chief Executive said: "Today's announcement demonstrates our commitment to improving performance and customer service in our First Great Western franchise (FGW). This additional investment of £29 million will directly benefit FGW passengers and underpins our plans to improve the quality and reliability of services we provide.

"We have already put in place actions to address performance at FGW. We are encouraged that during January 2008 performance improved and cancellations were at their lowest level for 18 months and this trend has continued during February. We are committed to the long-term development of railways in the UK and look forward to sustained performance improvements at FGW in line with our other three rail franchises."

Andrew Haines, FGW Chief Operating Officer said: "We've put together a robust and realistic plan that sets out our broader vision to re-establish the First Great Western franchise as delivering good performance and benefits to all its customers, stakeholders and the wider regions, which it serves.

Text ticketing wins most innovative transport project of 2008

Text ticketing was a first for the UK rail industry and now Chiltern Railways have been awarded 'the Innovative Transport Project of the Year' for text ticketing at the London Transport Awards held at Hilton Park Lane in London.

Peter Owen, Marketing Director of Chiltern Railways said: "I am delighted that we have won this award for mobile ticketing as it is a real innovation for the rail industry and we're excited to be continuously developing technology to make travelling by train simpler and more convenient for our passengers."



Martin Hathaway, Director for YourRail, said: "We are delighted that Chiltern's forward thinking has been recognised by this award. So far over 18,000 customers have signed up to use Chiltern's innovative electronic ticketing service supplied by YourRail. This year, Chiltern's customers will have an expanded range of attractive electronic tickets to choose from, in addition to the excellent levels of service that they have come to expect."

As well as winning an award for tickets by text, the Fastis system developed in partnership by Chiltern – which allows our passengers to buy a full range of Oyster products – won Information Excellence of 2008 at the HSBC Awards.

NETWORK RAIL PUBLISHES RAIL INDUSTRY PLAN TO MEET PASSENGER AND FREIGHT GROWTH FOR EAST COAST MAIN LINE

More seats on more and longer trains form part of a plan for growth on the East Coast Main Line and North East routes, Network Rail has announced.

The plan, outlined in the Route Utilisation Strategy (RUS) for the East Coast Main Line (ECML), seeks to meet the growing demands for the line and accommodate the continuing rise in passenger numbers – which could increase by 40% by 2016 on long distance services - while making journeys more reliable

The RUS sets out a number of recommendations, and follows a twelve week consultation period with key stakeholders after the draft strategy was first launched in June last year.

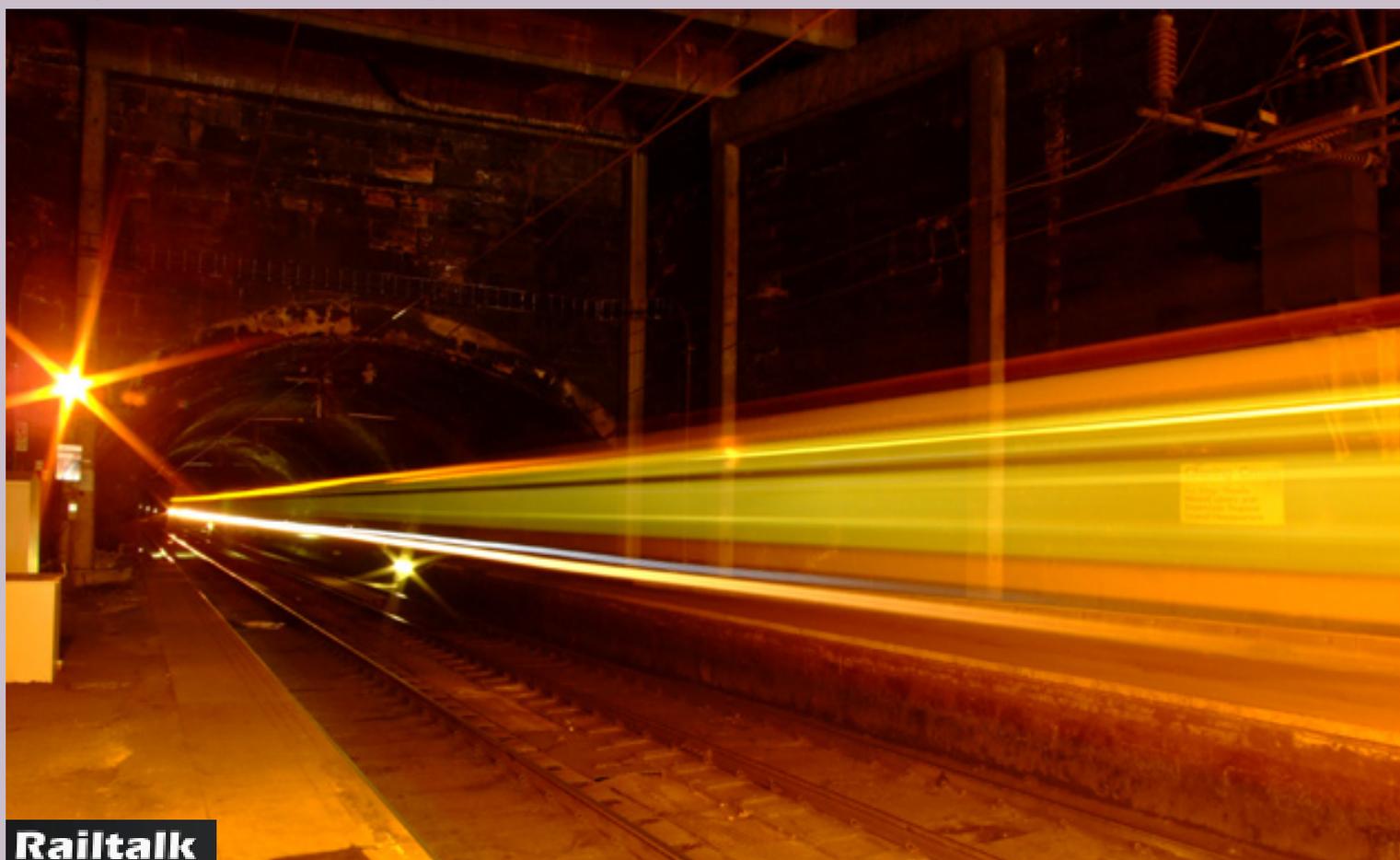
Highlights of the strategy include:

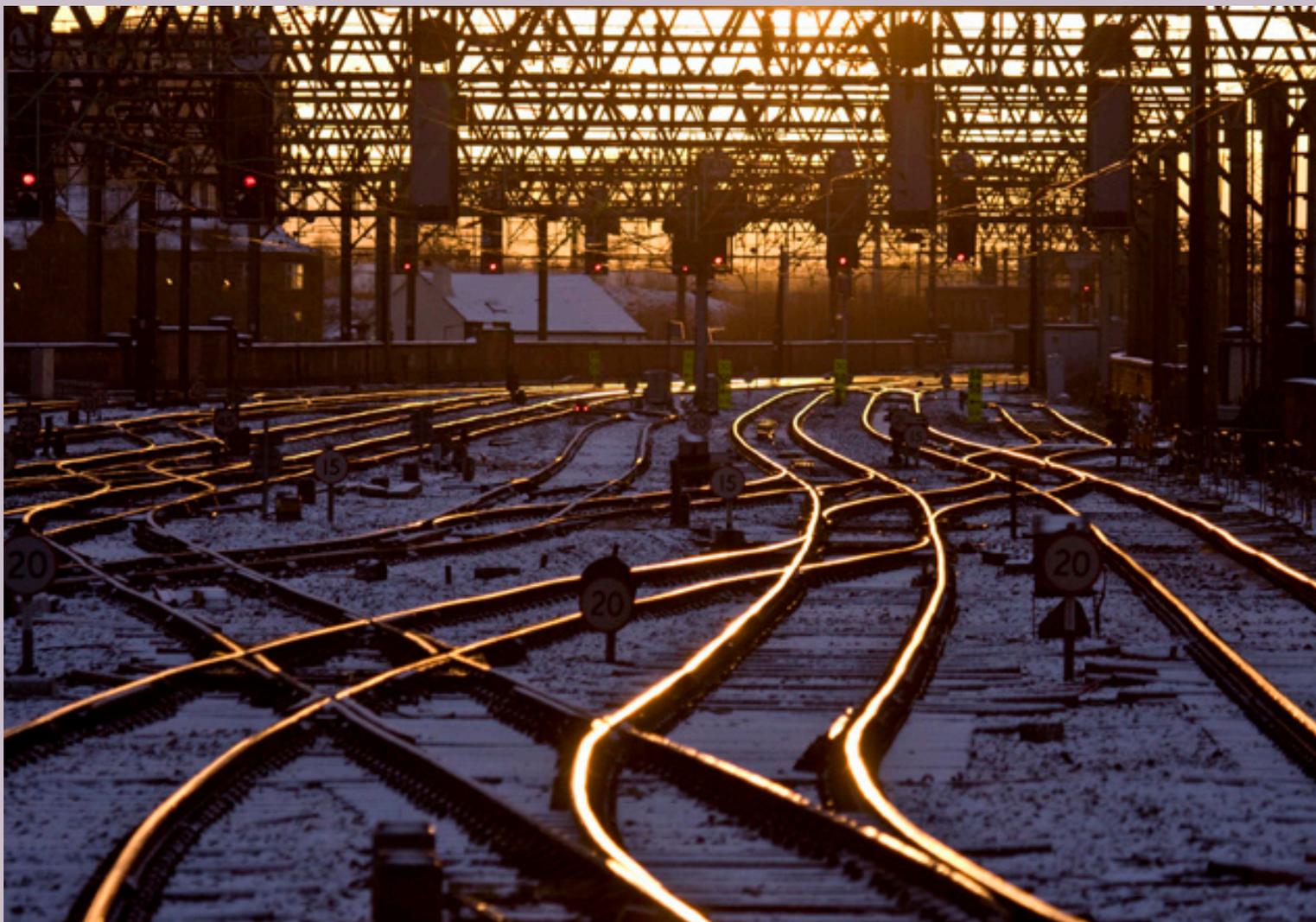
- Increasing the number of long distance trains from King's Cross to eight trains per hour at peak times, and six services per hour off-peak allowing faster journeys to the principal destinations in Yorkshire, the North East and Scotland
- Redevelopment at King's Cross, coupled with the completion of the Thameslink upgrade will increase capacity once both schemes are completed
- Power upgrades to facilitate extra and longer services
- Boosting capacity between Peterborough and Doncaster by upgrading the parallel route through Lincoln

A number of other infrastructure schemes to improve capacity, performance and journey times for passengers and freight Network Rail's Route Director, Dyan Crowther, said: "This strategy sets out how we will make the necessary investment to improve reliability while meeting the demands of rising passenger numbers and freight growth over the coming years." The RUS was drawn up in consultation with a number of rail industry stakeholders including train and freight operators, passenger groups, local authorities and regional investment authorities.



Above: "Oops, wrong turn!", or, "These traffic lights have been on red for a while!", and other such thoughts came into our heads when we saw this photo. A Colas Rail Lorry and other railway equipment are seen being stabled inside Edinburgh Waverley station on the 11th February, notice that the lorry has a pantograph on the roof for testing the O.H.L. equipment. **Jonathan McGurk**
Below: A Long Exposure Shot Of Class 320 322 'Festive Glasgow Orchid' coming into Charing Cross station working the 0938 2H13 Drumgelloch - Helensburgh Central service on the 21st February. **Jonathan McGurk**





Above: A frosty morning at Manchester Piccadilly as the sun rises and lights up the trackwork. Class47

Below: Warrington Arpley on the 16th February, and engineers are trying to replace a set of wheels on a jacked up HHA coal wagon. Dave Harris





Above: The Weardale Railway is a real gem in the North of England, travelling along some excellent scenery this line is well worth a visit . On the 24th February, Class 25 D5217 is seen here at Stanhope, the current end of the line. Class47

Below: Some shots from the Nene Valley Diesel Gala on the next few pages, an excellent day out, despite a few technical problems. One of the major failures was this, 03 179, that died whilst pulling a service to Yarwell. Lets hope that Clive can be repaired, and will live to see another gala.. Andy





Above: Killer of Class 03's amongst other classes of loco! 66 727 crosses the river at Wansford on the occasion of the Nene Valley Diesel Gala. [Andy](#)
Below: Same location, ex Freightliner livery, and recently returned to original livery, albeit with the name "Swift", Class 47 270 looks immaculate as it crosses the river bridge at Wansford. [Richard Hargreaves](#)





Above: More from the Nene Valley and this time its Class 33 053 pulling the lines DMU. Andy

Below: The sound of two Sulzer's pounding along the lane made a fine sight. Here we see Class 24 081 from the Gloucester and Warwickshire Railway paired up with Class 27 066 from the Dean Forest Railway. Andy





Above: With a cheeky face behind it, Class 31 271 waits between duties at Wansford on the Nene Valley Railway. Class 47
 Below left: Standing room only!, this view of Class 33 053's cab, caught just as the sun came out, as it crosses the river bridge at Wansford Andy
 Below right: In fading light, Class 56 003, stands at Peterborough having just arrived from Yarwell. Despite this side and cab of the loco looking in excellent condition, the other side and cab are currently in grey primer. Andy



CLASS 40 145 visits the Nene Valley

40145 will be attending the Nene Valley Railway over the weekend of April 19th & 20th to celebrate the 50th anniversary of D200's inaugural run from Liverpool Street to Norwich (18th April 1958) where it will run along side D306.

This will be the first visit of a Class Forty Preservation Society locomotive to the Nene Valley Railway and the first time D306 will be paired up with another class 40.

Further details and full timetable will be released closer to the time.

The Class 58 Locomotive Group wish to publicise their forthcoming AGM and invite new member to attend.

The 2008 AGM is at Doncaster Works on the 29th March

The Class 58 Locomotive Group is growing and eagerly looking forward to when members of the Class become available for purchase. In the meantime, members of the group are busy fund raising and contributing towards Red Diamond, our society magazine. The 2008 AGM will be held at Doncaster Works on the 29th of March and it will be a great opportunity for members to get together to discuss future plans and activities.

We wish to extend an invite to the AGM and visit to Doncaster Works to anyone wishing to join the Class 58 Locomotive Group.

Membership of the group costs £10 per year and members receive::

- One year membership to the Group
- A copy of our Group magazine, Red Diamond, each quarter (published March, June, Sept and Dec)
- The opportunity to attend Group trips and depot visits.
- Attend the AGM which this year will be held at Doncaster Works.

Join now at: <http://www.c58lg.co.uk/index.html>

The Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway's Spring 3-day Diesel Gala: April 4th to 6th 2008

Featuring the return to service of 47376 as well as visiting 27066!

Fresh from winter maintenance, the Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway's diesel department are preparing for their first big diesel event of 2008. It is anticipated all resident ex-mainline English Electric and Sulzer diesel locomotives will be in action during the three-day gala: Class 20 D8137, 24081, 37215 and class-mate 37324, 47105 and 73129. The event will also see the return of 47376 to active service following a number of months undergoing engine and exhaust system repairs.

In addition to this fine line-up, we are expecting Sulzer Type 2 27066 to make a flying visit to the GWR for the gala before returning home to the Dean Forest.

In its BR blue livery, the loco will fit right in with the majority of the GWR's own diesels, especially our own Sulzer Type 2, 24081.

With Gotherington crossing loop not open in time for the gala, the running format will follow the precedent set in previous years with two 'main line' sets running between Toddington and Cheltenham Racecourse as well as a 'local' service which will shuttle between Toddington and Winchcombe.

A working timetable and loco roster for the gala will be available in advance from the GWR's website.

The remaining diesel galas for 2008 will be held on Friday 4th to Sunday 6th July (which will also include a heritage bus display on the Sunday) and Saturday 25th and Sunday 26th October as well as the traditional Diesel Day on Saturday the 27th of December.

Other diesel running dates in 2008 are on 'green timetable' days Wednesdays 13th and 27th August, weekends 4th & 5th and 18th & 19th September as well as 1st and 2nd November where three round trips

are available on each day. In addition, a diesel will operate the 16.15 round trip from Toddington on any of the railway's 'blue' timetable days. Please keep an eye on the loco roster for more details!

Left: Last one from the Nene Valley gala, shows Class 40 D306 and Class 37 518. The Class 37 ran in a combination of green and grey primer, not easily visible in this shot.

Richard Hargreaves





Above: One of the many Siemens units that are now appearing all over the OBB Austrian network is seen at Schwarzach - St. Veit on the 11th Feb. These units are relatively new to the Austrian rail network, but have excellent interiors and ride quality. Andy

Below: OBB has several all over advertising liveries on its loco's, seen here at Wien Sud is 1016 023 in a livery that promoted the Kyoto agreement to lower emissions. These locos are seen all over the OBB network on both passenger and freight workings. Andy





Above: One loco and three coaches, one of which is fitted with a driving cab. This scene is repeated over many countries in Europe, so why in Britain are we obsessed with units, especially when most of them are totally unsuitable for the loadings of the services they are working. In old OBB livery, a Class 1142 waits in Salzburg with a local service. Class47

Below: Another all over livery, this time on a Class 216 diesel loco. This loco is also carrying it's full RIV number, which certainly would fill the pages of the notebooks if it ever becomes standard over here. Class47





Above: Sunny June in 1985, designed by the Great Western Railway for branch line passenger work when introduced in 1932. Although credited to Collett, the design dated back to 1865, this GWR tank engine number 1466 stands outside the Railway Centre at Didcot. Peter Cheshire

Below: During the Mid-1980's, British Railways started introducing "cyclic diagramming" of locomotives and rolling stock. The system produced train workings with locomotives not associated with certain routes up until then. Such diagramming also provided a wider variety of locomotive knowledge for train crews and maintenance staff. Whether entirely successful was debatable. However, it did provide some diesel haulage on scenic routes. Here I photographed Class 33 (Away from its familiar Southern territory) 33 008 "Eastleigh" at Hereford whilst working the 13.36 Crewe - Cardiff service on All Fools Day - 1st April 1984. The diagram would eventually work the train to Portsmouth Harbour via Severn Tunnel. David Mead





Above: I was in the North West later in the month and was fortunate to photograph double-headed Class 31's 31 152 and 31 305. This was on a short-lived ICI chemical tank working from Heysham Moss to Haverton Hill (Cleveland). The working went via the Wennington / Settle Junction route. I took this at Bare Lane (on the Morecambe Branch) on 21st April 1984. The Class 31's whilst not the best of reliable locomotives certainly were able to cover many mixed diagrams throughout England. David Mead

Below: 37 669 and 37188 blast through the unmistakable location of Cockwood Harbour on the 10th August 1989. Glorious sunny days, the unfenced harbour view and quality trains all have disappeared in today's modern world. Richard Hargreaves





Above: Summer Saturday traffic in the 90's brought out an assortment of rolling stock and locomotives "hired" from the freight sectors. It was to be honest the "run-down" of the former lucrative Summer Saturday rail cross-country business. Nevertheless, in 1992, the passenger business considered there was sufficient traffic to warrant substituting d.m.u. services with loco-hauled and stock. Here 47 049 is seen on the 09.46 Great Yarmouth - Sheffield departing Norwich on 18th July 1992. These trains were to be popular with rail enthusiasts so in order to deter such business, day rangers, rover and BR staff discount tickets became barred. *David Mead*

Below: In the early 90's, Royal Mail still had a good concentration of business with the railways - under the sub-sector (for a few years) Rail Express Systems. The business came under the parcels group umbrella. Various converted rolling stock was used and one of the interesting conversions was this former "South-end" electric. Here 302 992 stands at Norwich Station on 15th July 1992, where it would be employed on a Liverpool Street mail. The bright postal livery and yellow ends certainly stood out wherever one saw it. *David Mead*



