Railway Herald

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The electronic journal for the railway enthusiast

Railway Herald

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19th January 2009

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Fred Kerr

ELR January Diesel Day

As ***Jonathan Stevenson*** provides readers with a pictorial view of the East Lancashire Railway's diesel running day on 17th January, when steam heat and a variety of motive power was the order of the day.

See the action on Page 15

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Is Electrification back?
Electrification could be back on the agenda, as the Transport Minister announces plans to investigate the feasibility of further electrification.
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Job losses loom ahead
Several TOCs are blaming the state of the economy following several announcements of a reduction in workforce
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Preservation News
A round-up from the world of preservation as steam locomotives appear at Ilford and the Bluebell gains a 4VEP!
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News and pictorial events from around the globe with specific reference to North America and Europe.
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Front Cover Caption:

Class 60 No. 60074 *Teenage Spirit* is pictured at Kempston with the Toton to Forders engineers train on 14th January. Steve Madden

Editorial

First of all, may I thank all of those readers who have emailed and contacted us over the last week with feedback on the new look.

I'm delighted to say that, although a small number of people have raised issues and problems, the vast majority of those emails were very firmly in favour of the new look and especially the landscape layout.

Of the issues raised, there appears to be two main problems; firstly that with Adobe Reader set to display 'page width', the text is too small to read and that zooming into read it, then means scrolling horizontally and vertically. In almost all of the cases where further discussion was had between ourselves and the reader it was apparent that many people are running 17"-22" monitors but are still on 1024x768 resolution!

Screen resolution is one of those issues that is definitely down to personal preference. However, the bigger monitors are able to be set to higher screen resolutions that will give a larger desktop on screen, better rendering of images, and using a minimum 1280 pixels wide setting should allow you to read the magazine when set at 'page width'.

However, we accept that some readers will not wish to change, or indeed not have the 'know-how' to change, the resolution of their computers, but to try and assist all readers, we have returned to the previous Gill Sans font and increased the font size slightly to make it more readable. We would be keen to hear readers feedback on this move.

The second issue surrounds scrolling through pages, with several readers reporting that pages are now jumping or when they scroll down, that pages are being skipped. We have not changed anything in the setup of the PDF that would affect this. However, Adobe Reader does have several settings that dictate how the pages scroll.

One solution is to click onto the 'View' menu, then on 'Page Display' and ensure that is set to 'Single Page, Continuous' - which should eliminate any jumping and provide a smooth scrolling up and down of the pages.

Could MML and GWML electrification finally be on the table?

On 15th January, Transport Secretary Geoff Hoon outlined radical new plans for the UK's transport infrastructure, designed to support the economy and secure jobs in the long term.

The statement included the creation of a new company - High Speed 2 - to help consider the case for new high-speed rail services between London and Scotland and tasked initially with developing a proposal for an entirely new line between London and the West Midlands which could link to Heathrow and Crossrail through a new international interchange station. Further work is to be carried out to consider the case for electrifying two of Britain's busiest railway lines – the Great Western and Midland Mainline - with a decision to be announced later in the year.

The Association of Train Operating Companies (ATOC) welcomed the Government's commitment to put rail at the centre of a transport system fit for the 21st century. Michael Roberts, Chief Executive of ATOC, said: "Geoff Hoon's announcement is a bold step forward to improve the rail network offering the promise of new and faster journeys, investment in much needed rail capacity and electrification of key lines. The Government has made a commitment to investing in rail that will put it at the centre of a transport system fit for the 21st century - one that is designed to drive our economy forward. A new high-speed north-south line provides an opportunity for train operators to offer more seats and reduce journey times. It is vital that train operators, with their understanding of passenger needs, are fully involved in considering the case for high speed services and look forward to working on this with the new company – High Speed 2. We warmly welcome the support for further electrification of the rail network. It is an endorsement of the work carried out by train operators and industry partners and is a vote of confidence in rail. This work shows that a strong business case already exists for the further electrification of the Midland Main Line and the Great Western Main Line. Rail is already the greenest form of transport and further electrification will make it even more so".

Virgin Trains has also welcomed the Government's plans for a new high-speed rail link between Heathrow Airport, the West Midlands and Scotland. Virgin Trains Chief Executive Tony Collins said: "It is great news that having seen the evidence of train operators success in taking on the airlines, the Government is taking bold steps to develop the UK's rail network and encouraging people to use rail to and from international airports. The long distance train operators have a track record for offering a real alternative to domestic flights, and Virgin Trains has demonstrated the benefits of rail in taking many thousands of passengers off domestic airlines. Completion of a rail link will also take thousands of cars a year off the roads".

New freight terminal for Inverness

A new railfreight terminal at Needlefield Yard, Inverness, which is expected to take thousands of lorries off the A9 road between Bridge of Allan and Inverness, is to be formally opened by the Scottish Government's transport minister, Stewart Stevenson, on 20th January.

The official opening of the terminal comes two-and-a-half months after services, operated by hauliers John G. Russell and Stobart Group, of Coatbridge and Grangemouth respectively, began on 4th November last year. At present the trains carry items destined for the three Tesco stores in Inverness, as well as supermarkets at Aviemore, Dingwall, Elgin, Forres, Thurso, Ullapool and Wick.

The initiative was made possible after the Government awarded £2.1 million to John G. Russell and £982,000 to the Stobart Group last year.

▼ In what could prove to be one of the workings of the year, DRS Class 37/0 No. 37087 *Keighley & Worth Valley Railway* powers the 11.25 Tilbury to Daventry intermodal service through Chelmscote north of Leighton Buzzard on 5th January. John Pink

Network Rail looks to relocate Caldercruix station 600 metres west

Network Rail has announced its intention to apply for planning permission from North Lanarkshire Council to relocate the proposed Caldercruix station on the new £300 million Airdrie-Bathgate rail link.

The suggested change will move it from the currently proposed site, 600 metres to the west of the town, to the site of the former Caldercruix station, which closed in 1956. The new location, in the centre of the town, will bring significant benefits for travellers, with the number of people living within 800 metres of the station increasing by almost 40%. The relocation will also improve access to existing bus routes. The company has already secured land for the station and station car park and the change will have no impact on the Transport Scotland-funded project's planned 2010 completion date. The rail link itself will re-open the passenger route between Airdrie and Bathgate more than 50 years after its closure and reinstate more than 15 miles of track, building new stations at Armadale and Caldercruix and relocating stations at Bathgate and Drumgelloch. When completed next year, the rail link will bring four more trains per hour in each direction between Glasgow and Edinburgh.

Javelin set undertakes Ramsgate to St Pancras International run

▼ Class 395 Javelin No 395002 passes through Gravesend on 15th January, forming the 11.40 special from Ramsgate to St Pancras International.

Brian Morrison

Welsh coal branch returns to the network

A scheme to bring the disused branch line between Pantyfynnon and Gwuan-Cae-Gurwen back into use as a working freight line entered an important stage on 12th January with test trains running.

Although the route has never formally closed, Network Rail is concerned that local residents and dog walkers have got used to not having trains on the line after several years, and is warning them to stay safe and keep away from the railway and has also started an awareness campaign by visiting schools and writing to local residents, reminding them to obey level crossings signs and urging them not to trespass on the track. The operation of the line started with drivers receiving their training on the route and the operation of the infrastructure being tested. DB Schenker is initially planning to run two trains a day – one in each direction, and they will not exceed 20mph.

Didcot revamp is set to get the green light

A long-awaited £5.4 million revamp of Didcot station is set for the go-ahead this week, transport officers having recommended that the project to transform the forecourt of the station is given the support of Oxfordshire county councillors.

The county council originally hoped to submit a planning application in October 2007, but there were delays with the design of the forecourt. It could now be finished by spring next year. The scheme, which is funded by the county council, aims to create a gateway for Didcot, with better facilities for walkers, cyclists and bus users.

Redundant buildings on the forecourt will be demolished so that there is separate space for buses, taxis, bicycles and cars. There will also be a central pedestrian piazza flanked by a dedicated bus and delivery area, a larger taxi rank and more secure cycle parking. Over two million passengers a year use the station, making it the second busiest station in Oxfordshire, next to Oxford itself.

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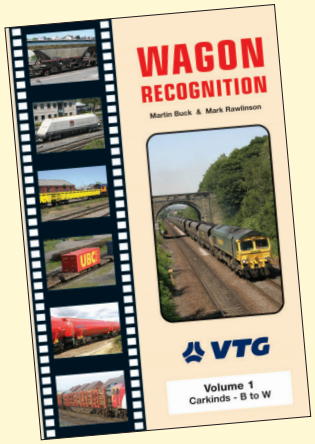

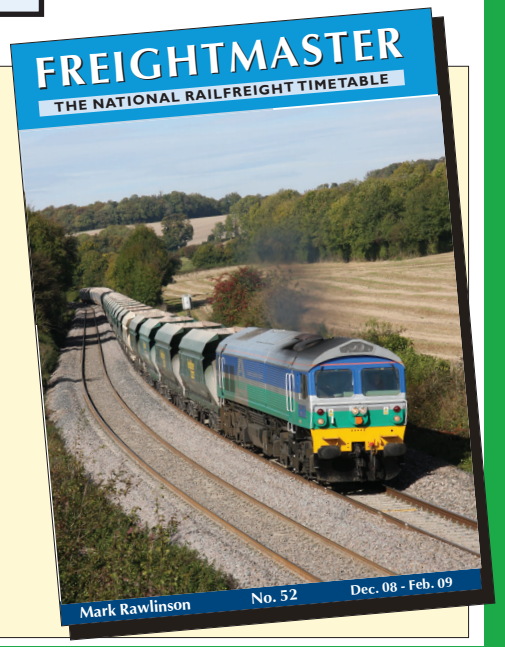

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Woolwich Arsenal extension on Docklands Light Railway opens to the public

The £180 million extension of the Docklands Light Railway (DLR) from King George V station in North Woolwich to Woolwich Arsenal on the south side of the River Thames, had an 'official' opening by current London Mayor, Boris Johnson on 12th January, although trains in fact commenced running on 10th January after an earlier opening by his predecessor Ken Livingstone!

Funding has been made by Transport for London (TfL) as part of its £8 billion Investment Programme. Key benefits of the new extension include improved transport links, connecting Woolwich to London City Airport in six minutes, Canary Wharf in 20 minutes, Stratford in 23 minutes and Bank in 28 minutes. Trains are every 10 minutes, increasing to every six to seven minutes in peak hours.

There is a direct interchange with Southeastern services at Woolwich Arsenal overground station, and with buses and taxis, although the directional signage to and from the overground station could be made clearer, people going up and down the escalators and finding the way from DLR to the Southeastern platforms a mite confusing.

As with the rest of the Docklands rail network, Woolwich Arsenal station includes step-free access to platforms and trains and it has two entrances, at Greens End and Woolwich New Road. Greens End offers direct access to the main shopping area of Powis Street, while Woolwich New Road provides easy interchange with local bus services.

The tunnel beneath the Thames runs at depths of up to 35 metres, the tunnel boring machine used to help build the extension removing over 100,000 cubic metres of material, which was transported via Thames' freight river barges to reduce the impact on London's roads.

The new extension opened early, with services originally scheduled to commence on 28th February.

▶ **On the official opening day of the Docklands Light Railway station at Woolwich Arsenal, a service from Bank arrives, formed of units Nos. 53 and 93. Brian Morrison**

UK News In Brief

■ Transport for London has increased its penalty fare for passengers caught without a ticket to travel from £20 to £50 and from £30 to £50 on trams. For the first time, those charged the penalty will be able to pay immediately using a debit or credit card.

■ A £750 000 project to improve train performance in the Taunton area has been completed by Network Rail. Upgrading of the relief line between Norton Fitzwarren Junction and Taunton station will improve train movements and reduce delays in the area. The track has been renewed, and now has a line speed of 40mph instead of 15mph. The line has been used regularly by freight workings, including civil engineering trains and specials to the West Somerset Railway, whose line starts at Norton Fitzwarren. The higher speed allows the relief line to be used by passenger services once again.

■ The power cables on the full length of the 400-mile West Coast Main Line are to be inspected by Network Rail engineers to avoid a repetition of the problems following the Christmas/New Year break when five separate failures hit an estimated 250,000 passengers. Preliminary investigations have failed to identify a common cause between the different breakdowns, an installation error stated to have been responsible for the problem at Wembley, and metal fatigue is being blamed for the component failures at Bletchley and Watford.

■ The Victorian columns that once held up Primrose Hill station looked destined for a scrapheap, but amid pressure from railway enthusiasts, conservationists and residents, Network Rail has agreed to the calls for a rethink and is to give the public the right to choose what happens to them. Councillor Chris Naylor said he was pleased to hear the columns and brackets had been salvaged and hoped one day to see them back in their rightful place and Primrose Hill station reopened.

■ First GBRf has signed a multi-million pound contract with private wagon hire company VTG Rail UK, a subsidiary of VTG Aktiengesellschaft, for the lease of a further 89 HYA coal wagons. Designed by International Rail Services (IRS), they will be constructed in Britain by W.H. Davis from its workshop at Shirebrook. Due for delivery from April 2009, the wagons will be of the same design as First GBRf's existing fleet of HYAs, which are well liked by power station and terminal staff, and provide higher payloads per wagon length than previous models. John Smith, Managing Director of First GBRf commented: "I'm extremely pleased that First GBRf's growth continues unabated despite difficult economic conditions. The procurement of these wagons is the next step in our strategic plan to secure a larger proportion of the Railfreight haulage market."

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Ministers say no to ticket office closures, but job cuts loom

Plans by South West Trains (SWT) to cut overheads by reducing the opening hours of ticket offices have in large part been rejected by Government Ministers following public consultation.

SWT had wanted to make radical cuts in its ticket office opening hours at 114 stations. Transport Minister Lord Andrew Adonis said: "We have acted to protect passengers from unacceptable cuts, ensuring that tickets continue to be easily available and that ticket offices are staffed during busy periods. We have rejected many of the proposed cutbacks in opening hours because we were not convinced they were in passenger's interests. We have also sought an assurance from South West Trains that, where ticket office hours are reduced in periods of very low demand, passengers can still buy a wide range of tickets from machines, with easy helpline support where necessary. In addition we have agreed that there will be no charges for tickets purchased in advance over the internet or phone. I now expect SWT to staff their ticket offices to the agreed level."

Generally, the Government has rejected proposals by the rail operator to reduce hours at offices during times when on average 12 or more tickets are issued hourly. This includes the rejection of around 80% of changes that would have seen no Saturday openings and around 65% of changes that would have seen no Sunday openings. SWT had also proposed altering hours at 105 stations during the midweek period - 53 of these proposals were rejected by Ministers, 14 wholly and 39 in part.

As this news emerged, First Group was also reported to have plans to cut 800 hours a week from the opening times of more than 40 of its stations. The RMT, however, has vowed to work with passengers and MPs to keep services intact and protect rail workers' jobs. The vast bulk of the planned cuts are aimed at 28 stations, which would see their ticket office hours reduced by a total of 750 every week and which would threaten up to 22 jobs. The stations include London Blackfriars, Bedford, Luton, Luton Airport, St Albans, Stevenage and Drayton Park, which is to be closed completely.

First ScotRail has also announced that it is seeking up to 40 voluntary redundancies out of its 4,300-strong workforce, although stressing that the offer of voluntary severance will not impact on frontline services. The notice has gone to headquarters' staff and managers and to other support departments, and is designed to ensure the business continues to operate as efficiently as possible.

However, the company also stressed that overall staff numbers are expected to grow as it will be recruiting more drivers due to major projects such as the Airdrie to Bathgate and Glasgow Airport rail links, and is also planning to recruit more customer service staff.

Southeastern says the economy has forced staff reductions

Go-Ahead has announced that due to the economy, Southeastern will have to reduce its workforce by some 300 during the year ahead, although to date no specific details have yet been given regarding the jobs likely to go.

Another four operating companies are scheduled to move from subsidy into paying premiums this year for the first time, their business plans having been calculated on a basic assumption of continuous growth. However, it was this type of optimism that forced GNER to relinquish its franchise at the end of 2006, after lower than expected revenue combined with the collapse of its parent company Sea Containers. Its successor, National Express East Coast (NXEC), has committed itself to paying average premiums of some £500, 000 a day, but the company is now cutting some jobs and most of the NXEC restaurant cars have been withdrawn, resulting in an expected job loss of 50 personnel in this respect.

As already reported, National Express East Anglia (NXEA) is reducing staff levels by some 300 following closure of its Norwich call centre, reducing station booking office hours and its review of train catering. The RMT Union is naturally opposing job losses for its members saying: "'Southeastern is part of a group that has been raking in record profits. These cuts are not only completely unjustified, but underline that Govia is interested only in making money. Its passenger numbers grew by more than 6% and its revenue by 13% in the last year".

Southeastern responded, saying that the staff reductions were necessary, "in order for us to remain a successful organisation, in a time of reduced growth". Some 90 administrative jobs are scheduled to go in May, and the rest are hoped to be lost through natural wastage.

On a separate issue, NXEA which like its sister company NXEC had been looking to axe its restaurant cars because of under-performance, has had to abandon its plans, at least in the short-term due to public outcry. It is understood that the decision is under review.

▼ A working involving TTA tanks in daylight is a rare sight. Class 66/0 No. 66134 passes Dyffryn with the 13.28 Llandarcy to Newport ADJ on 8th January. This was a positioning move in order to move the tankers for eventual scrapping following the rail traffic between Llandarcy and Thameshaven ceasing at the end of last year. **Mark Thomas**

▲ With the testing programme having moved from the c2c lines several weeks ago, the Bombardier built Class 378 is undergoing trials on third rail metals. Here No. 378 001 head the 11.45 Ashford - Willesden through Redhill on 12th January. **Ken Brunt**

Oyster expands to National Rail around London but not to SWT and Newcastle looks to smartcards

The pre-paid Oyster smartcard system that has been in operation in London for several years on London Transport and Docklands Light Railway is set to be extended to cover commuter services on overground lines.

The agreement is also seen as the first stage in a more ambitious national programme, which would allow similar technology to be spread around the country. Introduced by Ken Livingstone when he was London Mayor, the cards have enabled Transport for London to charge substantially less to holders than those who pay for individual journeys in cash. As a result of the change it will mean that those coming in from the suburbs will be able to use one card to travel around the capital.

The only exception to the scheme at this stage is South West Trains, which objects to the cost of installing and maintaining the card readers, which are already in place at all London Underground stations.

Similar readers are now being installed at suburban stations throughout the other train operators at an estimated cost of £40 million.

Ultimately the Department for Transport is keen to see smart card technology used throughout the railway industry, but a system in this respect still has to be devised to make it possible for passengers to buy discounted tickets in advance, which would be stored on the smartcard. The ability to use such technology is being included in the latest batch of rail franchises put out by the DfT, and industry insiders believe this could be a possibility within five years.

Meanwhile, London-style Oyster travel cards are to be introduced in the North East in a move designed to make public transport easier to use. The project, expected to start by the end of 2011 and estimated to cost £15 million, will allow passengers to travel using a single smart card.

They will be able to scan electronic card readers on the Metro system, buses and trains on routes as far apart as Berwick and the Tees Valley. The system will charge a fare using a single 'intelligent' card in place of cash as they board, allowing travellers to take advantage of any network travel arrangements. It would also make it easier for people to purchase travel through the internet. Nexus now hopes for approval from the PTA at its January 2009 meeting to submit a bid for Government funding for pilot projects.

UK News In Brief

■ Eurostar achieved record passenger numbers and ticket sales in 2008, following the first full year of operations on High Speed 1. Passenger numbers broke the nine million barrier for the first time with 9.1 million travellers carried – an increase of 10.3% from 8.26 million in the previous year. Ticket sales also reached a record level of £664 million, rising by 10.9% from £599 million in 2007. Shorter journey times to Paris and Brussels and the excellent connections offered by St Pancras International are attracting increasing numbers of passengers to switch to high-speed rail. The results would have been significantly stronger but for the closure of part of the Channel Tunnel following the fire on board a Eurotunnel freight shuttle in September, which continues to cause reductions in services and longer journey times.

■ First Capital Connect (FCC) has finished a £2.2 million extension of Bedford's Cauldwell Walk Depot in readiness to stable and maintain its new fleet of Class 377 Electrostars, which are due are due to enter service early this year. By the time all 92 carriages arrive, all but six peak-hours workings will be of maximum eight-car length. Currently, shortage of stock means that 20 peak hour services have only four carriages. In a welcome boost to the local economy, an extra 27 engineers have been employed to man the Depot, many from Bedford, Milton Keynes and surrounding towns. Cauldwell Walk now has a fifth enclosed section of track with inspection pits and elevated platforms from which the new trains – as well as the old – can be maintained. The new EMUs are an essential part of the Thameslink Programme that will radically transform capacity on the route. They are needed to operate a new timetable that will allow Network Rail to begin work transforming Blackfriars station so it can take, 12-car trains.

■ £10 million is to be spent on the line between Exeter and Plymouth in a series of improvements to six separate sections, starting this month with more than two weeks of intensive work at Marley Tunnel, the Dawlish sea wall and Plymouth station. Altogether, half a mile of new track and more than a mile of new drainage pipes will be installed. In addition, engineers will be fixing cliff nets onto the Dawlish sea cliff to reduce the risk of rock fall. A unique, high-tech early warning system will also be installed on the cliff to effectively detect rock falls.

■ Deutsche Bahn is interested in taking a stake in Eurostar. "We have had informative talks with the British ministry about this," Deutsche Bahn Chief Executive, Hartmut Mehdorn, told reporters at an event in the German capital. "Strategically, Deutsche Bahn has a natural interest," he said, adding, "However, it was too early to talk about any concrete intentions". Currently, Eurostar is a joint project involving Great Britain, France and Belgium.

◀ Merehead switcher No. 44 is seen on the pit road at Merehead shed. The locomotive is in the process of having the main generator changed, the first time such an operation has been carried out since the loco's arrival in the 1980s. As the engine bonnet had to be removed to carry out the work, something that it was not designed to do, it had to be cut off and a new one will need to be fabricated to allow the job to be completed. **Richard Dunn**

◀▼ The latest member of the DRS Class 37/6 fleet to be returned to service by HNRC at Barrow Hill, No. 37683 is pictured outside the workshops on 11th January in immaculate condition. **David Wragg**

▼ DB Schenker Class 67 No. 67029 *Royal Diamond* heads the 11.24 Marylebone to Wrexham General WSMR service past Kings Sutton on 17th January. The locomotive is believed to be working in place of WS&MR-liveried classmate No. 67012, which is presently at Crewe IEMD. **Both: Robert Jefferys**

UK Steam & Modern Traction Railtour Listings

The following table details the latest information available on railtours for the forthcoming weeks from the date of publication. Information is understood to be correct at the time of going to press.

24th January		
Past Time Rail	34067	London Victoria- Ashford-Folkestone Harbour-(Folkestone Hbr-Folkestone East-Harbour shuttle)-Canterbury (break)-Faversham-London Victoria
Pathfinder Tours	DBS 66 FL 66/5	**The Mersey Mancunian:** Bristol T M-Bristol Pky-Cam & Dursley-Cheltenham Spa-Stafford-Manchester Piccadilly (DBS Cl 66/0)- Fiddlers Ferry-Widnes-Regents Road L/C (rev)-Manchester Victoria (FL 66/5 & DBS 66/0 tnt)-Stockport-Wilmslow-Crewe (& return) (DBS 66/0)
30th January		
VSOE	35028	London Victoria- Guildford-Reigate-Redhill-London Victoria
31st January		
A1 Steam Loco Trust	60163	York-Newcastle upon Tyne (break/rev) & return
Past Time Rail	tbc	**The Cotton Mill Express:** Manchester Victoria-Stalybridge-Huddersfield--Copy Pit-Blackburn (break)-Darwen-Manchester Victoria
UK Railtours	DBS 92 DBS 60	London KX-Potters Bar-Stevenage-Peterborough- Doncaster-Leeds Skipton-Settle Jct-Wennington-Carnforth-Preston-Blackburn-Copy Pit-Hebdon Bridge-Wakefield Kirkgate-Doncater RM Siding & return
VSOE	2xDBS 67	London Victoria- London Victoria
1st February		
A1 Steam Loco Trust	60163	York-Newcastle upon Tyne (break/rev) & return 06 February
Pathfinder Tours	DBS 67	Swansea-Cardiff Central-Hereford-Crewe- Edinburgh Waverley
7th February		
A1 Steam Loco Trust	60163	Darlington- York-London KX (break/rev) (& return) *Limited Tickets : Contact Steam Dreams for bookings*
Past Time Rail	46115	(Manchester Victoria-Skipton-Hellifield)-Hellifield-S&C-Carlisle (break)-S&C-Hellifield-(Hellifield-Skipton-Manchester Victoria)
Spitfire Railtours	2xDRS 20/3	Birmingham International-Birmingham New St-Wolverhampton-Warrington BQ- Blackburn-Hellifield-S&C-Carlisle (break) & return
8th February		
Pathfinder Tours	2x DBS 66	Edinburgh Waverley-North Berwick- Monktonhall Colliery (rev)-Leith Docks (rev)-Powderhall Branch-Mossend-Grangemouth Docks Branch (rev)-Larbert-Stirling-Alloa-Dunfermline Town-Forth Bridge-Edinburgh Waverley
9th February		
Pathfinder Tours	DBS 67	Edinburgh Waverley- Crewe-Hereford-Cardiff Central-Swansea
14th February		
Past Time Rail	tbc	**The Cotton Mill Express:** Manchester Victoria-Stalybridge-Huddersfield-Copy Pit-Blackburn (break)-Darwen-Manchester Victoria

Not all pick up/set down points are shown. Check with the operator before travelling any distance.

BLACK Charters expected to operate as booked.
GREEN Tours postponed to a future date by the operator
WCRC West Coast Railway Company
RED Tours cancelled by the operator
BLUE Provisional excursion
(Locations) in brackets on a steam tour listing indicates a diesel or electric-hauled section.

The Week Ahead

The railtour scene begins to pick up some momentum this coming weekend with two quality tours scheduled to operate, and with quite a variety to enjoy in the forthcoming weeks.

Back to this weekend, and Past Time leads the way with its 'Golden Arrow', which visits the threatened steeply graded branch to Folkestone Harbour. With the closure process seemingly in limbo, and with the VSOE 'British Pullman' still a regular visitor, Past Time is using the opportunity for a steam-hauled tour some nine months after we all thought we had said our farewells.

As with the 'last' departure in April last year, Battle of Britain Pacific No. 34067 *Tangmere* will again be in charge and there will also be the now obligatory additional shuttle from the Harbour station to Folkestone East and back, before the main train again sets off for Ashford and Canterbury West, for a short break, and then back via the Medway Towns. The train originates at London Victoria, and travels via Ashford to Folkestone East, where a diesel will be attached for the descent to the harbour on both workings, as well as being available to provide support on the two hauls up the fearsome 1-in-30 incline.

On the same day Pathfinder Tours head north from Bristol Temple Meads to Manchester Piccadilly, via Birmingham New Street, Stoke-on-Trent and Macclesfield with a DB Schenker (DBS) Class 66. There will then be an afternoon option to stay with the train for a visit to the newly re-opened Olive Mount Chord. A Freightliner Class 66/5 will be added to the train at Manchester Piccadilly, which will travel via Altrincham and Hartford Junctions to Latchford Sidings in Warrington, where the train will reverse and continue via Fiddlers Ferry Junction to Widnes for a further reversal at Wapping Sidings. The Bootle branch is next as far as the Network Rail Limit at Regents Road level crossing, where it again reverses to return to Manchester Victoria via Olive Mount Junction, Huyton, St Helens Central and Eccles. The Class 66/5 will leave the train at Manchester Victoria and travel back to Birmingham and Bristol via Stockport, Wilmslow and Crewe.

▼ **Heading the Venice-Simplon Orient Express stock, Rebuilt Merchant Navy Pacific No. 35028 *Clan Line* powers through Wimbledon with the 'United Castle Express' on 17th January. Chris Wilson**

▲ SR Bulleid-designed Merchant Navy Pacific No. 35028 *Clan Line* powers through Worting Junction, heading towards Winchester, on 17th January with the VSOE 'Union Castle Express' bound for Southampton Docks. **Walter Stamper**

Cromwell to Folkestone and Gresley to Lincoln as RTC announces its 2009 charter programme

The Railway Touring Company ask the question of when will the Folkestone Harbour branch close, as it states that the 14th March 'Golden Arrow' will 'probably' be the last chance to travel the branch.

It is due to be hauled by BR Standard 7MT Pacific No. 70013 *Oliver Cromwell* and will rekindle many memories of when the original 'Golden Arrow' was 'Britannia'-hauled in the 1950s. The train will depart from London Victoria and pick up also at Headcorn before proceeding to Folkestone East, where a diesel will be attached for the descent to the harbour. A feature of this trip is that there will be two shuttles operating between Folkestone Harbour and Folkestone East. The main train then returns via Ashford, taking a short break at Canterbury West, and returning to Victoria via Margate and Faversham. Will it be the last? Well, there are unconfirmed reports of at least one other train heading in that direction before Easter.

RTC's season is scheduled to get underway on 14th February with the re-dated 'Somerset Explorer' from London Paddington to Yeovil Junction and Salisbury with No. 34067 *Tangmere*. This is followed seven days later with 'The South Western Express' from Portsmouth Harbour to London Waterloo and return, picking up at Fratton, Cosham, Fareham and Eastleigh. Lord Nelson 4-6-0 No. 850 *Lord Nelson* was originally booked for this train, but with the situation over its mainline certification still unclear, *Tangmere* will now substitute.

On 28th February the 'Great Northern' is booked to start at Cleethorpes, and pick up through North Lincolnshire to Doncaster for, hopefully, a fast run into London King's Cross with No. 70013 *Oliver Cromwell*. Note that the return run is steam-hauled to Peterborough, with diesel-haulage back to Cleethorpes.

Meanwhile, 'The Severn Valley Limited' on 14th March is a joint operation with the Severn Valley Railway Association, and is in essence a positioning special to get 'A4' No. 60007 *Sir Nigel Gresley* back to the North Yorkshire Moors Railway following its short visit to the SVR for its Festival of Steam Gala, booked for the previous weekend. The interesting aspect is that the train will be hauled by the 'A4' throughout from Bridgnorth, via Bewdley, Old Hill Bank, Walsall, Burton-on-Trent and Nottingham to Lincoln. The return is diesel hauled.

Duchess of Sutherland's first trip for 2009 is scheduled for 28th March on the 'Cumbrian Mountain Express' from Worcester Shrub Hill, Kidderminster, Stourbridge Junction, Birmingham New Street and Wolverhampton, with steam haulage northbound over the S&C from Hellifield, returning over Shap with steam as far as Preston.

THAT'S YER LOT

– 50 years since the closure of the M&GN –

Friday 27th February – Sunday 1st March and Saturday 7th – Sunday 8th March 2009

When the Midland & Great Northern Joint Railway closed in 1959 they said 'That's Yer Lot', how wrong they were! 50 years on don't miss the North Norfolk Railway's biggest ever steam gala, with the unique chance to see eight steam locos representing types that worked the line in its heyday.

Guest locos include B1 1306 'Mayflower', 4MT 76079, 4F 44422, 2MT 78019 and L&Y 'A' Class 1300 ● Intensive timetable ● Free vintage rail replacement buses ● Dining and real ale trains (28th February) ● Vintage coach tour of the M&GN with railway historian Adrian Vaughan.

All day hop-on, hop-off rover tickets: £16 adult, £15 senior citizen, £10 child, £45 family (2 adults + 2 children or 3 adults + 1 child). Discount price tickets available for 2 or 3 day travel.

Visit nnr.co.uk or call 01263 820 800

LIVE STEAM – LIVING HISTORY

▲ Class 73/1 No. 73109 *Battle of Britain 40th Anniversary* crosses Riddlesdown Viaduct with 4VEP No. 3417 *Gordon Pettitt* in tow on 17th January, bound for East Grinstead. **Jamie Squibbs**

South West Trains Celebrity 4VEP EMU is handed over to the historic Bluebell Railway

The Bluebell Railway celebrated the inauguration of its mainline connection and the arrival of the first item of rolling stock by rail for more than 45 years on 17th January.

South West Trains 'Celebrity' 4VEP No. 3417 *Gordon Pettitt* has been sold to the heritage line for a nominal fee and its handover took place during a special East Grinsted Open Day, which will hopefully have helped to promote and publicise the work being undertaken to return the Bluebell Railway to the town.

The railway's mainline connection was officially reinstated on 16th January, with pointwork connecting the National Network to a short length of track, long enough to hold the 4VEP. Once the clearance of Imberhorne Cutting is completed, and tracklaying extends from Kingscote to East Grinstead, the new point will form the link between the Bluebell Railway and the new Bluebell station in the town, while at the same time, allowing charter trains to run through to Horsted Keynes.

The four-hour public open day on 17th January was a huge success with a number of people visiting the site and taking advantage of the ability to join one of the organised walks across Imberhorne Viaduct.

Work on the actual extension is continuing and the railway's recent share issue, that closed at the end of 2008, saw around 1,100 applicants apply for £670,000 of shares, which has funded the initial removal of spoil and material from Imberhorne Cutting and allows accurate estimates to be compiled on the costs and time involved in clearing the remainder of the tip.

Imberhorne Cutting remains the last major obstacle to the Bluebell Railway returning to East Grinstead.

Perserverance leads the way on cutting clearance!

▲ **As the Bluebell Railway looks to progress the clearance of Imberhorne Cutting in 2009, privately-owned, mainline-registered Class 73/1 No. 73136 *Perseverance* has been hired on a two-month basis to cover for the usual Class 08, which is presently out of service. The 'ED' will be used on the trip workings to remove a further quantity of inert spoil material, which is located on the northside of Imberhorne Lane Bridge. This material will be used for civil engineering purposes at other sites on the Railway and is principally soil and sandstone. The newly arrived Class 73, the first mainline diesel on the Bluebell Railway, is pictured during shunting movements at Horsted Keynes on 15th January. Tony Sullivan**

Marking 50 years of the M&GN closure

What promises to be a spectacular steam gala will be held over two weekends at the North Norfolk Railway to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the closure of most of the Midland & Great Northern Joint Railway system.

The gala will take place from Friday February 27th to Sunday 1st March, and on the following weekend, March 7th and 8th, with the 28th February being the actual closure date fifty years ago. Five visiting engines are scheduled to appear: B1 class 4-6-0 No. 1306 *Mayflower* in LNER apple green, Ian Riley's BR Standard 4MT 2-6-0 No.76079, Fowler 4F class 0-6-0 No. 44422, BR Standard 2MT 2-6-0 No. 78019, and Andy Booth's L&Y Class 27 0-6-0 No. 1300. They will be joined by three 'home' locos: WD 2-10-0 No. 90775, 97 years-old J15 class 0-6-0 No. 65462 and Class N7 0-6-2T No. 69621.

Passenger rolling stock will include the quad-art set and the North Norfolk's new RBR-equipped dining train. The newly commissioned Holt signal box will allow an intensive service to be worked on all five days.

Other highlights are tours of the M&GN system with railway historian Adrian Vaughan in a 1959 Bedford-Duple coach, ex-Eastern Counties buses recalling the two railway replacement routes introduced in 1959, and an open evening in Weybourne works on 28th February (visitors must bring their own orange hi-vis vests). Whitwell & Reepham station will be re-opening its doors on 1st and 8th March.

All day hop-on, hop-off 'Rover' tickets are £16 adult, £15 senior citizen and £10 for children. Discount price 2-day and 3-day tickets are available for adults and senior citizens. There is also £1 off all tickets booked before 20th February. The Adrian Vaughan tours of East and West parts of the old M&GN are £8.

Beechings scissors presented to the National Collection

Dr Beeching's scissors have been donated to the National Railway Museum by his daughter and accepted into the National Collection at York.

The 'Beeching Cuts' is the common description for the Government's attempt in the 1960s to reduce the cost of running the railways in the UK. Ironically the scissors were made to mark the opening of the rebuilt Plymouth station, opened by Beeching in March 1962. Along with the scissors a presentation salver engraved with an aerial view of Tinsley Marshalling Yard, showing the layout of the yard, buildings and bridges, was also donated.

Ilford becomes a steam workshop!

▶ **Over recent weeks, several steam locomotives have visited the Bombardier workshops at Ilford for tyre turning, the latest two being from the West Somerset Railway, in the form of GWR 'Prairie' No. 4160 and S&DJR 2-8-0 No. 88. The latter pictured here, being offloaded from the low-loader in the works yard on 12th January after its journey.**
Samuel D. James

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Hunslet No. 3155 *Walkden* and Barclay No. 1147 *John Howe* are positioned for a specially staged night photo shoot, on the evening of 10th January at the Ribble Steam Railway, Preston. **Andrew Fowler**

Preservation View

The East Lancs Railway held a Winter Diesel Day on 10th January 2009, using several of the resident fleet of locos to operate the usual Saturday timetable.

◀ Problems earlier in the day meant that Class 50 No. 50015 *Valiant* had been unable to work its scheduled diagram but managed to make an appearance for the last round trip of the day, top-and-tailing with Class 40 No. D335. The BR Large Logo Class 50 stands under darkening skies at Ramsbottom with the 16.30 Rawtenstall to Bury Bolton Street service.

◀▼ On the same day, BR blue Class 33 No. D6525 *Captain Bill Smith RNR* is seen here approaching a cold and frosty Ramsbottom as it powers the 10.40 Rawtenstall to Heywood service.

▼ The BR green type 4, now with small yellow warning panels, has its steam heat boiler working to full effect as it leaves a frosty Ramsbottom with the 10.20 Heywood to Rawtenstall service.

All: Jonathan Stevenson

▲ The Heart of Wales line saw a rare loco-hauled train on 7th January, when Class 37/6 No. 37605 and Class 37/0 No. 37259 powered a Serco test train. The working is pictured as it wanders through rural Mid-Wales near Manordeilo with the 07.52 Shrewsbury to Shrewsbury. Obviously the sheep were unimpressed! **Mark Thomas**

▼ On 14th January, still wearing its Fragonset black livery, Class 31/1 No. 31106 pauses at Taunton while propelling an Exeter - Didcot test service. Leading the train was one of the Mk2 DBSO vehicles. **Brian Garrett**

▼ 'Royal' Class 67 No. 67005 *Queen's Messenger* powers a Crewe to Euston test train through Stafford on 13th January. In the consist was test coach *Mentor*, three DB Schenker Executive coaches and No. 67007 *Royal Sovereign* on the rear. **Brad Joyce**

An extremely colourful picture shows class 150/0 No. 150011 pulling away from Norton Junction in Worcestershire on a working from Gloucester to Worcester Shrub Hill on the 13th January. The long winter shadows emphasising the strong light on the unit. **Jack Boskett**

▲ Class 60 No. 60076 was used to power a rake of five stored Class 60s from Toton TMD to Crewe on 16th January. The convoy arrives at Crewe with Class 60s Nos. 60007, 60045 and 60046 (nearest the camera) in tow, which are to be stored at Crewe DMD. **Neil Bradley**

◀▲ Class 60 No. 60021 *Star of the East* powers through Wickwar with a Robeston to Westerleigh 'Murco' petroleum service on 10th January. **Glen Batten**

◀ Class 66 power is usually in charge of coal services into Ironbridge Power Station. However, on 12th January, Class 60 No. 60087 *Barry Needham* was used with one of HTA sets, where the end vehicles have had the autocouplers removed and replaced by conventional drawgear. The train passes Stafford on its return working from Ironbridge to Warrington Arpley Yard. **Brad Joyce**

◀ West Coast Railway Class 37/7 'Heavyweight' No. 37706 passes Barrow-on-Trent on 14th January with a stock move from Carnforth to Barrow Hill. conveying five Cargo-D Mk2 vehicles. **Bob Gibson**

◀▼ First GBRf Class 73/2 No. 73205 *Jeanette* drags Class 33 No. D6515 through Southampton Millbrook on 14th January, en route to Eastleigh Works, where the loco is to be overhauled by the 71A Locomotive Group. **David Warwick**

▼ Class 57/3 No. 57307 *Lady Penelope* hauls Mk3 No. 11027, DVT No. 82101 and Mk3 No. 11079 through Stafford, bound for Crewe IEMD from Wembley CS, the first two vehicles of which will form part of the new Fridays-only loco-hauled diagram from London Euston to Preston. Traction for the diagram, it is understood, will be provided by an EWS Class 90. **Brad Joyce**

High-speed Finland-Russia route becomes the Allegro

Finnish Railways has announced that the high-speed link between Helsinki and St Petersburg is to be renamed Allegro, meaning 'fast' in Italian.

The high-speed trains will carry a base white livery with silver, blue and red streaks, with the colours being derived from the Finnish and Russian flag colours. The Pendolino trains, being built by Alstom, are to enter service in 2010.

▲ Artists impression of the new livery. **VR/Finnish Railways**

The Fast Rail project aims to shorten the travel time between Helsinki and St Petersburg to three and a half hours and then to three hours. Presently, services take around five and a half hours. The number of passengers on the route is estimated to triple in five years, partly due to the faster services. In 2008, passenger figures between Finland and Russia improved by 9% on the previous year

Alstom was awarded the contract to supply four high-speed Pendolino trains in September 2007. They will be manufactured at the Alstom site in Savigliano (Italy) and are due to come into service in 2010.

The new Pendolino trains will operate on a 450km line connecting the cities of Helsinki and St. Petersburg at speeds of up to 220 kph.

The trains will comprise seven carriages, making a total of 352 seats, with a business class fully equipped to allow business meetings during the journey. Customs and passport checks will be carried out onboard in a dedicated carriage.

Russian Railways trials new gas-turbine locomotive

Russian Railways is conducting trials on its latest type of traction equipment and something unlike anything else in the world - the first GT1001 gas-turbine locomotive.

During trials on 20th December, the new locomotive hauled a 116-wagon freight train weighing 10,000 tonnes.

Russian Railways says there is no other locomotive today that is capable of pulling trains of this weight. The gas-turbine project was designed by the all-Russian Scientific-Research and Design-Engineering Institute, and the experimental unit was assembled at the Voronezh locomotive repair works. The gas-turbine locomotive works on liquefied natural gas and is designed for use on non-electrified railway lines.

The locomotive comprises two sections; one consists of a turbine and power unit, while the other contains a fuel tank with a capacity of 17 tonnes, sufficient to cover a distance of 750km. The maximum power of the gas-turbine locomotive is 11,130hp and its total weight is 300 tonnes.

▼ The Gas-Turbine locomotive, No. GT1001, on trials. **Russian Railways**

New ETR610s on test, but not in service

SBB already has a temporary timetable in operation for services to Italy following the delay in delivery of the new Alstom Ferroviaria ETR610 high-speed trains.

On 8th January, Cisalpino introduced conventional SBB trains for the Basel to Milan service, allowing increased maintenance to be undertaken on the ETR470 type trains. As the operation of Cisalpino ETR470 cannot achieve a satisfactory reliability level coupled with the delays with the delivery of the new ETR610 sets, The SBB trains have been leased for several weeks.

◀ Class ETR610S Nos. 610008 and 610009 cross the Luogelkin Viaduct, near Hohtenn, on the Lötschberg mountain line, on 16th January, on a test run from Berne to Brig. **Georg Trüb**

Heritage traction on the Rhatische Bahn

◀ The Rhatische Bahn in south-east Switzerland is in the midst of a busy programme of operations to cater for the increased traffic demands of the peak winter sports season. An added bonus for rail enthusiasts is the use of older classes of locomotive on passenger diagrams. The Class Ge 6/6 Bo-Bo-Bo articulated locomotives are a case in point, as they are normally used on freight services. On 9th January, No. 703 *St Moritz* rolls into Tiefencastel with Regio Express, Train No. 1141, the 12.58 from Chur to St Moritz. Don Gatehouse

First high-speed 'Sapsan' train delivered to Russian Railways

The first high-speed 'Sapsan' train was delivered to Russian Railways (RZD) on 26th December at St.Petersberg, it being the first of eight such high-speed trains in the Velaro RUS series manufactured by Siemens Transport Systems under a €276 million contract with RZD.

In 2007, the companies also signed a €354 million contract for maintenance of the trains over a 30-year period. It will carry its first passengers between Moscow and St.Petersberg in late 2009, following completion of trials and certification. It will travel at speeds up to 250km/h, although it is technically capable of reaching 300 km/h.

The new service will reduce travel times for passengers between Moscow and St.Petersberg from four hours 30 minutes to three hours 45 minutes. The train owes its name to its speed: "We named the train 'Sapsan' as this is the fastest bird on the planet", said RZD President Vladimir Yakunin at the presentation. The remaining seven trains will be delivered during 2010.

In the future, 'Sapsans' will also serve the Moscow to Nizhniy Novgorod route.

Voith Maxima approved for German operations

In late December, the Voith Maxima - 40C'C' locomotive was officially approved for traffic by the German Federal Railway Authority.

This approval successfully concludes the development of the first Voith locomotive, which, with approximately 5,000hp, represents the most powerful diesel locomotive within the European standard gauge network.

Immediately after its approval, the first Maxima is already proving itself in regular operation within the German rail network. Over the last 12 months the locomotive has been used for supplying coal to the combined power station Kiel-Wellingdorf. On the demanding transport route from Brunsbüttel to Kiel, the Maxima shows its full power potential. Until recently, the coal services had to be sub-divided between several trains due to a lack of tractive effort, a problem that has been solved by the new 'Maxima' locomotive. Over the next few months, the first Maximas will be delivered to their customers from the Voith workshops in Kiel.

Based upon the approval for operation in Germany, the current licensing procedures in Belgium, the Netherlands and other countries will soon be finalised as well.

Milestone funding cleared for New York tunnel scheme

The New York Mass Transit Tunnel, centerpiece of the Access to the Region's Core (ARC) project, reached a major milestone that clears the way for federal funding and will allow construction to begin this year.

The local financing share of $5.7 billion is already committed, including $3 billion from the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey. New Jersey is now looking for a federal funding commitment from the new administration in Washington, D.C.

With train traffic into New York at maximum capacity, the tunnel project will double commuter rail capacity between New Jersey and New York and also allow improved rail service within New Jersey itself. These improvements will reduce roadway congestion with tens of thousands of additional transfer-free passenger trips each day and generate 6,000 jobs annually during construction until project completion in 2017. About $600 million in design and construction contracts will be ready for construction bidding as soon as a federal funding agreement is reached Several other contracts, and other work, totaling about $3 billion, will be ready to go to construction soon after.

The existing two-track 100-year-old commuter rail tunnel under the Hudson River is pushed to its limits each rush hour with NJ TRANSIT and Amtrak trains. The Mass Transit Tunnel will more than double peak capacity from 23 trains per hour to 48.

In addition to two new side-by-side single-track tunnels, the project will create new station capacity in Manhattan designed specifically for commuter rail service with wider platforms and more escalators.

▼ **Railpower-built Gen-Set switcher No. 1400 is pictured on 15th January at David Junction, Illionis. The loco was moving dead in-transit on the Iowa, Chicago & Eastern Railway from Chicago to Kansas City, where it will be delivered to the KCS. This is the second Gen-Set that has moved over the line recently, as KCS No. 1401 made the same trip last week. Lance Wales**

High speed travel could reach the US

Japan has the bullet train, Europe has several high-speed lines using TGV, ICE, Eurostar and Thalys trains and now the United States Congress has said that it is about time that the USA got its own high-speed rail system.

The U.S. Department of Transportation is soliciting proposals to design, finance, build, and maintain 11 new high-speed rail corridors around the country. The 11 proposed lines will connect the major cities within each highly populated area in the country, and by making rail viable will free up airports for cross-country and international travel.

The high-speed rail corridors envisaged are:

- North-east Corridor—Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Washington DC
- California Corridor—Sacramento, San Francisco, Los Angeles, San Diego
- Empire Corridor—Buffalo, Albany
- Pacific Northwest Corridor—Eugene, Portland, Seattle, Vancouver
- South Central Corridor—Tulsa, Little Rock, Dallas, San Antonio
- Gulf Coast Corridor—Houston, New Orleans, Mobile
- Chicago Hub Corridor—Chicago, Detroit, Cleveland, Kansas City, St. Louis, Louisville, Minneapolis/St. Paul
- Florida Corridor—Tampa, Orlando, Miami
- Keystone Corridor—Pittsburgh, Philadelphia
- Northern New England Corridor—Portland/Auburn, Boston, Montreal
- South-east Corridor—Raleigh, Charlotte, Atlanta, Columbia, Jacksonville

The plan is part of the Rail Safety Enhancement Act of 2008, which was signed into law last October. Section 502 of the law requires that the Northeastern Corridor be able to take passengers from New York to Washington DC in two hours or less, including stops along the way.

Different technologies can reduce that time further, but pricing must be taken into consideration.

New Jersey bridge replacement agreed

In a move that could unlock one of the thorniest railroad bottlenecks in the north-east of the USA, the Federal Railroad Administration has signed off a plan to replace the almost century-old Portal Bridge that spans the Hackensack River, clearing the way for Amtrak to spend $1.34 billion to build a three-track bridge just north of the Portal Bridge and a two-track span to the south of it.

The project is expected to be completed by 2014. Once the new bridges are finished, the Portal Bridge, built in 1910, will be dismantled. Currently, even the slightest slowdown can interfere with the daily routines of the approximately 150,000 New Jersey Transit passengers who cross the bridge each weekday. Nearly 400 New Jersey Transit trains and 103 Amtrak trains use the bridge daily, and because of its structure, trains can cross at only 60mph compared with 90mph line-speed either side of it.

The 961-foot Portal Bridge has only two tracks, and because its lowest beams are only 23ft above the river, the bridge must swing open to allow commercial boats to pass. This delays trains travelling between Pennsylvania and all points west during non-peak hours on average about 20 minutes.

New Intercity services from Colombo

The Sri Lanka Railway introduced four new Intercity Express train services from Colombo Fort to Trincomalee, Batticoloa and Badulla from 1st January.

The new Trincomalee Intercity Express departs Colombo Fort before the 05.45 Yazh Devi express to Vavuniya, and reaches Trincomalee around 12.00. The same train commences its return journey at 01.00 from Trincomalee and reaches Colombo Fort on the same day at around 19.30.

The railway eventually plans to employ an interconnecting Intercity Express service to Batticoloa that will interconnect with the Trincomalee Intercity Express.

Vietnam to build an express railway

Vietnam Railway is to build an express railway to cut travel times between Saigon and Hanoi to six hours from the present 29 hours, officials hoping to realise the project by 2035.

Opened in October 1936, the North-South Railway has seen various changes over its lifetime. It was damaged extensively by bombs from two wars., and since the advent of peace, employees have continuously upgraded the railway and trains to reduce travel times between Saigon and Hanoi from 42 hours to 40, 36 and now as mentioned to 29.

However, a railway transport development strategy for 2020, onlooking to 2050, has been approved by the Prime Minister and is expected to develop a modern, rapid and sustainable railway transport system. It is planned to have 10 stops over the 1,630km route and will cost $33 billion, of which just over $23 billion will come from the Government to build infrastructure and just over $10 billion from Vietnam Railways to purchase land and set up facilities. The North-South Express Railway will be built alongside the current track and will require 4,261 hectares of land, about 70% of which is agricultural and forests.

Queensland Rail signs $45 million deal for new locos for intermodal business

Queensland Rail (QR) signed a AUS$45 million deal with Downer EDI to lease nine new locomotives at the end of 2008.

QR's intermodal business has negotiated a five-year lease of nine new GT46 Ace locomotives from Locomotive Demand Power Pty Ltd, a subsidiary of Downer EDI Rail Pty Ltd.

QR Executive General Manager Freight, Ken Lewsey, said the first of the locomotives came on line in late December 2008, with final delivery planned by mid next year.

"The agreement boosts QR Intermodal's capital investment programme, which includes the previously announced purchase of 18 new locomotives and 488 wagons for AUS$187 million and the upgrade of our terminal at Forrestfield in Perth." he said.

Each week QR Intermodal offers four services on the eastern seaboard between Cairns and Melbourne, six services from Melbourne to Adelaide and two from Melbourne to Perth.

New Class 92 locomotives for Pacific National

New 92 class locos are currently being introduced to the Pacific National Operations in the Hunter Valley, NSW, Australia.

Built by United Group in Newcastle, 15 of the type are currently being delivered to Pacific National for both coal and intermodal work and are based on the General Electric C44ACI 4,500hp design.

▲ Class 92s Nos. 9207, 9210 and 9208 pass East Maitland, about 20kms from Newcastle, NSW, with a train of around 90 loaded coal hoppers bound for the Port of Newcastle.
Andy Warren

▲ On 6th January, more then 10 new Euro Class 66s (led by No. 77034) for Euro Cargo Rail are recorded at Botlek Harbour, Rotterdam, awaiting onward movement to France.
▼ Veolia Class 66 No. MRCE 8653-01 powers train No. 51802, a Blerick-shuttle on 6th January past Hulten. Also in the consist were two Euro Class 66s; CrossRail No. DE 6310 and Euro Cargo Rail No. 77011, both en route to NedTrain's workshop in Tilburg. **Both: Rob van der Woude**

▲ An MBTA commuter train, bound for the City of Boston, heads west through Ayer, Massachusetts, while GP40 No. 348 on a Guilford local working heads onto the 'Y' towards the yard on 2nd January. **Chris Butts**

▲ After blasting through a snowdrift in near whiteout conditions across northern Illinois, an Iowa, Chicago & Eastern Railway manifest finds some sunshine just west of Stillman Valley, Illionis, on 10th January led by SD40-2 No. 6421. **Jim Kleeman**

▼ Canadian National No. 2512 heads south through Ackerville, Wisconsin, on the CN Mainline in early January. The CN is currently adding a new main line track, turning the existing mainline into a siding. **Aaron C. Jors**

19th January 2009

Great Central Railway (Spinkhill Branch)
The Angel Hotel, 26 College Road, Spinkhill, Sheffield S21 3YB
Members Evening (slides or digital). Meeting commences at 19.30. Contact Frank Greaves on 01909 473927 for further details.

Locomotive Club of Great Britain (Dorking)
Pethick-Lawrence House, 85 South Street, Dorking, Surrey.
'Travels in South America' by Donald Wilson. Meeting commences at 19.30.

RCTS (Chester Branch)
The Town Crier, City Road/Station Road, Chester (opposite station entrance).
'The New Welsh Highland Railway' by Dave Kent. Meeting commences at 19.45.

RCTS (Oxford Branch)
West Oxford Democrats Club, 1 North Street, Osney, Oxford.
'SNCF Today' by Mike Bunn. Meeting commences at 19.30.

RCTS (Northampton Branch)
Weston Favell Parrish Hall, Booth Lane South, Weston Favell, Northampton.
'Southern Electric' by Bruce Oliver. Meeting commences at 14.00.

20th January 2009

Stephenson Locomotive Society
Fox Covert Inn, High Leven, Nr Yarm, Teeside.
'The Glorious Years - North Eastern Region' by Martin Green. Meeting commences at 19.30. Contact the Secretary on 01642 321205 for further details.

21st January 2009

Institute of Mechanical Engineers (Rail)
Chartwell House, 1 Brunel Parkway, Pride Park, Derby.
'The Welsh Highland Railway' by Peter Randall. Doors open 17.15 for 17.45 start.

Permanent Way Institution (Glasgow)
Upstairs Lounge, The Iron Horse, West Nile Street, Glasgow.
'Bottom up Track Renewals' by Hugh Delahunt and Jamie Breckenridge, Babcock Rail, Hamilton. Meeting commences 17.30. Contact Jack Scott on 0141 952 2562, mobile 077889 765291 or e-mail Jack.scott1@Btinternet.com for further details.

RCTS (Eastleigh Branch)
(in conjunction with The Mid Hants Railway & The Somerset & Dorset Trust)
Eastleigh Railway Institute, Romsey Road, Eastleigh.
'John o' Groats to Lands End Part 2' by Alistair Jeffrey. Meeting commences at 19.45.

RCTS (West Riding)
Pudsey Civic Hall
'Out and About in the Last Year' by Hugh Gould. Meeting commences at 19.30.

22nd January 2009

Gravesend Railway Enthusiasts Society
Emmanuel Baptist Church, Windmill Street, Gravesend DA12 1BB.
'On and Off the Footplate' by Bill Davies, Ratired Railwayman. Meeting commences at 19.45. Contact Roger Hart on 01474 8333320 for further details

RCTS (Brighton Branch)
Brighthelm Church and Community Centre, North Road, Brighton.
'Railways of Southern France' by Michael Bunn. Meeting commences at 19.30.

23rd January 2009

Shropshire Railway Society
The Gateway, Chester Road, Shrewsbury 'Settle - Carlisle Perspectives' by Tony Icke. Meeting commences at 19.30. Minimum donation of £3 requested for non members. Contact Tony Hatch on 01691 650985 or by e-mail at colin.hatch531@btinternet.com for details.

24rd January 2009

Stephenson Locomotive Society
The Mining Institute Lecture Theatre, Neville Hall, Westgate Road, Newcastle upon Tyne. 'Thomas Bouch - Railway Engineer' by Professor A.I.B.Moffatt. Meeting commences at 19.00. Contact 01434 688946 for details.

26th January 2009

RCTS (Maidenhead Branch)
Cox Green Community Centre, Highfield Lane, Cox Green, Maidenhead. 'An Overview of the Crossrail Project - Consent to Contruction' by Peter Fry. Meeting commences at 19.30.

RCTS (Sheffield Branch)
St Mathews Church Rooms, Carver Street, Sheffield. Branch AGM. Meeting commences at 19.30.

27th January 2009

RCTS (Nottingham Branch)
Nottingham Mechanics, 3 North Sherwood Street, Nottingham.
'Ten Years of Medium Format Photography' by Gavin Lake. Meeting commences at 19.30.

RCTS (Welwyn GC Branch)
The Methodist Church, at the junction of Ludwick Way and Colegreen Lane, Welwyn Garden City. 'Branch Lines' by David Soggee. Meeting commences at 14015.

RCTS (West Riding)
Saltaire Methodist Chapel, Saltaire Road, Shipley. 'Tales of a Signalman' by Malcolm Riley. Starts 19.30.

RCTS (Woking Branch)
Woodham Hall, Christ Church, Town Square, Woking. 'The Challenge of Delivering a Bigger, Better Railway' by Richard O'Brian. Starts 19.15.

28th January 2009

Basingstoke & District Railway Society
Wote St.Club, New Road, Basingstoke
Members AGM. Starts 20.00. Contact 01256 326096 for further details.

29th January 2009

Locomotive Club of Great Britain (Croydon)
United Reformed Church Hall, Addiscombe Grove, East Croydon.
'21st Century loco-hauled Trains' by Geoff Brocket. Meeting commences at 19.15.

RCTS (Preston Branch)
Claremont Hotel, Blackpool Road, Preston.
'The North Wales Coast Railway since 1989' by Ian Pilkington. Meeting commences at 19.30.

30th January 2009

Great Central Railway (London Branch)
The Exmouth Arms, 1 Starcross Street, Euston, London NW1 2HR.
TBA. Meeting commences at 19.30. Contact the society secretary Richard Butler on 01525 372487 for further details.

Great Western Society (North West Group)
St Hilda's Clubroom, Slater Street, Latchford, Warrington.
'West Highland Railway'. Meeting commences at 19.30.

Great Western Society (Oxford Group)
Pauling Human Sciences Centre, 58 Banbury Road, Oxford.
'The Industrial and the Deltic' by John Hubbard.. Meeting commences at 19.30.

Scarborough Railway Society
The Public Library, Vernon Road, Scarborough.
'A Rover's Double Decade' by Terry Digney. Meeting commences at 19.30. Contact the Secretary, Adrian Scales at email@scarboroughrailwaysociety.org.uk for further details

3rd February 2009

Gravesend Railway Enthusiasts Society
Emmanuel Baptist Church, Windmill Street, Gravesend DA12 1BB
TBA by Andrew Munden, Network Rail. Meeting commences at 19.45. Contact Roger Hart on 01474 8333320 for details

Locomotive & Carriage Insitution
London Underground Limited, Broadway, St James Park Station, London. 'Crossrail Project' by Simon Bennett. Starts at 18.00.Contact Stuart Smith at smithstuart@btinternet.com for further details.

Locomotive Club of Great Britain (Bedford)
St John's Church Hall, St John's Street, Bedford. 'The History & Upgrading of the Victoria Line' by Peter Neal. Meeting starts at 19.30.

Should your society information be listed on this page?

If so, then please email the details to the editor, remembering to include the date, starting time and location, together with details of the event, speaker and entrance charges if applicable.

It is not necessary, but helpful to people, if you can also include a contact name and phone number/email address for the organisation that can be published.

Railway Herald reserves the right to edit details entered in this section, which may also be displayed on our online events diary.

Internet Links
Links to the various society websites can be found in our links section on the website, or by clicking here.

▼ **Showing a true corporate identity, National Express East Coast Class 91 No. 91111 joins Class 43 powercars Nos. 43295 and 43319 at London King's Cross on 13th January. Paul Townsend**

Locomotive Club of Great Britain (North London)
Wood Green Labour Club, 3 Stuart Crescent, Wood Green, London N22 5NJ. 'The Committee Entertains'. Meeting commences at 19.30.

Southern Electric Group (South Hampshire Branch)
Eastleigh Railway Institute, Romsey Road, Eastleigh. ' The Isle of Man in the 1970s and 1980s' by David Mead. Meeting commences at 19.30. Admission charge of £2. Contact the Secretary, John Goodrich on 023 8067 0028 for further details.

Weston super Mare Railway Society
The Function Room, The Conservative Club, Alexandra Parade, Weston super Mare. 'Diesels in Scotland' by Ian Chancellor. Meeting commences at 20.00. Contact Lionel Jones on 01934 628289 or e-mail fotophile69@talktalk.net for further details.

4th February 2009
Burton Railway Society
Marston's Social Club, Shobnall Road, Burton upon Trent. 'Preserved Steam on Video' by Karl Jauncey and Dave Richards. Meeting commences at 19.30. Admission £1.50 non members, 50p members. Contact Mark Ratcliffe on 01283 221537 for further details.

5th February 2009
Great Central Society (Rotherham Branch)
The Three Horseshoes, Bawtry Road, Wickersley, Rotherham, S66 2BW. 'Out Through the Hope Valley and back over Woodhead' by Ted Hancock.. Meeting commences at 19.30. Contact Mick Hayes on 01709 820544 for further details.

Stephenson Locomotive Society
St John Ambulance Centre, Sandes Avenue, Kendal. 'By Midland to Morecambe - a Last Glimpse of the 'Little North Western' by Noel Machell. Meeting commences at 19.15. Contact the Secretary on 01539 720706 for further details.

6th February 2009
Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway (Birmingham Area Group)
Northfield Library, Church Road, Northfield, Birmingham. 'Flavours of the Past' by Les Plews. Doors open at 19.00 for 19.30 start.

Severn Valley Railway (Wolverhampton Branch)
Old Wulfrunians Club, 253A Castlecroft Road, Castlecroft, Wolverhampton. 'The Corris Railway, Beginnings to Rebirth' by Rosie and John Guest. Starts 19.30. Contact Alan Davies on 01902 758882.

Stephenson Locomotive Society
The Mining Institute Lecture Theatre, Neville Hall, Westgate Road, Newcastle upon Tyne. 'Mixed Traffic Locomotives' by David Stewart-David. Meeting commences at 19.00. Contact the Secretary on 01434 688946 for further details.

8th February 2009
Stephenson Locomotive Society
Settlement Centre, Union Street, Middlesbrough. AGM followed by 'The Emerald Isle' by Ian Armstrong. Meeting commences at 19.00. Contact the Secretary on 01642 321205 for further details.

9th February 2009
Southern Electric Group (Sussex Branch)
The Deall Room, Southwick Community Centre. AGM followed by 'The Brains of Sussex' quiz by Mike Hearn and Nick Kelly. Starts at 19.30. Donation of £2 requested. Contact the Branch Secretary, Bruce Cakebread on 01273 462094 or by e-mail at b.cakebread@ntlworld.com for details.

Stephenson Locomotive Society
New Trinity Parish Hall, Saltcoats, Ayrshire. 'Irish Railways in the Years 1996-2006' by Arthur Wilson. Meeting commences at 19.30. Contact the Secretary on 01294 822303 for further details.

York Railway Society
Archbishop Holgate's School, Drama Studio, Hull Road, York. 'On shed, behind the scenes of Britain's Railways' by David Birtle. Meeting commences 19.30. Contact Robin Patrick on 01904 412232 for further details. Visitors £2 entrance fee.

10th February 2009
Abergavenny and District Steam Society
Upper Room, The Hen & Chickens, Flannel Street, Abergavenny 'Railway Performance Society' by Martin Barrett. Meeting commences at 20.00. Contact the Secretary, Ken Mumford at ken.mumford@ntlworld.com for further details.

Great Western Society (Bristol Group)
NAWA, 589 Southmead Road, Filton. Group AGM followed by 'Narrow Gauge Railways in the Dresden Area' by Andrew & Vivienne Hook. Meeting commences at 19.45. Contact the Secretary on 01454 324230 for further details.

The 8E Railway Association (Northwich Branch)
The Gladstone Club, Station Road, Northwich CW9 5RB. 'Archive Video' with Colin White. Meeting commences at 19.45. Contact the society secretary Michael Lenz on 01606 44959 for further details

11th February 2009
Basingstoke & District Railway Society
Wote St.Club, New Road, Basingstoke. 'Southern Steam on London Sheds' by P.H.Groom. Meeting commences at 20.00. Visitor welcome. Contact the Secretary on 01256 326096 for further details.

Grimsby & Cleethorpes Railway Group
Royal Air Force Club, 5 Alexandra Road, Cleethorpes DN35 8LQ. 'New England in the Fall' by Bob Gellatly. Meeting commences at 19.30. Contact the society secretary Mike Hartley on 01724 341358 for further details

Stephenson Locomotive Society
YMCA, Bridge Street, Guildford. 'Reminiscences of Steam Days' by John Snell. Meeting commences at 19.30. Contact the Secretary on 01372 379216 for further details.

Swiss Railways Society (London Branch)
The Model Railway Club, Keen House, 4 Calshot Street, London N1 9AT (near Kings Cross station) 'Switzerland in 1988' by Nick Freezer. Meeting commences 19.00, Refreshments available during the evening. A £2 donation is requested. Contact the society secretary Ron Dawes (0208 660 3532) for details.

12th February 2009
Continental Railway Circle
St Paul's Church Centre, Rossmore Road, Marylebone, London NW1 6NJ 'Steam in France and Italy' a DVD show by Nick Lera. Meeting commences at 19.15. Contact Adrian Palmer on 01932 850624 or e-mail akpalmer@talktalk.net for further details.

Friends of the West Highland Lines
Room 10, Partick Burgh Halls, Burgh Hall Street, Glasgow 'The Stranraer to Ayr Line Suport Association' by Richard Carr. Meeting commences at 19.30.

Locomotive Club of Great Britain (St Albans)
United Reform Church Hall, Watford Road, Chiswell Green. 'More British Transport Films of the 50s & 60s' by Alan Willmot. Meeting commences at 19.30.

13th February 2009
Altrincham Electric Railway Preservation Society
Altrincham Methodist Church Hall, Barrington Road, Altrincham, Cheshire. 'Scottish Branch Line Steam in the 1960s' an illustrated presentation by John Ryan. Admission £3 for non-members Starts 19.30. Call Andrew Macfarlane on 0161 928 9394 for details.

Great Western Society (Swindon Group)
Lawn Community Centre, Guildford Avenue, off Windsor Road, Lawn, Swindon SN3 1JE. Group AGM followed by A Railway Quiz by Jim Turner. Meeting commences at 19.00. Contact the Secretary on 01793 495976 for further details.

Scarborough Railway Society
The Public Library, Vernon Road, Scarborough. 'A Trainspotter's Dream' by Nick Bielby. Meeting commences at 19.30. Contact the Secretary, Adrian Scales at email@scarboroughrailwaysociety.org.uk for further details

Shropshire Railway Society
The Gateway, Chester Road, Shrewsbury. 'PSOV on Video' by Karl Jauncey and Dave Richards. Start at 19.30. Minimum donation of £3 requested for non members. Contact Colin Hatch on 01691 650985 or by e-mail at colin.hatch531@btinternet.com for further details.

14th February 2009
Cornwall Railway Society
The Community Centre, Foundry Row, Redruth. 'Welsh Narrow Gauge, including the Welsh Highland Railway' by Peter Johnson. Meeting commences at 18.30. Contact the club secretary Derek Buttivant on 01637 860627 for further details.

Back Issues

All of the back issues of the magazine are available 24 hours a day, on our website **www.railwayherald.com**

Rear Cover Caption

With Class 43 powercar No. 43062 leading, classmate No. 43014 brings up the rear of Network Rail's NMT as heads north at Abbotswood Junction with the 05.42 Old Oak Common to Derby RTC via Swansea test run on 9th January. David Pagett

Magazine Information

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