Railway Herald

Issue 167 - 23rd February 2009

The electronic journal for the railway enthusiast

Railway Herald

Issue 167
23rd February 2009

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All editorial emails should be sent to the editor. To email a member of the team, send your message to firstname.surname@railwayherald.com

Publication
The Railway Herald is published weekly, 47 times a year.

Submissions
We welcome submissions from all readers, especially digital photographs. Pictures should be sent to the editor at *editor@railwayherald.com*

Good quality scans of colour slides and prints are also acceptable. There is currently no financial payment made for photographs published in *Railway Herald*. Where possible we always try to use news photographs taken within the production week of the publication date.

Website
Our website contains all back issues of the magazine and is available at **www.railwayherald.com**

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ISSN 1751-8091

Richard Tuplin

A Royal naming for *Tornado*

Eighteen years in the making, millions of pounds to build and after creating an interest level in steam locomotives not seen in many years, the latest chapter in the A1 Steam Locomotive Trust story began when the locomotive was given a Royal naming.

See the action on Page 3

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Win a cab ride!
Would you enjoy a cab ride or chance to drive Southern's dedicated driver simulator? If so, then a raffle being held could be of interest!

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Front Cover Caption:
A1 Pacific No. 60163 *Tornado* passes Milford Junction on 19th February with the Royal Train, working from York to Leeds. Steve Chapman

British steam and engineering gets the Royal seal of approval

It is 61 years since the first Peppercorn 'A1' Pacific was built, a year that coincidentally saw the birth of the future King, suggesting that, as HRH The Prince of Wales commented, it was a fine vintage.

It was with that comment that, after arriving by Royal Train, HRH The Prince of Wales and HRH The Duchess of Cornwall officially named the A1 Steam Locomotive Trust's prized-possession, *Tornado*.

As with everywhere that the 'A1' goes, crowds lined the platform, as eager to see the new locomotive as they were the Royal couple, but for the Trust that has spent 18 years building the 50th member of the class, it was the final step in a construction programme that many thought would never see the light of day.

But see the light it did, and there can be better no crowning glory than having Britain's newest steam locomotive take charge of the Royal train for a short journey from York to Leeds. While the Duchess of Cornwall travelled in the train, Prince Charles rode on the footplate from York to Church Fenton, obviously enjoying the start of a day of engagements in West Yorkshire.

Photographers in their hundreds were at the lineside to watch the Royal train pass with the newly named *Tornado* at the helm, complete with the Royal lamp code and the Prince of Wales feathers on the smokebox. No. 60163 worked the Royal train to Leeds via Church Fenton and Castleford, before returning to York Holgate sidings with the empty stock - DB Schenker Class 67 No. 67005 *Royal Sovereign* was on the rear.

▲ A1 Steam Locomotive Trust Chairman, Mark Allatt, looks on as TRH The Prince of Wales and The Duchess of Cornwall unveil the plate to officially name No. 60163 *Tornado*. **Richard Tuplin**

◀ Complete with the Prince of Wales feathers on the smokebox, No. 60163 *Tornado* coasts through Bolton Percy, south of York, with the Royal Train and with HRH Prince Charles on the footplate. **Geoff Dingle**

▼ The sleek outline of *Tornado* is seen to the full as it speeds through Colton Junction. **Fred Kerr**

Final upgrade to West Coast timetable

Network Rail has announced the addition of further services onto the West Coast Main Line, representing the final step in the introduction of new trains on the route following completion of the £9 billion upgrade project.

From 16th February, a further 16 daily Virgin trains were added to almost 100 services that were introduced in December. London Midland will introduce six extra services to add to its 52 extra trains added in December. Southern will now operate to Milton Keynes. Chris Gibb, Chief Operating Officer of Virgin Trains, said: "Virgin Trains is delighted to have a full new timetable, including the most frequent service ever run between Chester and London, and we are looking forward to developing this exciting new market with faster journeys every hour". Steve Banaghan, Managing Director of London Midland, said: "We're delighted to have a full new timetable, which includes our new Trent Valley line service. This is already proving popular and providing a great connection from the North West and West Midlands into London at affordable prices".

Chris Burchell, Managing Director of Southern said: "I'm very pleased we can now put in place the final pieces of our timetable. Southern's hourly service will provide direct trains for people travelling between towns along the West Coast Main Line and locations in west and south London, including Wembley, Shepherd's Bush and Kensington Olympia. With connections to many other destinations at Clapham Junction and East Croydon I am sure these trains will prove very popular".

The planned extension of the East London Line has been given the go-ahead, funded by the Government, Transport for London (TfL) and City Hall and will link Surrey Quays to Peckham and Clapham Junction, providing direct links to the City and Docklands. The extension is intended to reduce congestion on radial routes, and at Central London interchange stations.

The Department for Transport is providing £64 million for the extension and other transport improvements. TfL will contribute £15 million towards the cost of the scheme.

▲ **The initial First ScotRail Class 156 to carry the new Saltire Livery, is pictured ex-works at Railcare Springburn on 11th February. A total of 28 units will be repainted, of which this is the second, but the first to be branded. Classmate No.156494 was painted and released without branding recently.**
Bill Wilson, courtesy of Transport Scotland/Railcare

Corby 'taster' service starts operation

East Midlands has introduced a single daily direct return 'taster' service between Corby and London St Pancras from 23rd February.

Running Mondays to Fridays from Corby at 06.37 and returning from St Pancras International at 18.00. On Saturdays, the trains run to London at 09.15 and return from there at 17.00. The company remains committed to providing a full and regular direct service for Corby and this will be able to begin when the additional three trains required have been secured. Contract negotiations are ongoing.

Providing a rail service for Corby was an optional feature of the East Midlands Trains franchise. To deliver the service it requires three additional trains. As is known, there is a shortage of rolling stock and for the last year the company has been working with the Department for Transport to secure the necessary trains to begin a full service.

£557,000 investment in Merseyside stations to improve access for people with mobility problems

Merseytravel and Merseyrail, with the support of the Department for Transport (DfT), have invested £557,000 at a further four stations on the network to improve access for people with mobility problems.

At Bidston, improvements include a fully accessible toilet, better seating and customer information screens on the platforms and in the waiting room. New Brighton also now has information screens in the booking hall and on the platforms. There is also a rise and fall ticket counter, automatic station entrance doors, improved seating, tactile paving and new flooring in the booking hall.

Wallasey Grove Road improvements include new information screens, rise and fall counter, tactile paving, and double-glazed windows to the Liverpool platform waiting room. At Wallasey Village, both waiting rooms have been refurbished; there are improved seating and information screens on the platforms and at the top of the stairs.

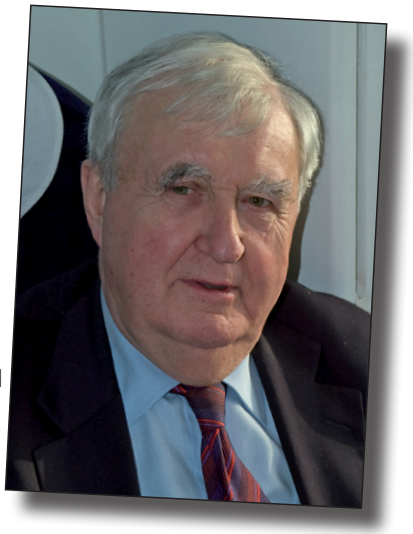
The projects have been part-financed by the DfT's 'Access for All Small Schemes' fund (£265,760) with Merseytravel contributing a further £271,240 and Merseyrail £20,000.

Bombardier complete Voyager refresh

As previously reported, Bombardier completed the refresh programme of Virgin Train's Class 221 DMUs early.

The final unit, No. 221144 being renamed *Bombardier Voyager* by VT Chief Operating Officer Chris Gibb. ▲▶ **Steve Knight**

Brian Perren, Journalist 1928-2009



The well-known railway journalist, Brian Perren, died on 10th February after a short illness, aged 80.

His first feature was in Trains Illustrated, the forerunner to Modern Railways, in July 1954. He wrote in parallel with his career as an oil industry executive, and after taking early retirement his writing output increased, with regular articles for Modern Railways and numerous supplements and one-off publications that he commissioned, wrote and edited.

Among his books, his noted TGV Handbook was translated into several languages, and he also co-authored HSTs at Work and contributed to Ian Allan's first 'modern traction' book, The Deltics - a Symposium. His specialities for Modern Railways included annual timetable reviews, researched with the Regional management and timetabling staff, and train catering, reflecting his enthusiasm for good food and drink.

His enthusiasm for French Railways made him the leading chronicler of the rise of its high-speed lines and the development of TGV and its derivatives. Brian had contacts and friends throughout the railway and was a stalwart of the Railway Study Association and the Chartered Institute of Transport. His many interests apart from railways included a love of jazz.

He was a friend and valued colleague to the majority of railway journalists and always ready to share his specialist knowledge. His cheerful presence, quick wit, and unending fountain of very funny jokes will be sadly missed at railway press functions. Our sympathies go to his wife and family.

£5.5 million project to install ticket gates at 14 London stations to be completed by August

A £5.5 million project to install ticket gates at 14 stations in South London has been announced.

The scheme is intended to improve security and discourage ticketless travel, and follows the recent installation of Europe's longest ticket gate line at Waterloo station. In total 68 normal, wide aisle or manual gates are due to be installed by Transport for London (DfT) and train operator Southern. Additional ticket machines will be installed at Wallington and Tulse Hill stations to make it easier for passengers to buy tickets.

Initially, the gates were to have been specified as part of the new South Central franchise, but the DfT has agreed to introduce the gates earlier alongside the Oyster card roll-out programme to reduce costs and increase security ahead of schedule. The project is the first stage of improvements to station staffing that will be delivered within the new South Central franchise from early next year. The franchise contains a requirement that the gates will be staffed from the first train in the morning until the last train at night, seven days a week.

The stations that will have gates are Battersea Park, Carshalton, Gipsy Hill, Norbury, Peckham Rye, Purley (2 entrances), South Croydon, Streatham, Streatham Common (2 entrances), Streatham Hill, Thornton Heath, Tulse Hill (2 entrances), Wallington (2 entrances) and West Norwood (2 entrances).

Wide aisle gates will be introduced at every station to accommodate wheelchairs, pushchairs and luggage, and remote monitoring equipment will be installed to ensure secondary station entrances are kept open to reduce passenger inconvenience while maintaining security.

Installation of the gates is due to be completed by August this year, but is dependent upon relevant consents being granted. Southern and TfL are liaising with Network Rail to link installation with other projects at the relevant stations.

Brighter future for Goole to Knottingley route?

Goole-based Danbrit Shipping, the company spearheading plans to revitalise an old rail line between the Goole Intermodal Terminal and Knottingley to improve freight transport, says the four-year project now looks as if it can be successfully funded.

The shipping company is spear-heading a consortium that includes Wykeland, the Hull-based industrial developer, the East Riding of Yorkshire Council, British Waterways and DB Schenker, which is endeavouring to further improve facilities at the Port of Goole.

A European Union grant has been made available to support transport schemes in which UK and European companies work together along with a local council, and on this basis the project should move forward to improve the transport of goods between ship, train, barge and road. It is aimed to develop a direct rail link between Goole and the West Midlands and include local waterways in the intermodal strategy, so cargo can be discharged straight onto barges in Leeds and Rotherham.

Investment for Appley Bridge

Passengers using the railway between Gathurst and Appley Bridge will enjoy a smoother and quieter ride following a £1.1 million track renewal project being carried out by Network Rail.

Just over two miles of new track will be laid, including 147 yards of guardrail over Gathurst Viaduct. The 25ft high viaduct spans both the River Douglas and the Leeds & Liverpool Canal, and the guardrail sits alongside the normal rails to keep trains on the viaduct in the event of a derailment.

Once the work is completed, there will be an improvement in the performance of trains along the Wigan–Southport line. The work took just over a week to complete and 13 engineers' trains were used to take the old track away and deliver the new materials to the work sites. The line was closed continuously from 14th to 23rd February, and Northern arranged an alternative bus service between Southport and Wigan.

Metro and Light Rail News

▲ A shaft of sunlight highlights a southbound 'A' Stock train arriving at Baker Street in the wintry conditions of 3rd February. **Jon Nye**

Euro trams for Croydon?

Transport for London (TfL) has approached operators of light rail systems in Continental European cities in a bid to hire in extra trams to relieve overcrowding on the Croydon Tramlink network.

Contact has been made with a number of cities, including Cologne and Saarbrucken in Germany, Berne in Switzerland and Istanbul in Turkey, to ascertain if they have any spare trams that can be borrowed! TfL believes that borrowing the trams could provide a short-term solution to overcrowding by providing additional capacity on Tramlink within three years. TfL is expected to focus on procuring new trams from Bombardier, which built the original Tramlink fleet. However, it says that any new tram order could have a long lead-time and could be expensive for the small number of vehicles required. Tramlink has 24 trams and is looking at leasing a maximum of four more.

Edinburgh tram delay

The Edinburgh Tram project has announced that the planned tram infrastructure work due to commence on Princes Street was unable to start as planned over the weekend.

The ongoing utility diversion work will continue and the diversion of traffic from Princes Street will still take effect from 05.00 on 21st February. The decision was brought about because the Project was given 48 hours notice before the commencement of Princes Street works that the tram project consortium, BSC, comprising Bilfinger Berger, Siemens and CAF wished to impose what are termed as unacceptable conditions as a requirement to start the work as planned. The City of Edinburgh Council support the Project team's announcement.

Light rail or monorail could be brought back to Swansea Bay

Trams could be returning to the streets of Swansea, turning back the clock to the days of the famous Mumbles Railway.

Councillors have agreed to fund a feasibility scheme looking at bringing back the trams to Swansea Bay. One of the ideas being considered involves an overhead monorail network that would provide excellent views along the coast. Such a system could be similar to the one that operates in Sydney, Australia, and could become a major tourist attraction. Swansea was home to the world's first tram system, the Mumbles Railway, which opened over 200 years ago. The feasibility study may cost tens of thousands and may even run to £100,000, but providing a light rail system for Swansea and the surrounding area could create hundreds of jobs and would bring a new vibrancy to shops and other businesses in the city centre as Swansea's economy is said to be stifled by the fact that people cannot get in and out fast enough. If the project goes ahead, it could involve Swansea Bay linking with places such as Morriston with a second phase coming from Llanelli.

Do you fancy winning a cab ride or trying your hand on a driver simulator?

A driver for Southern is trying to raise money for Wansbeck Hospital near Ashington, in Northumberland, by holding a raffle, with the prizes, especially for the enthusiast, not being average raffle prize draws.

First prize is a day for two people on the Southern simulator at Selhurst, second prize is a cab ride for two people anywhere on the Southern network, while third prize is a tour for two people around the joint Southern/First Capital Connect/Network Rail control centre in Croydon. Southern has also kindly provided five pairs of Southern 'Daysave' tickets for the runners-up.

The fund-raising idea came about following the death of a family member to a pneumonia-related illness, and with the help and support of his employers, Daniel Bound is looking to raise as much money as possible. Tickets are priced at 20p each, with a book of five for £1.

Anyone wishing to assist the cause and purchase tickets, or simply make a donation to the fund, may contact Daniel Bound at 37, Blenheim Park Road, South Croydon, CR2 6BJ making cheques and postal orders payable to Mr. D. Bound. Alternatively, readers can call the Railway Herald Editorial Office on 01904 500175 and purchase a minimum of 10 tickets using a Credit Card (Debit Cards cannot be accepted).

Daniel will also be selling tickets at Brighton station on 4th/5th March and in London Victoria station on the 25th/26th March. The draw will take place on 17th April and the Southern Managing Director, Chris Burchell, will draw the winning tickets.

▲ **The Telford International Railfreight Terminal project team in front of DRS Class 66/4 No. 66431, which had brought two containers into the site on the 09.43 from Crewe. The movement occurred to allow a gauging run to take place on each siding at the Donnington terminal. Visible in this picture are the Telford & Wrekin councillors who were instrumental in making the project happen, as well as Ken Russell of JG Russell, who will be operating the terminal. Richard W. Jones**

UK News In Brief

■ Automatic ticket barriers are being installed at five stations in Birmingham as part of a £2.7 million investment by London Midland. The first will be completed at Five Ways and University in early March, followed by Snow Hill two weeks later and Moor Street in mid-April. The work, which is part of London Midland's franchise commitment, will be completed when barriers are installed at New Street station in the summer.

■ The Wrexham, Shropshire & Marylebone Railway (WS&MR) is to alter its timetable to provide a service leaving London during the evening peak on weekdays. A consultation document on proposed changes to Chiltern Railways' services from May states that a number of trains departing from London Marylebone just after 18.30 could be retimed to allow a WS&MR service to run. It is likely the train would call at Banbury, at about 19.45, to pick up passengers bound for Shropshire and Wales. The current 16.33 service from Marylebone runs non-stop through the station, but all other WS&MR trains stop at Banbury to drop off passengers southbound and pick them up northbound.

■ Tram-trains – rubber-wheeled vehicles that can run on railway tracks – could be coming to Bristol. They are to be tested next year by the Government and Network Rail on a Northern Rail's Sheffield to Barnsley route and, if successful, could be introduced first in the Bristol area. Tram-trains, which run on a hybrid system of diesel and electric, are lighter and cheaper than conventional trains and can replace conventional trains on a line using the same track. It will be the first time such vehicles have been used in Great Britain, although several lines already run them in Europe, including in the German town of Kassel.

■ A cross-party delegation is to lead a march on 27th March in the long-running protest over plans to install ticket barriers at Sheffield station. Members of 'Residents against Station Closure' will join the politicians as they walk from Barkers Pool to the station. Widespread opposition has built up to the proposed gates on the basis that they will sever a main pedestrian route between Park Hill, Norfolk Park and the city centre. East Midlands Trains says they are needed to prevent fare dodging and are looking at ways of addressing community concerns.

■ Over four miles of new track is to be laid between Kettering and Harrowden on the Midland Main Line at a cost of £11.5 million, to boost capacity and enable trains to pass through the area more quickly. The two-track bottleneck on this stretch of line has increasingly become a problem as more trains use the route and freight traffic is increasing, especially quarry traffic taking aggregates to East London for the 2012 Olympics and Paralympics. The project to return the stretch to four tracks is due for completion in spring 2010.

■ Stansted Express has become the latest outlet for Visitor Oyster Cards. Under a new deal, visitors to London will able to buy a card pre-loaded with £10 when they purchase their train tickets at Stansted, allowing direct access to the Tube and bus network as soon as they arrive in London.

Increased winter service for Coast line

Northern Rail has announced plans to run more services between Hull and Scarborough from December this year.

The new timetable would mean an improved weekday timetable after 15.00 and the extension of the current summer Sunday services to year round. This will more than double the number of Northern Rail services available on Sundays.

The Area Director, Northern Rail, said: "We believe our proposed timetable will bring real benefits to passengers and the wider communities along the Wolds Coast line. I would like to thank Community Rail Humber and East Riding of Yorkshire and North Yorkshire County Councils for their hard work and support in getting the proposals to this stage."

The plans have been submitted as part of the industry timetable planning process, and Northern Rail expects to hear whether they have been accepted in July.

£3 million makeover for Barnes bridge

One of London's landmark bridges is to receive a £3 million makeover by Network Rail.

The 1891-constructed, Grade 2 listed, wrought-iron Barnes Bridge, in the London Borough of Richmond, will be refurbished starting next month and is expected to be completed early in 2010. Much of the work will be done during the day, but in order to keep rail services running, some trackside elements will need to be carried out at night. The refurbishment works have been staggered in order for the Thames to remain open to river traffic throughout.

Joseph Locke constructed the bridge in 1891, replacing the original cast-iron bridge that was built in the 1840s. It was last painted in the early 1970s. It is fairly unusual in that there are very few railway bridges over the River Thames that also incorporate pedestrian footpaths. In years gone by, tickets were sold to spectators who used Barnes Bridge as a vantage point to watch the University Boat Race, as it is situated within the final mile of the course.

Bombardier exhibits new Electrostar design

Bombardier Transportation is to exhibit design studies for its second generation of Electrostar EMUs at the Railtex 2009 exhibition, which is to be held in London on 10th-12th March.

There are currently over 1,600 Electrostar cars in service and over 400 vehicles on order. The second generation is said to be an evolution of the existing technology, which it is claimed will make the design 'the lowest risk solution'. The second generation will also draw on Bombardier's recent products for the European market, including the AGC in France, the Spacium 3.06 (Francilien) for Paris suburban services and the Talent 2 currently on test in Germany. The new Electrostar is to feature 'aerodynamic styling, spacious interiors, lightweight vehicles and bogies, and leading-edge propulsion equipment'. Bombardier says that the design is targeted at forthcoming projects in Great Britain. The company is one of four shortlisted to supply the equivalent of around 300 four-car EMUs for the Thameslink programme, and is the preferred bidder to supply 120 cars for National Express East Anglia for the 'Stansted Express'.

Bids submitted for new South Central franchise

Both National Express and Stagecoach have announced that they have submitted bids for the new South Central franchise, currently operated as Southern by Govia.

The new franchise operates a range of inner and outer suburban services to London Bridge and London Victoria, together with services along the South Coast, covering much of south London, Surrey, East and West Sussex, as well as serving parts of Hampshire, Kent and West London.

The network includes Gatwick Express (formerly operated by National Express), the non-stop service between Gatwick Airport and London Victoria running four times an hour, with some peak hours services extended to Brighton. A direct service between East Croydon and Watford/Milton Keynes is also included in the franchise specification.

The successful bidder is due to be announced in June, with the new franchise commencing in September 2009.

Arriva 57 rescues the 'log' train

▼ **On 16th February, Class 57/3 No. 57305 failed at Acton Grange Junction while en route from Carlisle to Chirk. The train was hauled back to Warrington by Class 87 No. 87002, where No. 57314 took the train on to Chester. However, as the driver had worked over his hours on arrival at Chester, the train was stabled. On 17th February, the loco worked the train forward to Chirk, albeit now 24 hours late. Here, Arriva-liveried Class 57/3 No. 57314 arrives at Chirk with loaded timber carriers from Chester. Mark Riley**

◀ The unique Army-liveried Class 60 No. 60040 *The Territorial Army Centenary* passes Stafford on 20th February with a rake of HTA wagons, forming a Liverpool Bulk Terminal to Ratcliffe Power Station coal service. **Geoff Dingle**

◀▼ Engineering work on the West Coast Main Line has seen some of the DRS intermodal services diverted via cross country routes and the East Coast Main Line. On 21st February, Class 66/4 No. 66422 passes Colton Junction with a diverted Daventry to Grangemouth 'Tesco Express' service. **Ron Cover**

▼ Network Rail Mk2 DBSO No. 9701 with Class 31/1 No. 31285 providing the motive power on the rear passes Farncombe on the 'Portsmouth direct' line south of Guildford forming the 09.11 Selhurst-Derby measurement train taking in Staines Shalford, Redhill, Farnham, Woking and Haslemere. **Chris Wilson**

◀ Virgin Trains Class 57/3 No. 57311 *Parker*, with a loaded Colas Rail-operated timber train bound for the Kronospan factory in Chirk and still missing its Dellner coupling, and a Network Rail MPV pairing, led by vehicle No. DR98957, wait for the road at Carlisle on 18th February. **Keith Helmsley**

◀▼ West Coast Rail's Class 37/7 No 37706 heads a convoy northbound at speed through Chesterfield on 17th February. The second '37' is a rather battered-looking Class 37/7 No. 37717 and West Coast Rail's Class 57/6 No 57601 brings up the rear. **Mick Glaves**

▼ Northern Rail Class 158 No. 158855 passes Chesterfield on the freight lines while undertaking driver training as CrossCountry Trains Class 220/0 No. 220005 enters from the south on 22nd February. **David Wragg**

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.

26th February			
A1 Steam Loco Trust	60163	London KX-York-London KX	**Postponed**
27th February			
VSOE	2xDBS 67	London Victoria-tbc-London Victoria	
28th February			
Past Time Rail	60163	(Peterborough-Grantham-Newark Northgate-Doncaster-York)-York-Newcastle-Edinburgh (& return)	
Railway Touring Company	70013	Cleethorpes-Barnetby-Scunthorpe-Crowle-Hatfield-Doncaster-Peterborough-London KX (& return)	
Vintage Trains	60007/47773	(Birmingham New St-Nuneaton-Leicester-)York-Leicester-Nuneaton-Walsall-Bescot-(-Birmingham NS)	
VSOE (Northern Belle)	2xDBS 67	Cardiff-Newport-Bath Spa-London & return	
1st March			
Steam Dreams	70013	London Paddington-Slough-Reading-Swindon-Cardiff Central & return	
7th March			
Past Time Rail	60163	(Leeds-York-Newcastle-Edinburgh)-Edinburgh-York (& return)	
Railtourer/WCRC	2xWCRC 47	Preston-Lancaster-Carnforth- Wennington-Hellifield-Leeds-York-Middlesborough-Whitby (break) & return	
Spitfire Railtours	WCRC 37	Preston-Wigan NW-Bolton-Manchester Victoria-York--Edinburgh	
Spitfire Railtours	WCRC 37	Edinburgh-Fife Circle-Edinburgh	
VSOE	35028	London Victoria- Clapham Jct-Richmond-Staines-Virginia Water-Woking-Guildford-Dorking Deepdene-Reigate-Redhill-East Croydon-Clapham Jct-London Victoria	
12th March			
Pathfinder Tours	60163	The Tyne Tornado(Cardiff Central-Bristol Parkway-Barnt Green-Birmingham New St-Coleshill Parkway-Burton on Trent)-York-Durham-Newcastle(break)-Durham-York-(& return)	
14th March			
Railway Touring Company	60007	Bridgnorth-Kidderminster-Stourbridge Junction-Tame Bridge Parkway-Walsall-Tamworth-Nottingham-Newark-Lincoln (& return)	
Railway Touring Company	70013	London Victoria-Headcorn- Ashford-Folkestone East-(Folkestone Hbr)--Folkestone East-(Folkestone Hbr) (twice)-Folkestone Hbr-Ashford-Canterbury West-Margate-Faversham-London Victoria	
15th March			
Past Time Rail	45407/76079	Manchester Victoria-Peak Forest-Buxton (break/rev) & return	
20th March			
VSOE	35028	London Victoria-Clapham Jct-Staines-Woking-Reigate-Redhill-East Croydon-Clapham Jct-London 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.

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The Week Ahead

The bandwagon known as *Tornado* continues its relentless march this coming weekend with the first visit north of the border for the new 'Peppercorn' Pacific.

Past Time Rail operates 'The Auld Reekie Express' on 28th February from Peterborough to Edinburgh, which features No. 60163 *Tornado* at the helm from York via Newcastle-upon-Tyne and Berwick-on-Tweed. The train returns diesel-hauled, with the 'A1' positioned to haul Past Times' 'North Briton' from Edinburgh on 7th March.

Also operating along the East Coast Main Line on 28th February is 'Britannia' Pacific No. 70013 *Oliver Cromwell* at the head of Railway Touring Company's 'The Great Northern', which features the locomotive throughout from Cleethorpes to Doncaster, and then onwards to King's Cross. The train was originally planned to be steam-hauled as far as Peterborough on the return, but this run is now scheduled for diesel haulage throughout, no doubt to position No. 70013 for its duty to Cardiff the following day.

Vintage Trains has its first tour of the year on 28th February, which is a positioning special from York to Bescot for 'A4' Pacific No. 60007 *Sir Nigel Gresley* to get the locomotive to the Severn Valley Railway for its 'Festival of Steam' event, scheduled for the weekend of 6th-8th March. The outward working from Birmingham New Street will be hauled by Tyseley's Class 47/7 No. 47773, which will also cover the final leg from Bescot back to New Street. The steam section from York is via Chesterfield, Toton, Leicester, Nuneaton and Walsall.

For St. David's Day, Steam Dreams provide the opportunity to ride with *Oliver Cromwell* from Paddington to Newport on 1st March, which follows the direct route via Reading, Swindon, Bristol Parkway and the Severn Tunnel. Note that this train now operates to Newport, and not to Cardiff Central as was originally planned.

▼ **Rebuilt Merchant Navy Pacific No. 35028 *Clan Line* powers through Barnes on 21st February with a VSOE luncheon circular. Kim Rennie**

▲ **SR Battle of Britain Pacific No. 34067 *Tangmere* crosses Battledown flyover hauling the 10.00 Portsmouth Harbour-London Waterloo 'South Western Express' charter on 21st February. The rake of maroon-liveried Mk1 vehicles only being spoilt by a single Pullman-liveried vehicle, slightly hidden in this view behind the bridge. West Coast Rail Class 47/7 No. 47787 is on the rear of the train. Chris Wilson**

Regular mid-week steam returns to the S&C route in the high-summer

Regular high season steam workings over the Settle & Carlisle line are again scheduled for 2009, which are to be operated by newly launched Statesman Rail, in conjunction with the West Coast Railway Company and train operator Northern Rail.

This serves to fill the vacuum following the demise of Kingfisher, which in the past operated over the route with the 'Dalesman' services.

The trains will run each Wednesday from 29th July until 2nd September and pick up and set down from Lancaster (08.15/21.10), Preston (09.00/20.30), Bamber Bridge 09.20/20.10), Blackburn (09.40/19.50) and Clitheroe (10.00/19.30), before proceeding to the S&C where passengers have the option of detraining for around four hours in Appleby or staying aboard for Carlisle (arr13.15/dep.15.00). Fares range from £59 Standard, £89 First Class and £139 Premier dining. Connections from local Northern Rail stations are available. Full details are available from www.statesmanrail.com

The trains will be steam-hauled throughout featuring traction from a West Coast Railway pool presently consisting of 'Royal Scot' 4-6-0 No. 46115 *Scots Guardsman*, 'Jubilee' 4-6-0 No. 5690 *Leander* and '8F' 2-8-0 No. 48151.

Past Time Rail head to Swanage and the South West

A through steam working off the mainline to Swanage has been the ambition of many for a good few years, and over the May Day Bank Holiday weekend, Past Time intends to turn that ambition into reality.

On 2nd May Battle of Britain Pacific No. 34067 *Tangmere* will depart from London Victoria at the head of 'The Dorset Coast Express' for Swanage, which it will haul throughout, travelling via Woking, Basingstoke, Eastleigh, Bournemouth and Worgret Junction, to gain access to the heritage railway. Then, two days later, Past Time has 'The Royal Wessex' with steam haulage from Swanage, again with *Tangmere*, through to London Waterloo via the direct route to complete a weekend of classic steam action in the South West.

Past Time has another tour originating from a heritage line when on 30th May No. 6024 *King Edward I* leads the 'Capitals Express' from Minehead on the West Somerset Railway to London Paddington throughout, giving a Capital connection to such rustic haunts as Blue Anchor, Watchet, Williton, Crowcombe Heathfield and Bishops Lydeard. The train also picks up at Taunton, and follows the Berks & Hants route to London. The return is diesel-hauled throughout.

King Edward I also features on two other Past Time tours, commencing with 'The Red Dragon' on 18th April, which it hauls throughout between Newport and Carmarthen and back, with Birmingham New Street being the start point. It' also heads 'The Flying Carpet' on 13th June from Paddington to Kidderminster, running via Reading, Swindon, Cheltenham Spa and Worcester. After servicing at Kidderminster, the 'King' will then proceed to Bewdley to pick up the return working, which it will then haul through to Oxford via Old Hill, Birmingham Snow Hill and Solihull. The last leg from Oxford to Paddington will be diesel hauled.

Past Time also has two workings booked for *Oliver Cromwell*, the first being a joint operation with UK Railtours on 25th April from London King's Cross to Lincoln, outwards via Spalding and Sleaford, with the return running to Newark. Later, on 6th June the 'Britannia' is scheduled to haul the 'Welsh Marches Express' from Bristol Temple Meads to Shrewsbury and return, setting down also at Ludlow. This train commences at Birmingham New Street.

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▲ On 7th February, Class 20/3 No. 20309 and Class 37/4 No. 37423 await departure time at Carlisle for the return working of the 'Fellsman Chopper', Spitfire Railtours charter to Birmingham International. Stabled in the middle road is Network Rail Class 86/9 No. 86902. **Jamie Course**

SRPS head for the Highlands and Fife with its 2009 programme

The jewel in the recently announced SRPS 2009 programme is a return steam-hauled trip over the Highland mainline on 27th June with 'A4' No. 60009 *Union of South Africa* **booked to head the excursion from Perth to Aviemore and Inverness and back.**

The tour is scheduled to commence diesel-hauled from Polmont, picking up at Falkirk Grahamston, Larbert, Stirling, Dunblane and Perth, where the steam-hauled section commences. Most of the recent steam-hauled trains over the route have been double-headed, so the opportunity to sample a single Class A4 over the challenging summits of Druiumuachdar and Slochd has to be one of the steam events of the year. There is an opportunity to leave the train at Aviemore for a return journey on the Speyside Railway, but that would mean missing the assault on Slocht, wouldn't it?

Steam also heralds the commencement of the SRPS 2009 season, with a second attempt to run steam around the 'Forth Circle' postponed from last year, which is over the Forth Bridge, along the Fife Coast and Fife Circle culminating with the new route through Alloa to Stirling. Two trains are planned for 5th April, both featuring 'K4' Mogul No. 61994 *The Great Marquess*. The morning train will commence and terminate at Linlithgow (09.14/14.05), which then permits the stock to run empty to Dalmeny, which will be the starting point for the afternoon train (15.14/19.14).

Other diesel hauled tours scheduled for the first half of the year include Fort William and Mallaig on 9th May from Glenrothes, which should feature DBS Class 37s, Plockton and Kyle of Lochalsh on 30th May from Dunbar, and York and Harrogate on 13th June also from Glenrothes, both of which are most likely to be with WCRC Class 47s.

Full details of the programme, together with all departure points are available from the SRPS website, or the Railway Herald website's comprehensive steam and modern traction railtour listings at www.railwayherald.com

News In Brief

■ Following the highly successful trip to Folkestone Harbour in December, Hastings Diesels Ltd and its iconic Hastings DEMU are off on their travels again on 21st March, this time to Salisbury. The plan is to use a five-car formation, picking up and setting down at Hastings (07.44/20.46), St Leonards (07.50/20.40), Battle (08.03/20.29), Etchingham (08.16/20.14), Tunbridge Wells (08.34/19.45), Tonbridge (08.46/19.25), Redhill (09.23/18.48) and Guildford (10.11/18.04), prior to proceeding to Salisbury via Havant, Fareham, Eastleigh and Romsey. The return is by the same route, as engineering work precluded any variation. Fares range from £54 Standard to £78 Club Class, and there is a £5 supplement for travelling in each power car.

■ On 2nd May 1859, the railways of Devon and Cornwall were joined for the first time with the opening of Brunel's Royal Albert Bridge at Saltash, a structure that has endured as an engineering masterpiece to the present day. The 150th Anniversary of the opening will be commemorated on 2nd May with a steam special featuring 'King' 4-6-0 No. 6024 King Edward I, which is being organised by the locomotive's owners, the 6024 Preservation Society Ltd. The train will feature steam haulage between Exeter St David's and Par, returning with steam as far as Taunton. The tour originates at London Paddington, and picks up at Slough, Reading, Newbury, Taunton, Exeter St Davids and Plymouth, with diesel haulage to Exeter outwards and from Taunton on the return. Bookings are being taken by Past Time Rail and the Railway Touring Company.

■ So you want to give your old Dad a special treat on Fathers Day to remind him of those happy far-off days of train spotting when he was a kid? Well Steam Dreams has the answer, with two trains booked for Fathers Day on 21st June featuring the 'A1' No. 60163 Tornado from London Victoria. The first tour leaves around 09.45 and will be on a circular itinerary via Woking, Winchester, Havant and Guildford, arriving back in London at around 15.00. The evening working departs at 18.45 and heads for the South Coast with an arrival back in to Victoria at 22.15. A discount applies for booking to travel on both trains. Go on, you know he'll love you all the more for the experience, especially if you throw in lunch or dinner as well!

Battle of Britain class Pacific No. 34067 *Tangmere* **approaches Barnes on the 10.00 Portsmouth Harbour to London Waterloo 'South Western Express' charter on 21st February. Kim Rennie**

▲ Visiting Class 73/1 No. 73136 *Perseverance* waits to depart from Horsted Keynes with an empty spoil train on 30th January. **Andrew Strongitharm**

▼ Caledonian Railway 0-4-4T No. 419, now repainted in BR black livery and numbered 55189, is pictured at Bo'ness on 21st February. **Alex Napier**

New station opens at Romney Warren on RH&DR

The Romney, Hythe and Dymchurch Railway opened Romney Warren Halt on 16th February, its first new station in more than 60 years.

The new platform runs adjacent to the Romney Marsh Visitor Centre, managed by the Kent Wildlife Trust, and the Romney Warren Country Park and Local Nature Reserve, and trains will shuttle passengers to and fro on selected days throughout the year. Kent County Council, Shepway District Council and the Mid Kent Leader programme funded the creation of the new halt, which is in an important habitat for great crested newts.

Special measures had to be taken to ensure that no newts were harmed in the construction process and a licence had to be secured from Natural England for the work to be undertaken, with the area fenced off and trapping carried out over a period of 37 days.

▼ RH&DR No. 6 *The Bug* departs from the new station on 16th February. **Alan Crotty**

Diesel days announced at Llangollen

The Llangollen Diesel Group and Llangollen Railway have announced the following diesel operating dates for 2009, with a revised loco roster.

Class 47/4 No. 47449 will operate on 4th/9th April, with Class 37/0 No. 37240 working on 30th May & 27th June. A further day will operate on 26th September although the traction is to be confirmed. The diagram will comprise the 10.30, 12.00, 14.00 and 16.00 departures from Llangollen with the corresponding return workings from Carrog at 11.15, 13.00, 15.00 and 17.00.

There will be no need to purchase a Day Rover ticket as a Day Return from Llangollen to Carrog (on non-event days) now provides unlimited travel for a cost of just £10.

In addition to the scheduled running days, driver experience courses are also available on the resident Class 37 No. 37240 and Class 47/4 No. 47449, along with *Davy*, the Class 08-style English Electric shunter. The first driver experience date will be on 10th May although further dates will be announced shortly.

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. 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.

SOUVENIR PROGRAMME NOW AVAILABLE – Priced at £2.50

Produced in association with the Railway Herald, the 20 page A4 colour guide includes the working timetable, history of the M&GN from conception to preservation. The programme also gives details of what is on offer during the event. Order now and get 20% off the cover price (until 26th February '09, P&P charges may apply). Order online at www.nnr.co.uk or by phone 01263 820 800.

POPPY LINE

NORTH NORFOLK RAILWAY

Event subject to operational availability. North Norfolk Railway, Sheringham Station, Norfolk NR26 8RA

LIVE STEAM – LIVING HISTORY

37003 finally on the move to Mid-Norfolk

After a false start prior to Christmas caused by problems with certification paperwork, everything is now finally in place for the Class 37 Locomotive Group's No. 37003 to move to the Mid-Norfolk Railway.

The move by road is scheduled to take place on 24th February, leaving its temporary home at the National Railway Museum's Locomotion Shildon. The Class 37 Locomotive Group was formed in 1984 and currently has over 100 members. As well as No. 37003, the oldest of the fleet in private preservation, the Group is custodian of No. 37175, which is owned by a long-standing member. No. 37003 has been at Locomotion Shildon since December 2007, and No. 37175 is based on the Bo'ness & Kinneil Railway. The Group plans to seek mainline certification for No. 37003 in time for the locomotive's 50th anniversary in late 2010.

Feasibility study for GCR missing link

The Great Central Railway (GCR) has announce that feasibility study work for its 'Bridging the Gap' project will soon begin, following a significant funding announcement from the East Midlands Development Agency.

The six figure grant will go towards paying for a consultant firm to study development prospects for the GCR corridor between Nottingham and Leicester the 'Gap' project being central to uniting the two halves of the GCR and unlocking the economic potential of a 17 mile railway route. The southern section of the line would gain a main line connection, meaning it could expand the commercial services it already offers, and the entire extended route could have potential uses far beyond tourist traffic. It is expected the consultants will be asked to review other possibilities for development and expansion as part of their remit. The GCR itself will need to raise a third of the funding to complete the study.

▼ **On the Bluebell Railway, GWR Dukedog No. 9017 *Earl of Berkeley* heads towards Ketches Halt with the 15.00 service from Sheffield Park on 21st February. Andrew Strongitharm**

One of the Class 158s on loan from South West Trains to East Midlands Trains is pictured shortly after departure from Ely on 18th February. **Thomas Blampied**

◀ Class 465/2 Networker No. 465244 departs from New Eltham on 16th February as Class 465/0 No. 465001 arrives. The trains are the 14.40 Cannon Street-Woolwich Arsenal-Sidcup-Cannon Street roundabout service and the 15.32 Charing Cross-Gravesend, respectively. **Brian Morrison**

▼ South Eastern Class 375s Nos. 375827/605 pass Redhill, forming the 12.54 Hastings-Charing Cross, diverted due to engineering work between Tonbridge and Sevenoaks on 25th January. **Chris Wilson**

On 21st February DB Schenker operated two Class 60-hauled engineering trains into the South West in relation to engineering work on Hemerdon Bank. First to appear, pictured here, was Class 60 No. 60049 passes Wyke Champflower on the approach to Castle Cary with the 15.53 Westbury to Lipson Junction. The second Class 60, No. 60011, was paired with Class 66 No. 66054 and worked the 17.26 Westbury - Hemerdon later in the evening. **Brian Garrett**

The North & West Route Vol. 2 – Shrewsbury & Hereford

by John Hodge

The author has already produced several books through this publisher, portraying workings and locations along stretches of ex-GWR arterial routes, and this latest is another.

Initially spotlighting the South Wales main line, he has now turned his attention to the 'North & West' cross-country route. Vol. 1 concentrated on the fascinating hub that was Shrewsbury and this latest takes us on a journey from there to Hereford, a little over halfway to Newport.

Pre-history of the route opens this new volume, encapsulating the subsequent arrival of the iron road from 1852. The Shrewsbury & Hereford Railway was the first stretch and it is this route that occupies this volume.

Wild Swan is not shy at devoting much space to the subject in hand and this is no exception. Traffic over the section is covered, before transporting us south by photographs, with pertinent captions and thumbnail textual sketches of the many locations. Throughout, the illustrations are superb, from a variety of sources, but benefiting in places from particular photographers having opened their lenses in volume and to advantage. Although the vast majority of views are from post-Nationalisation, motive power from GWR and LMS are strongly in evidence and, as well as being a reflection of the joint operational nature of this northern end of the route – and there is a fascinating tapestry of loco types. Cheek-by-jowl illustration of ex-GWR 2800 class 2-8-0 No. 3841 with ex-LMS 'Royal Scot' No. 46118 *Royal Welch Fusilier* at Pontypool Road graphically evidences the point.

The views are not just 'front-three-quarter' of trains and, with the demonstration of railway infrastructure that has been consigned to the dustbin of history, all are very well reproduced on high quality paper. The book is a delight. **MJS**

Wild Swan Publications Ltd, 1-3 Hagbourne Road, Didcot, Oxon. OX11 8DP. 174pp. ISBN 978 1 905184 47 7. £29.95

LMS Locomotive Profiles No.11 - The 'Coronation' Class

By David Hunt, John Jennison, Bob Meanley, Fred James & Bob Essery

"The best express passenger locomotives ever to run in Britain" - discuss!

There are those who would challenge this quotation, but even the usual die-hard GWR aficionados must admit the lineage from their empire, through Stanier, a product of Swindon. Had 'God's Wonderful Railway' progressed beyond *The Great Bear* and the 'Kings', who knows, there may have been directed comparison. Elsewhere, Gresley, Bullied and others' devotees would have to concede the the 'Semis' (as so many 1950s spotters called them) were magnificent beasts.

The latest in this line of 'LMS Locomotive Profiles' sets out to examine the above claim. This is not the first book dedicated to the Class and, as with earlier entries in the series, there are facts and statements that differ to previously published material, but the authors have endeavoured to be as accurate as possible, even over-turning some cherished understandings along the way. The story is told in straightforward, matter-of-fact textual style, which carries narrative and reader forward smoothly and seamlessly. Accompanying the words are numerous technical drawings and for the engineers and modellers among us these will be welcomed. There are also four Appendices, giving yet more data to that already embalmed within the text.

As is usual with this series and with Wild Swan, the choice of photographic illustrations is wide and varied and reproduced to an excellent standard. The album proliferates in shots of locos - 'straight' and streamlined. All in all, a fine collection of views and facts that could leave you believing there is nothing else left to learn! **MJS**

Wild Swan Publications Ltd, 1-3 Hagbourne Road, Didcot, Oxon. OX11 8DP. 174pp. ISBN 978 1 905184 46 0. £24.95

British Railways Steam - The Final Years

By John Stretton & Peter Townsend

Published to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the end of mainline steam last year, this book from Silver Link provides the reader with a wealth of information and imagery.

As would be expected from the two authors, the book is well researched and organised, each of the four main chapters covering one of the final four years, and within each chapter is an overview of specific areas of the country along with details of which routes and locomotive sheds were closed in that year.

The final chapter, perhaps somewhat unexpectedly, provides a brief overview of those jobs, items of machinery and buildings that were 'endangered species' and like the steam locomotive was intended to do, vanished in everyday service.

The design of the title is a complete departure from the usual Silver Link style, but one which your reviewer feels adds to the overall interest of the book. Soft edges to photographs and strategically placed information tables somehow seem to make the book an easier read, although it will not be to everyones taste!

The pictorial content of the book is to the usual high standard that readers will expect from both the publisher and the authors and is a mixture of both black and white and colour images, spanning a wide range of classes and locations.

Overall the title is a superb recollection of those final years and provides an interesting point of reference for all. Recommended! **RT**

Silver Link Publishing, The Trundle, Ringstead Road, Great Addington, Kettering, Northants. NN14 4BW. 160pp. ISBN 978 1 85794 320 7. £30

▲ 11 years after its last repaint, 'Warbonnet' BNSF 762 and a fellow 'Warbonnet' lead a manifest freight west, through Goffs, on a clear winter day in the Mojave Desert, California. **Jim Husband**

$50 billion available for transport investment and high-speed rail

At a ceremony in Denver, USA, on 17th February, President Barack Obama officially signed the American Recovery & Reinvestment Act, a $787 billion economic stimulus measure that provides nearly $50 billion in direct funding for transport investment.

The 1,100-page bill provides $8.4 billion for transit, $1.3 billion for Amtrak, $8.4 billion for high-speed passenger rail projects and $27 billion for roads and bridges. The President reportedly insisted upon the high level of spending for high-speed rail.

The Chairman of the California High-Speed Rail Authority said: "I'm delighted to see that the momentum has shifted in favour of high-speed train transportation in the United States, a first here in California with voter passage of Proposition 1A last November, and today with the President's signature on the federal stimulus package which includes an $8 billion appropriation for high-speed train projects. The Department of Transportation will be issuing guidelines on how competitive grants will be awarded within 120 days. The Rail Authority has outlined for our Congressional leaders how it can utilise at least $2 billion of the allocation by a September 2012 deadline, and will continue to prepare and refine its official application over the following months as guidelines are known".

There are several specific projects for which funding can be applied in California by the September 2012 timeline outlined in the legislation. They include Grade separations, which prevents auto or pedestrian cross traffic on the high-speed train line in the Los Angeles to Anaheim corridor; Street and pedestrian crossing construction in San Bruno in the Bay Area; Right-of-way purchase and construction grading of a heavy maintenance facility in the Central Valley as well as two storage 'layover' facilities in the Bay Area and Los Angeles basin respectively, and design and procurement for the electrification of the system from San Jose to San Francisco, including train controls, and commuter vehicles.

Economic delay to new yard?

BNSF has advised local officials in Gardner, Kansas, that it is considering an 'extension of the construction schedule' of a new intermodal yard, due to a decline in intermodal volumes.

The intermodal rail yard, which would provide a facility with cranes to transfer freight from rail to road, plus a logistics park with warehouses where goods would be sorted, had been scheduled to open in 2010. These details follow the news that an economic downturn in traffic has led to thousand of wagons, believed to be a six-figure total, being stored across the USA.

Upgrade ahead for Serbian railways Corridor 10

According to Serbian Railways, Czech Republic business partners are interested in participating in the construction of the railway Corridor 10 through Serbia.

The Czech partners are ready to grant a loan to Serbian Railways for an amount of □300 million for the modernisation of the line. If this occurs, Serbian Railways will modernise three sections on Corridor 10, namely: Beograd-Kovacevac-Mladenovac, Rakovica-Jajinci- Mala Krsna-elika Plana and Ni-Ristovac to the Macedonian border. Both parties confirmed their business preference by signing the appropriate Protocol, a result of consultant meetings held by the representatives of Serbian Railways and the consortium of Czech companies, set up with a view to realisation of the investment projects on the route.

▼ **Driving Trailer No. 971039 of Class 471 unit No. 471039 waits to leave Praha Hlavni Nadrazi, in the Czech Republic with train Os8846, the 15.46 service to Beroun. Alongside is No. 163040 on a recently arrived R train. The services between Praha Hl N and Beroun now form part of the Praha Esko Network, this route being S7. Services are formed from a mix of the new Class 471 units, older 1960s vintage Class 451s and 1990s built Class 470s. Situated on the main Praha - Plzen route, Beroun is the terminus for the S7 service from Praha. The 43km S7 route has been increased to half-hourly for most of the day with additional services Monday to Fridays as far as the intermediate station of Revnice. In addition, loco hauled R trains operate fast services between Praha and Beroun going on to destinations such as Cheb, Ceske Budejovice, München and Nürnberg. Andy Pratt**

▲ **One of the BLS-leased Class 185 electrics, No. 185-525, used to work the S1 service between Thun and Fribourg via Bern is pictured at Thun, Switzerland on 6th February. Ian Thurman**

Electrification starts on Tabriz-Azarshahr branch

Vladimir Yakunin, President of Russian Railways, participated in a ceremony to mark the start of work to electrify the Tabriz-Azarshahr line in the Iranian town of Tabriz on 9th February.

The heads of Iranian Railways, Iran's Ministry of Transport and other officials also attended the event. As part of the ceremony, a conference was held on 'Prospects for Russian-Iranian Rail Co-operation'.

The 46km branch line, located on the outskirts of Tabriz, will have alternating current with a voltage of 25kV and an industrial frequency of 50Hz. It serves the local community and the university in the town of Azarshahr and links the passenger terminals in Tabriz with the university. It also joins the line between Djulfa and Tabriz, which was electrified in 1979 under a project carried out by the Soviet Union.

The contract takes into account the further electrification of the line towards Teheran with regard to its electrical characteristics.

Alstom wins contract for Spanish route upgrade

Spanish railway network administrator ADIF has awarded Alstom Transport and its Spanish partners Acciona and Comsa a €80.8 million contract for upgrades to bring the Girona-Figueres line to European UIC standards.

The 41-km section is located on the high-speed line linking Barcelona to the French border. Bringing the line into compliance with European standards will allow trains to operate both on Spanish tracks with a wider gauge (1,668 mm) and on UIC-compliant French tracks with a narrower gauge (1,435 mm) without changing rails. Acciona and Comsa are in charge of civil engineering.

The contract also provides for installation of advanced signalling and telecommunications technologies on the Girona-Figueres section. Alstom will equip the line with its Level 1 Atlas 100 ERTMS signalling solution and will also install the Smartlock electronic interlocking and communication systems. In addition to signalling, the contract provides for installation of a third rail on the Girona-Figueres section to create a dual-gauge track.

Steaming through the Harz Mountains ... in the snow!

▼ **HSB Mallet No. 995901 takes water at Eisfeider Talmuhis in the Harz Mountains, Germany, on 11th February, while awaiting a service from Nordhausen to pass, hauled by HSB 2-10-2T No. 997238. David Gibson**

East Japan Railway unveils the design for next generation Shinkansen trains

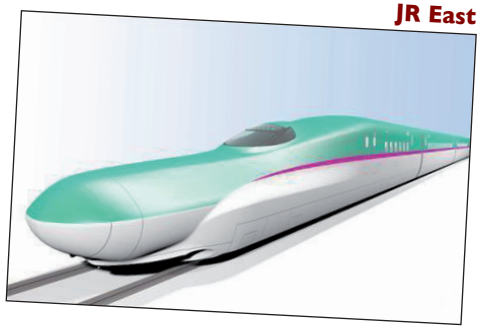
East Japan Railway has disclosed the exterior and interior designs for its next generation of Shinkansen trains.

A pre-production Series E5 trainset is due to be rolled out in June for testing, as a precursor for the fleet to operate between Tokyo and Shin Aomori, following the opening of the extension from Hachinohe in December 2010.

JR-East's research programme launched in 2002 was looking at 360 km/h operation to bring the journey time for the 670km Tokyo - Shin-Aomori trip below three hours, including intermediate stops, compared with 3hrs 20 min with the current Series E2-1000 sets running at 275 km/h. After trials with the two Fastech 360 prototypes the railway announced that it was scaling back its ambitions and would build a pre-production trainset designed for a maximum of 320 km/h. The railway subsequently ordered a fleet of 59 Series E5 trainsets, which are due to enter service in the spring of 2011. The 10-car sets will have eight powered vehicles and two trailers, and will feature a 'Super Green Car' with 2+1 power-operated reclining seating for 18 passengers at the Aomori end.

The trains will incorporate a number of technical advances from the Fastech 360 sets, including a lightweight pantograph, active suspensions and body tilting.

JR East



New Australian rail link opens

After more than six years, the Epping to Chatswood rail link in Sydney, Australia, finally opened on 23rd February, the construction phase having been dogged by problems and cost over-runs.

It is the first major addition to the CityRail network since the airport rail line opened in 2000, and is designed to help ease congestion on the approaches to the city from the west. Excavation began in 2002 on what was then going to be the Parramatta to Chatswood rail link. Those plans were abandoned shortly afterwards in favour of a shorter route. After the official ceremonies, the first services started mid-morning and passengers were able to travel free of charge.

The 12.5km track, with new stations at Macquarie University, Macquarie Park and North Ryde, has cost more than $2 billion to build, about $900 million more than originally estimated. It will operate initially as a shuttle service before the line is integrated fully into the CityRail network later this year and is expected to eventually carry up to 12,000 commuters a day. That will then allow more train services into the city from the west, although some are of the opinion that this could result in a worse service on the north shore.

25th February 2009

Basingstoke & District Railway Society
Wote St.Club, New Road, Basingstoke. 'Cable's Railway Year' by David Cable. Meeting commences at 20.00. Visitors welcome. Contact the Secretary on 01256 326096 for further details.

Permanent Way Institution (Bristol & West of England Branch)
Arup Auditorium, 63 St Thomas Street, Bristol. 'Crossrail' Scott Wilson Railways. Meeting commences at 18.00. Refreshments available. Contact, Phil Harrison on 0117 976 5432 for further details.

20th-26th February 2009

Locomotive Club of Great Britain Overseas Tours
AUSTRIA: 'ICE Winterdampf' LCGB membership is compulsory for participants on these tours due to insurance reasons.

Locomotive Club of Great Britain (Croydon)
United Reformed Church Hall, Addiscombe Grove, East Croydon. 'Ken Nunn on the Southern' by Graham Stacey. Starts at 19.15.

27th February 2009

Scarborough Railway Society
The Public Library, Vernon Road, Scarborough. 'Looking to the Past' by Gordon Wells. Meeting commences at 19.30. Contact Adrian Scales at email@scarboroughrailwaysociety.org.uk for further details

Great Central Railway (London Branch)
The Exmouth Arms, 1 Starcross Street, Euston, London NW1 2HR. MEETING NOW CANCELLED.

Great Western Society (North West Group)
St Hilda's Clubroom, Slater Street, Latchford, Warrington. Group AGM followed by 'Cheshire Lines Committee'. Meeting commences at 19.30.

Great Western Society (Oxford Group)
Pauling Human Sciences Centre, 58 Banbury Road, Oxford. Group AGM. Meeting commences at 19.30.

Shropshire Railway Society
The Gateway, Chester Road, Shrewsbury. 'China - The Dragons Last Roar' by Tony Harrison. Meeting commences 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 details.

28 February 2009

Bournemouth Railway Club
All Purpose Room, Winton Methodist Community Centre, junction of Alma Road and Heron Court Road, Bournemouth. 'History of the Royal Naval Cordite Factory at Holton Heath' by Bob Dukes. Meeting commences at 19.30. Charge of £2 for all. Contact Martyn Thresh on 01202 742099 or by e-mail at martyn.thresh@ntlworld.com for further details.

2nd March 2009

RCTS (Ashford Branch)
The Elwick Club, Church Road, Ashford. 'Narrow Gauge Railways of France' by Mike Bunn. Meeting commences at 19.30.

RCTS (Croydon Branch)
Small Hall, Croydon Reformed Church Hall, Addiscombe Grove, Croydon. Branch AGM followed by Photographic Competition and Members' Slides. Meeting commences at 19.30.

RCTS (Northampton Branch)
St Crispin Social Club, Berrywood Road, Duston. 'The Emerald Isle' by Bob Hunt. Meeting commences at 19.30.

RCTS (Port Sunlight Branch)
The Lever Club, Greendale Road, Port Sunlight. 'Southern, Central and Eastern Divisions' by Edgar Richards. Meeting commences at 19.45.

Swanage Railway (Bath Area)
St John's Church Hall, St John's Road, Bathwick, Bath. 'Railtours' by Paul Udey. Meeting commences at 19.30. Admission £1. Contact John Lakey on 01225 315918 for further details.

3rd March 2009

Gravesend Railway Enthusiasts Society
Emmanuel Baptist Church, Windmill Street, Gravesend, DA12 1BB. 'The Medway Valley Line' by Dave Fisher, GRES. Meeting commences at 19.45. Contact Roger Hart on 01474 833320 for further details

Locomotive & Carriage Institution
London Underground Limited HQ, Broadway, St James Park Station, London. 'Rail Alliance' by Colin Flack. Meeting commences at 18.00. Contact Stuart Smith, by Secretary email smithstuart@btinternet.com for further details.

Locomotive Club of Great Britain (Bedford)
St John's Church Hall, St John's Street, Bedford. Annual Quiz versus RCTS Northampton. Starts at 19.30.

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

Permanent Way Institution (Darlington & North East Section)
Railway Athletic Club, Brinkburn Road, Darlington. 'Haltwhistle Embankment Works' by Paul Fairburn. Doors open at 18.30 for 19.00 start. Contact Dave Lugsden on 07825 766328 for further details.

Permanent Way Institution (Edinburgh Branch)
The Scots Guards Club, 2 Clifton Terrace, opposite Haymarket Station, Edinburgh. 'New Zealand Railways' by John Edwards. Meeting commences at 18.00. ContactNicola Topping on 07919 127995 for details.

RCTS (Merseyside, Chester and North Wales Branch.
'Day Observation at Carlisle' Contact Geoff Morris on 01244 376808 or by e-mail at geoffreymorris@tiscali.co.uk for further details.

RCTS (Watford Branch)
St Thomas's United Reformed Church, Langley Road, Watford. 'The Welshpool and Llanfair Light Railway' by Mike Willis. Meeting commences at 19.30.

Southern Electric Group (South Hampshire Branch)
Eastleigh Railway Institute, Romsey Road, Eastleigh. TBC by John Laker. 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 Sociey
The Function Room, The Conservative Club, Alexandra Parade, Weston super Mare. 'Seasons of Steam' by Mike Tyack. Meeting commences at 20.00. Contact Lionel Jones on 01934 628289 or e-mail fotophile69@talktalk.net for further details.

4th March 2009

Burton Railway Society,
Marston's Society Club, Shobnall Road, Burton upon Trent. 'A Selection of Films from the British Transport Collection' by Alan Willmott with Les Henshaw. Meeting commences at 19.30 sharp. Admission £1.50 non members, 50p members. Contact Mark Ratcliffe on 01283 221537 or visit the Society's website at www.burtonrailwaysociety.co.uk for further details.

Permanent Way Institution (South & West Wales Branch)
Kings Hotel, High Street, Newport. 'Reading Resignalling' by Graeme Christmas. Joint Meeting with the Institution of Railway Signal Engineers. Meeting commences at 18.00. Contact the Secretary, Andy Franklin on 07824 410762 or by e-mail at Andy.Franklin@networkrail.co.uk for further details.

Permanent Way Institution (Thames Valley Branch)
Davidson House, Reading. 'Basingstoke Resignalling' by Mark Somers. Doors open at 17.15 for 17.45 start. Contact the Secretary, Peter Simmonds at peter181102@yahoo.co.uk for further details.

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. The information is believed to be correct at the time of publication.

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

▼ **The lunchtime southbound West Highland line train to Glasgow Queen Street, operated by First ScotRail-liveried Class 156 No. 156496, passes a northbound freight at Bridge of Orchy hauled by Class 66/0 No. 66113. Ian Docwra**

Permanent Way Institution (Wessex Branch)
The Rose and Crown, Columbo Street, Waterloo, London. 'Reading Resignalling' by Sean Murray. Starts 18.00. Contact, Eddie Gosling on 01252 614558 for details.

RCTS (Ipswich Branch)
Back Room, St Thomas Church, Bramford Lane, Ipswich. 'Irish Railways in the Late 1950's and 1960's' by David Soggee. Meeting commences at 19.30.

5th March 2009
Great Central Society (Rotherham Branch)
The Three Horseshoes, Bawtry Road, Wickersley, Rotherham, S66 2BW. 'The Schools of the Southern Railway' by Bob Gellatly. Starts 19.30. Contact Mick Hayes on 01709 820544 for details.

RCTS (Milton Keynes Branch)
The Crown Public House, The Square, Stony Stratford. 'An Introduction to Australian Railways' by Frank Faulkner. Meeting starts at 19.30.

6th March 2009
Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway (Birmingham Group)
Northfield Library, Church Road, Northfield, Birmingham. '1968 and All That' by Ralph Ward. Doors open at 19.00 for 19.30 start

RCTS (Bristol Branch)
St Peters Church Hall, Church Road, Filton. Branch AGM and Slide/Digital Competition. Meeting starts at 19.30.

9th March 2009
Lincoln Railway Society
St Hughs Church Hall, North Hykeham, Lincoln. 'Rail Privatisation' by Christian Wolmar, Meeting starts at 20.00. Contact Graham Lightfoot on 01522 705365 for further details.

RCTS (Sheffield Branch)
St Matthews Church Rooms, Carver Street, Sheffield. 'Nottingham to Norwich' by Martin Bromley. Meeting commences at 19.30.

Severn Valley Railway (Wolverhampton Branch)
Old Wulfrunians Club, 253A Castlecroft Road, Castlecroft, Wolverhampton. 'South African Steam' by Dave Walker. Meeting commences at 19.30. Contact (Evenings) Alan Davies on 01902 758882 for details.

Southern Electric Group (Sussex Branch)
The Deall Room, Southwick Community Centre. 'The Devil's Dyke Branch' and 'The Kemptown Branch' by Chris Bedford. Meeting commences at 19.30. Donation of £2 requested. Contact the Branch Secretary, Bruce Cakebread on 01273 462094 for further details.

York Railway Society
Archbishop Holgate's School, Drama Studio, Hull Road, York. 'A to Z of Yorkshire Transport - a slide show of trains, trams, buses, trolleybuses, canals and rivers' by John Holroyd. Meeting commences 19.30. Contact Robin Patrick on 01904 412232 for details. Visitors £2 entrance fee.

10th March 2009
Abergavenny and District Steam Society
Upper Room, The Hen & Chickens, Flannel Street, Abergavenny 'When Steam Reigned Triumphant' by Michael Harvey Meeting commences at 20.00. Contact the Secretary, Ken Mumford at ken.mumford@ntlworld.com for details.

Great Western Society (Oxford Group)
Pauling Human Sciences Centre, 58 Banbury Road, Oxford. Group AGM. Meeting commences at 19.30.

Great Western Society (Bristol Group)
BAWA, 589 Southmead Road, Filton. 'Singapore - A Transport of Delight' by Gerald Nichols. Meeting commences at 19.45.

RCTS (Nottingham Branch)
Nottingham Mechanics, 3 North Sherwood Street, Nottingham. 'The Nottingham Suburban Railway' by David Birch. Meeting commences at 19.30.

The 8E Railway Association (Northwich Branch)
The Gladstone Club, Station Road, Northwich CW9 5RB. Quiz Night.. Meeting commences at 19.45. Contact Michael Lenz on 01606 44959 for further details

11th March 2009
Basingstoke & District Railway Society
Wote St.Club, New Road, Basingstoke. 'The Modern Industrial Scene in the UK and Europe' by Nick Kelly. Meeting commences at 20.00. Contact the Secretary on 01256 326096 for details.

Grimsby & Cleethorpes Railway Group
Royal Air Force Club, 5 Alexandra Road, Cleethorpes DN35 8LQ. 'Round Britain by Rail - Part 2' by Tony Othen. Meeting commences at 19.30. Contact Mike Hartley on 01724 341358 for further details

Permanent Way Institution (London Branch)
10th Floor Restaurant, 55 Broadway (LUL HQ), London St James Park tube. 'Rugby Schemes' by Ben Venables. Doors open 17.30 for 18.00 start. Contact the Secretary, Alison Stansfield on 0770 332 6080 or by e-mail at alison.stansfield@btinternet.com for further details.

RCTS (Hitchin Branch)
Hitchin Christian Centre, Bedford Road, Hitchin. 'Out and About' by Hugh Gould. Meeting starts at 19.30.

Swiss Railways Society (London Branch)
The Model Railway Club, Keen House, 4 Calshot Street, London N1 9AT (near Kings Cross station) Branch AGM. Meeting commences 19.00, Refreshments available. A £2 donation is requested. Contact Ron Dawes (0208 660 3532) for details.

12th March 2009
Continental Railway Circle
St Paul's Church Centre, Rossmore Road, Marylbone, London NW1 6NJ 'India & Nepal' by Richard Pelham. Meeting commences at 19.15. Contact Adrian Palmer on 01932 850624 or e-mail akpalmer@talktalk.net for further details

Locomotive Club of Great Britain (St Albans)
United Reform Church Hall, Watford Road, Chiswell Green. 'The Welsh Highland Railway' by Andy Savage. Meeting commences at 19.30.

Monmouthshire Railway Society
Room LL1, UWCN, Allt-Yr-Yn Avenue, Newport. 'The 1960's in Colour, from the Late Derek Cross archive' by David Cross. Meeting starts at 19.30. Non-members £3.

Permanent Way Institution (Birmingham Branch)
The 11th Floor Boardroom, Network Rail Offices, The Mailbox, 100 Wharfside Street, Birmingham B1 1RT. 'Cambrian Line Enhancements' by Richard Langford. 'ECML Hitchin Grade Separation' by Norman Kelsell. Meeting commences at 18.00. Contact the Secretary, Ian Wardle on 0782 441 0961 or by e-mail at ian.wardle@networkrail.co.uk for further details

Permanent Way Institution (Croydon Branch)
Matt MacDonald House, Sydenham Road, Croydon, CR0 2EE. 'The Bluebell Railway Northern Extension' by Chris White. Doors open at 17.30 for 17.45 start. Contact the Secretary, Martin Creswell on 0780 326 0645 or by e-mail at martin.creswell@atkinsglobal.com for further details.

Permanent Way Institution (Manchester & Liverpool Branch)
Location to be Confirmed. Presidential Address by Bob Cummings. Also the Section AGM. Meeting commences at 12.30. Contact the Secretary, Rob Cummings on 0779 885 8784 or by e-mail at rob.cummings@networkrail.co.uk for further details.

RCTS (Newcastle Branch)
The Brunswick Methodist Hall, Newcastle. 'India/Portugal Safari' by David Anderson. Meeting commences at 18.30.

RCTS (Preston Branch)
Claremont Hotel, Blackpool Road, Preston. 'A Rail Tour round Glorious Devon' by Stephen Gay. Meeting commences at 19.30.

13th March 2009
Altrincham Electric Railway Preservation Society
Altrincham Methodist Church Hall, Barrington Road, Altrincham. 'Persia - Back door to Russia in 1942/Steam & Modern Traction in the 1960s' by Robin Patrick. Admission £3 for non-members Starts 19.30. Contact 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. 'Through the Lens of a Railwayman' by Mike Goodfield. Meeting commences at 19.00.

RCTS (Edinburgh Branch)
Quakers Meeting House, 7 Victoria Street, Edinburgh. 'Industrial Railways' by Alistair Ness. Meeting commences at 19.30.

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

A Southampton to Leeds Intermodal service passes Lower Basildon, west of Reading, on 16th February headed by Freightliner Class 66/5 No. 66592
Johnson Stevens Agencies.
Chris Lampard

Magazine Information

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Telephone: 01904 500175

Railway Herald is produced by Railway Herald Ltd (Registered as company number 05837609 in England).
VAT Registraion: 942 6509 14
Registered office: Hobarn House, 12 Brompton Road, Northallerton, North Yorkshire, DL6 1DY

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