Railway Herald

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TOP: DRS Class 47/4 No. 47501 hauls the 08:43 Norwich to Wolverton and Crewe stock move through Ipswich on 6th February, conveying Class 90 No. 90015 and Mk3 DVT No. 82102.
John Day

BOTTOM LEFT: Am 841 No. 841001 heads back through Croy-Romainmôtier in Switzerland, with a single wagon of loaded waste containers for processing at Lausanne.
Don Gatehouse

BOTTOM RIGHT: Following a substantial snowfall the previous evening, a Northern Class 158 No. 158784 passes Copmanthorpe on the outskirts of York, on 5th February with a service to Blackpool North via Hebden Bridge.
Paul Braybrook

Railway Herald

Issue 301 — 8th February 2012

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A one-year (48 issue) subscription rate is £18 (UK). Payments can made online using any major credit/debit card through Paypal. WorldPay and Google Checkout will follow shortly

Letters to the Editor
We welcome comments, please send them to letters@railwayherald.com. Due to the volume received we cannot respond to all. We reserve the right to edit all submissions.

Back Issues
All editions of Railway Herald prior to Issue 300 are available to download free of charge in PDF format from our website at www.railwayherald.com/backissues. From Issue 300 onwards, they can be purchased through the same website.

Railway Herald is published by **Railway Herald Limited**, in association with Ian Allan Publishing Limited.

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Produced within the United Kingdom.

ISSN 1751-8091

Moving forwards ...

... and answering some questions!

It is very pleasing to be able to comment that we are delighted by the loyalty that has been shown to the magazine by those that have been among the first to take out a subscription.

The number of subscribers is well ahead of where we expected them to be. Following the publication of Issue 300, we received a large amount of feedback from readers, with many positive comments on the new look and style being passed. A number of people reported a variety of issues with the new Digital Edition system, following which we took the decision to reintroduce the PDF version. We have also 'tweaked' the design to try, where possible, to avoid long columns, something we will continue to do.

As a magazine, we remain committed to the Digital Edition, but equally we always like to listen to our readers where we can. The PDF version will continue to be published alongside the Digital Edition, allowing readers to choose how they wish to read and watch the magazine. We are also working with the provider of our Digital Edition software to answer some of the queries raised.

To keep the file sizes manageable, the video contained within each issue will also be available on our website, quickly accessible from the 'News' menu on the black navigation bar, so that our PDF readers do not miss out on any part of the edition.

Subscription Payments

For those readers who have enquired about payment gateways other than Paypal, within the next 10-14 days, and certainly before the 29th February, we expect to be able to offer two additional ways to pay subscriptions, our own secure credit/debit card system and Google Checkout. We will keep you informed.

Submitting video footage

A number of readers have contacted us about the ability to submit video footage to the magazine. We welcome all submissions, text, still images and video, and would be pleased to hear from any readers who are interested in seeing their video content in the magazine. All footage should be filmed using a tripod and should have a good sound quality. Please contact the Editorial Office on 01904 500175 or use the Contact form on the website, to make the initial approach. The method of submission is slightly different given the large file sizes.

Website Update

We are making significant progress with the website. All of our Google links are now updated and should be back working again. The news pages will continue to grow over the coming weeks and we will shortly be including a news archive and search system. The Imaging Centre remains very popular and the search facility should be back online within a few days, while the popular class-by-class and Rail Diary features will also return shortly - and the final few gremlins are now being worked on.

Articles

This issue is slightly unusual in that we have an article looking at World railways, in this case Switzerland. It is our intension to feature four or five such articles each year, but in-depth features looking at the UK railway network will be included on average twice a month, with the intermediate issues containing photographic features such as the popular 'Turning The Clock Back' and 'Blue & Grey Years' compilations, plus a few new series that we have 'up our sleeves'!

Next Week

While we will continue to keep readers updated with new features on the website and developments with the magazine, it is my intention from next week that this column should become a traditional editorial view, looking at various aspects of the railway network from our viewpoint - as ever I welcome your views, thoughts and comments on the points that are raised over the coming weeks.

Richard Tuplin

Richard Tuplin, Editor

Below: A snow covered Haworth Shed on the Keighley & Worth Valley Railway, as Class 08 No. 08266 undertakes shunting duties on 5th February and LMS 'Black 5' No. 45212 awaits its next turn of duty. *Ralph Berry*

NEW RELEASES

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Class 37 Turns : Loads of DRS 37s in action on a variety of trains, diverted flasks and on-hire to DBS. Plus, heritage 'tractors' and some '97/3s' too.

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Freight Flows / Loco Gallery : ***lots of exciting action including ....***

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Weardale Coal - Colas Rail break into the coal market working coal trains over the private Weardale Railway from Wolsingham to Scunthorpe steelworks and Ratcliffe p.s.

Rock Armour - Freight returns to the West Somerset Railway with DBS and Mendip Rail Class 59s bringing boulders to Minehead to strenghten sea defences.

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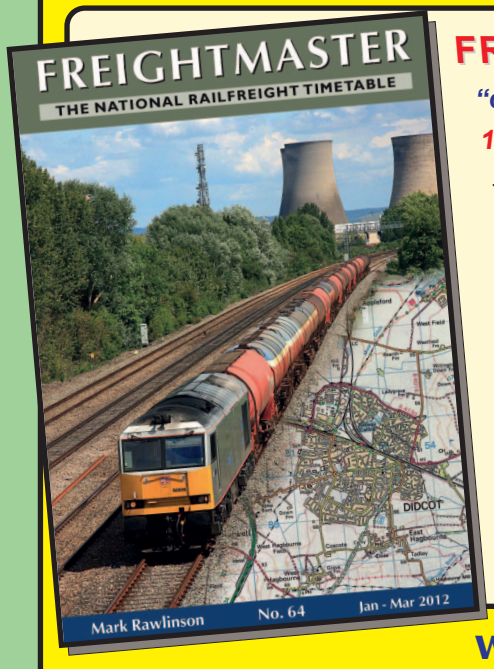

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** - Includes areas online that are not currently available, and will launch in the coming months.
*** - Not all video content is exclusive, some may be available through other sources.

Discover
the new magazine

FREE FOR FOUR WEEKS

Subscriptions start 29th February

Because the new magazine brings with it a significant number of changes, a larger editorial team, better news content, and new columns, we want readers to explore the title over the coming weeks, so both the magazine and the website is open-access, and free until late February!

Subscriptions can be purchased at any time - and any purchased during the free trial period will automatically commence from 29th February.

PLUS! Purchase an annual subscription before 29th February and you will receive 13 months for the price of 12!

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Imaging Centre

Railway Herald's popular Imaging Centre will remain free to view for all, and if you want to join the hundreds of other photographers that use the site to share their imagery, you can even upload your images free of charge, by signing up for a **FREE** account.

The free account does not provide access to the magazine. Paid subscribers that use the Imaging Centre will benefit from new features to be introduced shortly.

CLICK HERE for further details on What's New

Photo: Ken Brunt

Glyn Valley Tramway restoration gets the green light

The plans to bring the last 'Great Little Train of Wales' back to life took a major leap forward on 6th February when the Wrexham County Borough Council gave a big thumbs up to start Phase One of the reconstruction of the Glyn Valley Tramway (GVT) in Chirk.

This comes five years after a group of volunteers at Glyn Valley Tramway Trust started talks about restoring one mile of the narrow gauge line back in 2007. A detailed planning report was presented to the councillors which outlined proposals to reopen the Glyn Valley Tramway along a one-mile route from Chirk station, following the B4500 Chirk to Glyn Ceiriog road, to Pontfaen station, north of Chirk Fisheries.

The chosen gauge for the resurrected GVT is 2'-6", which is a departure from the original unique 2'-4 1/2" gauge. This new gauge allows more flexibility in the range of visiting locomotives and stock from other 2'-6" railways such as the Welshpool & Llanfair and the Sittingbourne & Kemsley Light Railways.

The plans will see the construction of a new building to provide covered storage of the railway's rolling stock and also allow for minor repairs at Chirk as well as reconstructing the original station building on the original site. A small building is also planned at Pontfaen, with the provision of a platform and car parking facilities.

Significant help and financial support will be required before there will be the sound of a Beyer Peacock whistle echoing down the Glyn Valley once again. Work will start later this month, and the first stage is scheduled to be completed by Autumn 2014.

The Glyn Valley Tramway Trust ultimately want to see the whole nine mile line reinstated, stretching between Hendre and Chirk, and they are seeking mediation with the GVT Group, and are hopeful that both organisations will be able to cooperate fully in the future.

The Glyn Valley Tramway originally opened back in 1873 using horse and gravity traction to haul the granite from the Hendre quarries, but converted to steam hauled trains in 1888. The line was developed with a passenger service being introduced on the 1st April 1891 between Chirk and Glyn Ceiriog. All trains were run mixed traffic, hauled by three now legendary Beyer Peacock built 0-4-0 tram locomotives with side skirts, named *Dennis*, *Sir Theodore* and *Glyn*.

A fourth engine was added in 1921, in the form of a ex-World War One American built Baldwin 4-6-0 tank engine dating from 1917. This was purchased from the Ministry of Munitions and was modified from 60cm to the GVT gauge and anglicised by Beyer Peacock, but was never fitted with side skirts or nameplates like the original tram locomotives, and was simply referred to as the 'Baldwin'.

Passenger services ceased in 1932, following the introduction of a more competitive bus service, and the whole line finally succumbed on 6th July 1935, after the more flexible and cost effective road lorries drove the final nail into the coffin after 60 years of rail haulage. All the locomotives, rolling stock, track and other associated equipment was sold to Davis Bros. of Barmouth for the sum of £2,400. The locomotives were cut up on site at Chirk for scrap and only one of Glyn's nameplates survives today.

For further information on the Glyn Valley Tramway Trust and making donations or volunteering help can be found on their website at: www.thegvt.org or write to the Glyn Valley Tramway Trust, Pentre Garth, Pentre Cilgwyn, Llwynmawr, Wrexham LL20 7BG.

Abellio takes over from NXEA

Below: **Class 90 No. 90006** *Roger Ford/Modern Railways Magazine* **passes Bentley on the 14:00 Norwich to Liverpool Street service on 6th February. Dutch operator Abellio took over the East Anglia franchise from National Express the previous day, and will operate it for a period of 26 months. Five Class 90s (Nos. 90002, 90006, 90007, 90014 and 90015) and two Mk3 sets are currently believed to be branded.** *Antony Guppy*

Princess Elizabeth receives boiler extension

Confirmation has been received from the 6201 *Princess Elizabeth* **Locomotive Society that its application for an extension of the boiler certificate for No. 6201** *Princess Elizabeth* **has been successful, and will now permit the Stanier Pacific to continue to operate on the main line through to the end of this year.**

This means that the forthcoming programme of use with Vintage Trains will now be confirmed, starting with a return to the Lickey Incline on 24th March on a tour from Solihull to Bristol Temple Meads. During the day, it will have the help of two Tyseley-based Pannier Tanks providing banking assistance from Bromsgrove. A fortnight earlier is the double-header partnered with No. 5043 *Earl of Mount Edgcumbe* taking on both Shap and Ais Gill, which was originally scheduled as the last tour under the old boiler certificate arrangements.

It is, of course, also extremely appropriate that No. 6201 can operate throughout the year in which HM The Queen, previously HRH Princess Elizabeth prior to ascending to the throne, will be celebrating her Diamond Jubilee.

Above: **The new East Anglian operator, Greater Anglia, has returned 12 Class 317/7s to the leasing company, Angel Trains, as all nine members of the former Stansted Express units have considerably lower seating capacity than other 317s. On 3rd February, the final day of Class 317 operation on the GE main line, Nos. 317709, 317722 and 317708 arrive at Colchester, forming the 08:01 London Liverpool Street to Ipswich service.** *Antony Guppy*

EGIP seven month consultation completed

Network Rail has completed the first phase of one of Scotland's biggest consultation exercises, seeking the public's views on the £1 billion Edinburgh Glasgow Improvement Programme (EGIP), which will transform rail services and infrastructure on key routes across the Central Belt.

As part of the seven-month consultation exercise, the EGIP project team held over 200 meetings with the public, local authorities and corporate stakeholders, distributed more than half-a-million information leaflets and received over 450 submissions.

The project team will now assess the feedback received as part of the consultation process, and review the programme before beginning a second phase of consultation in the summer. EGIP is being funded by Transport Scotland on behalf of the Scottish Government, with the new infrastructure financed through Network Rail's Regulatory Asset Base.

The programme is expected to deliver a range of benefits including a fastest journey time of 37 minutes on the main Edinburgh Waverley-Glasgow Queen Street route and increased service levels on all routes between the two cities from the current 10 to11 services per hour to 13 services per hour. The scheme will also involve the electrification of 350km of the existing rail network in the Central Belt, including the main Edinburgh Waverley-Glasgow Queen Street line, and provide opportunities to increase services and reduce journey times on routes between Alloa and Dunblane and Edinburgh and Glasgow.

Other opportunities gained through the project will be new and increased service opportunities between Alloa / Dunblane and Glasgow, reducing journey times by up to 10 minutes, and a reduction in Dunblane to Edinburgh services of up to five minutes.

A new rail/tram interchange station at Gogar (Edinburgh Gateway) facilitating better access to Edinburgh Airport and the surrounding area is also proposed, as is the scheme to transform Haymarket station into a modern interchange facility.

As well as electrifying the Edinburgh to Glasgow main line, EGIP will go on to electrify a total of eight routes in the Central Belt.

NEWS IN BRIEF

❖ Network Rail has confirmed that work to improve access at Montrose station, under the 'Access-for-all' scheme, will commence later this month, with completion expected by August.

❖ A planning application by Agility Trains has been given the go-ahead to build a new depot for the InterCity Express project on land at Stoke Gifford, adjacent to Bristol Parkway station. The work is expected to take up to two years to complete. The company says the new depot will be able to accommodate two full-length sets, as well as providing office and storage space.

❖ The campaign to reopen Baschurch station in Shropshire has been given a boost, after a developer who is planning to build 11 homes in the village, suggested using some of the £70,000 it would have to pay to the Parish Council for community improvements, on funding the railway study. Under Shropshire Council's new Community Infrastructure Levy arrangements, developers have to hand over money for community projects based on the scale of the scheme.

❖ The Severn Valley Railway (SVR) has introduced a new 'Freedom of the Line' ticket that allows unlimited travel on the day, plus free admission to the Engine House, the SVR's Visitor Centre located at Highley. The ticket is being issued initially as part of the SVR Half-Term Promotion between 11th-19th February, with four services each way, each day starting from Bridgnorth at 10:25 and Kidderminster at 10:35, and then running at approximately 105 - 115 minute intervals thereafter. The new ticket is priced at £16.50 (adults), £15 (seniors) and £8.50 (children), with a Family Ticket priced at £44 to cover two adults and up to four children (under 4s travel free).

NEWSDESK

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Above: With the first blanket of snow covering much of Great Britain, the rail network survived remarkably well. Here, Class 373 No. (37)3106 and (37)3105, displaying the recently introduced Eurostar branding, power across the Medway Viaduct with the slightly delayed 13:13 London-bound service from Paris Gare du Nord on 5th February. *Patrick Seale*

First snowfalls of the year, but rail network copes well

After the heavy and major snow encountered early in the winter of 2010/2011, this year's wintery conditions have been mild by contrast so far.

The first significant snowfalls of the year to affect the entire country arrived in early February, and while air traffic was disrupted the rail network escaped relatively unscathed.

Network Rail reports that its snow trains have been in use, although the level of snow, of between three and six inches deep was not enough to warrant use of the ploughs. Instead, the Class 57/3 powered sets have been utilised to assist the de-icing programme across the Southern network. Some Eurostar services encountered small delays due to speed restrictions on both sides of the Channel, while East Coast services were limited to 100mph.

The biggest issues were encountered on the third-rail network, where services were delayed or disrupted, with trains between Faverhsam and Dover, and on the Ramsgate and Canterbury lines suspended.

Right: East Midlands Trains Class 158/0 No. 158866 approaches Manea in Cambridgeshire, working the 10:47 Norwich to Liverpool Lime Street service on 5th February. *Kev Gregory*

Above: An artist impression of how the new Western Concourse will look at London King's Cross once it opens in mid-March. *Network Rail*

New King's Cross concourse on target for March

The doors to the new concourse at King's Cross station will open to passengers on 19th March, providing better facilities and an improved range of shopping and food and drink outlets.

The opening will mark a major milestone in the redevelopment of the station, which started in 2007. It will be fully completed by the end of 2013 following the removal of the 1970s extension and canopy at the front of the station and the creation of a new 7,000m^2 public square. The opening will transform the way passengers use the station, congestion being significantly reduced by new walking routes based on an innovative method of pedestrian modelling undertaken during the design phase of the project.

A new one-way system will direct passengers to enter the station via the new concourse, and exit via the existing concourse at the bottom of the platforms, allowing better connections to other forms of public transport at both ends of the journey.

FCC names Class 319 after driver trainer

First Capital Connect Class 319/4 No. 319441 was named at Bedford on 6th February, after retired driver instructor Mick Winnett, who died last year after a battle with cancer.

Mr Winnett started his railway career in 1958 in the days of steam at Kettering as an engine cleaner, before being passed out for firing duties. He 'fired' on many of the turns allocated to Kettering, and when Kettering closed in 1969 he moved to Bedford where was made a driver, and in 1978 became an instructor on all types of diesels that operated at that time. He retired in October 2007 almost 30 years later.

Do you have or know of a news story for *Railway Herald*?

If so, then call us on 01904 500175, or email the editor.

This well detailed book covers the history, development and decline of the Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway Company's system in and around Preston.

The work begins with an account of the early railways and then focuses on specific locations, all of which have either long since disappeared or have been whittled down beyond recognition.

There are nostalgic reflections on such places as Butler Street station and goods yard; the stables at East Cliff; the jointly-owned Park Hotel; the triangle of junctions at Whitehouse; Todd Lane Junction and station; the complex at Lostock Hall, with a large section given over to the famous engine shed.

The work terminates with a chapter on Bamber Bridge, Gregson Lane and Hoghton. There is also a chapter on the former West Lancashire section from Fishergate Hill to Southport, and another on the gas works at Lostock Hall, which was served by the railway and had an engine of its own.

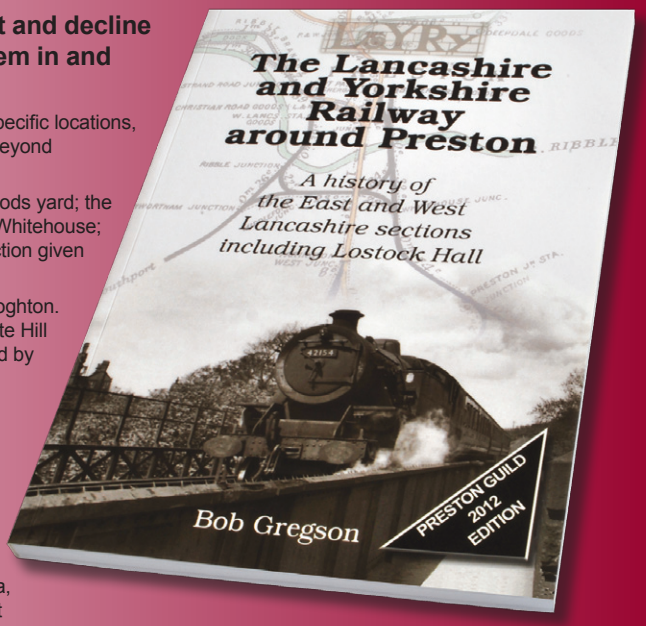
The text is well illustrated with many evocative and remarkable photographs, drawings and ephemera, most of which have never been published before. The author has included the human element wherever possible, in the form of personal accounts from men and women who worked in the Preston and Lostock Hall areas in the unforgettable days of steam, all painstakingly recorded and compiled over a period of 15 years.

We believe this is certainly the most informative work of its kind to be written on the former East and West Lancashire Railway sections in the Preston area, and as so much intense and meticulous research has gone into its creation, it will prove to be a valuable reference book for the railway enthusiast, modeller and historian alike.

Originally published in December 2011, the first print run was sold out by the end of that month. A second print run is now available with additional photographs.

This is the first of two books covering the history of the rail network around Preston with the second book **'The London and North Western Railway around Preston'**, to be published in the early summer of 2012.

Softback, A4, 184 pages with 277 images. Printed black throughout.



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Tees Trains starts discussions with ORR over proposals for new passenger services in North East

Community Interest Company Tees Trains has told *Railway Herald* that it is progressing forward with plans to introduce additional services in the East Cleveland and Teeside area.

The company, which aims to commence operations from the 2014 summer timetable, is approaching the end of its development phase, having completed market research and community consultation. David Masterman of Tees Trains says that in conjunction with various rail user groups, the company has identified several areas where rail services provided are inadequate for the communities being served, and it is the aim of the company to introduce new routes and services that compliment, not compete with Northern Rail.

While four routes were initially identified, Tees Trains is now focusing on two specific routes, firstly from Seaham, near Sunderland, travelling southwards along the Durham Coast, through Hartlepool and Middlesborough, then on to Redcar and Loftus. The majority of the route is currently served by several different Northern Rail operations, but no direct service, while its terminating point at Loftus is situated on the currently freight-only route to Boulby Mine. The intention is that services would operate hourly in-between the current hourly Northern service, to provide a 30-minute interval service.

The second route would commence from Great Ayton and Nunthorpe, passing Middlesborough and heading on to Darlington, improving the areas connection with the East Coast Main Line. It is the expectation that an hourly service would operate over the route, with the aspiration being to increase this in the future.

Both routes bring with them a number of requirements prior to the start of services, the biggest being the need to construct a new station at Loftus, if agreement can be reached with Network Rail and Boulby Mine operator Cleveland Potash. While the scheme would no doubt improve communications and travel connections for local communities, the costs of starting an open-access operator are high-enough, and climb significantly higher when station construction is taken into account, although David Masterman is expecting that a number of the station re-openings or constructions will feature in Local Transport Plans, as a means of improving the region.

Starting services from Seaham may seem a strange choice, but the move is strategic. Not only is it the only station within East Durham, but with the Tyne & Wear Metro's recently announced long-term expansion plan to extend the system from Sunderland to Seaham, it would provide direct and easy access to the surrounding area and Newcastle, without having to negotiate track access into a congested city centre station.

On the second of the two routes, a number of significant developments are underway that would have the potential to improve the journey for passengers and reduce rush-hour traffic in the Middlesborough area. The first is a proposed new Parkway station near Nunthorpe, which when combined with a frequent timetabled service into Middlesborough, is likely to provide a real alternative to users. Currently Nunthorpe, located just east of Middlesborough, on the Whitby branch, is served by 12 Northern Rail services a day between 07:20 and 20:30, although several of these are located around the morning peak-hour. Elsewhere on the route, a station is proposed at Middlesborough's Riverside Stadium and also alongside the redevelopment work taking place close to the old Thornaby TMD - the new complex will offer leisure and retail facilities as well as quick and convenient access to the local campus of Durham University.

The company says that it would operate services on a 'not-for-profit' basis and is looking at a variety of funding schemes from private finance to local and European grants. Discussions are about to commence with the Office of Rail Regulation, which has previously been made aware of the scheme. In addition, investigations into possible rolling stock are underway and while it is understood that a loco-hauled solution would not be ruled out, it is expected that the service would be operated by DMU vehicles.

Network Rail uncovers steam-age turntables at York

Contractors excavating for Network Rail's new Rail Operating Centre, adjacent to York station have uncovered three turntable pits.

The pits are believed to be from York South MPD which was located in the triangular section of land between the station and the freight avoiding lines. Network Rail says that the foundations and some of the bases have been uncovered and that the company is working with the City of York archaeologist to complete the excavation, and logging the various aspects of the turntable pits, to fully record it for historical purposes.

One of the turntable pits at York on 2nd February. *Ron Cover*

Above: The first of the tunnel boring machines for the Crossrail project is pictured in the course of being assembled at Westbourne Park, near the Royal Oak portal, on 2nd February. *Bill Turvill*

Part of the Royal Docks to be drained to repair Connaught Tunnel for Crossrail

Crossrail is to adopt a new approach to enlarging the Connaught Tunnel in the Royal Docks.

The structure was built in 1878, and until 2006 was part of the North London Line. It will be extensively refurbished as part of the works to construct the new Abbey Wood branch, as sections are in a poor structural condition. In 1935, larger ships began scraping the bottom of the Royal Victoria Dock, which sits above the Connaught Tunnel, and as part of work to deepen the Dock, the central section of the tunnel was narrowed with brickwork removed and steel segments installed. Crossrail originally planned to strengthen the central section of the bore by removing the existing steel linings and back filling the entire section with concrete foam. These tunnels would then have been enlarged by boring through the concrete to create ones that are large enough for trains to pass.

However, the organisation will now place cofferdams in the Connaught Passage, between the Victoria and Royal Albert Docks, pump out the water and create a dry construction site, allowing workers to dig down to the tunnel to undertake the enlargement work through a 'cut and cover' approach. This will be the first time the tunnel has been exposed from above ground since its construction.

During World War II, more than 40,000 explosive devices were dropped on London with the Docks and rail lines particularly targeted due to their crucial role in delivering supplies to the British war effort. Connaught Tunnel was hit by a bomb in 1940 and additional repair work will be undertaken to the damaged sections that still remain.

Ahead of major works on the tunnel next year, an extensive search of the wider construction area is being undertaken to identify any remaining undiscovered wartime devices that failed to detonate upon landing. The geology of the Royal Docks area meant that some devices that didn't explode on landing sunk into the first few metres of soil. A team of highly trained specialists is currently using armoured vehicles with magnetic equipment to investigate the ground. Their work involves sending probes into the ground in three-metre intervals and analysing the results.

After surveys for unexploded ordnance are completed, archaeologists will open excavation trenches in an attempt to locate evidence of human settlement and farming in the area dating back nearly 6,000 years. Working with the Museum of London Archaeology, Crossrail also aims to map the effect of the River Thames on the area during historic and prehistoric times.

Sitting above the Tunnel, near Connaught Bridge, is the tunnel pump house. This Victorian building is too small to accommodate the larger modern pumping equipment that will be installed as part of the refurbishment, and subject to structural surveys, it is proposed to donate it to the SS Robin Trust. The *SS Robin* is one of the world's oldest steamships and was built in East London. The ship's trust is seeking a permanent berth in the Royal Docks, and the pump house structure would form the quayside ticket office.

The cofferdam works that will commence next year have been planned in conjunction with the Royal Docks Management Authority and timed to start after the London Boat Show.

NEWS IN BRIEF

❖ Roodee Viaduct, which crosses the River Dee west of Chester station and carries the main line between England and North Wales, is being refurbished at a cost of £1.5 million and is expected to be completed in July. Work is being confined to times when the line is closed for other work. Contractors will be working from scaffolding suspended beneath the decks of the viaduct, to grit blast the structure back to bare metal and carry out repairs and strengthening where necessary. It will then have a protective coating applied to it before being repainted in its original grey colour.

❖ In order to make Blackpool South to Colne services more punctual, Northern Rail is to change Pleasington, Hapton, Huncoat and Burnley Barracks stations to request stops from 14th May, as a result of low passenger use.

❖ The ORR reports that train operators have asked for more time to prepare for new obligations aimed at ensuring passengers receive appropriate, accurate and timely information. ORR will allow train operators until 1st March to develop the industry code of practice on passenger information so that it is 'fit for purpose'.

❖ Against the backdrop of a £53 million redevelopment, the day-to-day running of Gatwick Airport station has been transferred from Network Rail to Southern, which maintains it is better placed to run it. The upgrade, which includes building a new platform, a replacement stairway, an escalator and a new lift on Platforms 5 & 6 is underway, but the major construction work is not expected to start until the autumn, after the Olympic Games, with completion scheduled for 2013. The work will also involve the station concourse area being refurbished and improvements to the track and signalling that will mean more reliable journeys and less congestion.

Class 90 derailment brings WCML to a standstill

The West Coast Main Line was severely disrupted on 3rd February, when a derailment shut all four running lines near Bletchley.

Freightliner Intermodal's Class 90 No. 90046 was heading south 'light engine' from Crewe to Wembley during the early hours of Friday morning, on hire to Virgin Trains prior to working the regular Fridays-only loco-hauled diagram, when it derailed around Bletchley South Junction shortly before 02:30. The incident caused extensive damage to the track and overheads, resulting in the complete closure of the West Coast Main Line at this point. The driver sustained minor injuries.

Investigators from the Rail Accident Investigation Branch attended the site, and Network Rail engineers worked throughout the weekend to replace track work, a crossover, signalling and the overhead catenary. While the 'slow' lines reopened shortly after mid-day on 3rd February, it was early on 6th February before both 'fast' lines were available to traffic.

In an attempt to handle the disruption, two Virgin Trains 'Pendolinos' operated a shuttle service between Euston and Tring, with bus connections onwards to Milton Keynes, where all services from the north were terminating.

The Class 90 was moved to Wembley overnight on 3rd/4th February, and it is believed that it will be moved by road for assessment and repairs.

Right: Class 90 No. 90046, which was working 'light engine' along the West Coast Main Line, is pictured after derailing at Bletchley South Junction. *Network Rail*

Below: With the overnight 'Caledonian Sleepers' having been cancelled at Crewe and Preston, the stock was worked south diesel hauled. Here, Class 67 No. 67017 passes Denham Golf Club station with the ECS off the Glasgow working heading for Wembley for servicing on 3rd February. *Paul Davis*

Below: With the West Coast Main Line initially closed, then subsequently reopened on two out of four routes, paths into and out of London were at a premium. Here, two Class 390 'Pendolino' sets stand side-by-side awaiting the road near Milton Keynes, during the afternoon of 3rd February. The line was fully reopened on 6th February. *Alan Wallwork*

Centro awards 'preferred bidder' status for 19 new trams to CAF

Above: The Urbos3 type of LRV currently operating in Zaragoza. If the contract is awarded, the new trams for Birmingham will be built to a similar style. *CAF*

Centro has announced its preferred bidder for the new multi-million pound tram fleet that will take the Midland Metro into the 21st century.

The Midland Metro runs between Wolverhampton and Birmingham Snow Hill, via Bilston, Wednesbury and West Bromwich. It has 23 stops and operates a frequent service with a tram every six to eight minutes during the daytime peak and every 10 minutes at other times. Spanish manufacturer Construcciones y Auxiliar de Ferrocariles (CAF) has been chosen as the builders to supply up to 25 Urbos 3 trams in a deal worth in the region of £40 million.

The Urbos3 type has already been supplied by CAF to Seville and Zaragoza and comprises a 30-metre long vehicle with a top-speed of 70km/h. If the order is awarded, a total of 19 vehicles will replace the current 16-strong fleet to deal with the expected growth in the use of the Metro once the 1.3km (0.8 mile) extension between Snow Hill and New Street, via Bull Street, Corporation Street, and Stephenson Street, is open. The contract includes an add-on option for a further six vehicles if the extensions currently under review are built in the future.

The new trams will start operating from late 2014 on the current route from Snow Hill to Wolverhampton, with the extension from Birmingham Snow Hill to Birmingham New Street beginning in 2015. The extension is expected to boost the West Midlands economy by £50 million a year and create 1,300 sustainable new jobs. The bigger trams will also provide far greater passenger capacity between Birmingham and the Black Country, the Urbos 3 being a five section air-conditioned tram with a passenger capacity of approximately 200, compared to 156 on the current trams. The design also has two dedicated spaces for wheelchair users, its features being fully compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act.

In addition each section of the vehicles will have passenger information and CCTV, with Passenger Assistance Units at each door. CAF has already supplied rolling stock for the UK market, including the Class 332s for Heathrow Express the Class 333s for Northern Rail, and the 3000 and 4000 Class DMUs for Northern Ireland Railways, as well as the trams for Edinburgh, which are the longest in the country.

Final testing phase for new DLR signalling system

Following the testing of new signalling software over the coming weekend, Docklands Light Railway (DLR) is aiming to increase the reliability of its services, which already stand at 97%,

The upgrade is expected to be switched on over the weekend of 18th/19th February, which Transport for London (TfL) says will provide an improvement in journey times and resilience in the system. The new system, which is part of the £300 million three-car upgrade programme that began three years ago, will ensure services across the whole network can recover more quickly from any delays that occur.

The work means that the entire Docklands network will be closed over the weekend of 11th/12th February for final testing in as near to normal operating conditions as possible. TfL says that the testing will bed in the new software properly and bring an early London 2012 Games legacy to regular DLR passengers.

The weekend of 11th/12th February has been chosen for the testing, considered as the best one to avoid causing inconvenience to forthcoming major events planned to take place at locations served by the DLR network. Around £6.5 billion has been invested in upgrading and extending transport links to enable spectators to get to and from the Games each day.

Weekend and late-evening closures for T&W Metro upgrades

Nexus is carrying out its first major modernisation work of the year on the Tyne & Wear Metro system, strengthening bridges and embankments that in some cases are more than 150 years old.

The modernisation work will involve a series of five weekend line closures on the Metro lines between Wallsend Metro and Tynemouth stations from the end of February. The work starts with an all-day closure on Sunday 26th February, followed by full weekend closures on 3rd/4th, 10th/11th, 17th/18th and 24th/25th March.

Once the Olympic Games are over, a 23-day major line closure will be made this summer. For the first time the organisation is also to undertake work on mid-week late evenings starting a 21:00, instead of at weekends, in an attempt to reduce the extent of line closures. Nexus says that in addition, further refurbishment work is also planned to take place, with projects at North Shields, Howdon and Meadow Well stations nearing completion.

The website nexus.org.uk, along with My_Metro pages on Twitter and Facebook, contain further details.

New viaduct to be built on South Wales Main Line

Contractor Carillion has been selected by Network Rail to build a £15.6 million replacement for the Loughor viaduct in South Wales.

Funded jointly by Network Rail and the Welsh Government, Carillion will replace the Victorian-era Lougher viaduct.

Subject to planning approval and listed building consent, Network Rail is proposing to keep the existing natural stone abutments and some of the Grade II listed trestles, and erect a small section of the old Loughor viaduct on the West shore as part of its conservation efforts.

Originally constructed in 1852, the 216 metre-long, eighteen span, timber viaduct connects Swansea and Llanelli over the River Lougher. The new structure will support both 'up' and 'down' lines, an improvement on the existing bridge that was reduced to one track in 1986.

Replacing the viaduct is part of a £40 million scheme to improve the rail infrastructure between Swansea and Gowerton. An additional six-mile track will also be installed between Cockett West Junction and Duffryn West Junction as part of the scheme.

Waverley Steps reopen in first phase of access project

The refurbished Waverley Steps at Edinburgh's Waverley station reopened on 30th January as the first phase of a multi-million-pound project to overhaul the station's Princes Street entrance came to an end.

The historic station steps have been rebuilt, and three banks of double escalators installed, as part of a £7 million contract to improve station access. The new steps and escalators have also been protected from the elements by the construction of a new steel and glass canopy. The ongoing refurbishment project will also include the construction of a level walkway and two new lifts allowing step-free access between Princes Street and Waverley station.

Now the step and escalator work is finished, two 16-passenger lifts will be installed, connecting from the roof of the Princes Mall to the platforms below. The new lifts are scheduled to be completed by July.

The Waverley Steps redevelopment has been funded by Transport Scotland and is being undertaken in parallel with Network Rail's improvements to the station, including reglazing of the station roof and upgrades to the platforms.

Triple-headed Class 37s rescue Ratcliffe coal working

Below: When DBS Class 66/0 No. 66007 slipped to a stand at Longton on 28th January while working a Liverpool Bulk Terminal to Ratcliffe Power Station loaded coal service, the nearest rescue locomotives were a trio of DRS Class 37s, Nos. 37510, 37194 and 37409, that were working 'light engine' from Crewe Gresty Bridge to Derby RTC. After crossing the line at Caverswall and attaching to the failed '66', the train continued its journey to Toton. Here, it passes Uttoxeter in the sunshine. *Richard Holmes*

London Mayor seeks control of all rail franchises within the Greater London area

The Mayor of London, Boris Johnson, has said that he wants to control all local rail links within Greater London and introduce an improved and more reliable service.

In a vision for the Capital's railways, he has explained how he wants the Government to devolve to him the power to set the standards for the rail services run by the private train companies. By integrating them into the Transport for London (TfL) network, and by adopting its contracting model, he believes that he can make millions of pounds of savings that could be used to provide more reliable and frequent services, safer and cleaner stations, more staff and simpler fares.

The Mayor has also cited the improvements he has overseen to London Overground services as the prime example of why this should happen. The former Silverlink Metro franchise services were poor quality with old trains, neglected stations, bad customer service and high levels of fare evasion. Since TfL took over the network and established London Overground, those services have been transformed into one of the best performing in Great Britain, with a reliability rate of 96% and some of the highest levels of customer satisfaction in the country.

As a result demand has shot up by 110% over four years on the original London Overground network (and 190% when the newly extended East London Line is included). Fare evasion has been cut from 16% to 4%. In the first year of TfL's operation alone, and crime fell by 19%.

The demand for rail in London is set to increase with the Capital forecast to grow in population by 1.3 million, the equivalent of a city the size of Birmingham, by 2031. In his vision for rail the Mayor argues that the current franchising system, which has created two distinct networks, one operated by TfL and one managed by the Government, must be reformed. He says that the creation of one integrated network will allow the maximum possible benefit to be derived from them. It would result in consistent and high levels of customer service and safety, backed by a single and far simpler fares structure.

Transport for London has identified a set of customer service standards that it would apply across the rail franchises in the Capital. These include a minimum of four trains an hour throughout the week, improved passenger security with networked CCTV and help points at all stations, a visible staff presence across the network throughout the day, better customer information supported by the best and most comprehensive online and mobile enabled journey planning system anywhere in the world, and high quality cycle parking facilities, to promote cycling as a means of access to stations.

The Government has said that it is willing to look at flexible ways of franchising local rail services, and it is believed that it will begin a consultation on the possibilities around devolving rail franchises at the end of February. In the next four years, six London-area franchises come up for renewal. TfL has identified the routes currently operated by Southeastern and West Anglia as priorities for devolution when those franchises come up for renewal in 2014.

Boris Johnson said: "The fractured organisation of London's suburban railways is totally inefficient and needs a complete overhaul. My vision is for one integrated suburban service operating to the standards we have demonstrated can be achieved on London Overground, which is now one of the most reliable and popular railways in the UK. There are 85 million trips each year on London's rail network that could benefit from this approach. Devolving the commercial franchises would allow us to invest millions of pounds in improving stations and to simplify the ticketing system".

The Mayor's strategy also examines the need to continue to provide investment in rail capacity to meet the demands of an ever-increasing population in London. The strategy also predicts that by the 2020s a Crossrail 2 running north to south will be required to address capacity issues and provide congestion relief to the Victoria Line in particular.

Left: London Overground scored 92% in the recent Passenger Focus survey, a gain of 7% in 12 months. The Mayor of London wants to see power of the Greater London rail franchises transferred to TfL, with the aim of bringing similar improvements to other routes. Class 378/1 No. 378141 arrives at Hoxton with a service for Highbury & Islington. *Richard Tuplin*

Above: The tressle bridge at Pont Briwet, which carries both the railway and road (nearest the camera) is to be replaced. Prior to the introduction of ERTMS, Class 31/1 No. 31285 crosses the structure returning from Pwllheli with a test train. *Richard Jones*

Cambrian line icon to be replaced

A new road and rail bridge is to be built at a cost of £20 million to replace Pont Briwet, near Penrhyndeudraeth, the currently privately-owned wooden toll bridge, built in 1860.

Work on the new crossing will start in the autumn, and the existing road will then be closed for 12-18 months with motorists having to face an eight-mile diversion through Maentwrog until the new bridge is finished. The Grade II listed Pont Briwet has carried the Cambrian Coast line and allowed people to cross Afon Dwyryd from Penrhyndeudraeth to Llandecwyn along a narrow road that is suitable only for cars. The work is a joint project between Network Rail, Gwynedd Council, Snowdonia National Park and Countryside Council for Wales and will take two years to complete.

Channel Tunnel in new Royal Mail stamp collection

The Channel Tunnel has been recognised in a Royal Mail commemorative stamp set as part of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebrations.

The 'Kings and Queens' stamps series was introduced in 2008 and has since then explored 600 years of the British Monarchy. It now reaches a fitting conclusion with The House of Windsor set in the year of Her Majesty The Queen's Diamond Jubilee.

The Channel Tunnel has been selected as one of only four stamps to commemorate important milestones of the period, and was issued on 2nd February. The special commemorative stamp has a face value of £1.00 and celebrates the historic linking of England and France in May 1994, when the Channel Tunnel first began operations. In nearly 18 years, Eurotunnel has carried 284 million people and 57 million vehicles through the Tunnel.

The other significant events commemorated in this special edition of just four stamps are Scott's expedition to the South Pole in 1912, the Second World War, and England winning the 1966 Football World Cup.

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Looking Forward & Looking Back . . .

THE VISIONS RAIL GUIDE 2012

The Visions Rail Guide 2012 is both a review of of 2011 and a guide to what to look for in 2012 - Olympics year. Here's the menu:

Passenger franchises - The recent changes and those about to change. **New liveries** - DBS get out the paint brush as well as GBRf and East Coast. **New EMUs in service** - The 379s & 380s.. **Freight workings** - the new, the old and the finished (and the Deltic again). **Class 60s** - resurrected at last - we feature those that have gone and those that came back. **Class 66s** - moves between operators and the comings and goings to and from mainlaind Europe. **More Class 70s**. **50044 and 33012** back on the main line . . . and the other 'mature' traction still pounding the network. **Extra features** - Infrastructure work, Thrash & Clag, and some of the things that never change.

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Driver training runs utilise closed Antrim branch

A series of driver training operations took place during early February on the closed branch to Antrim, in Northern Ireland.

The training trips were powered by NIR 111 Class No. 112 and comprised six ballast hoppers operating over the Lisburn to Antrim branch that was closed to traffic on 29th June 2003. The purpose of the runs was to allow the training of drivers from Coleraine & Londonderry, prior to a forthcoming ballast train programme on the Londonderry to Castlerock section, which is due to commence in Mid-February.

The provisional plan will utilise two Class 111 diesels based in the North West, with one being used on the ballast workings and the other at Coleraine. The work will all take place at night time and ballast will be dropped between Londonderry & Castlerock each night with a loading point halfway, around Ballykelly.

Later in the year the Coleraine to Londonderry line is due to close for nine months from 29th July, to allow a major track replacement project to take place.

Above: The 12:20 Lisburn to Antrim driver training 'trip' departs from Lisburn and climbs the bank towards Knockmore Halt. *Chris Playfair*

Away to Limerick

Right: The 2800 Class will shortly be cascaded to Limerick, following the introduction of the additional 22000 Class units around Dublin. To allow training of Limerick, Galway, Athlone and possibly Cork drivers to be undertaken, vehicles Nos. 2805, 2806, 2819 and 2820 were dispatched from Drogheda to Limerick on 30th January. The pair of units are pictured in the Gantry Sidings at Limerick on 4th February. *Neil Dinnen*

Below: Late evening on 4th February, two 450 Class DEMUs stand at Larne Harbour. No. 8785 on the left awaits time on the 22:40 service to Belfast Central, while classmate No. 8788 is on the right, stabled for the night before working the 08:10 to Belfast the following morning. Very obvious in the background is P&O's ship *European Highlander*, **which has just docked with the 19:45 sailing from Troon.** *Chris Playfair*

NEWS IN BRIEF

■ Hastings Diesel's 'Thames Tidal' tour has been re-dated to Saturday 31st March, because of engineering work that is due to take place between Pitsea and Southend on the original date of the tour. There will also be a slight revision to the route, as from South Tottenham it will run to Barking, and after reversing continue to Stratford via Forest Gate. From Stratford the route is unchanged. The tour, which has only been open for booking for a short while, is already over one third full.

■ Uncertainty of the availability of the proposed steam traction has led Compass Railtours to cancel its return Perth to Inverness 'Strathspey Highlander' working on Wednesday 9th May. The likelihood was that the train would utilise one, or both of the locomotives moving from Carnforth to Fort William for the commencement of the 2012 'Jacobite' season, but it seems that this cannot now be guaranteed, so Compass has decided to withdraw the tour from its schedules.

■ The Railway Touring Company's 'Winter Cumbrian Mountain Expresses' have been re-routed for the remainder of February. Instead of working northbound over the Settle & Carlisle, the trains will now proceed north from Carnforth, via Shap to Carlisle, and return south over the S&C.

■ Following a lengthy absence from the Railtour scene, Retro Railtours has three workings in mind for this year. The first, to Glasgow, is scheduled for 19th May, followed by a trip to the south coast in August, with details of the third to be announced. While the information of these proposed tours is presently sketchy, full details are looked forward to in due course. Riviera coaching stock will be used, which implies a DB Schenker operated charter.

Duchess 'Night Owl' loaded test run redated due to pathing issues

Following the formal unveiling of LMS 'Princess Coronation' No. 46233 *Duchess of Sutherland* **in BR Brunswick green livery at the West Shed (see Preservation World) on 3rd March, the mandatory 'light engine' main line test run, which is likely to take place around the 'Derby-Sheffield Circle', will take place soon after.**

Assuming a successful operation, the loaded test run, the 'Night Owl' will operate at the end of the March, which is open to the public. However, this will now operate on Thursday 29th March, a day later than originally advertised due to pathing issues between Derby and Lichfield. The train, while still originating at Hathersage, will run earlier than originally planned and now pick up at Sheffield and Belper in addition to Chesterfield and Derby.

The provisional steam departure time from Derby has been pulled forward to 16:13, giving an arrival in Crewe around 18:00. The return working is expected to depart around 19:40, arriving back at Derby just before 21:30.

Class 86 back on the West Coast route

Above: Privately owned Class 86/2 No. 86259 *Les Ross* **powers northwards through Cathiron on 4th February, with the first leg of the Railway Touring Company's 'Winter Cumbrian Mountain Express' working.** *Ken Brunt*

Below: By the time the train reached the Settle & Carlisle line, the wintery conditions were clearly in evidence! In a light snow shower, LMS 'Black 5' No. 45305 climbs through Sheriffs Brow, bound for Carlisle, on the outward leg. *John Wooley*

Forthcoming Charter Workings

The details shown in the following table were believed to be correct at the time of going to press. Not all pick-up and set-down points are shown, please contact the tour operator concerned for fare and ticket information.

Saturday 11th February 2012		
Railway Touring Co.	86259	London Euston-Watford Jn-Northampton-Crewe-Preston
	70013 / 45305	Preston-Lancaster-Shap-Penrith-Carlisle-S&C-Blackburn-Preston
	86259	Preston-Crewe-Northampton-Watford Jnc-London Euston
UK Railtours	DBS 59/2	London Paddington-Westbury-Whatley Quarry-Cranmore-Merehead Quarry-Westbury-London Paddington
Sunday 12th February 2012		
Steam Dreams	6024	London Paddington-Reading-Newbury-Westbury-Trowbridge-Bath Spa-Bristol TM & return
Vintage Trains	4965	Tyseley WR-Nuneaton-Leicester-Loughborough-Castle Donnington-Tamworth HL-Tyseley WR
Tuesday 14th February 2012		
VSOE	35028	London Victoria-Staines-Woking-Guildford-Redhill-East Croydon-London Victoria
Friday 17th February 2012		
VSOE	35028	London Victoria-Staines-Virginia Water-Guildford-Shalford-Redhill-East Croydon-London Victoria
Saturday 18th February 2012		
Railway Touring Co.	86259	London Euston-Watford Jn-Northampton-Crewe-Preston
	45305 / 70013	Preston-Lancaster-Shap-Penrith-Carlisle-S&C-Blackburn-Preston
	86259	Preston-Crewe-Northampton-Watford Jnc-London Euston
Saturday 25th February 2012		
Pathfinder Tours	2xDBS 66	Tame Bridge Parkway-Derby-Church Fenton-Durham-Pelaw Jn-Jarrow(to NR limit)-Ferryside-Billingham Jn-Seal Sands (NR limit)-Eaglescliffe-Thirsk-York & return
Railway Touring Co.	86259	London Euston-Watford Jn-Northampton-Crewe-Preston
	45305 / 70013	Preston-Lancaster-Shap-Penrith-Carlisle-S&C-Blackburn-Preston
	86259	Preston-Crewe-Northampton-Watford Jnc-London Euston
Steam Dreams	DBS 67	London Paddington-Reading-Didcot Parkway- Swindon-Severn Tunnel-Abergavenny-Hereford
	6024	Hereford-Abergaveny-Severn Tunnel-Swindon-Oxford-Leamington Spa-Solihull-Birmingham SH
CANCELLED	60163	Birmingham SH-Solihull-Oxford-Didcot Parkway-Reading-London Paddington
Thursday 1st March 2012		
Steam Dreams	6024	London Paddington-Maidenhead-Reading-Cardiff & return
Saturday 3rd March 2012		
Pathfinder Tours	DBS 67	Birmingham Intl-Stourbridge Jn-Kidderminster-Cheltenham Spa-Bristol Parkway-Bristol TM-
	6024	Bristol TM-Swindon-Reading-London Paddington-Reading-Swindon-Bristol TM
	DBS 67	Bristol TM-Bristol Parkway-Cheltenham Spa-Worcester Shrub Hill-Kidderminster-Birmingham Intl
Railway Touring Co.	70013	London King's Cross-Retford-Whisker Hill Jn-Worksop-Dinnington Jn-Scunthorpe-Cleethorpes
	WCRC 47	Cleethorpes-Grimsby-Ulceby-New Holland
	70013	New Holland-Ulceby-Barnetby-Market Rasen-Lincoln-Newark Northgate-Grantham-Peterborough
	2xWCRC 47	Peterborough-Huntingdon-Potters Bar-London King's Cross
Statesman Rail	2xWCRC 47	Hereford-Craven Arms-Whitchurch-Crewe-Carlisle-Beattock-Crianlarich-Rannoch-Fort William
UK Railtours	DBS 67	London King's Cross-Potters Bar-Peterborough- York
	70000	York-Leeds-Skipton-S&C-Carlisle
	DBS 67	Carlisle-Hexham-Durham-York -Peterborough & return as outwards
VSOE	35028	London Victoria-Staines-Virginia Water-Guildford-Shalford-Redhill-East Croydon-London Victoria

Please mention** Railway Herald **when speaking to train operators, and remember charter operators need your support

Railtour Spotlight *by John Whitehouse*

Valentine's Day, predictably, dominates the weekend tour schedules, with both Steam Dreams and Vintage Trains offering steam-hauled workings featuring ex-Great Western power on Sunday 12th February.

Steam Dreams head for Bristol Temple Meads with the 'Valentine's Cathedrals Express', featuring No. 6024 *King Edward I* from London Paddington, which takes the direct route from Reading, via Swindon and Chippenham, prior to setting down at Bath Spa ahead of Temple Meads. Meanwhile, No. 4965 *Rood Ashton Hall* will be taking on the East Midlands circuit with Vintage Trains' 'The Valentine Express' from Tyseley Warwick Road, and then via Coleshill Parkway to Leicester and continuing back through Castle Donnington, Burton-upon-Trent and Tamworth High Level. On Valentine's Day itself, VSOE will be running a 'British Pullman' luncheon train around the Surrey Hills circuit with Merchant Navy No. 35028 *Clan Line*.

Meanwhile, on 11th February, UK Railtours again go wandering, but on this occasion the tracks are perhaps not so forgotten. The 'Angel of Bedlam', so named as it passes through the tunnel that takes its name from the nearby village of Bedlam, en route to the busy Whatley Quarry. After a reversal it then heads back to Frome, for a further reversal to head for Cranmore, on the East Somerset Railway and a break prior to completing the day with a visit to Merehead Quarry. Appropriately, the train is booked for Class 59 haulage from London Paddington, and is routed along the Berks & Hants route.

A full round-up of all known forthcoming charter and excursion trains can be found on our website at www.railwayherald.com/railtours

Day trip variety from the Riviera family of operators

Riviera Trains now controls a significant part of the railtour market, having built up a portfolio of operators over the years, including the rescue of Pathfinder Tours, the acquisition of the 'Torbay Express' business from the ruins of the Past Time Rail collapse, and more recently the creation of Cheshire Cat Railtours.

All three concerns cater for different areas of the railtour market, confirming the role of Riviera as a key player in the charter sector, a fact underlined by its role as one of the main coaching stock stock, and its position as a partner with DB Schenker in the 'charter alliance'.

All three of the Riviera operators have now announced their summer programmes, and while Pathfinder had already advertised a series of workings running through to April, these have now been expanded into the autumn, and feature a variety of workings to cover most, if not all tastes.

Two steam workings are of particular note, the most prominent being the use of a pair of BR Standard Pacifics over the South Devon banks on 28th July. The locomotives concerned are Nos. 70000 *Britannia* and 71000 *Duke of Gloucester*, which will head Pathfinder's 'Tamar Devonian' from Bristol Temple Meads through to Plymouth and back. The train starts diesel-hauled at Eastleigh and picks up via Salisbury, Westbury and Bath Spa. Earlier, on 19th May, the 'Cumbrian Streaker' breaks new ground with steam haulage by 'A4' No. 4492 *Dominion of New Zealand* from Hexham through to Preston, via the Cumbrian Coast. This will be a rare, but very welcome, southbound steam working around the coastline, which starts the day at Birmingham International and picks up northbound via Crewe, Preston and Lancaster. Carlisle is avoided in both directions.

Visits to freight lines again feature strongly in Pathfinder's programme, including visits to Eastleigh Works and the branches to both Southampton Western and Eastern Docks with the DRS Class 20s hauled 'Hampshire Hopscotch' on 5th May from Crewe, which works outwards via Westbury and Salisbury, and returns by way of Havant, Guildford and Didcot. A DRS Class 37 will assist during the day.

Moorswater, on the Liskeard to Looe branch, and the recently reopened line to Heathfield from Newton Abbott, are booked for a visit on 9th June that will be worked by a pair of DRS Class 37s. 'The 3-2-C', originates at Crewe and picks up southbound via Birmingham New Street, Cheltenham Spa and Bristol Temple Meads. This will the second of three Pathfinder workings to the Duchy, the first being booked for 21st April from Basingstoke, picking up via Salisbury, Westbury and Bristol Temple Meads through to Plymouth, Par, Truro and Penzance, while the third train is the 'Mazey Day Cornishman' on 23rd June with 'Deltic' No. 55022 *Royal Scots Grey* throughout from Birmingham International to Penzance.

Royal Scots Grey also features on an earlier tour for Railfest 2012, booked for 2nd June from Didcot Parkway to York. For many, though, the route of this train may be as attractive as a visit to the National Railway Museum, as the train picks up northbound via Oxford, Leamington Spa, Coventry, Birmingham International and Tame Bridge Parkway, before continuing to York via the Standedge route. The return will follow the East Coast Main Line south, before turning off just before King's Cross to work around the North West suburbs of London to reach the Great Western main line and Didcot Parkway, then setting down northbound to Tame Bridge Parkway. Quite a day out!

And talking of a good day out, tours that take in both the Ffestiniog and West Highland Railways in one day remain very popular as evidenced by Pathfinder's decision to include two such workings in its schedules. Both follow the tried and tested formula, that is half the train decants at Llandudno Junction and is taken by road coach to Blaenau Ffestiniog to join the northbound train via Porthmadoc through to Caernavon,

Below: Class 97/3 No. 97302 crosses Pont Briwet with the return ERTMS Level 2 timing test train from Pwllheli to Crewe, operated for data gathering purposes, prior to a proposed charter working later in the year. Due to problems with the ERTMS system, which caused a 70-minute delay at Porthmadog, it was terminated at Machynlleth overnight. *Richard Jones*

VIDEO FOOTAGE

Video Shot: LMS 'Black 5' 4-6-0 No. 45305 attacks the climb to Ais Gill on the Settle & Carlisle line as it approaches Helwith Bridge on 4th February, with Railway Touring Company's 'Winter Cumbrian Mountain Express' charter to Carlisle. *Austin Whitehead*

while the remainder stay aboard through to Bangor, where they are transferred to Caernavon to join the southbound working. This is truly a spectacular day of railtouring, and the departure dates are 25th June from Didcot Parkway, picking up via Leamington Spa through to Tame Bridge Parkway, and later on 22nd October from Swindon, picking up via Stroud, Cheltenham Spa and Worcester Shrub Hill to Stourbridge Junction.

Cheshire Cat Railtours (CCR) was formed last year, and is based at Crewe, although all bookings are taken at the Pathfinder office in Gloucestershire. While Pathfinder tend to cater more for the enthusiast market, CCR tours look to the general market with tours to popular destinations such as Edinburgh, Bath and Salisbury, to mention just a few. It is also going head-to-head with Compass Railtours, both in the variety of their pick up points, and also their itineraries, as CCR also feature the Settle & Carlisle and Cumbrian Coast as an inclusive tour.

Its tours generally originate from the Midlands and the west, a situation no doubt influenced by the use of Crewe-based Riviera rolling stock. Having dipped its toes into the charter market last year, the experienced gained has no doubt given CCR the confidence to introduce a programme of 14 tours this year. Each month between April and July has two scheduled outings, booked to operate, usually two weeks apart. After a break in August, there are two further charters booked for September, one each in October and November and two for December. The opening tour is scheduled for 14th April, and is the first offering of two that originate in Aberystwyth, and is booked to work through to Carlisle, outwards via the Settle & Carlisle, and returning around the Cumbrian Coast. This working will feature Network Rail Class 97/3s on the Cambrian section and DRS Class 37s on the remainder of the itinerary. The second working from Aberystwyth is booked for 20th October to Bath Spa and Salisbury.

CCR's second April offering is to Carmarthen, via the Central Wales line from Stratford-upon-Avon, which picks up via Birmingham New Street through to Telford Central and Wellington. Edinburgh and Carlisle are the destinations for May; the former is to be visited on the 12th from Coventry, with Trent Valley pick-ups through to Rugeley, while Holyhead and North Wales stations feature in CCR's working to Carlisle on the 26th, which again uses both the S&C and Cumbrian Coast lines.

Its June programme commences with a visit to Canterbury on the 16th, from Nantwich and stations via Shrewsbury to Tame Bridge Parkway and Coventry, while on the 30th, York and Scarborough are on offer from Cardiff Central and the Welsh Marches through to Wrexham General and Chester. The Cannock Chase line will see a rare charter service on 7th July, when it is included in the pick-up points from Stratford-upon-Avon on another Carlisle working which combines the S&C and Cumbrian Coast, and the company revisit the same route two weeks later on 21st July, this time setting out from Northampton and calling at Trent Valley stations.

Workings later in the year head for Bournemouth and Poole from Crewe on 1st September, followed by a trip to Edinburgh from Holyhead on 15th September. Edinburgh again features on 17th November from Hereford, while Portsmouth Harbour is the destination on 1st December from Nantwich. The final 2012 offering is to Swindon and Bristol Temple Meads from Manchester Piccadilly on 8th December.

This is a tight programme that will enable marketing to be concentrated in specific areas to obtain maximum advantage, while the operational side will benefit by the restricted number of destinations. For this sort of charter programme local publicity is vital, and CCR's success will depend upon the efficiency of its marketing.

Torbay Express, having already announced new tours to Windsor and Oxford, has confirmed the dates for its popular Sunday Kingswear trains. In all there are nine planned, four in July on consecutive Sundays from the 1st of the month, followed by two in August on the 5th and 19th, and concluding with three further workings on the 2nd, 9th and 16th September. Confirmation of the locomotive pool is awaited, but unconfirmed reports indicate that BR Pacifics Nos. 70000 *Britannia* and 71000 *Duke of Gloucester* may well feature, while the use of No. 35028 *Clan Line* has also been mooted.

Green Duchess on display at the West Shed

The formal unveiling of No. 46233 *Duchess of Sutherland* **in BR Brunswick green livery will take place at the West Shed on Saturday 3rd March between 10.00 - 16.00.**

After an intensive period of running in on the Midland Railway to accumulate a minimum of 1,000 miles to identify and rectify any problems, the Stanier Pacific will be reunited with its smoke deflectors, and with the final lining-out of new livery completed, will be positioned in light steam outside the shed.

Normally access to the West Shed is free of charge, but on this occasion a donation of £10 will be requested to gain access to the site. Full details of the event can be found on the PRCLT website.

Above: LMS Ivatt Class 2MT 2-6-2T No. 41241 heads for Oxenhope on a snow covered Keighley & Worth Valley Railway on 5th February. The railway was operating a truncated service due to a gas explosion in the Oakworth area the previous night. *Phil Sanderson*

Minor problem delays *Tornado* return by one week

Although the majority of the winter maintenance work on the A1 Trust Pacific *Tornado* has gone extremely well, a problem has arisen with a component in the engine brake gear.

The 3.5" diameter pin that forms the fulcrum of the wishbone that transfers the movement from the air brake cylinders to the brake gear has seized in the wishbone bearing. Despite several attempts to press it out it in situ, it eventually proved necessary to remove the large cast steel bracket in which the pin is mounted and to set the bracket and wishbone up on a horizontal borer and machine out the seized pin.

In the meantime a suitable piece of EN8 steel has been sourced and delivered to Ropley to enable the Mid-Hants Railway (MHR) to make a new pin, which is currently roughed out. A minor design change is being worked on to enable grease lubrication of the pin as opposed to external oiling that was the only method previously practicable. The net result of this is that work is running about one week late, and given the availability of labour and the sequencing of the remaining work on the locomotive, there is no realistic chance of pulling back the delay.

Following a meeting with the A1 Trust insurers, it has been decided that the steam test will be postponed by one week. This means that the 18/19th February operation on the MHR will not be possible and, subject to further discussions with the line's management, it is hoped to reschedule this for the weekend of 25th/26th February.

Bo'ness theft affects 'Caley' tank

Four specially-cast brass axle boxes, costing around £10,000 have been stolen from the Scottish Railway Preservation Society at Bo'ness.

The axleboxes, which are 14 inches by 6 inches by 15 inches, were destined for the Caledonian Railway 439 Class 0-4-4T No. 419, which is at present undergoing a major overhaul with the aim of re-entering traffic in mid-2013. Local police say that it would have needed at least two people to lift them and that the items were stolen during December or January.

Anyone with information can contact PC Hunter at Central Scotland Police on 01786 456000. A reward of up to £1000 is available for information leading to the recovery.

Work progresses on NER Autocoach

Above: New end framing has now been fitted to the NER autocar No. 3170 by project carpenter Tony Vollans. It is suspected that the vehicle was involved in a minor accident prior to its withdrawal in 1931, as the timbers show signs of impact damage consistent with a slow speed collision, and may have been the reason why the body was sold as a holiday home rather than converted to an observation saloon. *Simon Gott/NER 1903 Autocar Trust*

Construction work on target at Paignton Queen's Park

The Dartmouth Steam Railway and River Boat Company is currently investing £1.2 million in the redevelopment of its Paignton terminus.

The programme to redevelop Queen's Park station during the winter months is well underway. The old station has been demolished and the foundations and steel frame for the new building are in. During the construction, local building firms have been sourced where possible.

The new station will also feature water saving devices, movement sensors, air source heat pumps, super insulated cladding and roofing panels.

The new building, which is on target for its opening on 31st March is described as being a modern interpretation of a Great Western Railway station,

Right: An artists impression of how the new booking hall at Queen's Park station will look when completed. *DSR*

Above: **Issues with frozen water columns on the East Lancashire Railway on 5th February, resulted in Class 55 No. 55022** *Royal Scots Grey* **being called out to rescue BR Standard 4MT 2-6-4T No. 80098. The locomotive was then used to work a service to Heywood, before returning to Bury, where it is pictured shortly after arrival.** *David Gibson*

Royal Swindon

To celebrate the Diamond Jubilee, STEAM – Museum of the Great Western Railway has created an exhibition exploring royal rail travel, from the very early days of steam, through to the present day.

Entitled 'The Royal Road', the exhibition shows many items from the STEAM Collection, not on permanent display. These include the original clock from Queen Victoria's Royal Waiting Room at Windsor Station, as well as a surprising number of documents, notices and artworks relating to Royal travel. The original notes of Queen Elizabeth II to the Royal Train inspector are among the selection of Royal pieces.

Left: **After difficulties raising steam, Hudswell Clarke 0-6-0ST** *Renishaw Ironworks No.6* **passes Terrace Junction on the Tanfield Railway with the 12:30 departure to Sunniside on 5th February.** *Ian Leech*

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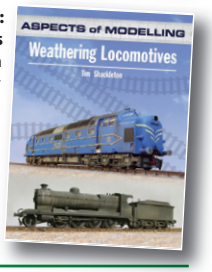

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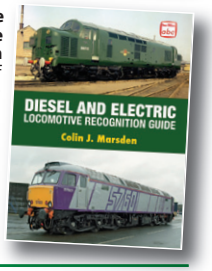

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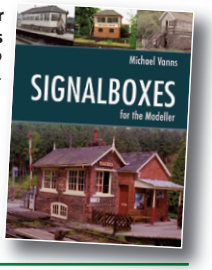

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Widening work on Porthmadog's 'Cob' begins

The Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Railway's £1 million Cob Widening Project got under way on 11th January with the first load of the 25,000 tonnes of rock being delivered.

The first phase of the project will involve 260 metres of the Cob embankment being widened to allow for the construction of a second platform at Porthmadog Harbour station. This will provide a much-improved service for its passengers with cross-platform interchange between Blaenau Ffestiniog and Caernarfon trains. The contractors hope to have delivery of all the aggregate and rock, which is being sourced from Minffordd Quarry, completed by mid-February. Once the widening is finished, the new platform and new station layout are scheduled for completion by volunteers in 2013. There are daily videos of Cob widening progress at clicking here

Elsewhere, the line's oldest steam locomotive *Prince* has returned home following an extended visit to the Severn Valley Railway. Built by George England and Co. in 1864, the locomotive has been a star exhibit at The Engine House since July last year. Now back on Festiniog metals, the engine is in Boston Lodge works for a full rebuild, and the race is on to get the famous locomotive ready to celebrate 150 years of steam on the line in 2013. As with any major rebuild project, there is a need to fund the work. The Ffestiniog Railway Society is co-ordinating fundraising for the project, and donations can be sent to: Dave Charlton, FRS, Freepost NATE 1232, Haltwhistle NE49 9BR.

Prince was the first steam loco to run in preservation on the railway, and it became the mainstay of the service for the first two years.

Above: This was the view on 14th January, taken from Harbour station at Porthmadog, looking across the cob towards Boston Lodge. The start of the new widened section is clearly visible in the bottom of the picture. The full work should be completed in 2013. *Andrew Thomas*

Taking the narrower view

Among a number of columns that readers regularly enquire about, Narrow Gauge is one of the most frequently requested. As a result, RH will be carrying Narrow Gauge News on a fortnightly basis, compiled by well known writer *David Lloyd-Jones*.

Once a month, the column will cover the numerous narrow gauge lines around the UK, while the second column each month will concentrate on news from the Isle of Man Railways and Tramways.

As normal, we welcome the submission of photo and video material for possible publication within this column. You can also follow UK Narrow Gauge 'tweets' @uknarrowgauge

S&LKR returns to Sittingbourne Viaduct

After a gap of 1,197 days, the Sittingbourne & Kemsley Light Railway (SKLR) will fully reopen from Sittingbourne Viaduct station on Good Friday, 6th April, for the first time since the railway was forced to close to the public back in 2008.

The railway has been fighting hard against the closure, and this dogged persistence has finally paid off.

Trains will operate hourly from Sittingbourne Viaduct station and Milton Regis (Asda) Halt to Kemsley Down every Sunday and Bank Holiday Monday from Easter to the end of September.

This year will also have the return to operation of steam locomotive *Leader*, which was one of the original two steam locomotives when the paper mill railway was converted from horse-power to steam power in 1905. The engine has been out of action since the early 1980s and has been completely overhauled. Unlike the rest of the SKLR locomotives, *Leader* has been out-shopped in a red livery, instead of the usual green.

Dorothea on target for return to steam

Winter work on the Cornish 2ft-gauge Launceston Steam Railway has involved refurbishment work on Carriage No. 1, which is one of the two Isle of Man style carriages known as 'Toastracks'.

The steelwork has been repainted, while the original seat slats have been removed and are being replaced with new iroko slats. Locomotive *Velinheli*, a 0-4-0ST built by the Hunslet Engine Company in 1886, is currently being dismantled for a full inspection by the boiler inspector. As the engine is used less than the other locomotive fleet it is hoped that little work will be required.

Work to complete *Dorothea*, another 0-4-0ST built by the Hunslet Engine Company in 1901, is progressing well with just the fitting of couplings and air-brake equipment to be completed, plus the final painting. It is planned that *Dorothea* will haul its first-ever public passenger trains this summer.

South Tynedale opens new extension

The South Tynedale Railway is set to open its Lintley extension to the public on 1st April, with a return fare of only £2 on the day.

An official grand opening day will be held during the Railway's Gala Weekend on 12th/13th May. On 5th November last year, a volunteer's special hauled by diesel No. 9 became the first passenger train to reach the new, temporary terminus at Lintley for 35 years.

The South Tynedale Railway Preservation Society has also launched an appeal to return the former Harrogate Gas Works *Barber* locomotive back to working condition. Built by Greens of Leeds in 1908, the society needs to raise £100,000 to fund the work required to return the 0-6-2ST to steam.

Grant funding for station improvements and diesel charter on Vale of Rheidol line

A grant through the Development Plan for Wales 2007-2013, which is funded by the Welsh Government and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development has been awarded to the Vale of Rheidol Railway (VoR) to enable it to restore five of its intermediate stations between Aberystwyth and Devil's Bridge.

Two of the larger stations en route at Capel Bangor and Aberffrwd will receive new station buildings, while smaller waiting shelters, similar to the original buildings, are planned for Nantyronen, Rheidol Falls and Rhiwfron Halts. Also new for this year, the VoR is now offering an online booking service at www.rheidolrailway.co.uk

On 1st April, the Preserved Locomotives Enthusiast Group (PLEG) will operate a special charter on the railway using the 0-6-0DH shunter built by the Brecon Mountain Railway using parts from Baguley-Drewry.

The charter will operate with three coaches thereby restricting numbers to 100 and start from Aberystwyth at 12:15 to Devil's Bridge with an expected arrival at 13:20. Time will be allowed for photographs and a look around before departing at 14:15 to arrive at Aberystwyth at 15:20.

These timings have been geared to the Arriva Trains Wales timetable whereby trains arrive at 11:20 and depart at 15:30 and 17:30; the later train giving an opportunity to visit Aberystwyth's Cliff Railway.

As part of the tour the charter will use Aberffrwd loop to by-pass the normal steam service, Capel Bangor loop has been requested but not confirmed and the train will use the non-preferred platform at Aberystwyth for a shunt move.

A souvenir ticket has been printed for this tour which will cost £15:00 per person and passengers are asked to Gift Aid their fare in order to boost the charter revenues which will be donated to the VoR.

Persons wishing to join this tour should e-mail kev.adlam@pleg.org.uk to obtain pre-payment details as advance booking is essential; telephone enquiries can also be made to 01270 662 396 between 20:00 and 21:00, Monday to Fridays. Arriva Trains has some low cost travel offers available from Crewe, Birmingham or Shrewsbury and applicants are asked to indicate a travel start point in case they may be eligible for one of these offers.

Fairbourne at risk?

The future of the Fairbourne Railway is at stake. Following the death last year of its major benefactor, Professor Tony Atkinson, who kindly covered its annual shortfall.

The trustees are looking at redundancies and a possible reduction in services. the Fairbourne Railway Preservation Society is heading up a fund raising drive to ensure the railway's future, and all donations are gratefully received. The address for all donations and enquiries is Beach Road, Fairbourne, Gwynedd. LL38 2EX or call 01341 250362.

Hugh Napier steams again

Below: The boiler of Hunslet 0-4-0ST *Hugh Napier* has its first steam test outside the workshops at Boston Lodge on 10th January. Owned by the National Trust, once restored it will become a roving ambassador. *Andrew Thomas*

NEWS IN BRIEF

■ Work on Talyllyn Railway's carriage 21 is continuing at the Ffestiniog Railway's Boston Lodge workshops. The carriage was transferred to the Festiniog by road in October last year, unloaded in Minffordd yard, then put on FR accommodation bogies to travel to the carriage works. The vehicle has been stripped down to the frames and the underframes are currently being sand blasted.

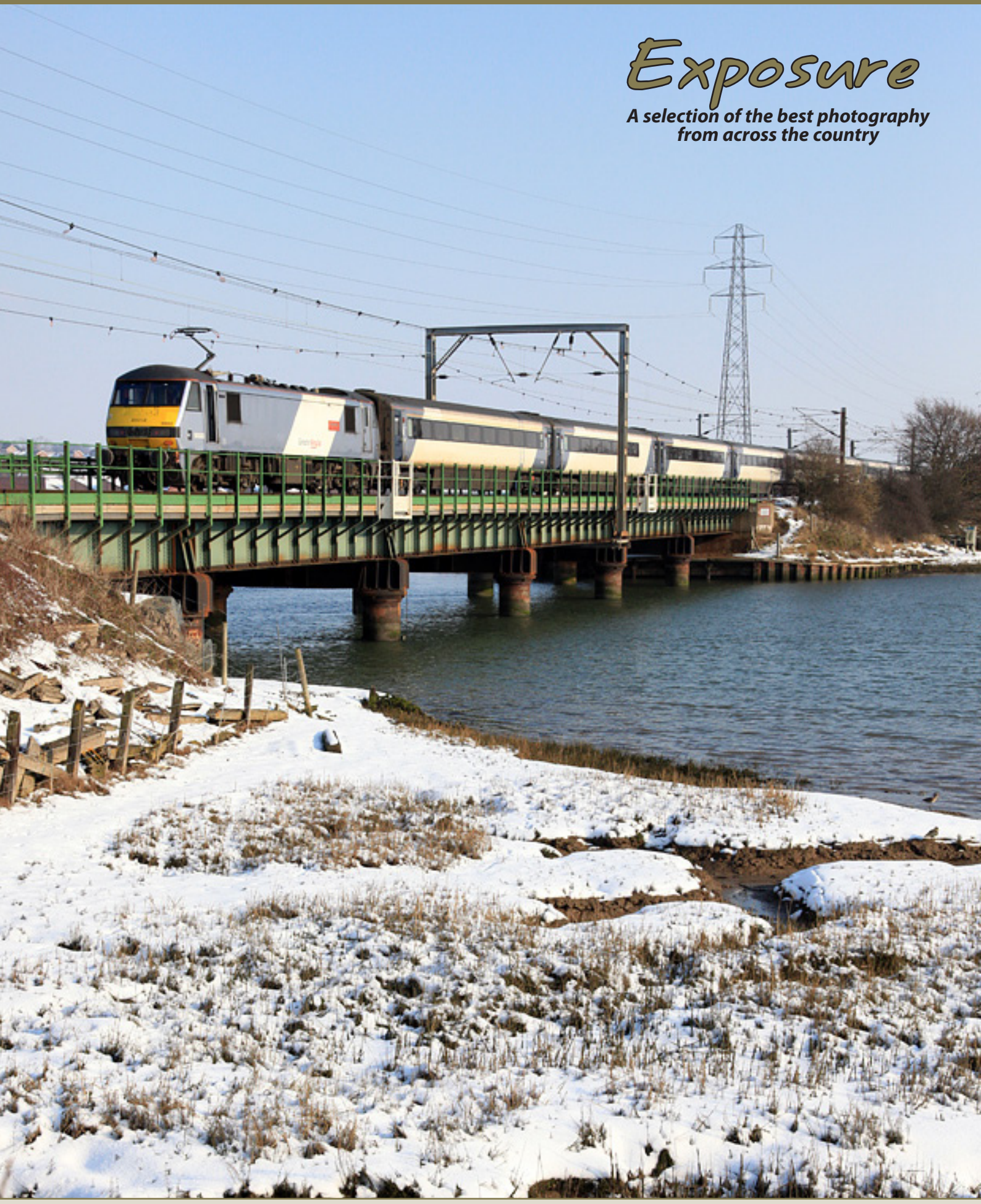
■ After last year's 4x4 road vehicles making headline news at the summit, the Snowdon Mountain Railway is hoping for better publicity this year with the London 2012 Olympic torch making its 3,560ft ascent by train to the summit of Snowdon on 29th May.

■ As part of the long weekend in June to celebrate the Royal Jubilee, the Leighton Buzzard Railway (LBR) is running a two-day family-oriented event featuring 'Little Chuffers' on Saturday 3rd June, and an enthusiasts day on the Sunday. As well as visiting engines, resident LBR's *Chaloner*, *Rishra* and *Pixie* will be in action. On the extra Bank Holiday Monday on 5th June, pairs of small engines will be hauling trains.

■ The restoration of the well known narrow gauge Glyn Valley Tramway, is set to take another major step closer to reopening the line once again. On 6th February, the Glyn Valley Tramway Trust (GVTT) will go before the Planning Committee of Wrexham County Borough Council to have its Planning Application heard for the restoration of Phase 1 of the Tramway, after both bat and ecological surveys have been submitted and accepted. The proposed GVT Phase 1 would reopen the line from Chirk station to the Chirk Trout Fishery, a distance of 1.2 miles. The GVTT was founded in October 2007, and its ambition is to see the line fully restored from Chirk to Hendre. *See NewsXtra*

Exposure

A selection of the best photography from across the country



Cold Reception for Greater Anglia

Above: With snow on the ground and with its National Express branding replaced by the new Greater Anglia wording, Class 90 No. 90003 propels the 10.00 London Liverpool Street to Norwich service over the River Stour at Manningtree. *Antony Guppy*

Snow Freight

Above: Owned by DRS, but currently operated by GBRf, Class 20/3s Nos. 20301 and 20305 are pictured in 'top and tail' mode with classmates Nos. 20302 and 20304, as they pass Netherfield with the 12:00 Peterborough to Derby Litchurch Lane move on 5th February. The trackbed of the closed Gedling Colliery branch can be seen just above the leading locos. *Barry Adams*

Below: DB Schenker-liveried Class 92 No. 92042 powers the 11:46 Dollands Moor to Scunthorpe steel empties through Charing Heath on 6th February. *Andrew Wood*

Heavy Freight

Above: With snow covering Pen-y-Ghent in the background, Colas Rail Class 66/8 No. 66849 comes off the viaduct at Ribblehead with the regular Carlisle to Chirk timber working on 1st February. *Mick Langton*

Video Shot: Class 70 No. 70015 climbs Stormy Bank, near Pyle, with a rake of empty coal hoppers from Port Talbot to Stoke Gifford yard on 3rd February. These trains run as required, and originate from Killoch, conveying Scottish coal down to the Tata Steel plant at Port Talbot. *Nick Wilcock*

The Railways of South West Switzerland

Don Gatehouse reviews the current standard gauge rail operations, all images by the author.

Although a relatively small country within Europe, Switzerland has an extensive and well patronised railway network of over 3,000 miles, that is well known for both its efficiency of operation and its wide appeal amongst railway followers worldwide. Approximately, two thirds of the railway network is standard gauge with the remaining mileage made up of numerous narrower, mostly metre gauge systems. The country's main railway operator, the Swiss Federal Railway covers most parts of the country, with other operators covering just specific routes and associated services. Although branding carried by the Federal Railways is displayed in the three official languages of German, French and Italian, the initials SBB (Schweizerische Bundesbahnen) are used throughout this article.

Switzerland is divided into 26 cantons, being broadly equivalent to counties as we know them in the United Kingdom. The south west area under review comprises cantons Geneva, Vaud and part of Valais, and includes two of the four largest Swiss cities, Lausanne (2nd) and Geneva (4th), both having direct rail services for both passenger and trunk freight traffic to Zurich (1st) and Basel (3rd). To the south is Lake Geneva, the largest lake in Western Europe and at its eastern end the main rail line to Brig enters the Rhône Valley. Heading northwards away from Lake Geneva, trains to Neuchâtel and beyond initially travel up the valley of the Venoge continuing through well cultivated farmland with the Jura mountains to the west, reaching Yverdon-les-Bains at the south western extremity of Lake Neuchâtel.

Passenger Traffic

The current SBB main line passenger services can be best reviewed by starting at Geneva. Geneva Airport has the benefit an hourly frequency of services to Luzern (InterRegio via Lausanne, Palézieux and Bern), St Gallen (Intercity via Lausanne, Bern and Zurich), Brig (being in fact two InterRegio trains per hour via Lausanne and the Rhône Valley) and an hourly Intercity-Neigezug (ICN), Intercity tilting train in German, service

Above: The ChemOil block train of loaded fuel tanks from St Triphon to Geneva, Train 66128, had Re 4/4s Nos. 11271 and 11243 at the helm on 15th June, when recorded just west of Aigle.

alternating in destination between Basel and St Gallen, both via Neuchâtel and Biel. The ICN service complements an hourly frequency ICN service based on Lausanne that operates between either Basel or St Gallen.

The ICN Basel and St. Gallen services are operated by the Class RABDe 500 seven-car tilting fixed formation sets working as a single unit or in multiple for peak time services. The St Gallen Intercity services via Lausanne, employ IC2000 double-deck push-pull stock, whereas the InterRegio Luzern workings operate in the main with single-deck Mk4 push-pull stock, although certain trains do produce IC2000 double-deck formations. The Rhône Valley InterRegio services operate with locomotive hauled stock having previously run as push-pull services until the timetable change in December 2008. Class Re 460 locomotives provide the staple motive power for the push-pull and loco-hauled services mentioned in this summary although the Brig trains can

Above: With a carpet of sugar beet in the foreground and a blanket of cloud on the Jura hills in the background, a Class RABDe 500 unit glides south near Chavornay with ICN614 from Basel to Geneva Airport on a fine September day in 2011.

produce an Re 4/4" 'substitute' locomotive occasionally. All of the push-pull services have the Class 460 at the east end of the train, i.e. leading departures from Geneva Airport.

To complete the summary of the area's SBB front-line daytime passenger services, mention must be made of the Geneva-Milan international trains via Lausanne and Brig, that employ the recently introduced ETR-610 tilting sets on four daily return workings via the Rhône Valley route. As well as cross-border services at Geneva, Lausanne is served by SNCF TGV sets from Paris that enter Switzerland via Frasne and Vallorbe, with certain weekend services extended into the Rhône Valley during the winter and summer tourist seasons.

Returning to the topic of locomotive hauled passenger services, the SBB Class Re4/4" represented for many years the standard electric locomotive to be found throughout the network on both passenger and freight duties.

The allocated passenger duties for the class have declined in recent years and are set to reduce further with the introduction of additional new fixed formation units. Within the south west area, the hourly Regio Express (RE) services that operate between Geneva and Lausanne provide daily work for several Re4/4" locomotives operating with push-pull stock but the delivery of new double-deck units towards the end of the year will result in the withdrawal of the regular passenger work for the class on this route.

The south west area still produces a number of peak hour services that employ Re4/4" traction and Table 1 lists the allocated workings as at the December 2011 timetable change. One notable change made was the replacement of the former Class RBe 540 motor coach push-pull workings from and to St Maurice, with Re4/4" traction, the locomotive being marshalled at the east end (St Maurice) of the push-pull set.

To complete the overview of SBB passenger operations, there remain the various local multiple unit operated services/routes that are based around Geneva, Lausanne (RER Vaudois) and the Valais (RegioAlps). The majority of these operations have seen a significant investment in new rolling stock and the refurbishment of older units in the last few years.

SBB Class RBDe 560 units have provided the standard NPZ (Neue Pendel Zug) local services throughout the SBB network since the late 1980s. Since 2008, these units have been progressively refurbished, fitted with air conditioning and received one or more new low-floor Bombardier 'INOVA' centre coaches. These new look Domino units now operate a good proportion of the local services in the area under review. In addition, variants of the new Stadler 'FLIRT' (Flinker, Leichter Innovativer Regional Triebzug) i.e. faster, lighter, innovative regional unit are also to be seen, especially on several of the Lausanne (S-Bahn) urban routes.

The only remaining exception to the above Class 560 and Stadler unit operations is to be found on services between Geneva Cornavin and Bellegarde in France where Class 550 light rail EMUs are still used.

For a more detailed look at the various services and type of units allocated in the south west area, the following links will provide the information required; Geneva Area, Lausanne Area, Valais.

Finally, to support the passenger traffic operations in the south west, SBB has depots for the completion of light maintenance work at both Geneva and Lausanne, with more major work and refurbishment capabilities provided by the Yverdon-les-Bains Maintenance Depot.

Table 1 – Peak Hour Passenger Services that use Re4/4" Traction as at December 2011

Train No.	Origin-Destination	Train No.	Origin-Destination
2733	17:00 Geneva – Nyon 17:18	2714	06:50 St Maurice – Morges 07:47
2732	17:39 Nyon – Geneva 17:55	2716	07.04 St Maurice – Lausanne 07:51
2735	18:00 Geneva – Nyon 18:18	4252	07:17 St Maurice – Renens 08:16
2734	18:39 Nyon – Geneva 18:55	2737	16:56 Lausanne – St Maurice 17:41
		2745	17:56 Lausanne – St Maurice 18:41
		2747	22:45 Lausanne – St Maurice 23:27
12015	06:07 Vallorbe – Lausanne 06:48	1606	06:53 Neuchâtel – Lausanne 07:40
12017	07:07 Vallorbe – Lausanne 07:48	1610	07:53 Neuchâtel – Lausanne 08:40
12040	17:01 Lausanne – Vallorbe 17:42	1537	17:13 Lausanne – Neuchâtel 18:00
12042	17:24 Lausanne – Vallorbe 18:05	1541	18:13 Lausanne – Neuchâtel 19:00

Illustrations of the stock formations of the passenger services mentioned above can be viewed via the internet link by clicking here.

SBB Cargo Freight Operations

While the south west of Switzerland does not see the level of international freight traffic associated with the trans-alpine Gotthard and Lotschberg routes, there is a healthy and interesting variety of rail freight activity to be seen during a typical weekday, especially in respect of the inland or domestic freight and postal traffic movements.

By far the largest freight facility in the south west is SBB's Lausanne Triage

Table 2 Summary of Freight Train Number Categories

Number Range	Traffic Category
47xxx-49xxx	International traffic e.g. 476xx trains cover the France-Italy Cereal traffic.
50xxx – 504xx	SBB Cargo Express service (e.g. time critical food/supermarket traffic)
507xx – 509xx	SBB Cargo Postal container and mail van services.
56xxx	SBB Cargo Rail shunter/trip freight (N.B. suffix L denotes loco move only)
60xxx	SBB Cargo Rail wagonload trunk or national freight
61xxx	SBB Cargo Rail wagonload regional freight
64xxx	SBB Cargo Rail local yard-terminal or trip freight move
661xx	SBB Cargo block train (e.g. ChemOil fuel/petrochemicals traffic)
68xxx	SBB Cargo Train. A company block train (e.g. Nespresso vans)

marshalling yard at Denges, being strategically located close to the triangular intersection of the arterial routes linking the French border, near Geneva, to Lausanne and through the Rhône Valley to Brig and the line north through Yverdon-les-Bains and beyond as well as access the French border via Vallorbe.

Lausanne Triage is one of Switzerland's three largest freight yards, handling approximate 20% of the domestic wagon load volume. It is linked to Switzerland's largest national freight handling locations at Zurich (Limmattal Yard) and Basel (Muttenz Yard) by SBB Cargo Rail national trunk services. Lausanne in turn handles a good number of Cargo Rail regional distribution or feeder workings to and from the numerous freight yards and rail served facilities to be found in the south west area. Lausanne Triage also accommodates the area's locomotive maintenance facilities.

SBB provides an excellent on line reference facility to enable the researcher to identify train paths along specific routes, available here.

Each of the examples of freight and postal traffic mentioned in this review can be identified on the appropriate graphic timetable chart and to assist with identification I will quote certain Train number in brackets. To enable the reader to better understand specific traffic types, Table 2 provides a summary of the more common train number categories that will be seen working in the south west area:

For the purposes of this article, the freight operations are split into distinct routes radiating from Lausanne Triage Yard; west to Geneva, operations to the east along Lake Geneva and into the Rhône Valley, and services that can be seen along the line north to Daillens, west to Vallorbe, along the line north to Yverdon and either onwards to Neuchâtel or east to Estavayer-le-Lac.

Freight Operations along the Geneva line

Day time freight activity along the route between Lausanne Triage and Geneva is not that spectacular. Indeed, it is the least active of the main line routes covered in this review. Geneva is served by a number of overnight Cargo Express and Cargo Rail regional freight and postal workings. A typical weekday morning at Nyon may only produce sightings of the east bound postal container train from Geneva to Daillens (Train 50765) at about 08:30 and some two hours later the Cargo Express vans returning from Geneva to Lenzburg via Neuchâtel, (50241).

Nyon, Gland and Rolle are served as required by an SBB Cargo Class 843 diesel hydraulic hauled morning trip freight working from Geneva. Further east, Allaman, St-Prex and Morges are served direct from Lausanne Triage Yard each weekday morning. While St-Prex has an early hours delivery via a regional freight service, a Class 843 diesel is used later for the trip freight moves and return traffic workings to be seen at these locations.

The freight operations at Morges include the transfer of SBB wagons to and from the metre gauge wheel-skates

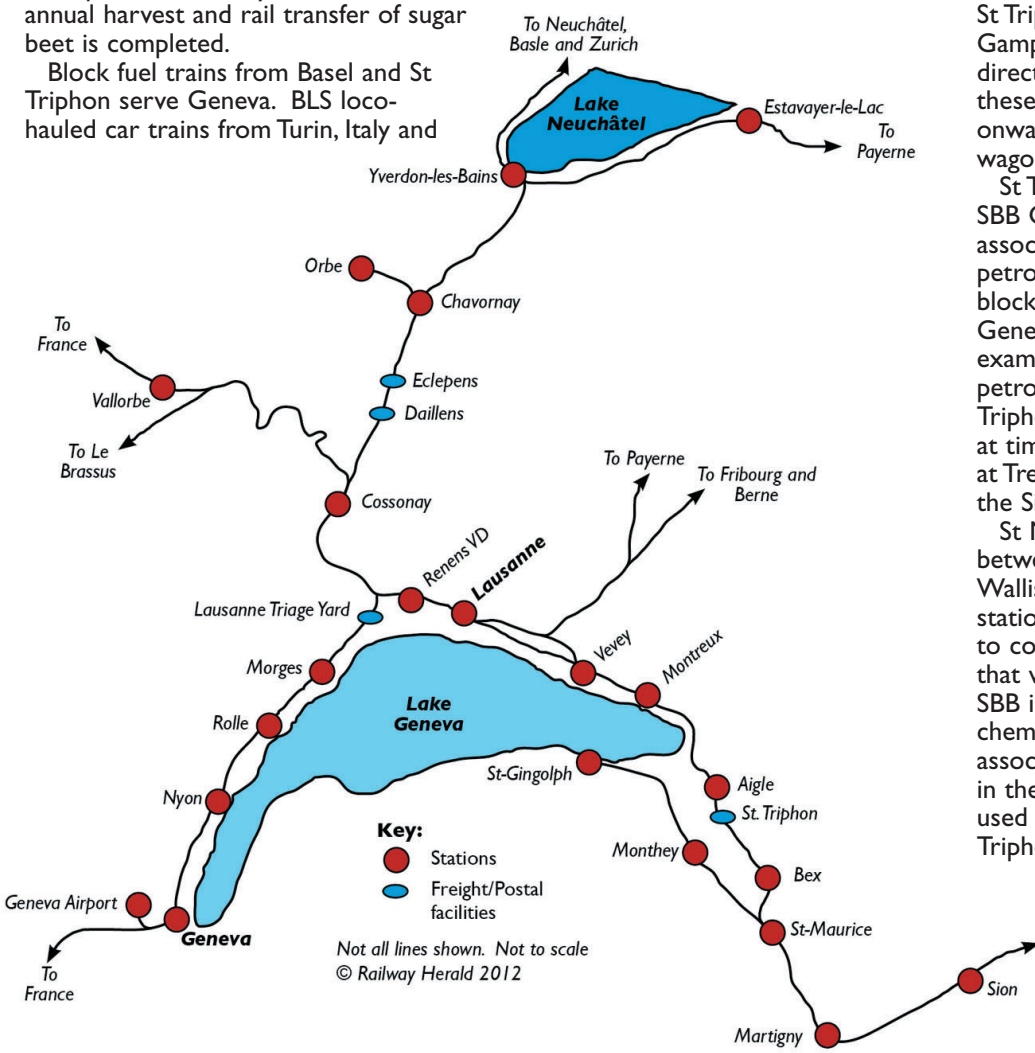
Below: One of the then recently commissioned fleet of Region Alps Domino Class 560-4 units approaches Saxon on a driver familiarisation run. Officially launched in May 2009, the majority of Valais local stopping services were soon operated by these enhanced sets that included the new Bombardier low-floor centre cars.

Above: SBB Class Re460 locomotives were introduced during the early 90s for the 'Bahn 2000' project and were established as the standard motive power for the majority of Switzerland's front line passenger operations. Arriving at Nyon is Class 460 No. 460042 *Albis* in standard SBB passenger livery and branding, with service IC2517 from Geneva to Luzern. The train comprised single-deck EW Mark IV stock with a Bt driving trailer at the rear.

used on the BAM Railway for the movement of standard gauge wagons. Both Morges and Nyon also see considerable freight activity during the final quarter of each year, when the annual harvest and rail transfer of sugar beet is completed.

Block fuel trains from Basel and St Triphon serve Geneva. BLS loco-hauled car trains from Turin, Italy and the associated return empty cartics from Lyon, France were once a daily feature along the Geneva line, but the economic downturn has produced a significant decline in the automotive traffic to the point where these particular car trains were removed from the timetable as at the December 2011 review.

Apart from the above block fuel trains, weekday afternoon activity may only produce the Geneva bound postal vans from Zurich Mülligen via Eclépens (50912) and in the late afternoon the first of the eastbound regional freights (61165) from Geneva Cargo to Lausanne Triage Yard.



Lausanne area and Rhône Valley Freight Operations

For the Lausanne area, the yard adjacent to Renens VD station provides the focal point for the local freight movements. Indeed, for any wagon enthusiast, the sorting activities to be viewed from the east end of Platform 5 will provide hours of entertainment on a typical weekday. The yard pilot duties are normally covered by a Class Am 841 centre-cab diesel locomotive. Each afternoon, there are lengthy transfer freight workings from Renens to nearby Lausanne Triage using electric traction to clear the sorted wagons for onward movement later that evening via the SBB Cargo network.

As well as the Lausanne area traffic that will typically include general goods, supermarket traffic, fuel oil and waste containers for the nearby recycling facilities, Renens VD also handles the diesel hauled trip workings serving nearby Bussigny, Vufflens-la-Ville, Cossonay and freight on the Vallorbe line.

A batch of early morning regional freights leaves Lausanne Triage Yard to serve locations along the Rhône Valley. St Triphon, St Maurice, Sion, Sierre, Gampel-Steg and Brig are all served directly each weekday morning and these locations in turn will generate onward local trip movements of wagonload traffic.

St Triphon yard in the main handles SBB ChemOil operated trains associated with the nearby gas and petroleum refinery and will generate block trains for Zurich Limmattal, Geneva, Mellingen and Niederglatt, for example. In addition, there is gas and petrochemical traffic between St Triphon, Visp and Brig to the east and at times, block trains from the refinery at Trecate in north Italy can operate via the Simplon tunnel.

St Maurice marks the border between cantons Vaud and Valais, or Wallis in German. Adjacent to the station is the modest freight yard used to concentrate local wagonload traffic that will include quarried ballast for the SBB infrastructure operations and chemicals and other commodities associated with the rail served facilities in the Monthey area. Diesel traction is used for the shunting at nearby St Triphon and Monthey as well as the morning trip workings that operate to Aigle, Roche, via St Triphon, and to Villeneuve, Vevey and Clarens, near Montreux.

The morning return trip freight

service from St Maurice to Bex (64116/64121) was described in detail in the Railway Herald Issue 222 (World Supplement) in May 2010 and both this and the afternoon collection of wagons by the diesel hauled freight (56533) still operate in 2012, albeit under revised Train numbers.

The town of Martigny lies at the confluence of the Drance and Rhône rivers at point where the Rhône Valley makes a right angled turn to the north to continue through the fruit growing region to Sion, the capital of Canton Valais.

Incoming freight wagons will be delivered to Martigny early in the morning and a resident shunting tractor is used to move traffic to and from rail served facilities on the branch to Martigny Bourg. In addition, cement silo wagons are parked close to the station car park where road vehicles are loaded for local deliveries. The autumn produces seasonal trip moves to and from nearby Charrat-Fully to transport loaded wagons of apples for onward movement via the Cargo Rail services to Muri AG. Each weekday the out going wagons are marshalled in a loop adjacent to the station's island platform and at about 15:30 the locomotive that worked the morning Bex trip working will arrive to collect the wagons for the short move to St Maurice (64134) from where they will be added to a Lausanne Triage bound regional freight.

Approaching the eastern extremity of the review area Sion, the destination for Cargo Express and regional freight services as well as postal traffic, is reached. Trip workings locally include as-required wagon moves to and from

Below: A brace of Re 4/4s, Nos. 11255 & 11276, speed west through Saxon with the Regional Freight from Visp to Lausanne Triage (Train 61244). Beyond the assortment of petrochemical and gas tanks was the lengthy consist of vans and containers collected from Sion during the mid-day stopover.

Above: Loaded cereal hoppers from France, via Vallorbe, to Italy provide the majority of the heaviest trains along the Rhone Valley. SBB Cargo Re 6/6 No.11652 *Kerzers* passes with ease through Martigny despite the almost 1600 tons trailing load of Train 47639 in tow.

Right: A view of the freight yard at Sion where Re4/4 No. 11171 awaits its next working, the lunchtime empty vans transfer to Ardon (Train 64124). Behind the dual-mode Tem tractor unit No.365, built in 1932, were cement tanks and on the right supermarket container wagons are dealt with.

the splendidly named Châteauneuf-Conthey and the much busier Ardon, where rakes of vans are loaded with bottled mineral water. The yard adjacent to Sion station handles considerable traffic for local supermarkets as well as other general goods for transhipment.

Beyond Sion, both Sierre and Gampel-Steg generate a sizeable contribution to the Rhône Valley wagonload general freight traffic through their association with the aluminium industry. Sierre, or Siders in German, lies at the border between French and German speaking Valais communities and is surrounded by vineyards. As a possible local excursion from line side activities, the village of Salgesch and Sierre are linked via a Sentier Viticole or wine route, running for approximately 4 miles through villages and their vineyards, with wine tasting stops along the way, naturally!

Although the majority of the early morning deliveries are completed before sunrise, the various Rhône Valley local freight movements can provide a rewarding level of activity for a good proportion of a typical weekday. In addition, trainload cereal traffic (476XX range) and movements of logs to Italy for the paper industry (Train 49633) can add to the above domestic activity.

For example, an early morning start near Aigle, can be rewarded by both westbound Cargo Express (50108) from Sion and the Brig-Daillens postal containers (50782). Following some morning trip freight viewing at Bex, regional freight workings destined for Lausanne Triage are to be seen from early afternoon starting with Train 61244 from Visp, via Sion, for example, through to the evening. The period between 16:45 and 18:15 north of St Triphon can be busy with freight activity and the regional freight from Sierre could well provide the best/only opportunity to record an Ae 6/6 locomotive in action.

Freight operations north of Bussigny

Bussigny is at the apex of the triangular set of lines that link the Geneva-Lausanne axis to the line northwards along the valley of the Venoge. At Daillens, the line to Vallorbe heads away to the French border and continuing north the main line reaches Yverdon-les-Bains where the line from Payerne makes a connection. Continuing northwards, the main line follows Lake Neuchâtel and into Canton Neuchâtel.

The Neuchâtel route is that used by the overnight Cargo Express and Cargo Rail trunk services to and from the north that serve both key destinations in the south west and Lausanne Triage Yard respectively. Early morning regional freight deliveries to Cossonay, Vallorbe, Chavornay, Estavayer-le-Lac via Yverdon, and Müntschemier via Neuchâtel, are despatched from Lausanne Triage Yard.

In addition to this wagonload activity, Swiss Post hub facilities at Daillens and nearby Eclépens generate a good contribution to rail traffic, as does the Eclépens Holcim cement works.

Mention has already been made of the freight trip workings based on Renens that serve both Bussigny and Vufflens-la-Ville. Cossonay receives a regional freight working direct from Lausanne Triage each morning (61529) and the TThO service continues west to deliver traffic to Vallorbe. In each case, the locomotive will return light, with all outgoing wagons being dealt with by a later Renens-based diesel loco working.

The sidings south of Cossonay station provide waste transfer facilities and the distinctive green containers will form a good proportion of the outgoing traffic, as well as discharged cereal silo wagons and loaded logs at certain times. The Class 841 locomotive will arrive from Renens at breakfast time to perform the shunting, and the marshalled train back to Renens will leave just after mid day (56300).

The Vallorbe line is also serviced on TThO basis by a Class 841 hauled working (56298) that will deliver fuel tanks to the small terminal at Croy-Romainmôtier before continuing on to Vallorbe to collect wagons for return to Renens. The France-Italy-France movement of cereal hoppers via Brig provides the international traffic to be seen.

A number of the postal container trains to and from Daillens and mail van trains serving the Eclépens depot can feature during daylight hours and are normally the preserve of Re 4/4" traction. Container trains returning from Geneva (50765) and Brig (50782) arrive at Daillens just after 09:00 and are soon joined from the north by the

Left: The S2 Vallorbe-Palézieux services are now operated by the Stadler Class RABe 523 four-coach articulated FLIRT units. On 6th September 2011, unit No. 523031 arrives at La Sarraz shortly after mid-day with a Palézieux bound service.

containers being returned from Biel (50782). Later incoming and outgoing container workings provide direct links to both the Harkingen and Frauenfeld Paketpost Post hub facilities while mail van services to Gossau AG (50915) in the morning and en route from Zurich Mülligen to Geneva (50912) at lunchtime provide activity at the Eclépens depot.

On a typical weekday, a visit to the lineside north of Eclépens, by 09:00 will provide the best opportunity to record an Ae 6/6 locomotive on a regional freight van service (61535) from Lausanne Triage, en route to Estavayer-le-Lac, via Yverdon. Yverdon-les-Bains receives a regional freight delivery from both Lausanne Triage Yard (61539) and Eclépens cement terminal (64521) mid morning and a Cargo Express van train from Lausanne Triage (50717) will call at Daillens to collect postal containers before continuing north to Harkingen and then Frauenfeld Paketpost. Added to these workings will be the northbound Cargo Express vans from Geneva Cargo to Lenzburg previously mentioned and those from Renens to Däniken RB (50043) just after mid-day.

Freight along this route is provided with an international flavour in the form of a Wednesdays only, weekly move of white goods from Austria to France. Train 47702 is over 500 metres long and comprises Railship branded vans from Buchs loaded with Liebherr fridges/freezers from Lienz, East Tyrol, Austria en route to Ambérieu-en-Bugey, France, via Geneva. The return empties (47701) cross Switzerland on the following Saturday. SBB Cargo provides the Re 4/4" traction for this service.

The Nestlé factory at Orbe generates a good volume of traffic associated with its Nespresso and boxed cereal products. In addition, each working day, there is a mid-morning arrival at Chavornay of a dedicated company train of Transwaggon branded vans (68266). This service commenced operations in 2009 following the opening of a second Nespresso factory at Avenches in Canton Vaud to meet fast-growing global demand for the pioneering coffee capsules. The return working will depart in the early afternoon.

Chavornay not only provides the reception and despatch point for rail served units on the Orbe branch, but also provides run round facilities for trains from Eclépens, which must initially travel north to Chavornay before heading back towards Lausanne. Early each morning and later in the afternoon, a Class 843 diesel locomotive is sent from Yverdon to transfer wagons to, and later from, the Orbe branch facilities. Outgoing wagons will be collected in the late afternoon to be worked south to Lausanne Triage Yard.

From the late afternoon each weekday, Lausanne Triage bound freights, for example from Yverdon, Estavayer and Müntschemier, with additional traffic collected at Neuchâtel, will be seen on the main line route and the first of the national trunk services to and from Basel-Muttenz and Zurich-Limmattal will produce some lengthy wagonload train consists.

Yverdon-les-Bains has freight handling facilities to the east of the station and provides another location where the transfer of standard gauge wagons to/from the metre gauge wheel-skates can be observed. The gauge transfer apparatus for the Travys light railway to Ste. Croix is located at the north west end of the station. Yverdon generates Class 843 trip freight workings of vans to Onnens-Bonvilliars (Philip Morris) and Yvonand (cereals), as required.

Estavayer-le-Lac on Lake Neuchâtel is the largest Swiss single-site dairy processing plant. Estavayer Lait SA (ELSA) processed 277 million kg of milk in 2010 and moves a considerable volume of its range of products, totalling over 550 items, via SBB Cargo Express and Cargo Rail services.

Above: This Re 4/4 pairing of Nos. 11316 & 11336 had a good load of sleepers and other concrete materials from Müntschemier in the bolster wagons at the head of Train 61590. Behind the discharged cement silo wagons were empty Fans-U and various vans from Marin-Epagnier and at the rear of the train a rake of loaded log carriers from Les Verrières on the Pontarlier line. The combined regional freight train for Lausanne Triage had been marshalled at Neuchatel prior to heading south.

In addition to the regular freight activity described in this review, are the seasonal sugar beet operations that generate a full program both local trip moves and dedicated block train services. At numerous locations mentioned in this freight review, mechanical loading/conveyor apparatus can be found. This equipment is used in the final quarter of each year to complete the wagon loading and despatch from the south west, of a significant tonnage of harvested sugar beet tubers for processing at Switzerland's largest sugar factory at Aarberg.

As can be seen, the area covered by this article is rich in both motive power and traffic variety, with numerous locomotive-hauled passenger services complemented by, at times, an intensive freight scene, making the area well worth a visit for both the enthusiast and the railway photographer.

In conclusion, I must record my thanks to several friends and fellow freight followers who have readily shared their knowledge and observations to help build a more detailed profile of Switzerland's freight operations both international and domestic. Thank you, Gentlemen and long may that association continue.

Railway Herald welcomes correspondence and comment from readers, whether it is on memories from the rail scene of years gone by, or a comment on the current rail industry, UK or overseas. We welcome the input from readers, either by letter to the editorial address or by email to the Editor. If you have something to say - tell us!

Australian Alco's

Dear Editor,
Congratulations on the changes to the magazine! A great read and good value too.

A correction on page 48, of Issue 300. The video shot of Nos. B65 and B61 looks good but these machines are GM locos built in Sydney N.S.W. by Commonwealth Engineering at their Clyde plant and are not Alco locos.
Graham Pack,
by email

Ed. - Graham, thanks - a mix-up in details at our end was the cause. But thanks for the comments and the correction.

B1 Photograph

Dear Editor,
Regarding the query about B1 No. 61140 - it was equipped with a self-weighing tender, which can be seen under the coaling tower and was allocated in the late 1950s to 65A Eastfield Depot. While I can't place the location, it must have been taken in the early 1960s as the Overhead Wire Warning Plates are clearly seen above the front buffers.
Graeme Fraser
by Email

John Graham Collection

Royal Train Headlamps

Dear Editor,
Regarding the picture of No. 70000 conveying HRH The Prince of Wales in the Royal Train in Issue 300, I noticed the engine only displayed three lamps on the buffer beam. My understanding is that when conveying royalty the loco should display four lamps, one on each bracket. Does this only apply when HM Queen is on board the train, and that 'lesser' members of the Royal Family (no disrepect intended!) do not have this distinction?
Hugh Ballantyne,
by email

Ed. - We've spoken to an industry insider who has been involved in the Royal Train to clarify this. He tells us, that three lamps across the bottom and one on the top are only used when carrying the Monarch. Three lamps, with no top lamp are used for senior royals such as the Heir to the Throne and lesser royals should in fact only get the Class 1 express head code. We are told that this is all laid out in the relevant handbook so the Britannia *run was 100% correct. Of the recent Royal Train steam workings, only one has run with the full Royal Train headlamp code of one top, and three bottom - that was 'Duchess' No. 6233* Duchess Of Sutherland *on the North Wales Coast when HM The Queen was onboard.*

Short Franchises

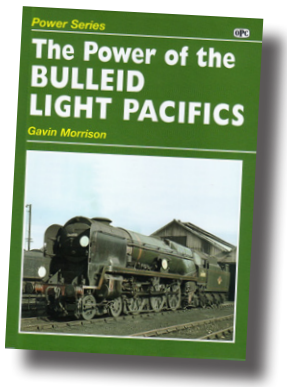
Dear Editor,
I read from the news story on your website during the week that the Abellio Group has taken over the Greater Anglia franchise for a period of 26 months.

Given the liking of the DfT for longer extensions, the new WCML franchise is proposed to be just over 13 years, why has the new East Anglia franchise only been awarded for 26 months? It seems a significant waste of money, time and effort not only to award the contract for such a short period, but also to change the franchise holder! Given the issues with the East Coast franchise I can understand that National Express was perhaps not the favourite TOC for the refranchising team, but sure for the sake of two years it would have been more cost effective to have extended the franchise? One would imagine that there will be little in the way of improvements from Abellio, as a business case of two years could not justify any significant investment.
Malcolm Rawthorpe,
by email

Reviews

The Power of the Bulleid Light Pacifics
by Gavin Morrison

Oxford Publishing Co. - 128 pages Hardback
ISBN (13) 978 0 86093 621 3



The first 'Power of' albums published by the Oxford Publishing Company (whose titles are now part of Ian Allan Publishing) appeared in the late 1970s, and some 30 years later, contributors to those early volumes still continue to provide a rare selection of photographic gems from the past.

One of those early contributors was Gavin Morrison who, with his co-author John Whiteley, joined a band of photographers whose quality work set an early standard for the later volumes produced under the 'Power' banner. Gavin still continues to produce volumes for this series and his recent production pays tribute to Bulleid's true masterpiece the Light Pacifics, designed and approved during wartime austerity and first appearing shortly after the end of World War II.

In a brief introduction to the class, the author explains the background to their introduction and acknowledges the foresight of Bulleid in building a mixed traffic design to replace the many life-expired locomotives inherited by the Southern Railway at the grouping.

The author has changed the format of this album from previous volumes and sought to follow the example of his earlier tribute to the Merchant Navy class by including an image of all the locomotives in both original and rebuilt guises – including such camera-shy examples as No. 34026 *Yes Tor*. The images are complemented by history details noting such facts as dates to traffic, dates withdrawn, dates rebuilt, dates renumbered, mileages and final fate such as cutting up or preservation.

The collection of images is rounded off by a number of images showing the original locomotives under construction and repair at both Brighton and Eastleigh, locations off-region visited during the 1948 Locomotive Trials, night scenes, and, finally, a selection of special workings including enthusiast specials to locations north of London.

This book is an excellent tribute (and aide-memoire) to a class that met the designer's specification for a locomotive suitable for a variety of duties until replaced by electrification. Although the reproduction size diminishes the impact of some of the images, they ably show the wide variety of duties undertaken by a class that was bedevilled by mechanical problems that left drivers to either "love them or loathe them".

Whichever opinion you subscribe to, you will be able to agree that this latest volume is a worthy tribute to a well-known locomotive class from an author whose work has been so much a part of the success of the 'Power' series. ***FK***

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 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.

For authorised representatives of societies, we can also provide access to our online system, allowing society secretary's to update the information online, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Please contact the editor on 01904 500175 for further details and to setup your access to the system.

BACK COVER CAPTION:
Class 66/0 No. 66125 powers north through Bishops Itchington with a Halewood bound car train, as Class 168/1 No. 168110 around the curve heading for London. *Jack Boskett*

8th February 2012

Basingstoke & District Railway Society
Wote Street Club, Ne Road, Basingstoke RG21 7NG. 'Signal Boxes, People & Trains on the Berks & Hants Line' by David Canning. Starts 20.00. All welcome. Contact 01256 819401 for further details.

Bradford Railway Circle
The Centre, Heaton Baptist Church, Leylands Lane, Bradford BD9 5PX. 'Narrow Gauge Niceties' by Robin Patrick. Starts 19.30.

Continental Railway Circle (London and the Home Counties)
St. Paul's Church Centre, Rossmore Road, Marylebone, London NW1 6NJ. 'Steam in India' by Geoff Warren. Meeting commences at 19.15. £2 Admission £2. Contact Adrian Palmer on 01932 850624 for further details.

Oxfordshire Railway Society
Seacourt Day Centre, Seacourt Road, Oxford OX2 9LD. 'AGM & Members' Short Talks. Meeting commences at 19.30.

RCTS (Cardiff)
Old Church Rooms, Radyr. 'Out and About in the Last 24 Months' by Hugh Gould. Starts 19.30.

RCTS (Hitchin)
Hitchin Christian Centre, Bedford Road, Hitchin. 'Stop Look and Listen' by David Cole. Meeting commences at 19.30.

Stephenson Locomotive Society
Y.M.C.A., Bridge Street, Guildford, GU1 4SB. 'Members' Evening'. Meeting commences at 19.30. Contact 01372 379216.

Swiss Railways Society (London)
The Model Railway Club, Keen House, 4 Calshot Street, London N1 9AT. '1991' by Nick Freezer. Starts 19.00. £3 donation. Contact Ron Dawes on 020 8660 3532 for further details.

9th February 2012

Bath Railway Society
Bath Green Park Station Meeting Room, Bath. 'GWR Miscellany (and a Few Accidents)' by Rev. Canon Brian Arman. Starts 19.30. All Welcome. Visitors £2. Contact Kevin Plummer (Evenings) on 01225 312564 for further details.

Locomotive Club of Great Britain (St Albans)
United Reform Church, Watford Road, Chiswell Green, St Albans. 'Thomas Brassey: Supreme Railway Builder' by Dr David Brooke. Starts 19.30. Contact the Secretary on 01442 251540 (after 18.00) for details.

Permanent Way Institution (Birmingham)
The Comfort Inn Hotel, Station Street, Birmingham. 'Manual Track Geomtry Measurement' Starts 18.00. Contact Jon Wells on 0771 406 4898 for further details.

Permanent Way Institution (Croydon)
Mott MacDonald House, Sydenham Road, Croydon. 'Railway Earthworks' Starts 17.30. Contact Martin Cresswell on 07815 968245 for further details.

Permanent Way Institution (Nth Wales)
Town Crier Inn, City Road, Chester. 'Thameslink Key Output 2 and London Bridge Redevelopment' by Stephen Whitmore. Starts 18.00. Contact Lynne Garner on 07771 672 2274 for further details.

RCTS (Newcastle)
The Brunswick Methodist Hall, Newcastle. 'Out and About in the Past Year' by Hugh Gould. Starts 19.30. Contact jimbrick@fsmail.net for further details.

10th February 2012

Altrincham Electric Rly Preservation Society
Altrincham Methodist Church Hall, Barrinton Road, Altrincham, WA14 1HF. 'Great Western Railway Lines in South & Mid-Wales' by Tony Icke. Starts 19.30. Contact Andrew Macfarlane on 0161 928 9394 for further details.

GCR Leicester Area Group
St Bartholomews Church Hall, Church Lane, Quorn. 'The Last Days of B.R.Steam' by Derek Huntriss. Starts 19.30. Contact John Calton on 07714 546163 for details.

Great Western Society (Swindon)
Lawn Community Centre, Guildford Avenue, off Windsor Road, Lawn, Swindon, SN3 1JE. AGM & 'Quiz' by Joe Turner. Meeting commences at 19.30. Contact the Secretary on 01793 495976 for further details.

Shropshire Railway Society
The Gateway, Chester Road, Shrewsbury. '2011 Show' by Karl Jauncey and Dave Richards. Meeting commences at 19.30

11th February 2012

Bournemouth Railway Club
Winton Methodist Community Centre, All Purpose Room, Junction Alma Road/Heron Court Road, Winton, Bournemouth BH9 1DE. 'A Look at the Local Changing Traffic Scene since the last year of Southern Steam' by Roger Smith. Starts 14.30. Visitors welcome. £2 Admission. Contact the Chairman on 01202 742099 for details.

Irwell Vale Railway Photographers
Irwell Vale Village Church, Irwell Vale, Rossendale. 'Kenneth Oldham's 16mm Steam in 1960's on DVD' by Barry Atkinson. Meeting commences at 19.30. Donation £3. Contact Mike Taylor on 01282 436653.

RCTS (Edinburgh)
Quakers Meeting House, 7 Victoria Street, Edinburgh. 'The Ravenglass and Eskdale Railway' by Andrew Thompson. Meeting commences at 14.30. Contact the Secretary at evenwilliams@talktalk.net for further details.

RCTS (Exeter)
Conference Room, Great Western Hotel, Exeter. 'Almost 50 Years of Railway Photography' by Geoff Lendon. Meeting starts at 19.00.

Stephenson Locomotive Society
Kidderminster Railway Museum, adjoining SVR station, Kidderminster DY10 1QX. 'AGM'. Meeting commences at 14.00. Contact the Secretary on 01242 582152 for details.

13th February 2012

Driffield & East Yorkshire Rly Society
The Sidings, Middle Street South, Driffield YO25 6PX. 'Steam, Diesels and Electrics in the York Area 1978-2009' & Society AGM. Meeting commences at 19.30. £2 Donation. Visitors welcome. Contact the Secretary on 01377 254068 for further details.

RCTS (East Croydon)
Small Hall, East Croydon United Reformed Church, Addiscombe Grove, East Croydon. 'The Role of London Travelwatch' by Tim Bellenger. Meeting commences at 19.30

RCTS (Ipswich)
Bridge Ward Social Club, 68 Austin Street, Ipswich. 'A Ride with the Guard with a Difference' by John Manning. Starts 19.30.

RCTS (Sheffield)
St Mathews Church Rooms, Carver Street, Sheffield. 'The National Railway Collection - An Overview' by Anthony Coulis. Meeting commences at 19.30.

RCTS (Wellingborough)
British Rail Sports and Social Club, Broad Green, Wellingborough. 'Bullied's Pacific's' by Colin Boocock. Starts 14.00.

Severn Valley Railway (Wolverhampton)
Old Wulfunians Club, 253A Castlecroft Road, Castlecroft, Wolverhampton WV3 8NA. 'The LMS in Ireland' by Tom Ferris. Meeting commences at 19.30. Admission £2.50. Contact Alan Davies on 01902 758882 for further details.

Southern Electric Group (Sussex)
Deall Room, Southwick Community Centre, Southwick. 'Branch AGM' followed by 'Taffy's Travels, Volume 2' by Peter Jones. Meeting commences at 19.30. Members free. Visitors £3 donation. Contact the Secretary, Peter Jones on 01273 504791 for details.

Stephenson Locomotive Society
Lauriston Hotel, 15 South Crescent Road, Ardrossan KA22 8EA. 'The Work of The Railway Heritage Trust' by Andrew Savage. Meeting commences at 19.30. Contact the Secretary on 01294 822303 for further details.

York Railway Circle
The Library, Archibishop Holgate's School, Hull Road, York YO10 5ZA. 'Rails to the Arctic' by Phil Lockwood & Enid Vincent. Meeting commences at 19.30. £2 donation requested. Contact Robin Patrick on 01904 412232 or at locopatrick@aol.com for further details.

14th February 2012

Abergavenny and District Steam Society
Upper Room, The Hen and Chickens, Flannel Street, Abergavenny. 'Swiss Railways' by David Jones. Meeting commences at 20.00. Contact the Secretary, Ken Mumford on 01793 335862 for further details.

Great Western Society (Bristol)
BAWA, 589 Southmead Road, Filton, Bristol BS34 7RG. AGM & ' Confessions of a Carriage Builder - The Steam Railmotor Project' by Graham Drew. Meeting commences at 19.45. Contact the Secretary on 01454 324230 for further details.

Meon Valley Locomotive Society
St Peter's Church Hall, Free Street, Bishops Waltham. 'British Main Line Steam' by Graham Stacey. Meeting commences at 20.00. Admission £2. Contact the Programme Secretary, John Barrodale on 02392 640951 for further details.

RCTS (Merseyside, Chester & North Wales)
'Observations at Doncaster'. Contact Alan Turton on 01606 854227 or at alan.christine@daisytally.fsnet.co.uk for further details.

RCTS (Nottingham)
Nottingham Mechanics, 3 North Sherwood Street, Nottingham. 'Grantham 1959 - 65 including Lines to Kings Cross and Nottingham Victoria' by Martin Smith. Meeting commences at 19.30.

Scottish Railway Preservation Society (Motherwell)
Vestry Hall, Trinity Church, Avon Street, Motherwell. 'Roaming Railways through the Years' by Bob Cleary. Starts 19.30. Contact Fred Landery on 01698 457777 for further details

Stephenson Locomotive Society
Fox Covert Inn, High Leven, near Yarm, TS15 9JW. 'Gresley in the North East Corner' by Chris Nettleton. Starts 19.30. Contact the Secretary on 01642 313451 for further details.

15th February 2012

RCTS (Eastleigh) / Mid Hants Rly
Eastleigh Railway Institute, Romsey Road, Eastleigh. 'Reading Development' by Shaun Winfield. Starts 19.45. Contact Ted Vaughan on 023 8084 9533 for details.

16th February 2012

Barrow Hill Engine Shed Society
The Roundhouse, Barrow Hill. 'Photo Charters 2001 to 2004' by David Birtle. Meeting commences at 19.30. £1.50 Admission. Contact 01246 472450 or e-mail beardspaul@aol.com for details.

Irish Railway Record Society (London)
The Exmouth Arms, 1 Starcross Street, London NW12HR. 'Last of the Irish Loose-Coupled Goods and More' by Richard Wall. Meeting commences a 19.00. £3.50 Donation. Contact the Secretary at irrslondon@hotmail.com for further details.

Locomotive Club of Great Britain (Nth West)
The Pied Bull, 54 High Street, Newton-le-Willows. WA12 9SH 'BR Steam' by Mike Taylor. Meeting commences at 19.30. £2 donation. Contact the Secretary, Neville Bond on 01925 226473 or email lcgb.nw@blueyonder.co.uk for details.

Stephenson Locomotive Society
St John's United Reformed Church Hall, Mowbray Road, New Barnet, EN5 1RH. 'More Travels with Bill Davies' by Bill Davies. Starts 19.30. Contact the Secretary on 0208 368 6200 for further details.

17th February 2012

Gosport Rly Society
The Methodist Church, Stoke Road, Gosport. 'The Route of the ACE' by Mike Pym. Starts 20.00.

Great Western Society (Taunton)
Village Hall, Stoke St Mary, Nr Taunton, TA3 5DE. AGM & 'More 1960s Steam' by Alan Reeve. Meeting commences at 19.30. Contact the Secretary on 01823 334188 for further details.