The Railway Herald

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The complimentary UK railway journal for the railway enthusiast

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Class 87s return to West Coast Main Line
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Green light for Grand Central Railway
Fastline Freight Class 56 returns to traffic

The Railway Herald

Issue 34
24 March 2006

Editor's comment

Although it is always nice to report on the provision of a financial grant to any heritage line, it is pleasing to note that the Heritage Lottery Fund continue to support the heritage railways, especially in view of the vast sums provided by them in recent years. The latest recipient is the Midland & Great Northern Joint Railway Society, who have been awarded a substantial grant for the construction of a carriage shed.

The next stage in the changes that are occuring with Railway Herald will take place over the next few days, with our new website being launched. Readers will be able to access it through both www.railwayherald.com and www.railwayherald.co.uk. As per the old saying, "stay tuned!" We do welcome readers views on the site, especially its content and how it could be improved in the future.

May I remind readers that any communication with Railway Herald should be via e-mail to *editor@railwayherald.co.uk*

Submissions

We welcome submissions from all readers, especially photographs from those enthusiasts with a digital camera! Pictures should be sent to the editor at *editor@railwayherald.co.uk*

Good quality scans of colour slides and prints are also acceptable.

Please note that as the Railway Herald is free and compiled on a voluntary basis, we are unable to offer any financial return.

Where possible we always try to use photographs taken within the production week (i.e the next issue will, where possible, only include images taken between the publication date of this issue and the following Friday.

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Forthcoming changes to Railway Herald

As we gear up for the forthcoming changes to Railway Herald, readers will start to notice several differences, both in the PDF magazine and on our website.

For those of you who want to know what the 'new-look' Railway Herald will be like, visit www.railwayherald.com from where you can download a promotional PDF file that will provide you with full details of the new magazine.

Within the next couple of weeks our new interactive and in-depth website will be launched (accessible from the usual web address) which will provide all readers with access to a wide array of news and information.

In order that you can visit and explore the new site, which currently extends to over 800 pages of information, we are going to open it free of charge to everybody.

To get the most out of it, you will need to sign up for a user account, which will be free initially. Once you have this you can explore the site and visit the sections that interest you whenever YOU want to!

We will continue to keep you up to date with plans for **The Railway Herald** through the pages of this magazine.

FRONT COVER: **The Bodmin & Wenford Railway's diesel weekend was held on 18-19 March. The four locos, Class 08 No. 08444, Class 20 No. 20166, Class 33 No. 33110 and Class 37 No. 37142 preformed very well on the 1 in 40 banks, with all locos putting in rousing ascents of the 3 mile climb towards the town at Bodmin! Despite the best arrangements not to clash with other events and good publicity, the passenger numbers for the event were unfortunately poor. On 19 March, Class 37 No. 37142 climbs away from Colesloggett Halt bound for Bodmin Parkway.** SAM FELCE

BELOW: **An apparent lack of motive power at Toton on 25 March, led to Class 67s Nos. 67028 and 67019 being used to work an empty HTA set to Immingham for loading. The pair are pictured at Melton Ross on the return 12.45 Immingham-Toton service, running about an hour late.** RICHARD TUPLIN

South West 'Route Utilisation Strategy'

On 21 March, Network Rail unveiled its long awaited South West Main Line 'Route Utilisation Strategy'. The document hails a number of major changes, but none will be seen by the travelling public or freight operators unless funding can be obtained, mainly from the private sector. Passengers using the busy routes into Waterloo could benefit from longer trains and a new hourly service between London Waterloo and Exeter via Salisbury, as well as enhancements to the lines through from Southampton, the latter also allowing larger freight containers to use the route.

Launching the 'Route Utilisation Strategy' for the south west, Network Rail's Chief Executive, John Armitt, said: "Network Rail is ambitious for the south west main line. This route has seen considerable growth in recent years, and this will continue in the future. This strategy recommends improvements that will grow capacity on this section of railway, meeting the needs of passengers and freight operators."

All these proposals will take time to deliver as Network Rail consider that within three years, by March 2009, passenger trains will all be lengthened to eight carriages and an hourly service will operate between London Waterloo and Exeter St Davids. By this time, route upgrading will have started between Southampton and the West Coast Main Line via Reading, allowing use of the larger 9 ft 6 in containers now preferred by most freight operators. Also much improved interchange with public transport and increased car parking at stations will be provided.

In the longer term, the strategy calls for work to start on the total redevelopment of Waterloo station, the redeployment of Waterloo International station for domestic services, platform extensions throughout the network and the lengthening of services to 10-cars within eight years (2014).

For the extended future, in the period 2015-2030, it is planned to increase all services to 12 cars, as well as improve route flexability in the Clapham-Waterloo area through resignalling. This would include total rebuilding and a revised track layout in the area immediately outside Waterloo as well as in the Clapham Junction area.

The proposed redevelopment of Waterloo station, will include use of the present Waterloo International 'Eurostar' terminal, which will cease to be used by international services from summer 2007. However, in the short term it is impossible just to open this five platform station for domestic train use. The track layout outside Waterloo was designed to facilitate a fast arrival/departure from the Windsor side of the station onto Linford Street Junction and then towards Kent. No provisions were incorporated in the original track plan to operate domestic South West services into the station. To work SWT main line services into the former international platforms would cause huge problems in the station throat area, with trains having to cross over the Windsor lines between Clapham Junction and Waterloo, causing huge disruption to the already overcrowded Windsor line routes. It would be possible to divert a handful of main line services from Byfleet Junction and travel via Staines and Barnes to Waterloo and thus approach via the Windsor lines, but the extended journey times would not be acceptable.

Passenger congestion on the concourse at Waterloo is a major issue facing Network Rail, and work planned for the 2008-2012 period will see a major increase in concourse capacity as well as the extension of platforms to accommodate at least ten-carriage trains. Network Rail will invite expressions of interest from developers for this project towards the end of this year.

The introduction of an hourly service between Waterloo and Exeter via Salisbury and Yeovil Junction is just an asperation at this stage. The route west of Salisbury is largely a single track railway with passing places and to accommodate an hourly service will require at least one extra section of double track or provision of an additional passing loop. This would cost a huge amount of money (and indeed time to build). Finance is to be sought from the private sector, but whether this will be forthcoming is doubtful, as what benefits would be given in return? Talk has been made of a 'significant' railfreight terminal in the Exeter area, but if this is to be fed off the Yeovil-Exeter route, major changes to the infrastructure will be needed, together with doubling of the Yeovil line.

For other parts of the route strategy to be fulfilled, extra rolling stock will be needed. As South West Trains/Angel Trains have invested heavily in Desiro products by Siemens, it must be assumed that fleet extension will see additional cars ordered to strengthen four-car sets to five, thus allowing 10-car trains. However, these have to be paid for. Extending the traffic fleet will also require provision of modified maintenance facilities to cope with extra vehicles.

The route changes on the Southampton-Reading route to accommodate larger containers, will require changes to a number of lineside structures, including bridges and stations, throughout the route. The authorisation of larger containers would however see some shipping companies make Southampton their preferred UK port and thus generate extra revenue.

RIGHT: By mid-2007 pictures such as this will not be possible, following the transfer of the London terminal for Eurostar services to London St Pancras International station. The five 395m long platforms will then be 'mothballed' until funding is put in place to upgrade route infrastructure to allow domestic services to use them. The platforms will be nearly twice as long as that required for a 12car South West Trains unit, so even when returned to use, much of the structure will be surplus to requirements. On 16 September 1993, Sets (37)3227, (37)3212 and (37)3018 stand in platforms 22-24 awaiting to depart with International services to Belgium and France.
COLIN J. MARSDEN

Virgin CrossCountry ticket givaway

Virgin CrossCountry is celebrating a record-breaking 20 million passengers in a single year milestone on its intercity train network by giving away hundreds of free tickets.

Managers were out travelling on Virgin CrossCountry services on Monday 27 March when over 300 pairs of First Class tickets were be 'up for grabs'.

Customers lucky enough to be offered a ticket voucher were be able to claim a First Class return journey for two anywhere on the Virgin Trains network completely free.

In addition, five customers were presented with a bigger bargain - unlimited Virgin Trains First Class travel for two for a year.

These highly sought-after tickets were presented throughout the day in the Birmingham, Edinburgh, Brighton, Exeter and Preston areas.

Station security awards

Newbury and Oxford stations have won a national Government award for safety and security. The FGW stations have been accredited with Secure Station status, indicating that they meet stringent standards of design, management, security and passenger safety.

The station platforms, ticket office and car parks are covered by 24 hour CCTV and a full alarm system improves safety for customers and staff. Newbury Station Manager Glyn Beck told the press recently: "This is recognition for the work we have done to enhance security and safety. Most of the measures needed to get Secure Station status were already in place but this award shows our commitment to continuous improvement".

The Secure Stations scheme required FGW to show how it expects staff to deal with security issues such as handling vulnerable people, monitoring CCTV and providing customer information.

Other Thames Valley stations to have won the award recently include: Thatcham, Ealing Broadway, Reading, Slough, Pangbourne and Cholsey .

ABOVE: The 'new' platforms 5 and 6 take shape at London Marylebone station on 15 March, as part of the 'Project Evergreen 2' infrastructure improvement scheme, replacing the stabling sidings and washer that were made obsolete wuth the opening of the new Chiltern depot at Wembley Stadium. A Class 168/1 'Clubman' unit has arrived as the 14.52 from Birmingham Snow Hill. BRIAN MORRISON

20th anniversary of Bathgate reopening

Celebrations took place on 24 March at Bathgate station as guests gathered to mark the 20th anniversary of the reopening of the line between Edinburgh and Bathgate.

Guests from First ScotRail, West Lothian Council and Bathgate's Bennie Museum attended, celebrating the improvements made to the route since it reopened in 1986. Also in attendance was Pauline Cumming, widow of Councillor and former BR train driver Joe Cumming, who unveiled the nameplate *Edinburgh to Bathgate 1986 - 1996* on Class 150/2 No. 150285 on 25 March 1996, celebrating 10 years of the line opening.

To mark the 20th anniversary, Alister MacLennan, retail manager at First ScotRail, presented one of the original nameplates to Councillor Carol Bartholomew. The plate will now be displayed at the Bennie Museum in Bathgate.

Since opening, several major developments have been introduced to the line. These include: 1987 - evening services introduced; 1988 - Sunday services introduced; 1998 - half hourly services to/from Edinburgh launched; 1999 - 24- hour online CCTV installed; 2000 - bus link from Livingston North to Kirkton campus introduced; 2002 - line extension to Newcraighall; 2003 - opening of Edinburgh Park station; 2004 - launch of Customer Information System, and platform extension; 2005 - Class 170 trains introduced and extension of car parks at all stations.

BELOW: The original naming ceremony at Bathgate held on 25 March 1996 saw Cllr Joe Cumming unveil the name *Edinburgh-Bathgate 1986-1996* on No. 150285 during the station dwell time of the 11.06 Edinburgh-Bathgate before its return to the Scottish capital with the 11.38 departure. Also present were the then ScotRail General Manager John Ellis and the late Scottish MP Robin Cook COLIN J. MARSDEN

Group adopts Widney Manor station

The Solihull and District branch of Soroptimist International has 'adopted' Widney Manor Station on the Birmingham Snow Hill-Leamington Spa line.

Members of the Soroptimists will help with gardening and improving the general appearance of the station. Soroptimist International is a world-wide organisation for women in management and the professions, working through service projects to advance human rights and the status of women. The word Soroptimist comes from the Latin words soror meaning 'sister' and optima meaning 'best'.

Andy Thomas, Operations Director for Central Trains, said: "Since we officially launched the 'Adopt a Station' scheme in January, we have received interest from 65 people or groups who want to play a greater role with their stations."

'Adopt a Station' is the first formal scheme of its type on the Central Trains' network. It offers volunteers wanting to help look after their local station an official way in which they can help, perhaps with publicity or gardening. For years, groups and individuals have helped out at stations informally.

The scheme is still open and information packs are available by email to: adopt.station@centraltrains.co.uk or by telephoning 0121 654 1257.

ABOVE: **While we will never return to full loco-hauled operation on the West Coast Main Line, the redeploymnt of three loco-hauled services each weekday from mid-summer will be welcomed by haulage enthusiasts and photographers. In the happier days of WCML-operation, Porterbrook-liveried Class 87 No. 87002 passes Crewe on 29 July 2004, leading the 06.55 Euston-Manchester Piccadilly.** COLIN J. MARSDEN

Class 87s return to Virgin West Coast services

After months of speculation that Class 87s were to return for limited use on West Coast Main Line passenger services, it is now confirmed that from the Summer timetable amendments to be introduced in May/June, there will be one Mk3 passenger set diagrammed on a Monday to Fridays basis. The trains to be loco-hauled are :

06.20 Rugby-Euston
1652 Euston–Birmingham NS
19.00 Birmingham NS-Euston.

The need to return to loco-hauled operation is to allow a major upgrade programme for Pendolino stock, including the fitting of sanding gear, a project that is estimated to take six months to complete.

The duty will also include significant empty stock mileage, with the set starting and finishing each day at Wembley Carriage Sidings. During the mid-day period the train is booked to stable as a 'hot-set' at Euston, being available if required for a fill-in duty.

At weekends the train is to be made available to operate Virgin CrossCountry duties, probably in the Birmingham-Manchester area, but it has not been ruled out that the formation could operate longer distance services. The problem here could be crew knowledge, with many drivers and conductors now no longer officially qualified to operate the trains, as it is more than six months since they last worked that class of loco or train type.

Motive power for the trains with be Porterbrook-owned Class 87s Nos. 87002 and 87026 with No. 87004 held as a spare.

The trains will operate with a Mk3 DVT coupled at the London end. Originally it was proposed to use 'top and tail' Class 87 formations, but this has been ruled out as insufficient locos are available.

A number of Class 87s are still 'sidelined' by Porterbrook as part of a plan to hire locos for use in Bosnia, and thus the number of available locos is limited.

Class 73 training on SWT

RIGHT: **Driver handling runs involving Class 73s were operated by South West Trains during week ending 24 March, working between Eastleigh and Poole. To provide a 'load' for the loco, and allow drivers to gain experience of using both the electro-pneumatic (EP) and auto brake, Class 423 No. 3417 *Gordon Pettitt* was coupled to the ED. No. 73201 and VEP 3417 are seen departing from Eastleigh on 23 March forming the 12.28 to Poole Carriage Sidings.** JOHN PINK

Infrastructure changes in the Rugby area

From 27 March, Rugby Yard will cease to be used for marshalling and stabling of infrastructure, especially ballast trains for use on the southern end of the West Coast Main Line.

From the same date, Forders will become the Network Rail sponsored yard in the area, although not directly on the WCML, it will allow redevelopment work at Rugby, while keeping ballast supplies in close proximity.

A number of EWS infrastructure timetable changes will also be introduced at the same time. These include the following new workings:

- 6A15 10.02 (MSX) Bescot-Forders via Northampton Castle.
- 6A15 05.25 (SO) Bescot-Forders via Northampton Castle.
- 6G15 09.30 (SX) Forders to Bescot via Northampton Castle.
- 7B42 07.00 (SX) Toton-Forders
- 7D42 12.12 (SX) Forders-Toton

Trains withdrawn in the changes will be:

- 7K46 22.00(FSX) Rugby-Crewe
- 7B46 02.14 (MSX) Crewe-Rugby

7G16 18.30 (SX) Rugby-Bescot

- 7B40 22.30 (SX) Bescot-Rugby

Some Freightliner Heavy Haul changes will also be introduced transporting 'Bulk Ballast' for the Virtual Quarry. New trains to operate are:

- 6F12 09.10 (WThFO) Forders- Stud Farm
- 6A10 16.05 (TWThO) Stud Farm- Forders.

Class 170s for First TransPennine Manchester-Hull route

ABOVE: With the Class 185 Siemens Desiro stock now settling down into daily service, with good reports received from the travelling public, testing of the sets and staff training has commenced on the Doncaster-Cleethorpes route. On 23 March, set No. 185107 approaches Scunthorpe forming the 12.00 Cleethorpes-Doncaster training special. It has now emerged that the nine 2-car Class 170s soon to be transferred from South West Trains at Salisbury to First TransPennine are to be used on the Manchester-Hull route. This is due to infrastructure problems east of Leeds which does not allow the Class 185s to operate at full line speed. RICHARD TUPLIN

Mosaic for Orrell Park

A mosaic has been unveiled at Orrell Park station, Liverpool, following a project by the Orrell Park community, Channel Five, the Arts Council of England and the Workers' Educational Association.

The mosaic, created as part of the 'Fivearts Cities Project', depicts local people's perceptions of the Orrell Park area and of Liverpool.

Recently, Merseytravel and Merseyrail have been in discussions with the local community to look at how improvements could be made to the station. Residents referred to litter and safety as their major concerns and a programme of work has been launched to help combat the problems.

The mosaic was one of the ideas to improve the environment at Orrell Park station, and has now been placed in the booking hall.

Mk3 seating stock for FGW sleeper services

As part of the First Group commitment to win the Greater Western Franchise, the frequently underused sleeper service between Paddington and Penzance is to receive investment in the provision of improved rolling stock.

RH understands that in terms of the Mk3 sleeper vehicles these will be fully refurbished, in keeping with the First ScotRail fleet now being worked upon at Toton. In terms of seating saloons, First has now obtained a number of former Mk3 vehicles, including two of the three unique BFO (Brake First Open) vehicles Nos. 17174/175.

Most of the Mk3s were trasferred to Laira in early March (See *RH* No. 33). On 19 March eight ex VT Mk3s were hauled by No. 57603 to Penzance Long Rock for heavy cleaning, returning to Laira on 24 March, powered by the same Class 57.

The vehicles will be repainted and re-branded and placed into service as soon as possible. The redundant Mk2 vehicles will be returned to the lease owner HSBC Rail.

BELOW: With the former clay works chimneys of Carn Brea in the background, FGW Class 57/6 No. 57603 *Tintagel Castle* heads a special empty stock move consisting of eight Mk3s from Plymouth Laira Depot to Penzance Long Rock Depot on 19 March. At Long Rock, the vehicles received heavy cleaning, before returning to Laira. BRIAN GARRETT

Grand Central Railway wins East Coast paths

Grand Central was granted final approval by the Office of Rail Regulation (ORR) to launch a new high speed rail services between Sunderland/Hartlepool and London King's Cross on 23 March, much to the dismay of Great North Eastern Railway.

Grand Central Railway Company Ltd is a York-based operation, which has developed plans to launch new high quality train services from Sunderland/Hartlepool and from Bradford/Halifax to London. These new services will be operated on a fully commercial basis, without any Government subsidy.

The Board of Grand Central (GC) was delighted with the announcement from the ORR, confirming its approval provisionally granted on 27 January, to begin operation of passenger train services from Sunderland and Hartlepool to London.

Final approval of GCs application for the Track Access Agreement necessary to launch services follows a full day's regulatory hearing at the ORR on 6 March to consider this and two related applications from GNER and Hull Trains.

Grand Central will now begin the detailed process of preparing for the launch of services, including the procurement of rolling stock and the recruitment of drivers and other personnel. Details will be announced shortly of the company's management and shareholding structure. The company is headed by Managing Director, Ian Yeowart.

The company will now be attempting to reach its next goal, running services between Bradford, Halifax and West Yorkshire to London, but these cannot be accommodated at the moment.

Grand Central plans to lease brand new Class 222 five-car sets. These will have to be constructed by Bombardier at their plant in Brugge, Belgium, but to date no orders have been placed. With the lead-in time for the assembly, commissioning and testing of new rolling stock, even though to an already established design, a date of service launch in early 2007 seems very optimistic.

GNER was absolutely furious that the decision was granted for Grand Central to commence operation in preference to its request to operate 12 additional daily Leeds-King's Cross services that were included in its franchise agreement at the request of the Government and would have provided nearly two million extra seats per year on the ECML.

GNERs Chief Executive Christopher Garnett was totally baffled by the decision in favour of Grand Central, as the ORR had already publically said that GNERs service development was the best economic case for the ECML.

The ORR in rejecting GNER's franchise commitment and approving a new open access operator, has undermined the Government's franchise policy, which called for the winner of the ECML franchise to increase Leeds-London services from 53 to 65 per day by December 2007. Much of the background to the decision seems to lay in the concern of track capacity in the Leeds-Doncaster area, which GNER consider could have been solved by minor timetable tweeks.

Christopher Garnett said: "We are at a loss to understand the basis on which this incredible decision has been made and believe that the ORR has made a grave error of judgment. Many Yorkshire, East Midlands and East of England passengers and stakeholders will be very disappointed by this news. The decision has implications for the Government's franchising programme. It creates a recipe for chaos where franchise contracts, awarded in good faith after long and costly competition, then become devalued and undermined by predatory operators who do not have to pay either fixed charges for the privilege of accessing the railway or any premium to Government. Grand Central's business case is based on revenue raiding from a premium-paying, publicly specified franchise.

Stored GBRf Class 73 moved to St Leonards Rail Engineering

The two long-stored GBRf-owned Class 73/2s Nos. 73203/207 at the GBRf depot in Peterborough have moved.

On 24 March the pair were hauled by Class 66/7 No. 66710 to Tonbridge, from where the '66' was deployed on weekend engineering work. The electro-diesels were then split and hauled separately to the St Leonards Rail Engineering plant near Hastings, by two operational GBRf EDs.

Nos. 73203/207 are to be donor locos to maintain the operational fleet. Wheelsets from No. 73203 are already destined for use under No. 73204.

GBRf are known to be keen to expand its Class 73 fleet, as these versatile dual-power locos are very useful. Fitted with drop-head buck-eye couplers and high level air pipes, they can be used to haul any type of train over virtually any route. The locos can be used as coupling translators, allowing MU stock to be hauled by non auto-coupler fitted locos.

At one time Nos. 73203/207 were destined to return to operational condition.

LEFT & ABOVE: Looking rather delapidated after a long period of store at Norwich and more recently Peterborough, EDs Nos. 73203/207 covered in graffiti pass through Wandsworth Common station (left) led by No. 66710, while a Southern Class 377 forms an 'up' suburban service. The view above shows GBRf Nos. 73205/206 hauling No. 73203 past Ashford (Kent) en-route from Tonbridge to St Leonards via the 'Marsh Link' route. No. 73207 was collected from Tonbridge a few days later. CHRIS NEVARD/PATRICK SEALE

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56301 delivered

Following months of work at Brush Traction, including the fitting of several major modifications and a full overhaul, Class 56/3 No. 56301 (ex-56045) made its first moves on the main line on 27 March, when the loco was delivered from Loughborough to Doncaster Roberts Road depot under its own power, with FM Rail Class 31 No. 31128 attached as insurance.

ABOVE: No. 56301 passes Hexthorpe on the outskirts of Doncaster. RICHARD TUPLIN

RIGHT: As a result of the non-availability of blue liveried No. 47709, FM Rail liveried Class 47/4 No. 47832 *Driver Tom Clarke OBE* has deputised. The train is seen on the approach to Woking Junction on 27 March with an ECS working from Salisbury to East Ham depot following a charter on 25 March. CHRIS NEVARD

ABOVE: On 21 March, the first 'one' Anglia Class 90/0 to be repainted at Alstom Oxley (Wolverhampton) into corporate 'one' colours was rolled out from the depot paint shop. The loco is seen being pushed out by a Class 57 prior to testing and return to Norwich Crown Point Depot. MIKE NEWPORT

Central door locking for CIGs

ABOVE: The two 'Heritage' Class 421 3CIG units Nos. 1497 and 1498 retained by South West Trains under the Community Rail banner for exclusive use on the Brockenhurst-Lymngton Pier route have recently been fitted with a modified form of Central door locking (CDL) to meet Department for Transport requirements. The modification work includes fitting a retractable 'bolt' at the base of each external door, protected by a rather ugly plate attached to the outside of the door. A door unlocked warning light is located just below cant rail height and visible in the top right cornor of the illustration. MARK PIKE

Eastleigh Works - final closure

The L&SW, Southern Railway, BREL, BRML and latterly Alstom Eastleigh Works finally closed its doors on 31 March after serving the rail industry for 96 years.

The final two items of National Rail stock to be overhauled departed on 24 March, when Southern Class 455 No. (45)5828 left under its own power for Selhurst mid-morning, followed a few hours later by South West Trains Class 455 No. (45)5918, which was hauled away from the site by another '455'. A few Freightliner wagons remained on site for collection during week ending 31 March, together with some scrap stock.

The site will now be the subject of re-development.

ABOVE: Eastleigh Works in happier days. Class 73/0 No. 73005 receives an intermediate overhaul on 25 April 1984, while Class 33s Nos. 33027 and 33029 seen in the background. COLIN J. MARSDEN

ABOVE: **During the East Lancashire Railway's 'Hoem Fleet Theme Day' on 18 March, the Class Forty Preservation Society's No. D335 approaches Summerseat with a service from Rawtenstall. Other locos in action included Class 24 No. D5054, Hymek No. D7076 and Class 47s Nos. 47402 and 47575.** MARK BEARTON

Open day at Hunsbury Hill

The Northamptonshire Ironstone Trust will be holding an open day at Hunsbury Hill Museum on 15-17 April from 10.00-17.00.

Cab rides will be available in two diesel locomotives, together with light refreshments.

For further details, visit www.nirt.co.uk

Lottery Grant for coach shed

The Heritage Lottery Fund has awarded the Midland & Great Northern Joint Railway Society a grant of £303,000.

The grant is to be used to construct a new carriage shed to house the priceless 1920's teak-built Quad-Art coaches. The coaches are currently being restored (with finance provided by another HLF grant) and are scheduled for completion later this year.

The structure, which will also allow other historical vehicles to be stored undercover, will be built adjacent to the road bridge a short distance down the line from Holt Station.

Diesel traction arrives at the Bluebell

After numerous years of being the only standard gauge heritage line in Britain to be worked totally by steam motive power, the Bluebell Railway, has temporarily added a Class 08 diesel locomotive to its fleet.

The locomotive, No. D3023 (previously TOPS No. 08016), is owned by the Heritage Shunters Trust and is normally based at Rowsley on Peak Rail, in Derbyshire.

The requirement for the diesel locomotive came about as the level of civil engineering work necessary for the Bluebell Railway to complete the next phase of its extension increases from this summer.

With investigations producting no suitable steam locomotive for the task, the railway has decided to utilise diesel traction for the first time in its history, to power engineering trains to and from the work site.

The Class 08 shunter has been hired for the duration of the extension works and will mainly be used to work the spoil trains from Imberhorne Cutting.

Restoration work proceeds on Ruddington locos

A major milestone was achieved in January on Class 25 No. D7629, when the No. 2 end cab was reunited with the frames. Work has also been undertaken on reconnection of the air and electrical services to the cab. All the air connections between cab and loco have been re-made and work is proceeding apace to restore the electrical connections. It is hoped that the locomotive will be back in traffic for the railway's May diesel diagram.

Elsewhere on site, progress is being made with Class 56 No. 56097. Following the starting of the power unit back in September last year, the loco has been drained for the winter period. Both bogies have had all defective brake cylinders replaced with refurbished ones, one bogie has been fully "plumbed" while the other is almost complete. Once the brake blocks have been refitted the loco will once again be able to stop under its own power.

The Type 5 has also become the first resident of the new number five building at Ruddington, which is capable of housing four mainline locomotives and allows space to be released in the main building for heavy overhauls.

BELOW: **Vintage Trains employed LMS 'Jubilee' No. 5690 *Leander* on 25 March, to work a Tyseley Warwick Road-Cardiff charter. The train ran well throughout and should have called at Worcester Shrub Hill to attach a banker, in the form of Tyseleys GW 'Hall' No. 4965 *Rood Ashton Hall*, in preparation for the attack on the Lickey Incline. In the event the train, climbed the 'Lickey' without the services of a banking engine! The LMS liveried 'Jubilee' is pictured on the outward journey passing Magor at speed.** KEN BRUNT

Recreating the Somerset & Dorset

The weekend had all the hallmarks of being a spectacular event and as usual the West Somerset Railway provided a show that exceeded all expectations.

Its 'Somerset & Dorset' recreation gala on 17-19 and 23-26 March proved very successful with over 9,000 passengers travelling across the two weekends. With visiting locomotives, typical of the old S&D line, trains were well filled across both weekends and no major operational problems were encountered.

Locomotives in action were SDJR 2-8-0 No. 88, SDJR 2-8-0 No. 53809, LMS 4F No. 44422, BR Standard 4 2-6-0 No. 76079, BR Standard 5 No. 73129, LMS Black 5 No. 45407, SR Battle of Britain No. 34067 *Tangmere* and BR 9F No. 92203 *Black Prince*. In addition, extra coaching stock was provided by the SRPS railtour set.

ABOVE: The classic S&D pairing - LMS 4F No. 44422 and S&DJR 7F No. 53809 storm through Nethercott (between Bishops Lydeard and Crowcombe) on route to Minehead on 25 March with the 10:50 from Bishops Lydeard in typical Somerset & Dorset weather! BRIAN GARRETT

BELOW: Back together again! On 25 March, S&DJR 7F No. 53809 and recently returned to steam No. 88 approach Nornvis Bridge (climbing Crowcombe Bank) with the 16.55 Bishops Lydeard-Minehead service. BRIAN GARRETT

BOTTOM: Visiting S&DJR 7F No. 53809 pilots SR Battle of Britain No. 34067 *Tangmere* past Woolston Moor on 18 March during the first of the gala weekends. TERRY BENNETT

Major gala activity for Yorkshire Dales line

The Embsay & Bolton Abbey Steam Railway ran a successful diesel gala weekend on 25/26 March.

The line saw the rare sight of ex-British Rail mainline diesel locomotives at work between Embsay and Bolton Abbey, in the form of 'Dutch' liveried Class 31 No. 31119, making its preservation debut appearance and green liveried Class 20 No. 20189. The resident Class 04 No. D2203 saw service on a two-coach local train throughout the day, dovetailing with the line's Class 107 DMU.

Unfortunately repairs to the resident Class 08 and Class 14 were not completed in time.

ABOVE RIGHT: Making its preservation debut gala appearance, 'Dutch' liveried No. 31119 departs from Embsay with the 12.30 service to Bolton Abbey on 26 March.

RIGHT: A rare passenger outing for the line's resident Class 04 No. D2203. The locomotive is pictured between Stoneacre Loop and Bolton Abbey on 26 March with the 14.00 Embsay - Bolton Abbey 'local' service.

BELOW: A classic Yorkshire country scene as visiting Class 20 No. 20189 heads nose first on the approach to Bolton Abbey with 13.25 service from Embsay on 26 March. ALL: RICHARD TUPLIN

LEFT: Two unlikely stablemates for the loco holding sidings at King's Cross station were recorded on 23 March, when EWS VIP Class 67 No. 67029 was parked up after assisting a GNER service between Doncaster and London while acting as 'Thunderbird' in South Yorkshire. On the right is GBRf Class 87 No. 87006 which arrived at the station in conjunction with driver's route learning, and departed as the 13.45 to Willesden Depot. MATTHEW GEE

LEFT MIDDLE: In mid-March, Cotswold Rail was contracted to carry-out a number of stored rolling stock moves, transporting equipment either from one store location to another, or transporting vehicles from storage sites to operators facilities, where overhauls can take place to return vehicles to traffic. Anglia-liveried Class 47/7 No. 47714 was used on 22 March to haul eight off-lease Virgin Trains Mk3 Driving Van Trailers from the MoD base at Smalmstown, north of Carlisle to the MoD site at Long Marston, via an overnight stop at Oxley Depot, Wolverhampton. The unusual convoy is shown near Winwick Junction. FRED KERR

BELOW: Great North Eastern Railway has recently taken over the lease of an additional HST set, a former Virgin-allocated unit with powercars Nos. 43090/100. After being stored at MoD Long Marston, the set was extracted on 23 March and hauled by Cotswold Type 4 No. 47714 as the 12.00 Long Marston-Leeds Neville Hill. After arrival at Neville Depot, the Class 47 took the HST power cars forward to Brush Traction, Loughborough for refurbishment. The transit move is pictured near Beeston, Leeds. MARK ALLATT

ABOVE: The 09.48 EWS 'Enterprise' 'as required' service from Wembley to Lille via Dollands Moor was very much 'required' on 22 March, the train being exceptionally long and needing the deployment of a pair of Class 92s. With the CTRL2 lines on the right, Nos. 92018 *Stendhal*, without EWS bodyside stickers, leads No. 92019 *Wagner* that does have them, past a forlorn looking Westenhanger station building. Brian Morrison

RIGHT: Pathfinder Railtours operated a charter from Gloucester via the West Midlands to Goole on 18 March, motive power ranging from an EWS Class 60 and 92, Freightliner Class 66 and DRS Class 37s. DRS Nos. 37218/059 pass Dewsbury East Junction bound for Goole. Mark Allatt

BELOW: One of the first recorded triple-headed Class 67 powered trains was captured passing Winwick on 22 March, when Nos. 67022, 67024 and 67015 led a Guide Bridge-Crewe Basford Hall ballast train. It is reported that the train was actually two booked services joined together. Fred Kerr