Railway Herald

"Providing a weekly round up of the UK rail scene"

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Final weeks of West Coast service for Class 87s?

ABOVE: In what looks to be their final weeks of operation, certainly on Virgin West Coast passenger services, LNWR Black liveried Class 87 No. 87019 ACoRP arrives at Birmingham International with the 13.10 London Euston - Birmingham New Street service on 1 April. RAILFOTO

Stormy times ahead for London's Crossrail Bill?

British Airports Authority is preparing to challenge key sections of the Crossrail Bill.

The company owns Heathrow Express, which forms the rail link to Paddington, and is concerned at the powers that will be handed to the Secretary of State for Transport as a result of the Bill.

The main cause for concern is a clause in the Crossrail Bill which will give the Secretary for State the power to seize control of the £750m rail link.

A BAA spokesman said: "BAA has to act in the best interests of its shareholders and to protect the Heathrow Express. We support Crossrail in principle but we feel the proposals put before Parliament don't have any positive benefits."

Therefore, in the next few weeks, BAA will formally petition Parliament with its objections during the second reading of the Bill, which could force ministers to rewrite sections of the proposed legislation.

A consultation document on the funding proposals for Crossrail is due to be published in the early summer, will come from a variety of sources, including a special levy on London business rates - expected to be 3 per cent. This would see BAA, London's largest single business ratepayer, forking out an extra £2m a year in taxes to pay for Crossrail.

The biggest Crossrail contribution would come from the Treasury, which would probably pay £2bn to £3bn.

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The trial run of a pair of Class 31s to Skegness took place on the 29th March from Derby.

GNER keeps East Coast franchise Page 3
GNER has been awarded the East Coast franchise for the next seven years, with the possibility of a three year extension.

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News from the National Network motive power scene including Class 37 repaints and news on further Class 56s for Europe.

Notable Workings Page 5
A brief look at some of the more notable and bizzare workings from around the network over the past seven days

Editorial

Welcome to the sixth edition of the **Railway Herald**.

The aim is to produce **Railway Herald** on a weekly basis where possible. The idea is that the journal is available to all enthusiasts across the world, so please do pass it onto your friends and fellow enthusiasts.

To receive your own copy as soon as its published, simply send us an e-mail to railway.herald@lwmailcentre.com

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Submissions

We welcome submissions from all readers, especially photographs from those enthusiasts with a digital camera! Pictures should be sent to the above e-mail address.

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

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

An Apology

An apology is offered to all readers for the delay in completing this weeks Herald, which was due to the pressure of other work. This issue covers the last two weeks, as the previous Friday was Good Friday.

ABOVE: One of the new South Eastern Trains Class 376 EMUs No. 376009 awaits departure from Hayes on 24 March 2005, as the 15.13 'all stations' to London Cannon Street. All of the 19 Class 376 units delivered have now been commissioned and are in daily service. BRIAN MORRISON

Franchise pre qualifiers announced

The Strategic Rail Authority have announced that National Express PLC, First Group plc and Stagecoach Group have been shortlisted for the Greater Western franchise, whilst the same three companies, plus MTR/John Laing plc and Danish Railways/EWS have been short listed for the Thameslink/Great Northern franchise.

Plans for Northern Ireland rail

A plan to spend more than £704 million on Northern Ireland's railway system have been announced. The project will aim to improve links across the country and reduce the dependance on using private cars.

A similar amount of money is also to be spent on the country's roads and public transport.

Driver escapes in rail collision

A Midland Mainline HST service collided with a Vauxhall Astra van, which had plunged down a railway embankment, on 22nd March.

Fortunately, the driver was able to scramble to safety moments before the train hit the vehicle.

The incident occurred shortly after 7am on the A6 near Market Harborough in Leicestershire. The vehicle came to rest on the track and was hit by the 05.21 Sheffield - London St. Pancras service, which was carrying around 100 passengers and travelling around 40mph at the time.

The driver was taken to hospital suffering from head injuries but was not seriously hurt. None of the train passengers suffered serious injury. Damage to the vehicle was so bad that the local fire brigade was unable to tell whether it was a car or a van.

The incident was investigated by British Transport Police.

Rail routes blocked after landslips

Two landslips have blocked a major cross-country artery and a rural branch line.

The Cambrian Coast Line is blocked west of Tywyn. A rail is operating between Machynnleth and Tywyn, with replacement road services ferrying passengers to Pwllheli and stations in between. Journey times are signicantly lengthened.

Also shut is the cross-country line between Leicester and Peterborough after a landslide near Oakham disrupted services. Central Trains are operating from Birmingham New Street to Leicester and between Peterborough and Stansted Airport with road coaches linking the two.

Loco-hauled services to Skegness this summer?

ABOVE: The 29th March also saw the trial run of the Community Rail Partnership demonstration train, comprising of 'top and tailed' Class 31's hired from FMRail, fromDerby - Skegness. The train departed Derby at 10.15 with invited guests on board. The day was deemed a success and could well pave the way for a similar loco-hauled operation during the coming summer. FMRail's InterCity liveried Class 31/4 No. 31454 leads a rake of 7 Mark 2s and No. 31602 at Derby, prior to departure. RAILFOTO

ABOVE: An unidentified GNER set speeds south on the East Coast Main Line on 23 March, south of Grantham. GNER has been awarded the new passenger franchise for the East Coast route but at a cost. RICHARD TUPLIN

GNER keeps East Coast franchise, but at a cost of £1.3 billion

The Secretary of State for Transport, Alistair Darling, announced on 23rd March that Great North Eastern Railway had retained the East Coast Main Line franchise.

As a result, the company will operate the ECML high-speed service for a further seven years, with a three year extension of performance targets are met. However, in return GNER will have to pay the Government more than £100 million per year, amounting to £1.3 billion over the next ten years.

The new franchise includes several major improvements, including an extra 13 services between London and Leeds, to be introduced by December 2007, raising the total number of London to West Yorkshire services to 66 each weekday. The Leeds-London route is now the biggest long-distance rail market in the UK. Passenger numbers have risen by 30% in the past two years.

An extra HST set will be leased to provide backup to the existing trains. The additional Leeds services, being worked by two additional HST sets, giving GNER a total of 13 HSTs in total. The company is planning to spend £25 million on a full refurbishment of the interior which would bring the Mark 3s up to the same standard as the 'Mallard' Mark 4s. Other work would include reliability modifications. All trains shoudl also feature Wi-Fi internet access by May 2007.

A new Integrated Control Centre is to be constructed in York by September 2006, together with reliability improvements to overhead line equipment and the lease of an additional 'Thunderbird' locomotive are designed to acheive a 90% punctuality target by 2010.

Extra car-parking and station improvements should take place at GNER managed station, together with the installation of automatic ticket barriers at Peterborough, Durham and Newcastle.

The company are also planning to improve transport integration with new bus-rail links and through ticketing between Darlington and Durham Tees Valley Airport, Doncaster and Robin Hood International Airport and Newark and Lincoln.

Services improvements would be introduced either by extending existing services or by additional services.

Above all of this the most impressive part of its franchise plan, and in addition to its contractual commitments, GNER plans to electrify 15 miles of track from Leeds to Hambleton Junction, located on the East Coast Main Line between York and Doncaster.

The scheme, which would cost £70 million, would be the first commercial electrification project since privatisation and would also reduce the Leeds-London journey time by around 20 minutes.

The electrification is part of a proposal to introduce five trains an hour to and from London King's Cross under a new even-interval timetable, which would see 80 services a day between London and Leeds by 2010. GNER's electric services can currently only access Leeds via Wakefield.

Work is currently ongoing at Grantham, to create a new chord at Allington Junction. The aim of the scheme is to enable the Grantham-Skegness services to be separated from those running on the East Coast Main Line. A new double line chord will be provided near Allington Junction (north west of Grantham) to allow trains to and from Skegness to access Grantham without having to traverse the ECML.

The work which is costing £11m also includes the construction of a new signalbox at Allington Junction. The new chord is due to open on the 12th December this year.

ABOVE: Construction of the new chord at Allington, near Grantham, which will remove Grantham - Skegness services from the East Coast Main Line is well underway. The £11m scheme is due for completion in December 2005. RAILFOTO

SRA looks at North Pole

The Department for Transport has asked the Strategic Rail Authority to commission the first phase of a study into possible future uses for Waterloo International station and the Eurostar train servicing depot at North Pole, in West London.

The study will be jointly sponsored by the DfT and the Strategic Rail Authority. Arup have been appointed to provide consultancy support.

Eurostar announced in November last year that International train services will be transferred from Waterloo International to St Pancras when the Channel Tunnel Rail Link is completed in 2007. Train servicing will also be transferred to a new depot at Temple Mills, East London, connected directly to the CTRL.

Honiton awarded secure station

Honiton station is to be presented with a Secure Station award, the 43rd such station on the South West Trains network to be given the status.

SWT has seen a 20% drop in crime across the network in the last six months of 2004 compared with the same period in 2003.

ABOVE: One of the latest Freightliner Heavy Haul Class 66/6 locomotives to arrive in the country, No. 66619 is pictured shortly after Aller Divergance with the Newton Abbott - Moorswater trip on 31st March. Richard Tuplin

New frequent timetable for St. Ives

Wessex Trains introduced a new timetable on the St. Ives branch from 26th March.

The new service frequency see's services every 30 minutes on the St. Ives Bay line in Cornwall, from St. Erth to St. Ives. The upgraded service is the latest stage in the Community railways development plan for the line, following on from the £189,000 investment in station facilities.

The previous timetable saw 19 return services per weekday on the branchline, with no set pattern of arrivals and departures. As of Easter this total rose to 25, with the departure times from St.Erth being at 11 and 41 minutes past the hour for much of the day, and 25 and 56 minutes past the hour from St.Ives.

The old pattern was based purely on connections with the mainline at St.Erth; but the mainline is moving towards a more 'clockface', regular-interval pattern, and the St.Ives branchline becomes the first route to adopt this easy-to-remember timetable.

The large majority of St.Ives passengers do not use the mainline, and indeed the St.Ives 'Park and Ride' operation at Lelant Saltings forms a half of the line's total income.

An easy to understand, simple and reliable timetable is the cornerstone of the drive to attract even more passengers, which in turn is at the heart of the Strategic Rail Authority's 'Community Railways' strategy. The St.Ives Bay Line is one of the national pilot schemes for this exciting strategy.

A third of a million trips were made on the line last year, providing healthy passenger figures.

Rail & Bus Through Ticketing

A new combined Rail&Bus ticket is making journeys to East Somerset from rail stations throughout the country more convenient and even better value-for-money.

Customers using First Great Western services can now purchase one combined Rail&Bus ticket for their train travel to Bristol Temple Meads and their bus ride to Street, Wells and Glastonbury.

The bus element of the combined Rail&Bus ticket is slightly less than the standard bus fare, offering customers who buy a combined ticket a cash-saving.

The combined Rail&Bus ticket can be purchased at any rail station ticket office in the United Kingdom. Season tickets are £25 for seven days, £90 for a month and £900 for a year.

Renationalisation could save £500m

A study just published has concluded that £500m could be saved by renationalising the railways. Most franchises could be renationalised without penalty by 2013 and reductions in subsidies paid to private train companies would save £200m.

BELOW: HRH Prince Charles enjoyed steam haulage on 22nd March, when he travelled on the Royal Train from Settle to Carlisle behind LMS Pacific No. 6233 Duchess of Sutherland. The locomotive was later hauled back to Butterley, whilst 67006 Royal Soveriegn took the empty stock back to Wolverton via the WCML. The train is seen passing Little Strickland. Peter Kellett

Heritage Colours for 37s

Two of the surviving EWS Class 37 locomotives are to be repainted into heritage liveried.

The two locomotives are due to be outshopped from the Toton paint shop during April. No. 37411 should appear in Large Logo colours, whilst 37425, which has already entered Toton, should emerge in BR Green colours.

Both locomotives will return to South Wales to work trains for Arriva Trains Wales on the Rhymney Valley Line.

Further, unconfirmed rumours suggest that the Cardiff - Rhymney service will be worked by Class 37s six days a week from early summer.

67s for WHL sleeper?

Further rumours are currently circulating that the Class 37/4 traction on the Fort William portion of the Caledonian Sleeper will cease from early summer.

Sources close to Scotrail have told **Railway Herald**, that EWS, who currently supply the traction, have advised the company that Type 3 motive power will not be available from the end of the year.

However it now appears that the classes reign on the overnight sleeper trains could cease as early as June.

A class 67 locomotive has been trialled to Fort William but was rejected at the time due to infrastructure restrictions.

Traction News In Brief

Euro 56s

A further batch of Class 56 locomotives have been identified for further 'European' use. 56091 was moved from Warrington in the consist of 6O12 Carlisle to Eastleigh Enterprise service as far as Didcot on the 31st. The locomotive is destined for Bristol Barton Hill depot. Elsewhere, 56094, 56095, 56113 and 56133 headed for Old Oak Common the same night in the consist of 6M97 Doncaster to Wembley.

Class 60 Storage

The current plan for EWS storing Class 60s appears to be to move them to Immingham depot in North East Lincolnshire, where they are to be placed in the old steam shed. To do this, several of the current Class 56 residents are to be moved to Healey Mills, the first examples of which are likely to move next week.

The next members of the Brush built Class 60 to be withdrawn look likely to be 60008, 60018 and 60060.

More DRS 37s

Following their purchase from HNRC, 37194 and now 37087 has been repainted into DRS blue colour scheme at Barrow Hill.

Another 86 for One

As mentioned in our Notable Workings column, One Anglia have gained another Class 86/2 with No. 86234 returning to service. This latest reinstatement now gives the company no less than three Class 86/2 locomotives, in addition to the Class 90 fleet. The other members are 86232 and 86235.

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Notable Workings

Thanks to GWOT and the 'Trains' crew

Bombardier constructed Class 377 No. 377454 was delivered to Brighton Lovers Walk depot on 18th March by silver liveried No. 67029. the locomotive later returned to Derby with the barrier vehicles.

No sooner had the last issue of **Railway Herald** emerged than 37422 was returned to the stored pool and put back 'on decision'! Elsewhere in the Type 3 fleet, EWS Class 37 No. 37427 was provided to work 4V25 05.00 Washwood Heath - Oxford Hinksey Yard on the same day. The locomotive ended up at Eastleigh, working 6O26 08.25 Hinksey Yard to Eastleigh service, returning to Oxford that after on 7V27, the 14.33 departure from Eastleigh. The same day saw 67020 head to Birkenhead TMD

The final Hull Trains Class 222 Pioneer arrived at Wembley Yard in the early hours of the 18th, hauled by 92001 Victor Hugo.

That afternoon saw the Hitachi Class 310 test unit move from its home based at Ilford TMD to Dollands Moor for a period of night testing on the CTRL. The EMU was moved by Class 66 No. 66229.

Both SWT Thunderbird Class 73s were in action together during the late afternoon 'Desiro' liveried No. 73235 joining SWT liveried No. 73109 Battle of Britain to move 4VEP No. 3581 from Wimbledon Park to Bournmouth depot. The locomotives then returned to Woking. On the other side of London, a DBSO failure led to 90013 piloting the 15.30 Liverpool Street - Norwich One service, with 90001 dead on the rear. The same evening saw black liveried Class 87 No. 87019 ACoRP make a rare apperance for the class on the 17.22 Euston - Northampton Silverlink service. The allocated Class 90 having failed before departure.

The 18th saw the start of a seven day heritage period in North Lincolnshire, when West Coast Railway Company operated Class 37 Nos. 37261 and 37197 worked the empty stock from Carnforth to Cleethorpes for the following day's steam charter to Chester. Having hauled the ECS for the steam charter into Cleethorpes, having stabled overnight at Barnetby, the pair then worked light engine to Doncaster, where they were due to replace the steam locomotive on the return leg. Unfortunately, 37261 only go as far as Appleby before it was discovered to have a seized wheelset. No. 37197 continued to Doncaster, whilst the FM Rail operated 'Peak' No. 45112 was called in to work the train from Doncaster to Cleethorpes! The same locomotive then worked the empty stock to Carnforth the following day.

The 18th March also found two celebrity Class 47s Nos. 47847 and 47815, now operated by Rivieria Trains, in top and tail mode on a Holyhead - Cardiff Rugby special. On the 19th the pair were used on the 10.12 Carmarthen - Cardiff service.. The Rhymney Valley enjoyed it usual Saturday loco-hauled 'Rugby' trains with 37408, 37411 and 37425 all in action.

Two FM Rail class 31 locomotives (Nos. 31459 and 31601) were employed by Wessex Trains the same day, to release DMUs which were then used to strengthen services to and from Cardiff. The top and tailed loco-hauled service working between Swindon and Southampton via Westbury. Anglia also saw a top and tailed diesel hauled shuttle service, with Cotswold Rail Class 47 Nos. 47714 and 47818, together with three coaches, working Norwich to Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft

BELOW: A shortage of HST Power Car's on 30th March lead to GNER liveried Class 43 No. 43078 appearing on Midland Mainline services! The power car is seen on the rear of a late afternoon London St. Pancras to Leeds MML service. NICK GREEN

Thanks to GWOT and the 'Trains' crew

ABOVE: BR Green lliveried Class 47 No. 47815 passes Marshfield with 2N90 additional service from Newport - Cardiff special on 19 March. Attached to the rear is BR Large Logo blue liveried Class 47 No. 47847 Railway World Magazine/Brian Morrison. ROGER COLEMAN

shuttles for most of the day! The other pair of Cotswold Brush Type 4s, Nos. 47200 and 47828 ventured to the North East with a charter to York and the Harrogate circle.

Special services were run from Crewe to Cardiff as usual, employing Class 67 No. 67014 (0826 departure from Crewe), 67015 (0953 departure) and 67016 (0853 departure).

Also enjoying the charter scene was the Diesel Traction Group's 'Western' No. D1015 which worked an Ealing Broadway to Newquay and Fowey Docks charter on the 19th March. In Yorkshire the same morning and 67017 was paired with 66150 on a rake of empty EWS HTA bogie hopper wagons.

The eight new Clas 66 locomotives for Freightliner departed from Newport Docks shortly before 4pm on the 20th, all heading for Crewe Basford Hall. For the record, the convoy's were 66581, 66578, 66580 and 66622 on the first and 66621, 66579, 66620 and 66619 on the second. Unfortunately problems with four out of the eight saw 66578-66580 and 66620 all destined for Marcroft Engineering at Stoke for repairs.

The evening of the 20th March saw Virgin operated Class 87 Nos. 87030 and 87033 withdrawn and returned to the leasing company.

The 21st March saw Class 205 'Thumper' No. 205205 move from Tonbridge Yard to its new home on the North Yorkshire Moors Railway. The unit was moved by GBRailfreight Class 66/7 No. 66710. After working from Eastleigh to Washwood Heath on the 19th, 67020 continued its journey north to Birkenhead TMD on the 21st. The same day saw DRS Class 33 No. 33207 work the Monday's only Carlisle Kingmoor to Hamilton conveying wagons for repair. Further south and the 10.55 Cardiff - London Paddington service was cancelled at Twyford following technical problems. FGW Class 57/6 No. 57604 rescued the train, hauling 43020 and 43030 back to Old Oak Common. Staying on the Western main line and Freightliner's Class 47 No. 47197 was employed on a well loaded 6M16 Southampton Western Docks - Crewe car train on the 21st.

In South Wales, 37405 was provided to power 6M75 Newport ADJ - Warrington Arpley Enterprise service on the evening of the 21st, returning with 6V71 to Newport. The locomotive working these two trains for the following three days!

The 22nd March saw the EWS Executive Train out, touring Lincolnshire. The train, again running as 1Z05, departed from London Kings Cross and ran via Cambridge, Peterborough, Spalding and Lincoln to Doncaster. The same day also saw the final pair of Class 390 'Pendolino' depart from Washwood Health.

Freightliner's Class 47/8 No. 47805, together with eight MJA wagons, worked an aggregate service out of Grain on the morning of the 22nd, destined for Wembley. Also in action was No. 47816, which worked 5Z25 0720 Polmadie-Wembley stock move. The same in the Midlands, Class 37/4 No. 37401 continued its spell on the Bescot-Birch Coppice trips. DRS Class 87 No. 87028 saw revenue earning use on the 22nd, which it pilotted 66404 from Crewe on 4M44.

The following day saw 67014 work an 'Edenex' from Swindon to Par and Penzance. The return working saw the locomotive suffeirng from low fuel. As a result, 66098 was dispatched from Didcot to take over from the 67 at Gloucester.

In Scotland and No. 37406 was used to power 6G74 13.39 Millerhill - Thornton and 6B51 return, departing at 19.25. One of the new Freightliner Heavy Haul Class 66/6 locomotives, No. 66622 was provided to

BELOW: Cotswold Rail's two Class 47s Nos. 47200 and 47828, together with the company's Mark 3 rake, worked a Pathfinder charter from East Anglia to York and the Harrogate Circle on 19 March. The train is pictured powering away from Poppleton between York and Harrogate.. MARK BEARTON

Thanks to GWOT and the 'Trains' crew

work 6M16 from Southampton Western Docks to Crewe. Due to locomotive problems, the train only got as far as Reading.

Great Western green liveried Class 60 No. 60081 Isambard Kingdom Brunel was incharge of 6E33 Knowsley - Immingham Enterprise service on the 22nd. The same day saw the first two refurbished Class 465 EMUs returned from Wabtec at Doncaster to Gillingham Depot. The train, consisting of 465231 and 465206 was worked by 67020. The trains are to be renumbered into the 465/9 number series by adding 700 to their current number.

The evening of the 22nd, found 37427 returning to Scotland in the consist of 6S75 from Bescot. Class 92 No. 92011 powered the train through to Mossend. Super power was used on the 24th March to work the Enterprise trip from Doncaster Belmont Yard to the Potter Group terminal at Selby, with 67024 doing the honours. Railtrack green and blue liveried Class 31 No. 31190 was in use on the the same on a route learning trip around Yorkshire and Lincolnshire. The 24th also found the Royal Train back in West Yorkshire when it conveyed HM The Queen to Wakefield. Motive power was the Royal Class 67s No. 67005 Queen's Messanger and 67006 Royal Sovereign.

On 24th March, NSE liveried Class 87 No. 87012 worked a set of six ex-Virgin Mark 3 coaches from Wembley. The train ran as 5Z87 13.00 Wembley to Polmadie. Also on a stock move, 67020 was provided to work newly delivered Siemens 'Desiro' No. 450105 to Eastleigh. The unit arrived at Bournemouth depot the following morning.

Following its test use on the CTRL, the Hitachi V Train returned to Ilford on the 25th March, powered by 66181. Gatwick Express passengers had another chance to experience Class 73 haulage on the 25th March, when 73202 made an appearance.

FM Rail Class 31 Nos. 31459 and 31601 were used by Wessex Trains on the 26th March to work a return trip from Westbury to Bristol Temple Meads and return. Following its fire damage, Freightliner Class 86 No. 86615, which has been dumped at Colchester, was moved to Ipswich during the afternoon of 26th. The locomotive was marshalled between 66535 and 57011.

ABOVE: Class 205 'Thumper' No. 205205 finally made it to its new home on the North Yorkshire Moors Railway, arriving behind GBRailfreight Class 66/7 No. 66710 on 22nd March. The DEMU is pictured at Grosmont, shortly after arrival from Tonbridge Yard. RON RADLEY.

The following day saw Class 90 No. 90027 on passenger services when it worked a diagram for Virgin Trains. West Coast Railway Type 4 Nos. 47854 and 57601 were provided for an ECS working from Carnforth to Hull in preparation for the following day's charter to Carlisle.

The 28th March found Hasting Diesels Ltd No. 1001 at work on the Ashford to Hastings line. The set worked the diagram all day. The same morning found Class 86 No. 86234 at work on the 10.00 Norwich to Liverpool Street.

The final Hull Trains Class 222 unit was delivered to Crofton on the 29th March. Class 92 No. 92003 worked the train as far as Doncaster Belmont yard. A shortage of power cars on Midland Mainline, lead to GNER liveried Class 43 No. 43078 working for two days on the Midland Main Line!

The same morning found 57303 and Class 390 No. 390025 engaged on a test run on the Settle & Carlisle. The train which departed from Manchester Longsight late due to problems on the Pendolino was further delayed at Hellifield by infrastructure

BELOW: The 22nd March saw DRS Class 66/4 No. 66401 (complete with a Heavy Haul Mossend headboard) pilot Freightliner's Class 66/5 No. 66556 on a Scottish bound coal service. The pair stand at Carlisle shortly after arrival. The leading Class 66 was detached and ran light engine to Kingmoor Depot. DAVID KIRKWOOD

Thanks to GWOT and the 'Trains' crew

ABOVE: FM Rail Class 31/4 No. 31424 powered an inspection saloon around the North East in late March. The locomotive is pictured crossing the pointwork at Newcastle stationand heading south with 2Z01 York - Doncaster. JAMES COVELL

problems between Blea Moor and Dent.

The 29th March found 1S96 16.26 Willesden to Sheildmuir mail service in trouble at Lambrigg. The 325s were rescued by Class 87 No. 87013. Class 507 No. 507029 was dispatched to Eastleigh depot for refurbishment on 29th, motive power being provided by 67015.

Silver Class 67 No. 67029 found itself in London Euston on the SERCO test train on the 29th, paired with No. 67002 Special Delivery. the 'Executive' 67 however was back on normal duties the following day when it worked the 'Executive' train from Crewe to Carlisle and back.

Following the announcement of two heritage repaints (see seperate story), 37425 left South Wales on 29th March in the consist of 6E20 16.45 Troste to Doncaster Belmont, the engine being detached at Toton.

GBRf operated Class 87 No. 87013 pilotted Class 325 No. 325001 on 1M44 Sheildmuir to Warrington on the 30th. The following day, DRS Class 37 No. 37218 replaced ex-Eurostar Class 37/6 No. 37605 on the Malcolm Group service between Grangemouth and Elderslie. The next refurbished Merseyrail Class 507 unit No. 507123 was returned to Birkenhead depot on the 31st, by 67015.

Network Rail liveried Class 73/2 Nos. 73212 and 73213 were hauled from Ludgershall to Hither Green on the 31st by GBRf Class 73 Nos. 73204 and 73206.

The first day of April saw Class 87s Nos. 87002, 87010 and 87019 at work on the Euston to Wolverhampton circuit, together with 90027 and 90028 on the Northampton - Euston 'Cobbler' service. The same morning, Class 57/3 No. 57308 rescued Pendolino No. 390015 after it was declared a failure at Cheadle Hulme. The 'Thunderbird' dragged the train ot Macclesfield where it was terminated.

April 1st also saw the final day of Slam-Door stock on South West Trains services, from the 2nd, all trains are to be worked by sliding door stock.

BELOW: Following a short period of testing, during which all of Virgin Train's operated Class 57/3 fleet visited the Alstom Test Centre at Asfordby, Nos. 57302, 57312 and 57313 dragged 'Pendolino' Class 390 No. 390038 from Asfordby to Oxley via Stafford! The triple headed drag is seen at Stafford, shortly after arrival on 18 March. MICK TINDALL