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# The Railway Herald

15 December 2006 Issue 66

The complimentary UK railway journal for the railway enthusiast

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The Railway Herald
Issue 66

## Front Cover

**Twelve months ago and in late December, snow was on the ground in North Lincolnshire! Class 60 No. 60036 GEFCO approaches Scunthorpe with a 'Binliner' train from Manchester, bound for the waste terminal just north of the town at Roxby Gullet, on 28 December 2005.** *Richard Tuplin*

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## Submission Guidelines

In response to the constantly increasing number of digital photographic submissions, *Railway Herald* has compiled a 'Submissions Guidelines' document, which can be downloaded through our website or by clicking here.

## 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.com

Good quality scans of colour slides and prints are also acceptable. Currently there is no financial payment made for photographs published in *Railway Herald*. Once the magazine is moved to a commercial basis then we will pay a standard reproduction fee.

Where possible we always try to use news photographs taken within the production week of the publication date, especially for news stories and features.

## Publication

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# Virgin retains West Coast Main Line franchise

**Virgin Rail Group (VRG) has agreed formal terms for a reinstated contract with the Department for Transport (DfT) for its West Coast rail franchise.**

The franchise deal starts immediately and will run until March 2012, replacing the Management Agreement (Letter Agreement 2002) which has been in place since July 2002 following the collapse of Railtrack plc.

Under the deal, VRG plans to increase the number of passenger journeys from 20 million a year in 2006/07 to more than 30 million a year in 2011/12 on the West Coast routes between London Euston and the West Midlands, the North West, Cumbria and Scotland. Under separate proposals, VRG is discussing with the DfT the feasibility of adding two extra cars to each of its 53 nine-car Pendolino trains, which would provide a further 10 million seats per year to meet expected demand.

Once the final stages of the West Coast Main Line upgrade have been completed, the timetable for the Anglo-Scottish route will be revamped from December 2008. From this point, the number of daily train services will increase by 32%, and it is planned that there will be approximately 10 million extra seats available per year compared to now. Three trains an hour will operate from London to Birmingham and London to Manchester (currently two per hour). A new hourly service will operate from London to Chester with more services from London to Scotland.

From November 2007, two routes currently operated by Virgin CrossCountry change operators, with Manchester - Scotland transferring to TransPennine Express and Birmingham - Scotland becoming part of Virgin West Coast. The result of this means that there will be no Virgin CrossCountry services calling at any stations on the West Coast Main Line north of Stafford, as Manchester trains will run via Stoke-on-Trent.

To facilitiate this change in operations, a number of Class 221 'Super Voyagers', likely to be either 21 or 22 units, will be transferred to Virgin West Coast. These will be reformed into a mixture of four and six-car trains, with the latter gaining a First Class vehicle. The hourly service to Chester is likely to make use of the six-car sets, with those services that extend through to Holyhead being formed of a four-car and six-car set, which will split at Chester, with the four-car '221' continuing to Holyhead.

In addition, from December 2008, weekend services will change massively, with almost double the number of trains operating on Sundays, subject to final agreement with Network Rail.

The West Coast franchise will receive an average of £259 million in payments each year until 31 March 2012. The support payment is mainly to contribute to Network Rail track access charges, which have risen steeply to more than £400 million each year as a result of the £8.6 billion cost of the West Coast Mainline modernisation project.

The Management Agreement was set up in 2002 following the financial collapse of Railtrack and changes to the West Coast Main Line modernisation project that prevented VRG operating a frequent 140mph train service as originally proposed.

# Extra services from Hull Trains, link Hull and London

**Hull Trains is celebrating the introduction two extra services on the East Coast Main Line, linking the City of Kingston-upon-Hull with London King's Cross.**

This is a major coup for Hull Trains as it has worked tirelessly to secure a service that will bring significant benefits for passengers travelling for both business and pleasure. It is particularly apt as the company is currently in its seventh year of operation after forming in 2000.

The seventh service will provide a later departure for passengers travelling both northbound and southbound. The company will be operating a 19.18 departure from Hull to King's Cross arriving at 20.54 and a 20.27 departure from King's Cross to Hull arriving at 23.13, Monday to Friday inclusive.

The company has been granted contingent rights by the Office of Rail Regulation to continue this service for a period of one year, with expectations that this right will be extended at the end of 2007.

# First two SWT Class 170/3s head for Yorkshire

**ABOVE: The first two Class 170 DMUs to be transferred north from South West Trains' Sailsbury depot to TransPennine Express (TPE) occurred on 11 December. The units will be based at Crofton depot, although no decision has been made on livery as yet. Five Class 170s will be with TPE by 1 March next year, with four in traffic daily. Another three units will head north over the main summer months, giving a total of eight. In November 2007 a ninth Class 170, possibly transferred from Central Trains, will join the fleet and from 1 December 2007, Bombardier will be committed to providing seven out of the nine sets for daily traffic. Here Nos. 170301 and 170302 head northwards on the East Coast Main Line at St. Neots with the 09.30 Salisbury-Crofton working.** *Robert Tarling*

# New Chiltern platforms inaugurated at London Marylebone

**ABOVE: A wide-angle view of the new-look London Marylebone station on 12 December, the day that the new platforms 5 & 6 (on right) were formally opened by Rail Minister Tom Harris, and also marked completion of the £70 million Project Evergreen II scheme that, apart from the new platform construction, also included work to increase line capacity allowing for 20 trains per hour to arrive and depart in the morning and evening peak periods, line speed improvements, bi-directional working on both lines between Princes Risborough and Bicester North and an extension of the Remote Condition Monitoring system on the Chiltern route. From left to right the units are Class 165/0 Turbo No. 165032, Class 168 Clubman No. 168001 and Turbos Nos. 165015 and 165007.** *Brian Morrison*

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VALOROUS WARSHIP CLASS — MORAY FIRTH

# Southern officially reopens refurbished Brighton Lovers Walk depot

**The 160-year-old Lovers Walk TMD at Brighton has been totally transformed over the past four-plus years and is now the Lovers Walk Traincare Centre.**

The work was carried out while the depot was still completely functional and was essential, following the introduction of the Class 377 Electrostar EMUs to the Southern network and the improved servicing that the units require.

The programme has cost £35 million and the depot now has a completely modern working environment providing the facility to carry out heavy maintenance work with an overhead crane and wheeldrop.

There is also new office accommodation and significant improvements have been made to all parts of the complex including the external Montpelier sidings where there are now six sidings with four covered walkways and a new washing plant replacing the old one that was 60 years old.

The depot cares for 134 Electrostars, 28 three-car units and 100 four-car sets, having 27 arrivals and 30 departures on average every weekday. The 200 employees include fitters, cleaners, engineers and support staff, some from Bombardier.

**TOP:** Class 377/4 Electrostar No. 377445 awaiting maintenance in the modern Lovers Walk Traincare Centre on 11 December.
**ABOVE:** Lovers Walk's Class 09 No. 09026 *Cedric Wares* has been fitted with de-icing equipment on the front steps to allow the loco to attend to winter problems around the depot.
**ABOVE LEFT:** The Mayor of Brighton & Hove, Cllr David Smith, having unveiled a plaque in Lover's Walk Depot, Brighton, on 11 December to mark completion of a four-year refurbishment programme of the depot, shakes hands with Southern MD, Chris Burchell.
**LEFT:** Class 377/4 Electrostar No. 377424 receives maintenance in Lovers Walk on the same day.
*All: Brian Morrison*

## Smaller stations targeted by GMPTA

**A total of 48 smaller stations around Greater Manchester have been listed for future funding.**

Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Authority (GMPTA) has drawn up a list of the stations that are likely to be part of its Rail Station Improvement Strategy.

The majority of the 48 stations have been included as they are well used by commuters, while a further 10 have been added to the list as passenger figures are expected to rise significantly in the coming years.

Passenger numbers are likely to rise at Hall i'th' Wood, Brinnington, Davenport, Rose Hill, Strines, Hattersley, Ince, Orrell, Pemberton and Gathurst, mainly as the result of planned new housing or business developments near to the stations.

GMPTA will work with the Department for Transport, Network Rail and the train operators to develop its Rail Station Improvement Strategy, which will focus on improving customer information and security at stations.

# FM Rail goes into voluntary administration

**Derby-based operator FM Rail announced on 11 December that the company had gone into voluntary administration.**

An FM Rail spokesman told *Railway Herald* that the current rumours in the industry suggesting that the company was now in receivership were totally unfounded. It's too early to tell what the future holds or what the outcome may be.

The transition into 'voluntary administration' serves to protect the company from its creditors while still being able to operate. The Administrator will be an Insolvency Practioner, who will run the business in the interim while its issues are investigated, the extent of the problems ascertained and the appropriate way forward identified.

The way forward, however, may include the sale of the business as a going concern, the sale of any assets, downsizing of the business to produce a financially stable and profitable enterprise or at worst, a move into Receivership. This decision is usually based on the amount of finance that is available or can be quickly realised in agreement with the creditors.

As revealed in *Railway Herald* last issue, a company was originally looking at bidding for the operational business. *RH* understands that this is still the case and may now have been joined by at least one other business, looking to enter the rail freight market.

FM Rail purchased charter operator Hertfordshire Rail Tours in late 2005 and it is expected that that business will be covered by the new operation. The railtour side of FM Rail's business has certainly gained a higher-profile with the launch in January this year of the 'Blue Pullman' luxury trips, which have gained a good reputation for high quality food. 'Blue Pullman', together with the Intercity Merrymaker brand, have both recently been combined under the Hertfordshire Rail Tours division.

The future of FM Rail could also affect external operations as Network Rail's Class 31 pool is maintained by the company as well as Fastline Freight's locomotives.

A spokesperson for Fastline Freight said that the current situation with FM Rail should not have any effect on their day-to-day business. All three Fastline locomotives, Nos. 56301-56303 are maintained at Doncaster Roberts Road depot under contract by FM Rail, with the latter locomotive being leased from the company as and when required.

# Midland Mainline launches new reward scheme

**Midland Mainline has opened a new customer reward scheme called AlwaysMore, following feedback from its customers.**

The new points-based system will allow members to collect points for each journey they make. The more points that are collected, the better the rewards become, ranging from free weekend travel for a year to free wine on board Midland Mainline services.

Best of all, points can be collected on all Midland Mainline tickets, including the company's bargain £6 online fare.

To sign-up for the scheme, simply visit http://www.midlandmainline.com/alwaysmore, or pick up a membership leaflet at any Midland Mainline station. Midland Mainline will also be offering 15% discount on products bought from the m's bar with a valid AlwaysMore membership card.

# Class 37 returns to working the evening mail train!

**BELOW: As reported in our late news column of last week's issue, operational problems on the West Coast Main Line as a result of the wires being down caused GB Railfreight to hire WCRC Class 37 No. 37248 to power a northbound mail service between Willesden PRDC and Warrington RM Terminal, via Reading! This photograph, which proves how far digital photography has come, shows the train passing Reading at around 40mph on 7 December.** *Ken Brunt*

## News In Brief

■ GB Railfreight has won a £35,000 contract with Balfour Beatty Rail Plant Limited to provide route conductor services in London, Essex and Hertfordshire. The contract, which covers 55 moves, began on 20 November and runs through to February 2007. Balfour Beatty has the option to extend this if required.

■ First Capital Connect will be operating an extensive bus replacement service on Boxing Day, 26 December. The road services will operate between Luton Airport and London Blackfriars, and will serve Harpenden, St Albans, King's Cross Thameslink and Farringdon.

■ First Great Western has extended the use of ticket gates to Plymouth and Exeter St Davids stations. Those at Plymouth coming into service by week ending 8 December. Four automatic gates, which will be staffed at all times when operational, have been installed at each station.

■ With the publication of the penultimate edition of the printed National Rail Timetable, comes the launch of the complete online version for the first time. The timetable, which is free in electronic format, contains the complete details of the more than 20,000 passenger train services operated by Britain's 23 passenger train operators. From December 2007, the National Rail Timetable will only be available online. The publication, which like *Railway Herald*, is in a PDF format can be downloaded from Network Rail's website (www.networkrail.co.uk) or by clicking anywhere on this story.

■ GB Railfreight has opened a new train crew base at Bristol. GBRf's existing depots at Willesden and Wellingborough will support the depot initially to help cover peak workloads.

# New era starts as Silverlink bids farewell to North Woolwich

**The last service train from North Woolwich to Stratford departed at 23.37 on 9 December, but a special farewell run was made for invited guests on the following day to celebrate 160 years of the North Woolwich Railway and the official transfer of responsibility beyond Stratford to the automated Docklands Light Railway (DLR).**

To mark the occasion, Lords Faulkner and Rosser named Class 313/1 No. 313101 *Silvertown* at Stratford Low Level platforms 'to keep alive the history of the original railway in London Docklands'.

Unofficially, the ceremony was somewhat comically dubbed 'Two Lords a Naming' as it was near to Christmas!

The unit then made a non-stop run to North Woolwich, believed to be the only time that a train had traversed the line without stopping apart from *Flying Scotsman* with the Queen Mother when the North Woolwich Museum was opened in November 1984.

Following an excellent buffet lunch for guests in the Gresley coach situated in the grounds of The Old Station Museum at North Woolwich, the train then made a final departure to Euston via Willesden. Providing current plans all come to fruition, the next train to depart from the terminus is scheduled to be a steam-hauled service to Silvertown.

**ABOVE RIGHT: A nice touch at North Woolwich on the final day with a requiem garland placed around a station nameplate.**
**RIGHT: As the last Silverlink train to North Woolwich, Class 313/1 No 313101 was named at Stratford on 10 December to mark 160 years of the North Woolwich Railway and the handover of future services to the DLR. After the curtains were pulled, a commemorative nameplate was handed to Pearson Shillingford, the Civic Ambassador for Newham (right), by Mark Hopwood MD of Silverlink (left), accompanied by the two Lords who named the train, Lord Rosser and Lord Faulkner (centre).**
**BELOW: The final Silverlink train from North Woolwich on 10 December, worked by Class 313/1 No 313101 *Silvertown*. The headboard reads '1847 - 2006 LAST TRAIN North Woolwich to Stratford - 10th December 2006'.**
**INSET BELOW: A last train notice for North London Line services from Stratford Low Level station.** ***All: Brian Morrison***

# Could new operators for Crianlarich timber traffic use Class 57/3s?

**A change in the motive power scene could be on the cards for the West Highland Line.**

EWS have confirmed that they have ceased to operate timber traffic out of Crianlarich Upper from 30 November when the existing contract expired. Although a new contract with a railfreight haulier is yet to be signed, Kronospan, who operate the timber factory at Chirk, have confirmed that discussions are ongoing with AMEC Spie Rail and that a conclusion to any potential contract is expected before the end of January 2007.

If this is the case, the question of potential motive power then comes to the fore. Industry sources have indicated that the company could be looking to make use of the spare capacity in the Virgin Class 57/3 fleet on weekdays. With on average four members of the sub-class available at Manchester Longsight TMD on weekdays, the suggestion is that there is spare capacity within the fleet to accomodate such a move, although Virgin Trains would not comment on whether any talks were currently taking place with any customers.

Alongside the daily requirement for '57s' on 'Thunderbird' duties on the West Coast Main Line and the outsourcing of one locomotive as 'Thunderbird' to Virgin CrossCountry based at Birmingham New Street, the key requirement time for Virgin is for 'off-the-wires' moves during weekend engineering work when all 16 members of the fleet are required. However, with the possibility of some locomotives being available for external hire from mid-day Monday until mid-day Friday, this could well fit the pattern of operation for the timber flow, which operated on weekdays under the previous EWS contract.

**BELOW: The Class 365 EMUs were introduced to the East Coast Main Line during 1996, the first run being Class 365 No. 365501 on 9 December that year. Exactly 10 years to the day, No. 365539 in the latest First Capital Connect livery, leads a classmate in the original NSE colours with FCC branding out of Hitchin with a Cambridge - London King's Cross service.** *Craig Leaper*

## News In Brief

■ Hull Trains has been named Best Train Operating Company in the country, in an award backed by the national disability charity RADAR. The votes were recorded from passengers themselves.

■ The National Network route between Highbridge & Burnham and Taunton has re-opened following a three-week closure for engineering work, which saw First Great Western and Virgin Trains services diverted via Westbury. Over six miles of rail, 26,000 tonnes of ballast and 14,000 sleepers were removed during the blockade.

■ EWS says it supports the National Transport Strategy and Action Plan for Freight just published by Transport Scotland and the Scottish Executive, and will be working with both organisations to increase the amount of freight carried on Scotlands rails by operating longer length trains.

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**ABOVE:** The latest Class 158 to emerge from Glasgow Works following relivery, No. 158722 is pictured in typical December lighting in the works yard at Springburn on 10 December. *Steve Summers*

## News In Brief

■ Following five days out of use after a component failure, Class 87 No. 87002 returned to traffic on 13 December. The locomotive was used to work the 13.10 London Euston - Birmingham New Street and 15.00 return service, in addition to its normal 'peak-hour' diagram on the same day.

■ The final booked loco-hauled service on the Rhymney Valley line into Cardiff operated on 11 December. Class 37/4 No. 37410, complete with a wreath, was provided for the final 07.44 Rhymney - Cardiff working. Arriva Trains Wales says that although daily loco-hauled services have now ceased, the company is planning to retain loco-haulage for special events, especially those in connection with events at the Millenium Stadium.

■ The 07.35 London King's Cross - Leeds service, formed of Class 43s Nos. 43107 and 43111 was dragged throughout by Class 67 No. 67018 on 11 December.

■ EWS Class 08 movements: No. 08561 Temple Mills-Doncaster TMD, No. 08646 Temple Mills - Margam, No. 08698 Motherwell-Thornaby, and No. 08782 Castleton (Corus) - Warrington. Finally Nos. 08738 and 08939 have moved from Margam to Toton for painting.

# Grand Central moves HST refurbishment forward

**After discussions with a number of contractors, Grand Central has announced, which companies have received the contracts to overhaul its rolling stock.**

Grand Central's six powercars are to be moved to DML at Plymouth for a full refurbishment, while a combination of Marcroft Engineering and ESG will undertake work on the coaching stock at Toton.

Work on some of the coaches will be more than a refurbishment as the FO (First Class) and TSO (Standard Class) vehicles chosen were all built for use on locomotive-hauled trains rather than HSTs. In order for the vehicles to operate with powercars, the coaches will need to have buffers removed and buckeye rubbing plates and be rewired to work with the 415volt three-phase supply HST power cars.The TRSB (Restaurant/Buffet) and TGS (Standard Class brake) vehicles are ex-HST trailers that will simply require a general refurbishment.

Initial stock for service will be formed of six passenger vehicles, which will include a First Class vehicle, a restaurant/buffet car available to all passengers, and four Standard Class vehicles, giving a total of 324 seats.

An additional three First Class and three Standard Class coaches have also been purchased, which will remain stored to allow Grand Central trains to be lengthened to meet future growth. These are indicated in the list opposite by a *.

## Grand Central Rolling Stock Fleet

**Class 43 Powercars**
43065 43067 43068 43080 43084 43123

**FO Mk3s**
11017* 11023 11036* 11038 11045 11055*

**RB Mk3s**
40424 40426 40433

**TSO Mk3s**
12033 12044 12058* 12088 12104* 12112 12121
12136 12149 12152 12155 12165*

**TGS Mk3**
44065 44088 44089

**ABOVE:** How the standard classes coaches will look. *Grand Central*

**ABOVE:** Recently removed from their storage location at Immingham Railfreight Terminal, ex-Virgin Trains Class 86/2s Nos. 86205 and 86226 stand in Immingham Reception Sidings on 13 December. The locos were moved the following day by Class 60 No. 60054, as the 12.45 Immingham to Doncaster working, destined eventually for Long Marston. *Ian Tunstall*

**Railtour Listings ■ Railtour Listings ■ Railtour Listings ■ Railtour Listings ■ Railtour Listings**

The following table details the latest information available on steam, diesel and electric railtours for the forthcoming two weeks from the date of publication. News from railtour operators is always welcome. Please contact editor@railwayherald.com. **Information is understood to be correct at the time of going to press.** *During the winter period, our weekly railtour listings will provide details for the next three weeks.*

| Date | Operator | Traction | Route |
|---|---|---|---|
| 09 Dec | 5305 Loco Assoc. | 4953 | Tyseley Warwick Road-Tamworth-Burton upon Trent-Derby-York and return |
| 09 Dec | Compass Tours | 2xFMR 47 | Preston-Lancaster-Oxenholme-Penrith-Carlisle-Dundee-Aberdeen and return |
| 09 Dec | Hertfordshire (BP) | 2xFMR 47 | London KX-Potters Bar-Stevenage-Lincoln and return |
| 09 Dec | Kingfisher | EWS Class 67 | Wolverhampton-Stafford-Stoke on Trent-Macclesfield-Stockport-Manchester Piccadilly-Bolton-Chorley-Preston-Edinburgh and return. |
| 09 Dec | Railtourer | 2xWCRC 47 | Scarborough-Windsor Riverside and return |
| 09 Dec | RTC | 60009 | St. Albans-Luton-Corby-Oakham-Loughborough-York-Leicester-(and return) |
| 09 Dec | Steam Dreams | 45231 | London Liverpool Street-Ely and return |
| 10 Dec | RTC | 45407 | Manchester Victoria-Rochdale -Hebden Bridge-York and return |
| 12 Dec | Steam Dreams | 71000 | London Waterloo-Clapham Junction-Staines-Woking-Salisbury and return |
| 14 Dec | Hertfordshire (BP) | 2xFMR 47 | London Victoria-Folkstone Harbour (break/rev)- London Victoria |
| 14 Dec | Past Time Rail | 34067 | London Victoria-Clapham Junction-Barnes-Feltham-Virginia Water-Chertsey-Woking-Guildford-Shalford-Redhill-Purley-Balham-London Victoria |
| 14 Dec | Steam Dreams | 71000 | London Waterloo-Clapham Junction-Woking-Salisbury-Sherbourne and return |
| 15 Dec | Vintage Trains | 45305 | Tyseley-Nuneaton-Leicester-Oakham-Ely and return |
| 16 Dec | Heartland Rail | CR Class 47 | Gloucester-Cam & Dursley-Yate-Bristol Parkway-Festive (Mystery Tour) |
| 16 Dec | Hertfordshire (BP) | 2xFMR 47 | London KX-Potters Bar-Stevenage-Skipton and return |
| 16 Dec | Kingfisher | 6024 | Bristol TM-Keynsham-Bath Spa-Swindon-Newbury-Trowbridge-Bristol TM. |
| 16 Dec | Kingfisher | EWS Class 67 | Newcastle upon Tyne-Durham-Darlington-York-London KX and return |
| 16 Dec | Past Time Rail | 6201 | (London Euston-Northampton-Birmingham International)-Stafford-Crewe-Chester-Crewe-Whitchurch-Shrewsbury-Birmingham International (& return) |
| 16 Dec | Pathfinder Tours | 50031+50049 | Cardiff-Newport-Bristol Parkway-Cam & Dursley-Cheltenham Spa-Barnt Green-Birmingham NS-Carnforth-Wennington-Hellifield-Leeds (break)-and return |
| 16 Dec | RTC | 71000 | St. Albans-Luton-Bedford-Wellingborough-Kettering-Melton Mowbray-Loughborough-Toton-Barrow Hill-York (break/rev) and return |
| 16 Dec | Steam Dreams | 45231 | London Victoria-Chichester and return |
| 16 Dec | Vintage Trains | 45305 | Tyseley-Nuneaton-Leicester-Oakham-Ely and return (luncheon) |
| 19 Dec | FM Rail (ICMM) | FMR Class 47 | Watford Junction-Milton Keynes-Northampton-Rugby-York and return |
| 19 Dec | Past Time Rail | 34067 | London Victoria-Clapham Junction-Barnes-Feltham-Virginia Water-Chertsey-Woking-Guildford-Shalford-Redhill-Purley-Balham-London Victoria |
| 19 Dec | Steam Dreams | 45231 | London Victoria-Bromley South-Canterbury and return |
| 20 Dec | Vintage Trains | 4965 | Dorridge-Solihull-Tyseley-East Midlands circular |
| 21 Dec | Hertfordshire (BP) | 2xFMR 47 | Stevenage-Welwyn Garden City-London Finsbuey Park-Norwich and return |
| 21 Dec | Steam Dreams | 71000 | London Victoria-Winchester and return |
| 21 Dec | Vintage Trains | 4965 | Dorridge-Solihull-Tyseley-East Midlands circular (luncheon) |
| 22 Dec | Vintage Trains | 4965 | Dorridge-Solihull-Tyseley-East Midlands circular(luncheon) |
| 23 Dec | Hertfordshire (BP) | 2xFMR 47 | London Waterloo-Clapham Junction-Reading-Newbury-Castle Cary-Yeovil-Weymouth (break/rev)-Bournemouth-Southampton-Romsey-Andover-Waterloo |
| 28 Dec | Kingfisher | 6024 | (Ealing Broadway-Maidenhead-Reading-Didcot-Swindon-Chippenham-Bath Spa)-Bristol TM-Cheltenham-Worcester-Malvern-Hereford-Bristol TM-(and return) |
| 29 Dec | Pathfinder Tours | tbc | Swindon-Chippenham-Bath Spa-Bristol Parkway-Cheltenham Spa-Barnt Green-Birmingham NS-Shrewsbury-Hooton Long Siding (rev)-Kirkby (rev)-Preston (break/rev)-Manchester Victoria-Crewe-and return |
| 29 Dec | Vintage Trains | 4965 | Tyseley Warwick Road-Tamworth-Buron upon Trent-Loughborough and return |

**Key to tour listings:**

**BLACK** Charters expected to operate as booked.
**GREEN** Tours postponed to a future date by the operator
**BP** Blue Pullman service
**RED** Tours cancelled by the operator
**WCRC** Operated by West Coast Railway Company Traction
**ICMM** InterCity Merrymaker

Location in (brackets) in a steam tour listing indicate a diesel or electric hauled section.
***PLEASE NOTE:*** Not all pick up/set down points are shown. Please check with the operator before travelling any distance.

# Cambrian Coast steam returns

**Although the news from Cardiff is bleak as Arriva Trains Wales (ATW) has said it will not be sponsoring Cambrian Coast steam operations in 2007, the news from Carnforth is good as the West Coast Railway Company (WCRC) will be stepping into the breach.**

ATW has not been specific as to why the company has decided not to proceed with the 'Cambrian Coast Express', but reports of 2006 operations did indicate that loadings were not good. Also, changes in the management at ATW earlier this year signalled a change of emphasis within the business.

The fine detail of WCRC's Cambrian operations remains to be fully revealed, but trains will operate between Machynlleth and Porthmadog, with the possibility of extending services through to Pwllheli, subject to the completion of track work. This would be a positive step forward as the railway north of Porthmadog offers some impressive coastal views and Pwllheli itself is an attractive alternative destination.

The outline service plan is to operate on mid-week days during August, and full details will be available in the New Year. Ian Riley's 'Pocket Rocket' No. 76079 is again the chosen motive power.

This latest development has to be a good move. As an operator, West Coast is in the ideal suitation to be able to provide coaching stock and back-up diesel locomotives (both the company's Class 33s and 37s are passed for Cambrian Coast operations) for the service. Perhaps more importantly, the company also has the operating and marketing expertise that has been gained over the years of running and promoting 'The Jacobite' trains out of Fort William.

**The Railway Herald**
**RAILTOUR LISTINGS**

**Our website at www.railwayherald.com provides one of the most comprehensive listing of all known UK railtours for the rest of 2006 and throughout 2007 available on the web. Click Here!**

**Please remember to mention *Railway Herald* when responding to railtour companies**

**LEFT: On 10 November, Ian Riley's 'Black 5', with the owner on the footplate, departs from Manchester Victoria with a charter service to York for the Railway Touring Company. This train was originally booked to go to Lincoln for the Christmas Market.** *Eddie Bellass*

## The Week Ahead

**Surprisingly, with all the attendant distractions of Christmas approaching, the railtour operators have confidence that there is business to be gained at this time of year.**

Christmas Luncheon trains obviously cater for a proportion of the festive season trade and Vintage Trains lead the way with its now traditional luncheon trains from Dorridge, Solihull and Tyseley, which meander around the East Midlands headed by ex-GWR 'Hall' No. 4965 *Rood Ashton Hall*.

This year the routing is via Nuneaton, Leicester, Loughborough and Burton-upon-Trent with trains on 21 & 22 December.

Steam Dreams' last train of its 'Christmas Carol Cathedrals Expresses' programme for this year heads from London Victoria to Winchester, with No. 71000 *Duke of Gloucester* as scheduled traction. However, the locomotive is currently sidelined with problems, so expect alternative motive power.

Notwithstanding any major developments in the current news regarding FM Rail (see separate story) Hertfordshire's 2006 programme draws to a close in the final days before Christmas. First is an InterCity Merrymaker on 19 December from Watford Junction, picking up at stations to Rugby before heading north to Crewe and then across the Pennines to York, while two days later HRT takes the 'Blue Pullman' to Norwich, originating at Stevenage. Finally, on 23 December the company head to the seaside and Weymouth. The tour travels outwards from Waterloo via the Berks and Hants route and Yeovil, returning via Bournemouth and Andover. FM Class 47s should predominate on these tours.

# March debut for *Lord Nelson*

**As mentioned last week, Kingfisher is to sponsor the mainline debut of No. 850 *Lord Nelson*, which is presently at Ian Riley's Bury works being fitted with TPWS and OTMR equipment.**

The locomotive is scheduled to return to Minehead in the New Year, from where it will make its official public debut on 31 March on 'The Trafalgar Express'. The train originates at Eastleigh and runs diesel-hauled via Southampton, Romsey, Salisbury to Westbury where it will reverse to head for Taunton and the West Somerset Railway for a break.

Then No. 850 attaches for the return, steam hauled throughout from Minehead to Eastleigh, travelling via Taunton, Weston super Mare, Bristol, Bath and Westbury.

This is followed on 14 April with 'The Garden of England Statesman' from London Victoria on a circular tour travelling via Ashford, Canterbury, Margate, Faversham and Rochester. Other dates are expected soon.

# New membership club for Past Time

**Past Time Rail has revamped its membership scheme, which now has a raft of new benefits.**

General Membership at £49 per year offers a two-for-one ticket on one Past Time trip plus a 12½% discount for one seat per member on all future trips.

Included is a subscription to *Railway Magazine* plus other benefits. There is a junior version available for £25 with the main benefit being 5% discount on one junior seat on all future trips.

Conditions do apply, and interested readers should contact Past Time for further details - remember you can always obtain tour operators' contact details through the railtours section on our website!

Also available is a £2,000 debenture which provides a 'debenture seat' on every trip within a twelve month period on any class of travel. There are several other notable features, including 30% discount on an accompanying seat, an evening out at the Tower of London, a day with a mainline steam locomotive, subscription to *Railway Magazine* and regular competitions, the prize of one being the opportunity to sit in the editorial chair of one of the printed heritage railway magazines for the day, including writing your own editorial!

Given the narrow profit margins associated with many railtours, this scheme does offer a useful source of additional revenue to Past Time Rail.

# OTMR issues appear for Class 50 tour

**EWS advised railtour operator Pathfinder Tours at the start of the week that the company was not prepared to operate Class 50s on Pathfinder's tour from Cardiff to Leeds on 16 December, due to OTMR issues.**

Pathfinder has responded quickly by arranging for an alternative operator, in this case West Coast Railway Company, which has obtained derogation to operate non-OTMR fitted locomotives on the national network, to step in and thus 'save' the tour from either cancellation or more modern traction!

As this was partially an enthusiast tour, it was important for it to run with the advertised traction.

**BELOW: The traditional Christmas Market at Lincoln brought several special charters to the Cathedral city on 8/9 December. Pictured departing from the east end of Lincoln station on 8 December with an ECS working bound for Barnetby, is SRPS Railtours' charter from Linlithgow, powered by Class 40 No. 40145. Also in the consist was WCRC Class 33 No. 33029.** *Don Gatehouse*

**ABOVE:** As Christmas approaches, it also signals the end for what has been an extended Sandite season. Here DRS Class 37/0s Nos. 37218 and 37059 are caught by the camera in the last rays of sunshine, working in 'top and tail' mode on what was scheduled to be the final Saturday run of the 14.39 Chester to Crewe Gresty Road 'Water Cannon' trip through Weston Rhyn, near Chirk. *Richard W. Jones*

**BELOW:** Class 37/6 No. 37605 and 37609 approach the end of the line at Shepperton on 11 December, with a Serco test train working on what is usually a multiple unit dominated branch. *Chris Holt*

**ABOVE:** History in the making. The rolling chassis of ex-GWR 7200 Class 2-8-2T No. 7200 became the very last steam locomotive to depart from the historic Swindon works on 12 December. The chassis is pictured on the back of a low-loader as preparations are made for its final departure. The remaining steam workshops are now virtually empty and in early 2007 will be turned into new shops for the adjoining Outlet Village. With the remaining staff redundant from early next year, over 150 years of locomotive building and repairs and indeed railway history finally comes to a close. *John Stretton*

# Bo'ness gains another Sulzer Type 2!

**Following the completion of a bodywork overhaul and repaint into 1960s green-livery, Class 26 No. D5310 (ex-No. 26010) has been moved to a new restoration base at the Bo'ness & Kinneil Railway from the Great Central Railway.**

The locomotive was purchased by Waverley Route Heritage Association (WRHA) members in November 2004 and will eventually be put to use on the section of the Waverley Route currently being restored by the group at Whitrope, south of Hawick.

In January this year, No. 26010 moved the short distance from the Northampton & Lamport Railway (NLR) to the Great Central Railway for coach builder John Robinson to carry out the extensive rebuilding work. Prior to that the locomotive had been laid up for several years underneath tarpaulins in Pitsford sidings on the NLR.

Now carrying a livery of green, off-white stripe, small yellow warning panel and light grey roof, D5310 closely resembles the locomotive it once was when allocated to Haymarket depot around 40 years ago. It has also become the first preserved loco of its type to have nose-end gangway doors reinstated and now carries a new set of marker discs at each end, constructed directly from original plans.

On 28 November, No. D5310 was 'tripped' the short distance from the carriage and wagon shed at Rothley to Quorn, ready for its move off GCR metals. The following day it was moved by low loader and reached Bo'ness two days later.

Work to complete the cab and get the locomotive mechanically fit will be undertaken by WRHA volunteers, with supervision and assistance from members of the SRPS Diesel Group.

It is anticipated the loco will be running again at some point next summer and will initially be run-in at Bo'ness, ultimately moving the short distance to the WRHA site on the Scottish Borders.

**BELOW:** Class 26 No. D5310 stands at Rothley on the Great Central Railway shortly before being moved to Bo'ness. *Matt Stoddon*

# All in a days work for South Devon volunteers

**It was all hands to the spades for a 35-strong team of volunteers and staff on the South Devon Railway (SDR) last week to mix and cast 30 tons of concrete by hand in one continuous pour, and in just one day!**

The concrete was needed to provide the rigid base for a new 6,000 gallon aerial water tower at Totnes and it all had to be done in just one pour in order to create a sound base.

The problem arose after a ready-mix concrete delivery scheduled for last week had to be called off when the large cement lorries were simply unable to get through the narrow Devon lanes at Littlehempston.

As a result, the SDR had no choice but to go for the Herculean option and do the job by hand instead, mixing all 30 tons of concrete on site which required around 250 individual mixes at the rate of 50 loads an hour.

The task posed a major logistics exercise for the SDR since it required 10 large concrete mixers on the go at once, and for every member of the 35-strong team to shovel and mix almost a ton of sand and cement each.

# PRODUCT REVIEWS

**Welcome to *Railway Herald's* new occasional product review section. The feature will aim to provide an unbiased, honest overview of a whole range of new products from books and DVDs to the latest railway models.**

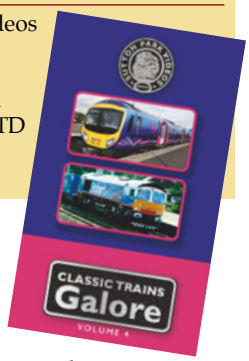
In addition to this feature, all the reviews will also be included in a fully searchable 'Reviews Library' on our website. From here, readers can easily access information on products, obtain an unbiased view and also add their own comments.

We welcome products being forwarded for inclusion in this section, publishers and manufacturers should contact the editorial office for details.

*The new Reviews Library will launch shortly at www.railwayherald.co.uk/reviews*

## Classic Trains Galore - Volume 4

Published by: Sutton Park Videos
Format: DVD & Video
Price: £29.99 GBP
Available from: 6 Lodge Farm Close, Sutton Coldfield B76 2TD
Running Time: 84 mins
*Click here to visit the website*




**Classic Trains Galore Volume 4 is the latest release from Sutton Park Videos which covers 120 trains filmed during 2005/6 with a running time of 84 minutes.**

It is split into sections which cover convoys, tours and specials, new units, locations and freight flows. The geographic spread is mainly the Midlands, eastern England and the south-east with a very wide array of traction on show.

Cathiron, just west of Rugby on the WCML, is the classic location covered, and the spread of trains gives a very good indication of what the visitor can expect during a three to four hour spell on and around the footbridge. Star of the classic freight section has to be a lingering view of Class 37 No. 37425 struggling through Taplow with a dead No. 37405 plus the Appleford-Brentford 'Binliner' rake in tow.

The opening sequence of the DVD, featuring Cotswold Rail's Anglia-livered Class 47/7 No. 47714 struggling up the Lickey with two First Great Western Class 43 powercars, a Mk3 Buffet and 'one' livered Class 47/4 No. 47818 dead at the rear, sets the scene well. This section is followed by a comprehensive review of new units, focusing on DMU Classes 222 for Hull Trains and 185 for First TransPennine Express and Class 350 EMUs for Silverlink and Central Trains.

This DVD is aimed firmly at the enthusiast of the current modern and heritage traction scene with virtually every class of mainline certified diesel and electric locomotive on view, plus footage of new units for good measure.

The sections work well, making it easy to dip in and out of the programme if the viewer doesn't have the time to sit down for nearly an hour-and-a-half, and will provide a pleasant distraction over the Christmas period.

Technically there is some evidence of vibration on some scenes, while a few panning sequences are a bit wayward. However, overall the quality of the traction and trains will remain the big attraction.

**ABOVE: The conversion from Metre to Broad Gauge operation is still progressing in India and the 83km section between New Delhi and Rewari Junction has been commissioned, enabling double line working to commence. The abolition of bi-directional running should enable the well-used passenger services to run more punctually and provide extra capacity for freight operations. The new line opened to rail services on 10 November. On a typically murky Delhi morning on 26 October, loco No. 16828 approaches Delhi Cantt station with the MThO 08.45 Delhi Sarai Rohilla - Porbandar service. The new 'up' line awaiting use is to the right of the picture. This service provides long-distance rail travellers with one of India's endurance 'tests' as it takes until 13.50 the following day to reach Porbandar, if on time!** *Don Gatehouse*

**ABOVE: Like most European cities, much of the passenger traffic in and out of Brussells Midi is in the hands of EMUs, especially the local traffic. High speed services to Germany are worked by ICE and Thalys TGVs, while the latter also work high-speed services into France. A number of regional and inter-regional services remain loco-hauled however. Here one of the 1981-built Class 27 electrics No. 2719 arrives at Brussells Midi on 1 December.** *Richard Tuplin*

**BELOW: A three-car set of German (DB) double-decker carriages has recently completed a one month tour of Hungary in which it worked numerous public service trains all over the country. Class 218s Nos. 218.431 and 218.432 went with two brand new trailer carriages and a Berlin-based driving trailer. No. 218.432 was the reserve loco and was not used, remaining at the Bombardier factory in Budapest. Here, No. 218.431 is seen arriving at Kisterenye on a local train from Salgótarján to Hatvan on 10 November.** *Philip Wormald*

**With the Tate & Lyle factory dominating the background, Silverlink Class 313/1 No 313107 discharges its passengers at Silvertown on 2 December, forming the 10.44 service from Richmond to North Woolwich. Seven days later and the last ever National Network service departed from the same station.** *Brian Morrison*