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The Railway Herald

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The complimentary UK railway journal for the railway enthusiast

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The Railway Herald
Issue 68

Front Cover

During a special night photographic session at the Llangollen Railway, Class 37/9 No. 37901 *Mirlees Pioneer* stands in Llangollen Station on 6 January, with a demonstration breakdown crane charter. *GWOT*

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Submissions

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

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

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National Rail Timetable

The entire UK National Rail Timetable is now available as a PDF download from the Network Rail website.

Produced in the same fashion as the printed version and ordered by table number, the current timetable is available by clicking here.

The railway by-laws and information for enthusiasts are also available online from the Network Rail website, by clicking here.

First Great Western amends timetable after problems

First Great Western (FGW) has announced that it is to make changes to its new timetable following a review of the performance of train services and seating capacity in some parts of the region.

The review was carried out in response to customer and stakeholder feedback received following the introduction of the new timetable on 10 December 2006.

The company has been heavily criticised for the problems that have occurred since the new came into operation timetable with numerous trains being cancelled as a result of a lack of rolling stock. FGW released a number of units at the end of the 2005-2006 timetable period in December, several of which now have no operator and are currently stored at Eastleigh.

A number of changes will be implemented from 15 January on the Oxford and Thames Valley services. In connection with this a number of small changes to timings will take place on the branches along the route to provide better connections.

In the West Country, capacity on the 06.47 Frome to Cardiff Central service will be doubled with two additional coaches as far as Bristol and an additional service will run between Exeter St Davids and London Paddington, departing 06.52 and calling Tiverton Parkway at 07.06, Taunton at 07.22, Highbridge at 07.40 and continuing to London.

Alison Forster, Managing Director of First Great Western, commented: "We recognise that some elements of the timetable have not met all our customers' needs and we apologise to those customers who have experienced crowding and train cancellations on some key services. Recent capacity problems in the Bristol and Bath commuter areas have been caused by a backlog of maintenance work required on our fleet of local trains. We are pulling out all the stops and have recruited additional staff at our Bristol maintenance depot to get this work completed as soon as possible. I'm confident that this will improve the reliability of our services and therefore, seating capacity over the next couple of weeks."

Desiro set vandalised en-route to UK

ABOVE & RIGHT: SWT Class 450 No. 450125 is pictured passing Limal on the Leuven-Ottigenies route in Belgium, behind 1200 Class No. 1203. The leading two vehicles of the set have been vandalised in transit to the UK. The unit was delivered to Bournemouth depot by Class 66/0 No. 66248 on 9 January, and was noted on a test working three days later. *Mathieu Crauwels*

News In Brief

■ Shuttle services through the Channel Tunnel were disrupted on 12 January as French Eurotunnel workers were on strike over pay. Eurotunnel cut the number of shuttles from three to two, which resulted in a long queue of lorries on the M20 through Kent, stretching for several miles. The workers are demanding a 3% pay rise and the reimbursement of company-based savings accounts, scrapped in the recent restructuring plan forced by the company's £6.2 bn debt.

■ Two traincrew sustained minor injuries when a Merseyrail train collided with the buffers at West Kirby station shortly before lunch on 11 January. No passengers were injured in the incident which occurred at low speed.

GNER extends Plusbus add-on tickets around York

Plusbus, a public transport initiative funded by National Express and also supported by the Government, is now available in more than 200 areas, including virtually every town and city in Britain with a population of over 100,000.

The venture is already proving very popular as it is possible to add Plusbus to any train ticket that is purchased from a staffed station or over the telephone.

There are additional discounts for Railcard holders, no peak restrictions on the bus travel, and also no need to carry spare change for bus fares or parking. The scheme is designed to support Government policies on integration by making public transport more accessible and simpler to use. It is also aimed at reducing the environmental impact of private car use by encouraging train travellers to use their bus to and from the train station and make the whole journey by public transport.

GNER is backing the scheme in the York area and offers return train travel to or from the city, plus unlimited bus journeys within a defined area in and around York, extending to Strensall, Stamford Bridge, Poppleton, Copmanthorpe and Holme-upon-Spalding Moor.

The scheme has now been extended, meaning regular travellers can now buy Plusbus season tickets giving combined rail and bus travel for a week, a month, three months or a year.

Prices for Plusbus tickets in the York area, in addition to the normal return or season ticket rail fare to the city, are Adult £3 and Child £1.50 for day travel. In addition seven day, monthly, three monthly and annual additions are available.

GB Railfreight unveils new-look Class 66/7 livery at Wembley

GB Railfreight Managing Director, John Smith, hosted an event at Alstom's Wembley Traincare Centre on 8 January, when the company's five new recent arrivals of Class 66/7 were specially displayed in echelon showing a smart new First Group livery with GBRf branding.

Two of the five locos are shortly to head north for deployment on the soon to commence coal traffic from Tyne Dock to Drax Power Station.

The company has also announced that it has won another new coal flow between the Port of Hull and EDF Energy's power stations at Cottam and West Burton, a new deal that follows closely on the heels of the one signed in September 2006 with Drax Power to haul coal from the Port of Tyne to the company's North Yorkshire power station, as already reported.

As part of the deal, GBRf has ordered an additional 24 high-capacity HYA hoppers from Romanian wagon builders IRS, these being similar to the 48 wagons already under construction for GBRf.

The plan is to run a dedicated shuttle between Hull Docks and the EDF's power stations with each train conveying at least 1,500 tons.

Along with the EDF agreement, a new three-year contract has been signed with Associated British Ports (ABP) to manage the operation of trains on the Hull Docks Railway within the ABP's port estate. This means that GBRf will take over the operation of the single-track link from the Network Rail boundary into the docks and also handle groundstaff duties for both GBRf and other operators within the port itself. As a result of this and the new coal contract, the company are looking to recruit additional Train Managers (drivers) and Assistant Train Managers, to be administered from GBRf's base at Doncaster.

Later this year, one of the new fleet is be named after Sunderland Football Club. The cast plates are expected to be of the same type as carried in steam days by 'Sandringham' 4-6-0 No. 61654, and the curtain should be unveiled at Tyne Yard by ex-Sunderland footballer, Niall Quinn.

ABOVE: The five latest Class 66 locomotives carrying the new First Group/GBRf-livery are seen lined up numerically (left to right Nos. 66727 to 66723) outside Alstom's Wembley Traincare Centre on 8 January.

LEFT: The attractive livery on No. 66727. The locomotives arrived at Newport Docks in late December, having just base blue livery. Following transfer to Wembley, the livery vinyls were applied to the cabs (see *Rolling Stock News*).
Both: Brian Morrison

TV4 moves forward over Christmas

The Christmas period was used by Network Rail to undertake several major works on the Trent Valley Four Tracking project.

The work is designed to increase capacity on the WCML through the Midlands from two to four tracks and to relieve among other things a major bottleneck at Rugby. A redundant bridge at Rugby dating from 1898 was removed, three other bridges were replaced, the last level crossing between London Euston and Crewe was removed at Hademore, near Tamworth, and replaced with a road bridge, and track was realigned over Huddlesford Lane and the Coventry Canal bridge.

The project is set to be completed by December 2008.

GNER staff move to atomic time

GNER has followed the Virgin West Coast example of providing radio-controlled watches to some 1,000 of its frontline staff.

Staff members such as drivers, on-train crews and train dispatchers have been given the watches as part of a new drive to achieve more trains running on time.

The watches automatically adjust themselves once a day in response to a time signal from an atomic clock, and even if the watch is only a fraction of a second out, it will correct itself to the precise time.

The company has also produced a leaflet and DVD showing how all its staff can save precious minutes on GNER's long-distance journeys entitled 'This time it's personal'. The old watches used by train dispatchers could vary by up to 90 seconds.

GNER is also working with Virgin West Coast, sharing best practices to improve performance further.

ABOVE: On 23 December, the 'Blue Pullman' set worked one of its final trips of the year and its last under FM Rail operation, when it operated from London Waterloo to Weymouth via Newbury and Yeovil, returning via Southampton and Andover. The current management of the business, Victa Westlink, said that all current charter commitments should be met. Here the train passes Maiden Newton on the Yeovil to Weymouth line with No. 47709 *Dionysos* leading. On the rear was No. 47703 *Hermes*. A point of interest in the photograph is the trackbed shown on the left, which is the old Bridport branch that closed in 1975. The formation can be seen passing under the left span of the bridge in the background, which is now a nature trail. Nothing now remains of the Bridport line although it is still possible to follow the trackbed in some places. *Neil Walkling*

Future for FM Rail operations looks more secure under Victa Westlink

Following on from the news that broke in December that FM Rail had gone into voluntary administration, the future for the operational division of the company now looks more secure.

The operations side of the FM Rail business is being controlled by Victa Westlink, which is a partnership between Victa Railfreight and multimodal operator Westlink Group. The company plan to maintain the current programme of activity, subject to short term alterations as dictated by the transitional arrangements.

Neil Sime, Managing Director of Victa Westlink, confirmed to *Railway Herald* that all immediate charter commitments were expected to be met and more details on the future of the business and future operations should emerge over the coming weeks. Victa Railfreight is looking to continue and expand the freight developments started by FM Rail at the end of last year.

Following a short period during which time, no member of the FM Rail locomotive fleet was active on the mainline, a number of movements have recommenced in recent days including one of the Class 31s working with Serco Railtest.

ABOVE: The re-engining programme of the HST powercars for GNER is proceeding apace with two now in traffic. On 2 January, No. 43290 (previously 43090) leads the 11.30 London King's Cross - Newcastle through St. Neots, with No. 43300 *Craigentinny* on the rear. Early January saw the third MTU powercar No. 43320 released from overhaul at Brush Traction, Loughborough. The first set of refurbished Mk3 stock is due to emerge from Wabtec Rail at Doncaster within the near future. *Robert Tarling*

Reward offered for conviction of Kilmarnock fire-raisers

Network Rail has offered a substantial four figure sum in return for information leading to the successful prosecution and conviction of the criminal(s) who deliberately set fire to Kilmarnock signal box on Christmas Day.

The fire at the signal box caused severe disruption to all services via Kilmarnock and cancellation of all trains running south from the station until 3 January, when normal services resumed.

The investigation into the fire, that was reported around 20.00 hours on 25 December, is being led by British Transport Police (BTP). They have issued a description of a man they wish to trace, as he may have vital information regarding the incident; he is described as being between 20-30 years of age and wearing dark clothing.

Anyone who has information about the signal box fire is asked to contact the BTP on 0800 40 50 40 or Crimestoppers on 0800 555111.

ABOVE: **The charred remains of Kilmarnock signal box on Christmas Day. The extensive damage caused disrupted trains for over a week.** *Network Rail*

News In Brief

■ Aston Villa supporters are campaigning to change the name of the nearest station to the ground. The campaign aims to rename Witton station as Villa Park.

■ EWS is further developing its European and railway support businesses by offering rail haulage for freight trains through the Channel Tunnel. In line with the Government's initiative to promote open access through the tunnel, EWS will provide traction services and resources for other operators in either direction between Folkestone in Britain and Calais in France. These services will be at market rates and on reasonable commercial terms. EWS launched its fourth business sector - EWS Network - on 8 January.

■ On 5 January, Freightliner's new design of coal wagon, designated HXA, entered traffic. Built by Greenbrier, in Poland, the wagon features a new design of track-friendly bogie and is one metre shorter than its predecessor, but still carries the same volume of coal, increasing the payload per train by up to 10%. 109 wagons of this type are currently on-order.

Major contract signed for Docklands extension

Docklands Light Railway (DLR) has awarded the first of three major construction contracts to build the £211 million DLR extension to Stratford International.

A joint venture between Skanska and GrantRail has been appointed to carry out the first physical work for the scheme, which is valued at approximately £39 million and will start immediately.

Mayor of London, Ken Livingstone said: "The extension will offer visitors and local residents a more frequent and reliable train service through Newham, with four new stations, and will be a crucial link to Stratford International and the Olympic Park."

The extension will be formed by converting the existing railway between Stratford and Royal Victoria (previously run by Silverlink Metro) to DLR operation, and building the new rail link between Stratford and Stratford International.

Skanska and GrantRail have been appointed this contract after a competitive tendering process which also involved Hochtief, AMEC and Carillion.

The work is scheduled to be completed by February 2009. It includes the construction of two new platforms on the north side of Stratford station, where North London Line national rail services will terminate, track alignment work to prepare for the new rail link between Stratford and Stratford International and the construction of the shell and foundations of the new DLR station at Stratford International.

Two further main work contracts for the extension to the international station will be awarded this year. The first, due to be signed in the spring, involves the construction of a 'flying' junction at Canning Town station to allow Beckton services to cross over the Stratford International line.

The second contract, due to be signed this summer, involves the conversion of the existing railway to DLR technology, the upgrading of existing stations to DLR standards, the construction of four new stations and the formation of the new rail link between Stratford and Stratford International.

When open, services along the route will increase from the previous two per hour under Silverlink Metro to at least six per hour on the DLR from 2010, with even more at peak times. During the 2012 Games, DLR trains will run every 2-3 minutes on the extension, with capacity for approximately 13,500 passengers per hour in each direction.

Great Western main line bridge replacement work completed

A major stage of the project to replace the Wallingford Road bridge in Goring, Oxfordshire, was successfully completed over the Christmas period.

The old bridge, which was around 100 years old, was demolished and a new structure put in place to ensure the future safety of both road users and the railway that runs beneath it.

Preparatory works took place in December but the bulk of the demolition work took place from 23.00 on Christmas Eve over Christmas Day and Boxing Day, with the line re-opening as usual for first services on the 27 December.

ABOVE: **Network Rail took advantage of other operational possessions and the quiet Christmas Day to install a new bridge at Goring. Having been lifted into position the previous day, the new bridge is pictured on Boxing Day.** *Ken Brunt*

Major revamp for Aberdeen station

The first phase of a multi-million pound revamp and refurbishment gets underway at Aberdeen station shortly.

A partnership between First ScotRail, Network Rail and Hammerson, the development company responsible for managing the project, and Miller, who will carry out the works, will see the station transformed over the course of the next year.

Work begins this month with a seven-phase programme, which will see new automatic ticket gates installed as well as the relocation of some current facilities, including the ticket office and car park at the front of the building.

A temporary covered walkway will be in operation during the majority of time that works are carried out. The walkway will re-route passengers using the side entrance from the Trinity Centre to the concourse. They should be aware that this may add a few minutes to their journey in accessing the station and should allow a little extra time.

The benefits of the revamp will result in a new, improved station environment, new ticket vending machines providing more opportunities to purchase tickets prior to boarding a train.

There will also be a new ticket office, complete with the latest ticket machine technology as well as CCTV covering all areas of the station, providing an increased sense of security for customers.

In addition, two new lifts will be installed to take passengers from the concourse area across to Platform 7. The car park will be relocated to the nearby multi-storey car park in College Street and will have dedicated floors and more spaces available specifically for rail users.

More CCTV cameras on 'one' trains

'one' railway announced on 28 December that it is improving security for passengers and on-board staff on its trains with the fitment of CCTV cameras on many of the units in its fleet.

A £4 million investment programme, completed over the last year, has seen all 77 Class 321 units and all 61 Class 315 units fitted with the special equipment, the improvements to the Class 315s being funded in partnership with Transport for London. The improvements are in addition to the facilities already in place on the 21 Class 360 units that are already fitted with CCTV. In total, 552 carriages have been modified in addition to the 84 already fitted, totalling 636 overall.

The high quality footage gained from the cameras is retained and monitored for use by 'one', the British Transport Police and the Civil Police and has already been used to help solve a stabbing incident on a Metro service, charge a vandal applying graffiti to a train and has assisted the Police during their inquiries into the recent murders near Ipswich. In addition, plans are in place to fit some of the Class 317 fleet with CCTV over the next 12 months, as well as upgrade CCTV provision at stations.

ABOVE: Class 66 No. 66079 is pictured within the complex at Coventry ProLogis Park on 10 January, shortly before departing with the 15.35 trip to Bescot. Regular services here are due to commence with Channel Tunnel traffic in February. *Ron Kosys*

New railfreight terminal comes on stream

The first mainline train to use the Coventry Colliery branch at Three Spires Junction in daylight since the Colliery was closed in 1993, worked on 10 January.

A distribution complex was built on the site of the Colliery and the adjacent Coventry Homefire Plant (which was closed shortly afterwards) by ProLogis. The former NCB-worked branch which connected the site with the Coventry to Nuneaton branch at Three Spires Junction was upgraded to take mainline locos in connection with the ProLogis development, and a demonstration train was worked on the branch by Class 66 No. 66250 in connection with an open day in July 2001.

Rail development was put on hold following the accident at Hatfield and has taken until now for commercial traffic to become a reality. EWS is due to begin operating trains into the site in early February.

To enable the HM Railway Inspectorate to approve the safety case for the steeply graded branch, as well as giving the traffic handling staff at the distribution company involved an opportunity to acquaint themselves with the wagons, a demonstration trip was operated.

The trains, the 07.18 Bescot to Coventry ProLogis Park and 15.35 Coventry ProLogis Park to Bescot were worked by EWS Class 66 No. 66079 and two twin-set IZA wagons. When the commercial traffic commences, trains will run from and to Wembley, the traffic having arrived there via the Channel Tunnel and Dollands Moor.

c2c revert to summer timetable operation

On 8 January, c2c reinstated its previous timetable after the new weekday timetable, introduced on 11 December, was cancelled following a large number of complaints from peak time commuters.

The new weekend timetable that includes through trains to Southend via Ockendon, however, has been retained. c2c says it is sorry that many passengers have been upset by the recent changes and are responding to their concerns by reverting to the old schedules. At the same time the company will continue to explore ways to make improvements to the peak timetable, and as a first move in this respect, has strengthened two weekday peak trains from Fenchurch Street to Stanford-le-Hope via Ockendon, the 16.20 and 18.22 departures, from four to eight coaches.

News In Brief

- FM Rail Class 47/3 No. 47375 at Derby and Class 47/7 No. 47715 at the NRM York are being offered for sale by SHM Smith Hodgkinson.

'Regen' braking introduced on Class 360s

'one' railway plans to make its train travel more environmentally friendly, having completed the testing on its fleet of Class 360 Desiro EMUs to enable the introduction of energy-efficient 'Regenerative braking' or 'Regen' as it is known in the industry.

This 'green' initiative allows the trains to generate electricity while they are slowing down, the energy created being converted as the train brakes back into electricity. This is then returned into the energy supply system to provide electricity for other electrically-powered motive power using the network.

The environmental benefit of the system is for less electricity to be used, and it is estimated that 'Regen' could result in a reduction of as much as 16% in electricity use from the operation of the Class 360 fleet.

This is possible because the Class 360s use a modern three-phase AC traction motor system that also has the benefit of reducing the effect of friction braking, thus reducing brake wear and reducing brake dust levels.

The 21 'Desiro' units were originally designed to use the 'Regen' facility, but the infrastructure in the region was initially not fully compatible with its operation. Recent upgrades completed by Network Rail, however, have now enabled 'one' to make use of the facility.

The whole fleet is scheduled to be 'switched on' for regenerative breaking by the end of the month.

ABOVE: After arrival from Newport Docks, the latest Class 66/7s for GB Railfreight, Nos. 66723, 66724, 66725, 66726 and 66727 await application of livery vinyls in the Carriage Shed at Wembley Traincare Depot on 22 December. *Pendolinoboy*

Porterbrook's 'Celebrity' Class 87s exported to Bulgaria

ABOVE: Two of the 'celebrity' Class 87 locomotives, Nos. 87012 (left) and 87019 (right) have been sold for use abroad having been moved on 22 December on the 01.15 Wembley-Dollands Moor 'Enterprise' service. The locomotives have both been de-named and are pictured in Dollands Moor Yard on Christmas Morning. Both locomotives were moved through the tunnel shortly after Christmas, destined for modification and trials in Bulgaria. Porterbrook Leasing, who previously owned the locomotives, have confirmed that both '87s' have been sold and that there is currently no plans for any more locomotives to be exported. *Patrick Seale*

BELOW: The next refurbished Class 159/1 No. 159103 was dispatched from Wabtec Rail, Doncaster on 20 December. The unit is pictured passing through Peterborough on its delivery run to Salisbury TMD. It was previously operated by First Trans-Pennine and numbered 158804. With the delivery of this second unit, the next two Class 170s to be transferred from South West Trains to First Trans-Pennine were due to move north during the next 14 days. Meanwhile, the first two Class 170s to be moved, Nos. 170301 and 170302 undertook two days of driver training between Selby and Hull over 11/12 January. *Oli Smith*

ABOVE: Class 08 No 08454, which previously carried Silverlink green and purple livery, shunts Class 325 No. 325007 at Alstom's Wembley Traincare Depot on 8 January 2006. *Brian Morrison*

BELOW: The recently repainted Network Rail ex-DMLV Class 489 luggage vans Nos. 68501 and 68508 are pictured shortly after arriving back at Tonbridge West Yard on 28 December. *Patrick Seale*

ABOVE: **Ex-SR Merchant Navy Pacific No. 35028 *Clan Line* powers through Wandsworth Town on 21 December with a VSOE Christmas Luncheon train, its first VSOE working since returning to the mainline. The locomotives next mainline outing is once again with VSOE on 7 February with a Victoria-Bath charter, followed 10 days later by a Victoria - Guildford trip.** *Peter Starks*

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.** *With our Christmas break, our weekly railtour listings have been extended to provide details for the next four weeks.*

Date	Operator	Traction	Route
13 Jan	Hertfordshire (BP)	2xFMR 47	London Paddington-Reading-Severn Tunnel-Hereford-Shrewsbury and return
17 Jan	VSOE	EWS Class 67	London Victoria-Kensington Olympia-Kensal Rise-Gospel Oak-York and return
20 Jan	ICMM	2xFMR Cl 31	'The Lancashire Witch' Birmingham NS-Burton upon Trent-Derby-Chesterfield-Sheffield-Wakefield Kirkgate-Hebdon Bridge-Copy Pit-Preston (break)-Manchester Victoria-Stalybridge-Standedge and return
20 Jan	Past Time Rail	45407	(Milton Keynes-Northampton-Rugby-Bham Int-Bham New St-Crewe)-Manchester Victoria-Huddersfield-Halifax-(Bradford Interchange (rev)-Leeds)-Hebdon Bridge-Accrington-Manchester Victoria (and return)
20 Jan	Pathfinder Tours	2xEWS Cl 37	London Paddington-Ardingley-London Victoria (rev)-London Blackfriars (rev)-Orpington Bay Platforms (rev)- London Cannon Street (rev)- London Bridge Low Level (rev)- London Waterloo (rev)-London St. Pancras
20 Jan	VSOE	34067	London Victoria-Southampton Eastern Dock-London Victoria
26 Jan	VSOE	EWS Class 67	London Victoria Luncheon Circular
27 Jan	Hertfordshire (BP)	2xFMR 47	London Victoria-Maidstone-Ashford-Rye-Hastings-Battle-Tonbridge-Redhill-London Victoria (Robert Burns Luncheon Train)
27 Jan	ICMM	45112	'The Tubular Belle': York-Sheffield-Chesterfield-Derby-Uttoxeter-Crewe-Llandudno Junction-Bangor-Holyhead (break/rev)-and return
27 Jan	RTC	34067	'Kent Coast Express': London Victoria-Brixton-Bromley South-Chatham-Faversham-Margate-Ramsgate-Dover-Folkestone Harbour (rev)-(Folkestone Harbour-Hastings-Eastbourne)(rev) Eastbourne-Gatwick-London Victoria
27 Jan	VSOE	EWS Class 67	London Victoria Circular Trip
28 Jan	VSOE	EWS Class 67	London Victoria Circular Trip
28 Jan	VSOE	EWS Class 67	London Victoria Circular Trip
31 Jan	VSOE	EWS Class 67	London Victoria-Bath-London Victoria
02 Feb	VSOE	EWS Class 67	London Victoria Circular Trip
03 Feb	Hertfordshire (BP)	2xFMR 47	London KX-Potters Bar-Stevenage-Peterborough-Buxton and return
03 Feb	Railtourer	48151	(Skegness-Wainfleet-Boston-Sleaford-Metheringham-Lincoln-Gainsborough Lea Road)-Doncaster-Church Fenton-York (break/rev)-Doncaster-(and return)
07 Feb	VSOE	35028	London Victoria-Bath-London Victoria
09 Feb	Pathfinder Tours	50031&50049	Swansea-Neath-Port Talbot-Bridgend-Cardiff Central-Newport-Bristol Parkway-Cheltenham Spa-Birmingham NS-Stafford-Crewe-Preston-Perth-Dundee-Aberdeen
09 Feb	Pathfinder Tours	EWS Class 67	Swansea-Edinburgh (in association with Arriva Trains Wales)

Key to tour listings:

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

(Locations) in brackets on a steam tour listing indicates 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.

The Week Ahead

With the post-Christmas hangovers still lingering and the credit card bills for that 'seemed like a good-idea at the time' spending excesses now looming, it is of little surprise that the railtour operators do not rush to fill January with numerous trains.

VSOE is the exception with three trains in January, commencing with their familiar Luncheon Circular from London Victoria on 12 January. Battle of Britain No. 34067 *Tangmere* is believed to be lined up for motive power, but with No. 35028 *Clan Line* now back in the frame, VSOE workings will from now on have extra interest. The route is via Barnes, Chertsey and Woking to Shalford for water, returning via Reigate, Redhill, Selhurst and Balham.

VSOE also has a diesel-hauled working on 17 January from Victoria, via Kensington Olympia, Kensal Rise and Gospel Oak to join the ECML at Harringay for a return working to York. Traction should be an EWS Class 67.

Operating on 13 January is the first Hertfordshire 'Blue Pullman' of the year, which will be running against the backdrop of where Hertfordshire's future lies with the imminent break-up of the FM Rail operation. The train originates at Euston and terminates at Paddington, and while taking a typically Western route to Shrewsbury via Bristol Parkway and the Welsh Marches, its return is via the Midlands and Banbury.

DRS Class 20/3 Nos. 20306 and 20311 traverse Oulton Broad North Junction on 18 December, with a Lowestoft to Norwich Rail Head Treatment Train. Clearly visible in the distance, is the Ness Point Electrofarm Windmill. *Steve Potter*

ABOVE: Due to a blockade between Trafford Park and Manchester Piccadilly shortly after Christmas, Intermodal services were diverted over the former Cheshire Lines Committee route, running round at Edge Hill, then heading south via Weaver Jnc to Crewe and beyond. Class 66/5 No. 66532 powers past Glazebrook East with the diverted 03.50 Southampton - Trafford Park Freightliner on 27 December. The fan of sidings to the left are now well overgrown with mature trees! *Terry Eyres*

BELOW: Early January saw some sunshine in East Anglia, hopefully a hint of what is to come later in the year, weatherwise! Class 66 No. 66120 takes the centre road at Ipswich with the Ipswich Yard - Parkeston Yard Freightliner fuel empties on 2 January. *John Day*

ABOVE: On 29 December, Pathfinder Tours ran its now annual post-Christmas 'Spin & Win' trip from Swindon to Preston, the 'Yo Ho Ho' charter! Motive power for the train was Class 66 No. 66120 from Swindon to Bescot, where the two DRS 37s took over. The train then travelled via Shrewsbury and Chester to Hooton, where Freightliner's Class 66/5 No. 66551 was attached to the rear of the train for a visit to Kirkby via the Ellesmere Port to Hooton line. Following a further reversal at Wigan, the train arrived in Preston where the Type 3s and Class 66 gave way to Class 60 No. 60030 for the run to Crewe via Manchester Victoria and Stockport. From Crewe, Class 86/6 No. 86614 provided the power through to Birmingham New Street, from where No. 66120 took the train back to Swindon. The DRS Class 37s Nos. 37194 and 37229 *Jonty Jarvis* are pictured on the rear of the train at Preston. *Mick Atkin*

BELOW: Class 37/0 Nos. 37194 and 37229 *Jonty Jarvis* cross Cefn viaduct with the 'Yo Ho Ho' charter during the outbound journey on 29 December in dark and wet conditions. *Richard W. Jones (with permission from the landowner)*

LEFT: **The FM Rail-operated Class 31 No. 31190, previously named *Gryphon*, was repainted into BR Green-livery for a filming contract at the Great Central Railway (Nottingham) for an ITV drama series. Following this, the locomotive should have returned to the national network, but remains at the GCR(N) following the issues with FM Rail in December. The locomotive was used to power some of the railway's 'Santa Special' services in December. On 24 December, No. 31190 arrives at East Leake with the 14.15 service from Ruddington.** *Ben Wheeler*

Goods engines head billing for GCR Winter Gala

The Great Central Railway's Winter Gala on 27/28 January is shaping up to be a special event, and one which the railway says has a locomotive line-up that is unlikely to be repeated.

Star of the show is the National Railway Museum's unique London and North Western Railway 'Super D' 0-8-0 No. 49395, which will be joined by resident GCR 'O4' 2-8-0 No. 63601. These two stars will be joined by another eight-coupled success story depicting the LMS '8F', in the form of No. 48305. A late addition is Stanier 5MT No. 42968.

The locomotive line-up will be completed by ex-GWR 'Prairie' No. 4141. Mineral trains, van trains and a mixed goods set are all likely to feature. An addition to the locomotive line up is the chance to visit Railway Vehicle Preservation Ltd's Gresley 'Mail' set on shed at Rothley and check up on the latest progress on the 'Beavertail' carriage. At Loughborough, 'Britannia' class No. 70013 *Oliver Cromwell* will also be on display.

A first class breakfast will be available on the first train out of Loughborough each day and the inspection saloon will also be attached to some trains. A passenger timetable will be posted on the railway website when available.

The event is also close to the 50th anniversary of the death of two railway men in an accident at Chapel-en-le-Frith in February 1957. One of the men, driver Axon had heroically stayed at the controls of his 8F locomotive which began to run away when a steam brake valve joint failed. He was subsequently posthumously awarded a George Cross for his efforts trying to prevent the accident. To commemorate Driver Axon's actions 50 years ago, '8F' No. 48305 will be temporarily renumbered as No. 48188 – the engine involved.

Diesel galas back on the agenda for '07 at Severn Valley & Keighley

Following the cancellation of diesel gala events at several of the main heritage lines it is pleasing to report that both the Severn Valley and Keighley & Worth Valley Railways have reinstated the event for the coming season.

The Severn Valley Railway's diesel gala will have a different format, however. While the gala will again span three operating days, it will consist of two diesel operation only days on Thursday 11 October and Friday 12 October followed by a mixed-format on 13 October.

It will be interesting to see how this arrangement works, as one of the problems encountered, not just by the SVR, is dealing with the public expectation to see steam-hauled services at weekends which clash with the enthusiast expectation of maximising diesel turns at the same time. If successful, this could herald a new template for diesel galas throughout the country.

Details of visiting traction will be announced nearer the date, and the SVR confirm that a special timetable will operate throughout. Incidentally, 14 October will feature a classic car and bike day which in the past has also proved to be a popular event.

Also back in the diesel gala market is the Keighley & Worth Valley, which will be operating a three day event over 15-17 June. The line-up comprises the railway's resident Class 20 No. 20031 in Railfreight Coal livery and BR Blue Class 25 No. 25059. The latter is currently undergoing repairs but is expected to be back in traffic for the event.

Visiting traction will once again include a DRS locomotive, although no type has been specified, and three members of the Bo'ness & Kinneil Railway fleet. These being Class 20 No. D8020, which has not worked a train outside of Scotland for eight years, Class 26 No. 26024, and undertaking its first passenger working in preservation, Class 37 No. 37025 *Inverness TMD*. In addition, Class 26 No. D5310 which has recently had its restoration completed at the Great Central Railway and is owned by 26010 Restoration Group, eventually destined to be used on part of the restored Waverley Route, will complete the gala line-up

BELOW: **Electro-Diesel Class 73 No. 73129 departs from Winchcombe with a service train to Cheltenham Racecourse on 27 December, during the Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway's Christmas Diesel Day.** *Andy Harkness*

News In Brief

■ The Nene Valley Railway is to hold a 1960's event on 28/29 April. Star attraction will be visiting Somerset & Dorset '7F' No. 53809, while resident 'B1' No. 61306 will carry the insignia 'British Railways' on the tender. Also in action will be BR Standard 5MT No. 73050 *City of Peterborough*, Class 20 No. 20137 and Class 40 No. 40106. The railway says that no continental stock will be used on any service trains. A live music band will be playing 1960's music both days at Wansford.

■ The Mid-Norfolk Railway holds its Spring Diesel Event on 16-18 March, which will see the return of Class 47 No. 47596 into traffic. The South East Locomotive Groups' Class 33 No. 33063 will also be visiting from the Spa Valley Railway.

ABOVE: **During a night photographic session on the Nene Valley Railway, BR Standard 5MT 4-6-0 No. 73050 *City of Peterborough*, which had been specially de-named, stands 'wrong-road' at Wansford station with a demonstration breakdown crane consist on 6 January.** *David Bowles*

Life member helps MHR 'Black 5' fund

The Mid-Hants Railway Stanier Black Five Restoration Fund has received a boost following a donation pledge from a supporter.

The pledge, which when gift-aid is added on, will amount to £50,000 has come from David Seal, a life-long railway enthusiast with a particular allegiance to the London Midland & Scottish Railway, having been born and raised in Manchester.

Mr Seal is a life-member of the Mid-Hants Railway Preservation Society and has been closely following the progress of the restoration work on the Society's 'Black 5' which was, in its earliest days, an LMS loco.

When the appeal was first launched, some three years ago he contacted the appeal co-ordinator, Derek Seaton, and they agreed at that time to defer any contribution until there was a clearer picture of just how much the total restoration would cost.

It was always known that the boiler would be the most expensive single item and the Society thought it had reached a final figure. But this proved not to be the case when the firebox end tube-plate was exposed revealing considerable wastage, and the Society decided to replace it entirely. The cost of this additional work was initially put at £50,000.

This pledge takes the fund from £140,000 to almost £200,000, although most funding will be required if the overhaul of the locomotive is to be completed for 2009.

Support needed for *Oliver Cromwell*

The Great Central Railway is progressing with the restoration of BR Standard Class 7 No 70013 *Oliver Cromwell*.

In August 2008, on the 40th anniversary of it's famous run over the Settle & Carlisle Railway, the loco is due to take to the mainline again for the first time in preservation. The engineering team at the GCR is hoping to accelerate the rebuild so the engine is steaming as soon as possible.

Tom Tighe, the GCR's Locomotive Superintendent, is appealing for two things: "Firstly we're hoping to attract an engineering company which can manufacture the roof stays. It would help enormously and free up a fitter to work on other parts of the restoration; secondly, we're hoping the lure of working on such a prestigious project will attract some skilled volunteers. While it's always nice to welcome total novices to our shed, on this occasion I'm looking for people with an engineering background who can get stuck in straight away."

The Standard needs 288 roof stays for the firebox, roughly shaped in EN3B steel, and the railway will add the thread to each one later.

Great strides are being made on the restoration with new pipework appearing on the frames. The bearings have been passed fit for use and the locomotive is due to be a rolling chassis again by the end of January.

If any readers are interested in helping the progress of the restoration, either through skilled help or the manufacture of the roof stays please contact Tom or Robert at the railway via 01509 230726.

'Grange' society help out 2807

The Betton Grange Society are lending a helping hand to the owners of 2800 class No. 2807 by completing work on its tender.

Cotswold Steam Preservation Ltd, owners of No. 2807, has progressed steadily with the restoration of the tender since 1981, but the new agreement now leaves the group free to concentrate on the locomotive, which is due to be back in steam at the end of this year.

In return, members of the Betton Grange Society will complete the tender to operational condition. The tender has already arrived at Llangollen and work on it is to start immediately.

In return, the group will be able to pair it up with 2800 Class 2-8-0 No. 3802, now in BR black livery, which will be used on a photo charter in March before being one of the stars at the Betton Grange Society's 'Steel, Steam and Stars' gala in late April.

The latter gala is now coming together with 11 locos planned to be in action including Battle of Britian No. 34081 *92 Squadron* and GWR 0-6-2T No. 5643 from Haverthwaite.

News In Brief

■ S&D Class 7F No. 88 will be one of the guests at this years Severn Valley Railway Branch Line Gala, which will operate on 10/11 March. Another locomotive of Great Western parentage is also being sought, and an announcement concerning this engine is likely later this month.

■ LNER 'K4' Mogul No. 61994 *The Great Marquess* has now arrived at the Churnet Valley Railway (see back cover) following a general overhaul at the LNWR Works at Crewe, and Ian Riley's at Bury. Running-in has commenced, and over the weekend of 13/14 January the railway will be operating passenger services using 'K4' *The Great Marquess* together with visiting ex-GWR 'Manor' No. 7821 *Ditcheat Manor*.

■ Didcot Railway Centre will be holding a '40-75 Gala' over the May Bank Holiday weekend 5-7 May with a number of visiting locomotives. Before then however, the centre will be operating steam services on 11, 14 and 18 February. There will also be turntable demonstrations on all three days.

ABOVE: Pacific National NR Class No. NR28 *Port Augusta*, in Indian Pacific livery, awaits departure time from East Perth with the 'Indian Pacific' service to Sydney via Adelaide on 13 December. The train, which runs twice weekly in both directions, takes three days to complete the journey and includes travelling over the longest stretch of straight track in the world, almost 300 miles, along the plains of The Nullabor. *Steve Madden*

CN freight train slides into Thompson River Canyon

The Canadian National mainline through British Columbia between Kamloops and Vancouver was blocked on 4 January after a Vancouver-bound freight train hit a rock slide shortly after midnight.

The incident happened north of Lytton in British Columbia and neither of the locomotive crew were hurt in the accident, although due to the conditions, it was around seven hours later before rescuers could recover them.

Only the two locomotives, the leading one ending up 160-foot below in the Thompson River Canyon, and the first wagon were derailed. The second loco remained at track level.

A CN spokesman added that the accident was not expected to cause any environmental problems as no fuel appeared to be leaking from either locomotive.

With the route blocked, CN services were being diverted over alternative routes, some of which are operated by Candian Pacific. and CN say transit times were between 12-18 hours longer, until the route was reopened.

BNSF gains approval to introduce ETMS system

The United States Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) has given approval to allow freight operator BNSF to commence implementation of the Electronic Train Management System (ETMS) on its network.

ETMS works as a safety overlay, through a train control program that passes critical train movement information, such as movement authorities, speed restrictions and switch position, to a digital communications network that displays the information on a computer screen inside the locomotive cab. The onboard computer, with location information provided via the Global Positioning System (GPS), will warn and then automatically initiate braking action if the crew fails to respond appropriately to the warnings. ETMS operates with existing train control signal systems and operating rules, as the primary means of maintaining train separation.

In 2003, FRA granted a waiver allowing BNSF and Wabtec Corporation to move forward with a pilot project to operate ETMS-equipped test trains between Beardstown and Centralia, Illionois. Wabtec installed ETMS on 50 BNSF locomotives that operated along the 135-mile corridor. Since October 2004, when testing started, more than 2,000 revenue service train trips have been operated with the ETMS-equipped locomotives. During this pilot testing, ETMS passed every test.

In May 2006, BNSF received permission from FRA to test ETMS on a 300-mile corridor between Arkansas City, Kansas, and Fort Worth. In addition to BNSF trains, Union Pacific Railroad freight and Amtrak passenger trains operate over parts of the route.

Implementation is scheduled to begin in the second quarter of 2007.

LEFT: The New Zealand English Electric heritage set is not normally permitted to operate on the mainline due to the high number of tunnels. The New Year holiday weekend, however, brought a special vintage traction event and the set has been running three services a day between Wellington and Paraparaumu as part of Tranz Metro's contribution to promoting the event. On the first day of services, 30 December, the three-car red set, lead by vehicle No. DM556 heads out of Porirua and passes alongside the harbour with the 09.00 service to Pram. *Alan Wickens*

News In Brief

■ In Colorado, USA, between two and four feet of snow fell across the state following two major snow storms within a week. Union Pacific ran the first of an expected five trains on 5 January, which will carry over 15,000 tons of salt to replenish the state's reserves. Each train, which operates to the outskirts of Denver for unloading, will comprise 50 wagons.

■ Eurostar has announced that it is to operate a direct weekly summer service from London and Ashford to Avignon in the heart of the Provence region of Southern France for the sixth year running. Tickets for the summer service, which will run weekly from 7 July to 8 September, went on sale from 10 January and start from £99 in standard class or £249 in Leisure Select. The service departs from Waterloo International at 07.09 and Ashford International at 08.02, arriving Avignon Centre 14.12, while the return service leaves Avignon Centre at 16.30, arriving Ashford International at 20.34 and Waterloo International at 21.30.

ABOVE: Rhatische Bahn RhB Class Ge4/4 No. 632 is pictured at Ilanz/Gion station on 21 October 2006. It was this locomotive that was involved in the accident, just east of this location on 6 January. *Neil Walkling*

Landslip causes Swiss rail accident

A landslip on the Rhatische Bahn RhB network in Southern Switzerland caused the derailment of a passenger service on 6 January.

The train, headed by Class Ge4/4 No. 632 hit and demolished four concrete pillars of a snow shelter after derailing due to the landslip near Valendas-Sagogn, east of Ilanz, on the Chur - Disentis line.

Thankfully no crew members or any of the 30 passengers on board were injured in the accident. The passengers were evacuated and walked to the nearby station at Valendas from where they continued their journey by road.

The line is well used by large numbers of tourists each year on board the popular 'Glacier Express' service.

Despite the extensive damage to both the locomotive and the leading luggage car, it is understood that the loco will be repaired and returned to service.

Further photographs of the crash can be seen on an external website by clicking here.

Rolling stock investment for Boston commuters

Massachusetts Bay Transport Authority (MBTA), which operates commuter services around Boston, USA, is to make a major investment in its rolling stock with the announcement that the company is to buy 38 locomotives and 75 double-deck coaches.

The company's current loco and rolling stock fleet is between seven and 29-years-old and the new stock will help to improve services and provide better air-conditioned surroundings for passengers.

The proposed order represents around $310 million (over £159 million) of investment over the next three to five years, with the contract expected to be awarded later this year.

The route carries over 74,000 passengers every weekday on average, conveying over 40 million passengers a year in its current fleet of 410 coaches, 140 of which are double-deck, hauled by 80 locomotives.

It is understood that bids for the construction of the new rolling stock will be open to companies across the globe, not just in the United States.

World speed record attempt

The French Transport Minister, Dominique Perben, has announced a "programme of French high-speed excellence" for SNCF.

It will involve an attempt to raise the world speed record for a conventional train from between 342 to 354mph, breaking the present record of 320mph also set by SNCF in 1990.

The speed attempt is to be made in June 2007 with a specially shortened version of a new generation double-decker TGV built by Alstom, consisting of two powercars and two carriages, and the run will be made on the new line under construction between Paris and Metz, opening next June for regular 200mph services.

Exciting railtours! Spring 2007

South China Steam Tour

11 - 28 April 2007

Starts and finishes Chengdu. Narrow gauge lines Shibanxi and Weiyuan. Standard gauge Jiangyou, Panzihua, Zhongyicun, Datong, Rongchang, Luzhou, plus others.

Ukraine (UZ) Diesel Enthusiast Tour

12 - 20 May 2007

Starts and finishes Kiev. Own private train. Narrow gauge diesels - Lvov, Beregovo and Vigoda - the last forestry line in Ukraine.
Broad gauge diesels - Lvov, Ternopol, Shepetovka, Grechany, Zmerinka, Tchors, Kiev. Runpasts, linesiding and depot visits.
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News In Brief

■ A Union Pacific train from Fort Worth to San Antonio was derailed in the town of West shortly before dawn on 1 January. In a separate incident, eight vehicles of a 20-wagon CSX train were derailed on 7 January, around 40 miles north west of Columbus. The vehicles were scattered across a field and closed a country road. The train had originated from Massachusetts and was bound for Cleveland.

■ Bombardier Transportation is to build 100 TRAXX F140 DC freight locomotives for Spanish National Railways (RENFE). The total contract is valued at about €416 million (£279 million) and includes a 14-year maintenance service agreement. Delivery of the first loco is scheduled to begin in the second half of 2008 and continue until 2010. The new locos will be manufactured by Bombardier at RENFE's site in Villaverde, near Madrid. In addition, the company is to supply Netherlands Railways (NS) with 50 double-deck VIRM type EMUs. The order volume amounts to around €433 million (£291 million) and the first of the new trains are to be delivered from June 2008. The four-car multiple units offering 20,000 seats in total will be built in Görlitz and Aachen.

■ A project that started as long ago as 1980 to build a 215 mile high speed train service in Taiwan between the capital Taipei and Koahsiung has at last been completed – at a cost of £7.7 billion. Services started on 5 January, and are in line with the environmentally friendly Japanese Shinkansen technology, the trains running at around 186mph with an end-to-end journey time of as little as 90 minutes compared with five hours on the conventional line. A fully loaded train carries 900 passengers. A somewhat bizarre result of the quarter century commercial disputes over the construction, however, means that the train drivers are French or German who are only allowed to speak to the Taiwan High Speed Rail controllers in English, the system design having been undertaken by British and French engineers.

The Churnet Valley Railway is current the temporary home to John Cameron's 'K4' Mogul No. 61994 *The Great Marquess*. The locomotive is pictured at Consall on 7 January during a running-in trial. *David Gibson*