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The Railway Herald

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The complimentary UK railway journal for the railway enthusiast

The Railway Herald
Issue 77

Front Cover

The EWS Executive-liveried Class 67 No. 67029 was in charge of the 11.38 London Victoria to Cardiff VSOE Rugby special on 17 March. The train is pictured at Shrivenham, enroute to the Welsh capital. *Ken Brunt*

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Submissions

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

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.

ABOVE: Rolls Royce Sentinel *Progress* manoeuvres its train through the newly completed station at the Ribble Steam Railways site at Preston Dock on 14 March. The bitumen trains run three days a week, Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays and are brought to the start of the Ribble system by Class 66 locomotives, which then complete their journey from Lindsey Oil Refinery, Immingham, to Total Bitumen, Preston, by Rolls Royce Sentinels from Ribble Railways. Chris Dixon

Three Class 37s in action for G-WR diesel gala

The Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway will hold its first diesel gala of 2007 on 30 March-1 April featuring visiting Class 37/0 No. 37219,which is on loan to the line from the Chasewater Railway for the year.

The appearance of the Mainline Freight-liveried No. 37219 gives the railway a line-up of no less than three preserved Class 37/0s. The event should also see Class 24 No. 24081 return to traffic following extensive radiator repairs, together with the home fleet of Class 20 No. D8137, Class 37s Nos. 37215 and 37324, Class 47s Nos. 47105 and 47376 and Class 73 No. 73129.

A working timetable for the gala will be available in advance from the GWR's website which will also give fuller details of the event nearer the time.

The other dates for G-WR diesel galas this year are 15-17 June, 3/4 November and the post-Christmas 'diesel day' event on the 27 December.

The G-WR also have a 'one child travels FREE with each fare paying adult' offer which is valid for all three days of the March diesel gala.

BELOW: On 9 March, the Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway operated a test train, formed of resident Class 37s Nos. 37324 *Clydesdale* and 37215, with visitor No. 37219 at the helm. The triple-headed service is pictured departing from Winchcombe on the outward run. The test operation was in readiness for the railway's diesel gala weekend on 30 March - 1 April, when a triple headed Class 37 train should operate. Peter Smith

'network west midlands' rolls out new-look '150'

ABOVE: The new look for Centro in the Midlands - Class 150 No. 150010 stands at Walsall on 21 March with the 10.12 Birmingham New Street-Stafford service. The six Centro-sponsored Class 150s are to be reliveried during refurbishment at Wabtec Rail, Doncaster, into this white, blue and green colour scheme and branding with 'network west midlands'. The refurbishment work also includes new upholstery on the seats as shown. *Both: John Whitehouse*

ICEC franchise ITT awarded to short-listed operators

As previously reported, an Invitation to Tender (ITT) for bidders for the InterCity East Coast rail franchise has been issued by the Department for Transport.

The ITT sets out the minimum level of services that the new operator will be asked to deliver when the new franchise begins later this year.

As usual, bidders are able to operate additional trains over and above the services outlined if required, but have to ensure current service levels are maintained together with additional Leeds half-hourly services that commence in May 2007 using ex-Midland Mainline HST sets, recently transferred to GNER.

The specification requires bidders to plan for current and anticipated passenger growth and ensure that performance continues to improve; seek opportunities to deliver faster journey times on longer distance journeys; set out how security on trains and stations can be improved and say how they will incorporate smart card ticketing by January 2010.

Bidders are also required to look at ways of implementing the recommendations of the East Coast Route Utilisation Strategy, which will be published by Network Rail.

They will also be asked to prepare for the introduction of new inter-city express trains, planned for operational trials in 2012. The franchise will become operational by the end of this year and will run until 31 March 2015, the final 17 months being dependent upon performance.

The deadline for completed bids is 6 June, and the winner is expected to be announced this coming summer.

The four bidders short-listed to receive Invitations to Tender are:

- Arriva Trains East Coast Ltd, a wholly owned subsidiary of Arriva Trains Limited
- First London, Scottish and North East Railways Ltd, a wholly owned subsidiary of First Rail Holdings Limited
- Inter city - railways Limited, a 50/50 joint venture between Stagecoach Group plc and the Virgin Group of Companies
- NXEC Trains Ltd, a wholly owned subsidiary of National Express Group plc.

Until the new operator takes over, the previous franchisee, Great North Eastern Railway, which has operated the East Coast operation since the original franchise was let, will remain in charge.

Lineside fire disruptes Eurostar service

A serious lineside fire near Wandsworth Road station at around 15.30 on 16 March resulted in the fire authorities giving instructions for the lines at Factory Junction to be closed as there was the risk of gas cylinders exploding.

This meant that services into Kent from London Victoria and all Eurostar services in and out of Waterloo International had to be cancelled, as no alternative routing is available through this section of track.

Services were not given permission to resume again until over 24 hours later at 16.30 on 17 March. Trains were not able to return to normal until 18 March.

Island Line units handed over

At the Island Line depot of Ryde St Johns on 23 March, the six two-car Class 483 units that operate the eight-and-a-half mile Isle of Wight route between Ryde Pier Head and Shanklin were ceremoniously 'sold' by HSBC Rail (UK) Ltd to Stagecoach South West Trains for £1, terminating the previous leasing agreement.

The event brought the running of the line by the 2006-formed Isle of Wight Community Rail Partnership a step closer. HSBC has worked with the Island Line for the past 10 years and has made modifications and repairs to the stock, which originally entered service on London Underground in 1938 and was converted for use on the Island in 1989-90.

The units are to be re-liveried in London Underground heritage maroon and cream in the same way that units Nos. 007 and 009 have already been changed from the amusing 'dinosaur' vinyls that have been carried on the rest of the stock for the past seven years.

As part of the new agreement, HSBC has given a refund of rental towards the re-livery and to help towards corrosion protection of the vehicles, always a problem with stock working at all times in sea air. Stations on the route at Ryde, Brading, Sandown, Lake and Shanklin are also to be repainted in heritage colours.

TOP: Island Line's two maroon and cream-liveried Class 483 units Nos. 009 and 007 outside Ryde Depot on 23 March. The other four units are now to be similarly treated.
ABOVE MIDDLE: With wooden internal window surrounds and fresh looking seating moquette, the Class 483 units are particularly smart in appearance and also ride well on the Island Line trackwork.
ABOVE: Island Line Class 483 No 008 arrives at Ryde St Johns Road on 23 March, forming a service from Ryde Pier Head to Shanklin. The dinosaur vinyls are now to go after seven years, to be replaced by heritage London Transport maroon and cream.
LEFT: Having both signed the legal contract, Stewart Palmer, Managing Director of South West Trains, hands over a nominal £1 coin to Peter Aldridge, Head of HSBC Rail, for purchase of the Island Line train fleet on 23 March inside Ryde Depot. *All: Brian Morrison*

ABOVE: Vintage Trains ran a special charter from Solihull and Dorridge on 17 March using No. 6024 *King Edward I*. The train worked through to Didcot where a break was taken before heading back to Tyseley via Swindon, Worcester Shrub Hill and Kidderminster. Here the train prepares to depart from Solihull. *John Whitehouse*

RTC heads for the Highlands and Yorkshire

In addition to the extensive early summer programme (see *RH* Issue No. 75), comes the news that the Railway Touring Company is to promote a Scarborough steam operation during the peak summer operating season.

Both West Coast and the NRM have attempted this market, together with British Rail previously, and all to a degree have not been a huge success. Marketing is the key, as illustrated when the NRM had *Flying Scotsman* working the trains, they virtually sold themselves. So, RTC know what it is up against, and that marketing is the name of the game. However, the company is employing some popular engines, with Nos. 71000, 60009, 6233 and 850 in the prospective pool of locomotives.

Equally, alternatives are being provided as the trains are booked to run from York via Harrogate to Leeds before returning to York, and then onwards to Scarborough. Around four hours is planned in Scarborough, with the train setting down as outward.

It will be interesting to see the effect of bringing the Leeds and Harrogate conurbations into the catchment area of the trains, as this could just provide the extra demand needed to bring these trains the success they deserve.

Also in the advanced planning stage is a plan to take John Cameron's 'K4' No. 61994 *The Great Marquess* back to its spiritual home - the West Highland. The RTC has operated a charter to the West Highlands in late August/early September in each of the past two years, and this year No. 61994 is firmly in the frame for haulage.

The itinerary is from Glasgow Queen Street to Fort William on 2 September, returning next day, again with the 'K4'. In addition, on 2 September there will be a Fort William to Mallaig and return with 'K1' No. 62005.

In previous years this train was used to reposition locomotives being used for West Coast's 'Jacobite' trains. However, this year the charter will be 'self-contained' with 'Black 5s' Nos. 45407 and 45231 being repositioned as 'light-engine' movements.

The Week Ahead

There is plenty of steam around on 31 March, but the prize tour must be Kingfishers' 'The Trafalgar Express' which features the long awaited mainline return of ex-Southern Railway No. 850 *Lord Nelson*.

The tour runs diesel-hauled from Eastleigh via Southampton, Salisbury and Westbury to Minehead, where after a short break, *Lord Nelson* will take over for the return to Eastleigh via Bristol.

Also in the West Country, is the Railway Touring Company's 'Royal Duchy' which is essentially a positioning move for No. 5051 *Earl Bathurst* and No. 6024 *King Edward I* ahead of the RTC's 'Great Britain' tour the following week.

However, this tour is not to be under-rated as it features both locomotives from Stoke Gifford through to Penzance. The tour originates at Birmingham International.

Vintage Trains meanwhile, is looking to head east from Tyseley Warwick Road via Nuneaton, Leicester and Nottingham to Lincoln with its own No. 4965 *Rood Ashton Hall* for traction.

Pathfinder has the pick of modern traction tours, with the re-run of their 'Buffer Puffer 4.1', which originally ran in January as a sell-out. This tour is also a sell-out, with 'top and tail' Class 37s from London Paddington to London St. Pancras via a host of reversals at London terminals, plus a quick visit to Ardingly for good measure.

Problems for the 'King'

Vintage Trains charter to Didcot on 17 March, ran into problems on the approach to Swindon when strange noises were heard coming from the tender.

Once at a stand, smoke was seen coming from the rear near-side axle. Network Rail allowed the loco to be moved to a nearby refuge siding to allow the support crew to investigate the problem further.

The tender was lifted with portable jacks, and the damaged bearing and oil-pad removed to discover the axle had thankfully, not been affected.

A new bearing and oil pad were fitted and after refilling the oil keep, the locomotive and support coach rejoined the train, which then proceeded as booked back to Tyseley without further incident.

Sir William A Stanier FRS back on mainline passenger duties!

ABOVE: The first ever passenger charter train to feature a preserved electric locomotive from the AC Locomotive Group ran on 24 March. Class 86/1 No. 86101 *Sir William A Stanier FRS* was the locomotive concerned, which undertook a test run north from Crewe on 21 March in preparation for the tour. Regrettably the booked blue and grey Mk3 stock was not ready in time, hence the use of ex-Virgin Trains liveried Mk2 vehicles. The train is pictured in glorious sunshine departing from Oxenholme on the WCML. At Crewe a pair of Class 47s took over for the run to Holyhead and back. *Terry O' Connor*

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 the spring period, our weekly railtour listings have been extended to provide details for the next three weeks.

Date	Operator	Traction	Route
24 Mar	Compass Tours	86101/2x 47	Carlisle-Crewe-Holyhead and return
24 Mar	Hertfordshire	2xRiveria47	Sheffield-Burton-Tamworth-Barnt Green-Minehead and return
24 Mar	RTC	60009&71000	60009:Mill Hill B'way-Bedford-Melton Mowbray-Toton-Barrow Hill-York and return
24 Mar	Steamy Affairs	6201	(Watford Jct-Rugby-Coventry-Stafford)-Crewe-Shap-Carlisle-Shap-Crewe (and rtn)
24 Mar	Vintage Trains	50031	Tyseley Warwick Road-Nuneaton-Leicester-Loughborough-Durham-Newcastle
25 Mar	Past Time Rail	45407/Cl 37	(Par-St. Austell-Truro-Falmouth Docks)-(rev)- Falmouth Docks-Truro (rev)- (Truro-Penzance) (rev)- Penzance-St. Ives-(rev)-(St. Ives-Penzance) (rev)-Penzance-Par
26 Mar	Past Time Rail	45407/Cl 37	Plymouth-Par-St. Blazey (rev)-(St. Blazey-Par Harbour) (rev)-Par Harbour-St. Blazey (rev)-(St. Blazey-Par)(rev)-Par-Newquay (rev)-(Newquay-Par-Plymouth)
27 Mar	Past Time Rail	45407/Cl 37	(Plymouth- Bere Alston) (rev)-Bere Alston-Plymouth Friary) (rev)-(Plymouth Friary-Plymouth) Two round trips
28 Mar	Past Time Rail	45407/Cl 37	Plymouth (approx 09.30)-Liskeard-Carne Point (rev)-(Liskeard-Plymouth)
28 Mar	Past Time Rail	45407/Cl 37	Plymouth (approx 12.25)-Parkandillack (rev)-(Plymouth)
28 Mar	Past Time Rail	7802	(Bridgnorth-Kidderminster-Birmingham NS-Worcester Shrub Hill-Bristol TM) Bristol TM-Hereford-Worcester Foregate Street-Kidderminster-(Bridgnorth)
29 Mar	Past Time Rail	45407/Cl 37	Plymouth-Ivybridge-Buckfastleigh (rev)-Exeter (rev)-(Exeter-Ivybridge-Plymouth)
30 Mar	Hertfordshire (BP)	2xRiveria 47	London KX-Potters Bar-Stevenage-Peterborough-Leyburn (break)-Redmire and rtn
31 Mar	Heartland Rail	2xCR 47	Swindon-Stroud-Gloucester-Cam & Dursley-Yate-Bristol Parkway-Truro and return
31 Mar	ICMM	2xRiveria 47	Bristol TM-Burton upon Trent-Wainfleet-Skegness and return
31 Mar	Kingfisher	850	(Eastleigh-Southampton Central-Romsey-Salisbury-Westbury-Taunton-Minehead)-Minehead-Taunton-Weston Super Mare-Bristol-Bath-Westbury-Salisbury-Eastleigh
31 Mar	NENTA Traintours	tbc	North Walsham-Norwich-Ipswich-Stratford-Bath-Bristol TM-Minehead and return
31 Mar	Pathfinder Tours	2xEWS Cl 37	London Paddington-Ardingley (rev)-Blackfriars (rev)-Orpington Bay Platforms (rev)-Cannon Street (rev)-London Bridge LL (rev)-Waterloo (rev)-London St. Pancras
31 Mar	RTC	6024&5051	Birmingham International-B'ham New Street-Barnt Green-Worcester Shrub Hill-Cheltenham)-Stoke Gifford-Bristol TM -Plymouth-Penzance (and return)
31 Mar	Steamy Affairs	EWS Class 67	St. Albans-Luton-Kettering-Market Harborough-Leicester-York-Keighley and return
31 Mar	Vintage Trains	4965	Tyseley Warwick Road-Nuneaton-Leicester-Trent Junction-Nottingham-Newark-Lincoln (break/rev)-and return (revised route-now via Nottingham & Newark)
06 Apr	Hertfordshire (BP)	2xRiveria 47	'The Easter Highlander' Day 1: London KX-Edinburgh-Inverness
06 Apr	RTC	71000	'The Great Britain' : London Paddington _ Reading-Didcot-Swindon-Bristol TM
07 Apr	Green Express	2xWCRC 47	Sheffield-Swinton-Wakefield-Brighouse-Hebden Bridge-Burnley-Accrington Blackburn-Shap-Beattock-Glasgow Central and return
07 Apr	Heartland Rail	CR Class 47	Gloucester-Cam & Dursley-Yate-Bristol Parkway-Bath Spa-Gloucester
07 Apr	Hertfordshire (BP)	2xRiveria 47	'The Easter Highlander' Day 2: Inverness-Kyle of Lochalsh-Inverness
07 Apr	ICMM	2xRiveria 47	London Paddington-West Ruislip-Gerrards Cross-High Wycombe-Princes Risborough-Shrewsbury-Wrexham-Chester-Llandudno and return
07 Apr	RTC	6024&5051	'The Great Britain': (Bristol TM-Penzance) (rev)-Penzance-Taunton-Bristol TM
08 Apr	Hertfordshire (BP)	2xRiveria 47	'The Easter Highlander' Day 3: Inverness-Georgemas Junction-Inverness
08 Apr	RTC	71000	'The Great Britain': Bristol TM-Hereford-Shrewsbury-Crewe-Preston
09 Apr	Green Express	2xWCRC 47	Spondon-Long Eaton-Langley Mill-Alfreton-Chesterfield-Wakefield-Hebdon Bridge-Copy Pit-Ravenglass-Sellafield (break/rev) and return
09 Apr	Hertfordshire (BP)	2xRiveria 47	'The Easter Highlander' Day 4: Inverness-London KX
09 Apr	RTC	6233	'The Great Britain': Preston-Shap-Carlisle-Beattock-Glasgow Central
10 Apr	RTC	61994&60009	'The Great Britain': Glasgow Central-Stirling-Perth-Aviemore-Inverness
11 Apr	ICMM	2xRiveria 47	Wolverhampton-Tame Bridge Parkway-Birmingham NS-Barnt Green-Cheltenham-Bath-Westbury-Dorchester-Weymouth and return
12 Apr	RTC	48151	'The Great Britain':Inverness-Georgemas Junction (rev)-Thurso
13 Apr	Hertfordshire (BP)	2x Riveria 47	Peterborough-Huntingdon-Stevenage-Potters Bar-Finsbury Park-Canterbury and rtn
13 Apr	RTC	48151	'The Great Britain': Wick-Inverness
14 Apr	Green Express	2xWCRC 47	Holyhead-Bangor-Chester-Henley in Arden-Stratford upon Avon and return
14 Apr	Kingfisher	850	London Victoria-Bromley-Canterbury West-Folkestone-London Victoria
14 Apr	Past Time Rail	6024	Bristol TM-Newport-Cardiff Central-Bridgend-Neath-Carmarthen and return
14 Apr	Pathfinder Tours	2x EWS Cl37	'The Principality Freighter': Birmingham International-Coventry-Oxford-Swindon-Bristol Pkway-Newport-Gwaun Cae Gurwen (rev)-Uskmouth (rev)-Newport and rtn
14 Apr	RTC	60009&61994	'The Great Britain': Inverness-Aviemore-(London KX)
14 Apr	Steamy Affairs	6201	(Guildford-Woking-Weybridge-Esher-Surbiton-Wimbledon-Watford Jct-Milton Keynes-Coventry-B'ham International)-Crewe-Holyhead (break/rev)-Crewe (and rtn)
14 Apr	Vintage Trains	50031&50049	Leicester-Shrewsbury-Wrexham-Chester (break)-Crewe-Leicester
14 Apr	Vintage Trains	50031&50049	Tyseley (Warwick Road)-Newcastle upon Tyne and return (Redated from 24 March)
21 Apr	Green Express	2xWCRC 47	Mills Hill-Rochdale-Wakefield-Doncaster-Ely-Wymondham-Lowestoft and return

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
P	Hertfordshire Pullman service	**ICMM**	Intercity Merrymaker from Hertfordshire Rail Tours

(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.

News In Brief

■ SRPS Railtours has advised that the proposed charter on 18 August, previewed in last weeks issue, scheduled to feature ex-LNER 'A4' No. 60009 *Union of South Africa* from Linlithgow to Stirling via the soon to be re-opened line via Alloa has been withdrawn from the programme. 'Technical difficulties' are cited by the SRPS for the cancellation of the train. However, the company have informed *Railway Herald* that one or two steam-hauled trains do feature in its in 2007 programme and that details should be available soon. John Cameron's 'A4' locomotive No. 60009 *Union of South Africa* and Class 'K4' No. 61994 *The Great Marquess* should be the traction.

■ Details, albeit very sketchy, are emerging of a proposed 'topped and tailed' Class 50-hauled charter visiting branch lines around Bristol for the benefit of the Railway Children's Charity on 3 June. Full details to follow later.

Tangmere and *Lord Nelson* for Folkestone climb!

Kingfisher has arranged for ex-Southern Class LN No. 850 *Lord Nelson* to make two assaults on the 1-in-30 ascent from Folkestone Harbour as part of the locomotives visit on 16 June at the head of its 'Golden Arrow' charter.

Originally scheduled for a one-hour layover at the Harbour station, the plan now is for No. 850 to haul an additional shuttle up the bank for the benefit of passengers on the train as well as linesiders. This should be the first steam-hauled ascent of the fearsome gradient since 1991.

The train departs from London Victoria and picks up at Bromley South, heading for Folkestone via Maidstone East. It will be diesel-hauled down the bank, and also from Folkestone East to Ashford before steam again takes charge to Canterbury for a further break, before heading back to London via Minster and Deal.

Kingfisher also advise that there will be a re-run on 6 October over the same route, this time featuring No. 34067 *Tangmere*.

The Charter Alliance

Riviera Trains and EWS Network have formed 'The Charter Alliance', which is to be a dedicated provider of reliable and high-class specialist rail services.

They aim at a wide market, which with their respective fleets of coaches means they can cover the much coveted top-end 'wine and dine' clients through to straight forward charters for enthusiasts, sporting events and business functions.

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.

DID YOU KNOW?
That the contact details and links to the appropriate websites for all mainline railtour operators are available through our website?
Click Here!

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

ABOVE: The rare sight of a DRS Class 47 on a pair of DRS-operated Mk2 support coaches. The vehicles are used when support personnel are required to travel with DRS services. Here No. 47237 passes Winwick Junction on 20 March, with Mk2s Nos. 9419 and 9428 with a Carlisle Kingmoor - Crewe working. *Kevin Truby*

LEFT: On 21 March, West Coast Railway Company moved three long-withdrawn Class 47 locomotives from Healey Mills Yard to the scrap merchants at Kingsbury. Haulage was provided by Class 37/0 No. 37248 *Loch Arkaig*, seen here shortly after departure from Healey Mills, with ex-R.e.s.-liveried Nos. 47733, 47734 and 47737 with Class 57/6 No. 57601 providing the brake force on the rear. *Mark Allatt*

BELOW: The fleet of Class 31 locomotives previously operated by FM Rail still see active use across the country on a number of test trains for Network Rail. Nos. 31602 *Chimaera* and 31106 *Spalding Town* depart from Glasgow Central with a southbound test working on 14 March. Adam Hiscock

ABOVE: As a result of the Settle & Carlisle line being closed due to engineering work, a number of services have been diverted via the East Coast Main Line and the Tyne Valley route. On 19 March, Class 66/7 No. 66720 *Metronet Pathfinder* heads the 10.21 Cottam-New Biggin along the Tyne Valley on the approach to Whitchester Tunnel, near Haltwhistle, during a sunny period, but with heavy snow on the horizon! *Paul Scott*

BELOW: On 15 March, the unique Freightliner/Shanks-liveried Class 66/5 No. 66522 passes through Carlisle with an engineers working from Shap. *Adam Hiscock*

Cardiff Rugby Specials

ABOVE: Class 67 No. 67021 heads the 12.28 London Victoria - Cardiff Central special at Shrivenham on 17 March. *Ken Brunt*

RIGHT: Riveria Trains Class 47/4 No. D1916 (TOPS No. 47812) leads classmate No. 47815 *Great Western* on a Gloucester-Cardiff Central service on the approach to Severn Tunnel Junction.

BELOW: Class 50 No. 50049 *Defiance* leads a Swansea-Cardiff Central service into Pencoed on 17 March, with No. 47805 *Talisman* on the rear. With the impending demise of loco-hauled workings on Arriva Trains Wales services, this is likely to be the last time that any of the Class Fifty Alliance locomotives see regular work on rugby specials for the company. *Both: James Welham*

ABOVE: West Country Pacific No. 34046 *Braunton* was the last Bullied Pacific to leave Dai Woodham's Barry scrapyard in the late 1980s, having been withdrawn fron service in October 1965. The locomotive was bought for the Brighton Locomotive Works Project, but when that failed the locomotive was moved to the West Somerset Railway, where restoration is being carried out in the works at Wiliton. The loco is in the final stages of restoration and has been reunited with its boiler, which has recently completed a successful steam test. Hopefully 'running-in' trials will start in May. *Chris Perkins*

Barry Island Railway

DMU Running Day
31st March 2007

Class 108, 115 and 117 DMUs in operation, with tail loads on certain trains

First public runs of the Class 115.
(limited seating)

Unlimited travel Rover Tickets:
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Drive an 'S160' at Cheddleton

The Churnet Valley Railway's resident USATC 2-8-0 S160 No. 5197 will be used for 'Driver Experience' duties during the line's steam gala on 23/24 June.

Each day, visitors will be able to drive No. 5197 from the bay platform into the sidings and back for just £10. The loco will also be used on an early morning freight train each day and an early evening freight followed by an 'Ale and Pie' excursion on the Saturday. It is expected that throughout the weekend resident Nos. 80098 and 5197 will be joined by two visiting Class 3F 'Jinty' 0-6-0T.

The railway's volunteers have also built a new signal post and gantry. It is now in position on the 'down' platform at Cheddleton, although as yet it is not connected to the signal box. Prior to completion of the gantry, the site excavation and erection of the signal post was carried out by the CVR Civil Engineering Department.

With two home signals its prime purpose is to improve visibility and to control approaches to Cheddleton level crossing from the 'down' direction. The right-hand signal will be the 'Up and Down Main'. The left hand signal will control the Cheddleton Down Siding on completion of the track layout at the station.

Diesel Gala Weekend

The railway will hold a diesel gala over 1-3 June when resident Class 47 No. 47192 should be joined by Class 33 No. 33102, subject to completion of repairs, and a visiting operational Class 37, the identity of the latter is still to be confirmed.

The railway's Class 104 DMU Nos. 50437 and 53437 will be on active duty, part of which will be 'DMU drags' utilising a box van and a GUV.

Early each morning, there will be freight operations and the Saturday evening will include a diesel-hauled 1970's themed 'Supper Train'

PRESERVATION SPECIAL

Due to our later publication schedule this week as a result of events in Belgium (see Worldwide View), the majority of the preservation section has been held until next week. However, a bumper edition is planned, with a special supplement looking at the action from the West Somerset Railway's recent steam gala. ***As it is said .... stay tuned!***

ABOVE: The recent wintry weather in Austria has even taken local residents by surprise! OBB 'Taurus' locomotive No. 1116 102-3 passes through the junction station of Schwarzach-St.Veit on 23 March, with a freight running either via Zell am See to Innsbruck or to Villach via the popular skiing resort of Badgastein. *Neil Walking*

Angel Trains invests €70 million in 16 new Siemens' multiple unit trains

Angel Trains, one of Europe's largest rolling stock lessors, has signed an agreement with Siemens Transportation Systems for the purchase of several 'Desiro' type electric multiple units.

The first 16 trains, worth a total value of approximately 70 million Euros, have been ordered and will be leased to trans regio Deutsche Regionalbahn GmbH.

The German company had signed a contract in January 2007 for the Mittelrheinbahn concession (a rail service between Mainz and Cologne) running for 15 years and commencing in December 2008.

The agreement between Siemens and Angel Trains includes an option for a further 84 trains to meet the needs of its portfolio and its clients. Work will commence on manufacturing the trains in July in the Siemens works in Krefeld, Germany.

The Siemens Desiro ML train has been designed to meet the continually changing needs of regional rail networks. The modular design allows cars to be combined in different ways to configure trains varying in length between 49 and 282 meters and the system operator can also choose between different interior layouts, varying the number of seats and the seat spacing in addition to the amount of room provided for bicycles and wheelchairs to suit passenger needs.

This latest order takes the total fleet of passenger trains now managed or ordered by Angel Trains Europa, the Cologne-based German subsidiary of Angel Trains, to over 220 units, comprising 60 electric multiple units.

RIGHT: How the new Siemens 'Desiro ML' multiple units could look on the Cologne to Mainz route from December 2008. *Artists impression courtesy of Angel Trains UK*

New north-south link underground platforms open at Antwerp Central

Special Report by
Richard Tuplin

The latest stage in enhancing transport links through Belgium and developing the country's high-speed rail network took a major step forward on 23 March.

After nine years of construction, the new 3.8km-long rail tunnel under Antwerp, together with four brand new subterranian platforms were officially opened, providing the first ever north-south rail link through the city centre.

The tunnel itself runs from Antwerp-Berchem to the Damplein and will allow domestic as well as international services quick, easy and direct access to the city. The project will double the capacity of the route from Antwerp, north to the Netherlands, and will also reduce the journey time by around 15 minutes.

The construction work has been carried out in stages to allow trains to continue using the main station at all times. The first phase (which took over three years) reduced Antwerp to just three platforms; the completion of this work has now provided six terminal platforms. Since 1998, work has been underway on the tunnel section. The approach slopes have a grade of 2.9%. Because there are two underground levels (see photograph below) four lines approach from the south, with two tracks feeding into Level minus one which provides the station area with an additional four terminal platforms. The remaining two decend to around 18 metres below the city before splitting to arrive at the four low-level through platforms (level minus two). After the station, the four lines converge back into a double-track route through the tunnel to emerge on the north side of the city at Damplein, where the route meets and joins the existing Essen-Roosendall line and the high speed line to the Dutch border.

Work on the platform tunnel was completed towards the end of 2001 and the city tunnels were started in 2002.

The latest work forms part of the Belgium high-speed line (HSL) to the Netherlands, which should be completed by the end of 2007, once HSL North (87km line) opens in December this year, along with the HSL from Liege to the German border (139km).

The construction of the Antwerp north-south link has cost €765 million, all of which have been invested by Infrabel, the Belgium infrastructure operator, and is in addition to the €684 million which it is costing to build the HSL North.

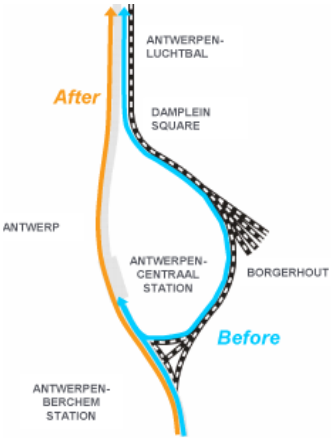
The HSL North should open to operators during April, bringing journey times between Antwerp and Amsterdam down to just one hour and 10 minutes and allowing high-speed services to travel up to 300km/h. A full report on the new HSL North and the technology behind it will appear in a future *Railway Herald*

A public open weekend for Antwerp Central station is being planned for the 19/20 May.

ABOVE: The new platforms looking from the centre concourse into the tunnel section.

LEFT: The immense amount of work that has taken place is clearly visible in this view, taken from Level minus one of the new station. The original terminus platforms are at the top of the picture, above the white columns and under the attractive overall roof. The next level down (level minus one), surrounded by red brick work, provides Antwerp Central with four new and additional terminal platforms for traffic from the south of the city, which will open in December. Finally the four north-south link through platforms can be seen at the bottom of the picture on level minus two. These latter platforms are connected directly to the 3.8km tunnels which provide the north-south link for rail services.
All photographs Richard Tuplin

BELOW: Previously trains from the north of Antwerp, including all international services from the Netherlands, had to follow a circuitous route around the city and reverse at Antwerp Central, as shown by the blue route. With the new tunnels and platforms now open trains will traverse a more direct route under the city. *Infrabel*



Watch the event!

Watch a short video of the arrival of the inaugural train into the new north-south link platforms at Antwerp Central.

Available in Windows Media Player or Quicktime Movie. Click on the picture above to view.
(Depending on your internet connection, this video may take several minutes to download)

TURNING THE CLOCK BACK

Watford Junction on 9 August 1952

Brian Morrison looks back to a busy day on the West Coast Main Line during the summer of 1952.

Apart from the photographically unattractive overhead electrification, the lines around Watford Junction have changed little over the past 50 or so years, although the same cannot be said for the motive power, the main line now being almost exclusively 'Pendolino country'.

Freight workings are still plentiful and although its haulage is not as diverse as was once the case, the variety in this respect is still reasonable with Freightliner Class 90s, 86s, 66s and 57s interspersed with EWS Class 92s, 66s and even the occasional '60'. GBRf Class 66s also appear and on nuclear flask days, DRS 20s and 37s still thrive, although usually at night.

Steam could be said to have been at its height when this visit was made and during the four hours spent on the station and lineside as far as Watford Tunnel, a total of 10 different classes were recorded on passenger turns and another four varieties on freight.

ABOVE: On the day, the time spent at Watford started out wet, and the first few photographs were taken from beneath the protective canopy of the suburban terminus platforms, where this double-headed express was captured. With a signal box and attendant semaphore signals in evidence, Stanier 'Black 5' 4-6-0 No. 44751, fitted with Caprotti valve gear, pilots 'Jubilee' 4-6-0 No. 45674 *Duncan* through Watford, hauling a service from Euston to Manchester. *All photographs by Brian Morrison*

BELOW: The ACV Demonstration Railcars Nos. 1, 2 & 3 stand in the branch line platform at Watford Junction, awaiting departure as the 16.48 train to St Albans Abbey, as Bowen-Cooke ex-LNWR Class G2a 7F 0-8-0 No 49145 comes off Watford shed (1C) in order to take out a freight for Bescot.

ABOVE: Winding around the slow line curves in Watford cutting, Rugby (2A)-based 'Black 5' 4-6-0 No. 45020 blows off steam approaching the Watford Junction stop, while forming the 13.55 semi-fast service from Bletchley to Euston, comprised of compartment stock.

LEFT: 'Crab' Mogul No. 42787 prepares to enter the southern portal of Watford slow line tunnel, hauling a northbound freight from Willesden for the Midlands.

LEFT: **Having made the scheduled stop at Watford Junction, Class 4P ex-LMS three-cylinder Compound 4-4-0 No. 41165 heads north, and curves into Watford cutting on the slow line with a Euston to Bletchley semi-fast working.**

BELOW: **In the same location as the last 'Black 5', Longsight (9A)-allocated Hughes Class 5MT 'Crab' 2-6-0 No. 42887 winds through Watford cutting, hauling a long freight from Longsight to Willesden.**

Royal-liveried Class 67 No. 67006 *Royal Soveriegn* passes Three Spires Junction with the 11.30 Warrington Arpley to Didcot Yard service, conveying covered car carriers. The local council is campaigning with other interested bodies for a station to be built here on the Coventry-Nuneaton line, to serve the Ricoh Arena and the local shopping area. *Ron Kosys*