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The Railway Herald

30 March 2007 Issue 78

The complimentary UK railway journal for the railway enthusiast

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The Railway Herald

Issue 78

Front Cover

Refurbished but still awaiting relivery, Class 465/0 No 465030 approaches Bromley South on 27 March, forming the 12.13 from Blackfriars to Sevenoaks.
Brian Morrison

Back Cover

Merchant Navy No. 35028 *Clan Line* passes Addlestone Junction on 14 March with a VSOE excursion from London Victoria to Bath, the steam being removed for servicing at Westbury.
James Stearn

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GB Railfreight commences Tyne-Drax coal operation. *Page 4*

Don't miss our 8-page supplement on the WSR Gala at the back of this issue

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.

Publication

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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: The Past Time Rail 'Devon & Cornwall Steam' trips appear to have run very well, with LMS Black 5 No. 45407 providing the motive power. Railway Herald will have a full round up next issue. Here the 5MT eases around the headland before dropping down to St. Ives. *John Whitehouse*

Chris Milner/The Railway Magazine

Peter W. Semmens 1927 – 2007

The well known train timekeeper, railway author and chief correspondent of *The Railway Magazine*, Peter Semmens, passed away at his home in York on 4 March, aged 79. He had been suffering from Alzhiemer's disease and died after a fall.

The official timekeeper for many railway speed records over the years and the compiler of the long-running Practise & Performance in *The Railway Magazine* from 1981 until 2004, Peter was a lifelong and very knowledgeable railway enthusiast and was the first Assistant Curator of the National Railway Museum, York.

He leaves a widow, Barbara, and five children.

BELOW: The Toton-Crewe Departmental service produced this colourful combination on 28 March, with the unique-liveried Class 67 No. 67029 at the helm. Here, the train passes Deblenfield Bridge, near Barrow-on-Trent. *Don Gatehouse*

More timetable changes for Great Western

Following continued complaints, further amendments have been made to First Great Western's December 2006 timetable changes to take effect from 26 March.

The alterations are targeted primarily at the early morning Thames Valley, Kennet Valley, Oxford, and Cotswold services.

Unacceptable overcrowding has resulted in over 750 seats being added to morning services running through Reading, and a key morning service from Newbury will now have over 500 seats available.

Changes to train times and train types will benefit passengers from Henley, Oxford, Pangbourne, Maidenhead, Twyford, and Worcester. The 07.33 Adelante from Oxford to Paddington has now changed to a HST.

GBRf route conducting deal

GB Railfreight (GBRf) has won a 27 month extension to its route conducting contract with Serco Rail Operations (SRO).

The new agreement for GBRf to supply SRO with drivers who will provide route knowledge on the railgrinding and infrastructure monitoring that the company operate on behalf of Network Rail runs until 31 March 2009.

There is also scope to extend the route conductor supply as SRO expands into delivering other services. GBRf will provide SRO with more than double the previous volume of route conductor shifts per annum and there will be an increase in the number of contracted routes.

The deal is a significant step for GBRf's expanding business, meaning that the company is firmly establishing itself as a rail services provider, not just a freight haulier.

Exhibition of contemporary photography

In 1968, when regular steam operation on Britain's railways ceased, a great many photographers of the railway scene hung up their cameras for good.

But in 1971, a group of rail enthusiasts found the more modern railway a challenging photographic subject, and the Phoenix Railway Photographic Circle came about, run by well-known photographer A. Wyn Hobson.

For nearly 30 years, members have sought to provide a different perspective on the normally staid subject of train pictures and have successfully elevated this subject to the status of a minority art form, members' work being circulated in postal portfolios and regularly appearing in rail periodicals.

The Circle's first exhibition is coming to the end of a long run at Scotland's Railway Exhibition at Bo'ness, and before that at the National Railway Museum in York. The exhibition has now moved to the West Country at Pecorama, near Seaton, for the summer season, from April until October.

Pecorama is a railway-based family tourist attraction in its own right, and of course is the home of the famous 'Peco' brand of model railway products. The theme of the exhibition is 'The Human Element' and aims to capture the relationship between railways and its staff, passengers and spectators, and locations featured are truly global, ranging from Myanmar, Poland, North America and Switzerland to the Forth Bridge.

As well as the exhibition, visitors can also visit the model railway exhibition, ride the 7in-gauge Beer Heights Light railway or stroll through the beautiful Millennium Gardens, offering wonderful views of South Devon's 'Jurassic Coast'.

Several pictures from the exhibition, as well as a wider selection of circle members' work can be found on the group's dedicated website by visiting at www.phoenixrpc.co.uk

Major signalling work around Port Talbot

The first stage of a £400 million investment by Network Rail to improve train performance and reliability in South Wales, the Port Talbot East resignalling project, is nearing completion.

A 22-mile stretch of line running from Llantrisant to Baglan is involved and the final work will require closure of the line between Cardiff and Swansea over the Easter weekend from 6 to 9 April.

Throughout the closure, Network Rail will be testing and commissioning the new signalling, erecting two new signal structures at Bridgend and Port Talbot and recovering the old signal structures. The scheme has been planned closely with Arriva Trains Wales and First Great Western to put in place an amended timetable designed to keep disruption to a minimum. The Port Talbot East project will be followed by schemes in Newport, Cardiff and Port Talbot West over the next 10 years, work commencing at Newport later this summer.

BELOW: On only its second day of operation after being reinstated, EWS Class 60 No. 60044 still in Mainline livery trundles into Southampton Airport Parkway with an Westbury - Eastleigh engineers train on 27 March. *Richard Sulzmann*

News In Brief

■ A 99 space temporary car park extension at Tring station has been obtained by Silverlink following an agreement with the local council, which has given permission for the car park to remain open until the new facility opens.

■ Merseytravel has started a £4.25 million project to transform Bootle Oriel Road station. A new shelter on the Southport-bound platform is to be constructed to match the new shelter on the Liverpool platform; the latest CCTV cameras are to be installed; a new ticket office and booking hall are to be built and a new footbridge with new stairs and new lifts is to be provided to give step free access to the platforms.

■ Network Rail has apologised for the failings of Railtrack some seven years ago that contributed to the tragedy at Ladbroke Grove when 31 people lost their lives, and has accepted the fine imposed by the court today of £4 million. The huge changes that have been made to the railway industry since Ladbroke Grove, particularly the introduction of the Train Protection Warning System (TPWS and TPWS+) that automatically applies the brakes on a train if it passes a signal at red or approaches one too quickly, have led to the railways becoming the safest form of transport in the UK. Who actually pays the £4 million is not clear, but presumably Network Rail will now have £4 million less to spend on railway safety!

■ Plans for a new concrete railway sleeper plant to be built at Toton, which would have created 60 jobs, have run into problems after the local council voted against the proposals. Talking to the *Nottingham Evening Post*, one councillor said he was in favour until he was advised of the immense traffic problems the scheme would cause.

GBRf commences coal operation to Drax

GB Railfreight worked its first coal train from Tyne Dock bound for Yorkshire on 22 March.

The first 10 of the company's new fleet of high-capacity HYA wagons, being built by IRS in Romania, were used on the inaugural journey as part of a planned trial from the Port of Tyne to Drax Power Station.

The first wagons arrived in the UK from Romania earlier in the week, with the second 10 arriving around 26 March. The vehicles are the first of an order for 72 placed with the IRS factory in Arad.

The remainder of the wagons are scheduled to arrive at the Port of Tyne in batches of 10 each week over the course of the next two months.

ABOVE: The inaugural service passes Bolton Percy just south of Colton Junction on 22 March behind No. 66714 *Cromer Lifeboat* bound for Drax Power Station. *Ron Cover*

RIGHT: On 27 March, Class 66/7 No. 66714 passes Norton East signal box, some half-a-mile west of Norton Junctions with the 11.27 Tyne Dock - Drax Power Station GBRf coal service. The train heads south via Stockton and Eaglescliffe to Northallerton, where it will join the ECML to Drax. *John Lewins*

More Class 158s for Northern Rail franchise

Angel Trains and Northern Rail, in co-operation with the DfT, have signed a long-term leasing agreement for 30 Class 158 DMUs. These trains supplement the six Class 158s that were leased to Northern Rail by Angel Trains in 2006.

This multi-operator cascade takes in units which had come off lease from at least four other train operators and will facilitate some of the extra capacity required by Northern Rail. The trains will be used to support growth on the Northern Rail franchise. Six of the units have been acquired in partnership with Merseytravel, enabling strengthening of City Line services. In addition to supporting franchise growth, a number of Class 142 Pacer units will be cascaded into storage.

Royal '67' visits new EWS Southampton terminal

ABOVE: Royal-liveried Class 67/7 No. 67006 *Royal Sovereign* stands at the new EWS container terminal at Southampton Western Docks, which opened last month. The loco had worked an inbound service from Eastleigh East Yard and having run-round the train is pictured preparing to work a service to Wakefield Europort. The locomotive was, however, swapped for an incoming Class 66 at the last minute due to fears over the maximum load being exceeded. *Dave Purvis*

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MML name Meridian unit after *City of Sheffield*

ABOVE: The Midland Mainline programme of naming Class 222 Meridians after cities on its route continued on 29 March when the third unit to be so treated, No 222004, was unveiled at Sheffield as *City of Sheffield* by the very enthusiastic Lord Mayor of Sheffield, Councillor Jackie Drayton. The proceedings followed a champagne reception at the Supertram entrance to the station, after which the unit formed the 12 27 service to London St Pancras with the guests enjoying a light lunch onboard as far as Derby. *Brian Morrison*

Community rail status for Clitheroe

The Northern service between Clitheroe and Manchester Victoria, via Blackburn and Bolton, is the latest line to have been designated as a community rail service (CRS).

This allows for a more flexible approach to be adopted by Northern, working alongside the CRS to provide the timetable with a greater emphasis on meeting local needs and to look for ways to increase passenger numbers and improve the service.

Currently there are 17 through trains Monday to Saturday in each direction.

News In Brief

■ Automatic ticket gates that have been installed by First Scotrail at Aberdeen station on the main concourse came into operation on 16 March. The gates have been provided as part of a multi-million pound revamp currently underway and have been introduced under First ScotRail's franchise commitment to revenue protection and reducing ticketless travel.

■ Passengers on the Crewe – Manchester line have benefitted from the return of the full timetable from 26 March. The reintroduction of the timetable sees off-peak services increase to two per hour departing Crewe at xx.00 and xx.38 and Manchester Piccadilly at xx.03 and xx.33. A new off-peak hourly service will depart Alderley Edge for Manchester at xx.53. The 07.43 Crewe-Manchester Airport is a new service, introduced from 26 March.

Major improvement work starts at Chester station

Chester City Council has secured £1.4 million of investment for Chester station and its surrounding areas, after making a successful bid for £550,000 of Heritage Lottery Funding.

A programme of improvements is to be delivered over the next five years, including work on the station complex to include a vastly remodelled concourse, a new station square and architectural lighting for the façade.

Meanwhile, work is about to begin on a new £4 million glazed roof over the concourse and platforms at the station, marking the start of the Chester Gateway Partnership's 2007 programme to revitalise the station and its surrounding area.

The entire glass roof behind the original 1848 station building, covering the concourse and Platform 3, is to be stripped of existing glazing panels and the metal superstructure cleaned and repaired where necessary before being rust-proofed and painted. New glazing will then be installed.

Similar work will take place to the roof covering on the parcels platform, and on Platforms 1, 3, 4a, 5, 6 and 7, with the work split between high and low levels to the platform canopies. Completion is anticipated by Christmas this year.

In 2008, £400,000 is to be spent on stonework repairs to the main station building and plans are being drawn up for a further £400,000 of conservation work.

The Gateway Partnership includes Arriva Trains Wales, Cheshire County Council, Chester City Council, Merseyrail, Merseytravel, Network Rail, North West Development Agency, Railway Heritage Trust, Virgin Trains, and Visit Chester & Cheshire.

BELOW: Due to engineering blockage on the Settle & Carlisle line last week, GB Railfreight diverted its gypsum working via the East Coast Main Line and the Tyne Valley. Class 66/7 No. 66720 *Metronet Pathfinder* passes Burn, between Doncaster and York, with the 10.20 Cottam Power Station - Newbiggin working on 19 March. *Robin Patrick*

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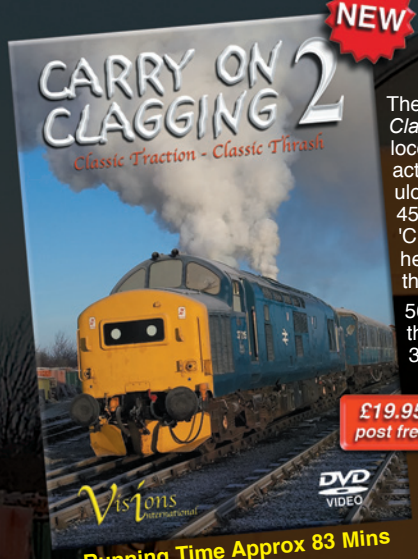

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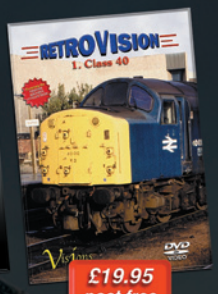

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ABOVE: The Branch Line Society's 'The Ribble Restitutor' was the second trip to focus on the Ribble Steam Railway. The tour originated from Ealing Broadway and followed a circuitous route to Preston. Class 66/0 No. 66009 leads the charter over the Albert Edward Dock bridge. The rear Class 66 had been removed at this point. *Terry O' Connor*

The Week Ahead

The Easter weekend, and indeed all of the following week, is dominated by one tour; The Railway Touring Company's 'The Great Britain'. Without doubt the most ambitious steam tour ever operated, will quite literally be steam hauled from Penzance to Wick and Thurso.

Meanwhile, a rejuvenated Hertfordshire (see separate story) also heads north with its 'Easter Highlander' on 6 April from London King's Cross to Inverness, which proceeds to Kyle of Lochalsh on 7 April, the Far North on 8 April and returning home on 9 April.

The train will feature Riviera Class 47s and Pullman stock. It is a busy weekend for the company, as on 7 April there is an InterCity Merrymaker to Chester and Llandudno from London Paddington, picking up at Chiltern Line stations.

Scotland is busy with charters on 7 April as Green Express head for Stirling and Perth from Sheffield and selected stations via Hebden Bridge and Blackburn. Two days later, and the Cumbrian Coast is the chosen destination from Spondon, Long Eaton, Langley Mill, Alfreton and Chesterfield. Ravenglass and Sellafield are the alternative destinations.

Cotswold Rail to remain in the steam market with Steamy Affairs

Adrian Parcell, Managing Director of Cotswold Rail, has told *Railway Herald* that as part of extending Advenza's safety case to include steam operations, the company will shortly be commencing training and refresher courses for steam drivers on the West Somerset Railway.

Currently, four individuals will be trained to undertake both driving and firing roles, two of whom already have mainline steam experience.

He also confirms that the company's Steamy Affairs subsidiary remains committed to working with key partners and will continue to operate steam charters, with further such trains planned for the autumn. Mr Parcell adds that Locomotive 6201 Princess Elizabeth Society Limited is "firmly seen" as one of those partners. Additionally, working with other train operators has been identified as a desired option in recognition of the specialist nature of steam operations.

His comments come in the wake of the substitution of No. 6201 *Princess Elizabeth* at short notice on Steamy Affairs 24 March charter from Crewe to Carlisle and back. The reason for this is attributed to the purchase of Steamy Affairs being completed quickly, thus not allowing sufficient time to allow the necessary detailed analysis of the operational requirements of the trip to be completed. Consequently, it was deemed advisable to change the specification.

Earlier, Locomotive 6201 Princess Elizabeth Society Limited had issued a statement pointing out that it had concluded an agreement with Steamy Affairs over six months ago to undertake the 24 March charter and others, which resulted in having to turn down other work offered subsequently. The society also refer to a lack of communication concerning its role on 24 March, and make the point that the No. 6201 had been turned at Crewe in readiness for the charter and that it was fully serviceable and available. The society conclude by expressing disappointment at not being able to undertake the role, but are hopeful that future booked charters with No. 6201 will be honoured.

Railway Herald is aware that this situation has been the centre of much comment and rumour, the accuracy of which being debateable. It seems that the core of the problem surrounds communication, or the lack of it at key moments.

Let us hope that all the key partners to this situation can now get together to resolve any issues and continue to run successful charters in the future, some of which will hopefully be headed by Pacific No. 6201 *Princess Elizabeth*.

BELOW: BR-blue liveried Class 86/1 No. 86101 *Sir William A Stanier FRS* speeds down the West Coast Main Line around Euxton Junction while working the first leg of the Carlisle - Holyhead charter on 23 March. *Fred Kerr*

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
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
21 Apr	Hertfordshire (BP)	2xRiviera 47	Stratford-Tottenham Hale-Waltham Cross-Harlow Town-Bishops Stortford-Audley End-Cambridge-Durham and return
21 Apr	RTC	76079&45407	(Leicester-Loughborough-Beeston-Nottingham (rev)- Uttoxeter-Crewe) (rev)-Shrewsbury-Llandrindrod Wells-Newport-(Gloucester-Birmingham NS-Leicester-Loughborough-Beeston-Nottingham(rev)-Uttoxeter-Crewe)
21 Apr	Steamy Affairs	6201	(Ashford-Headcorn-Paddock Wood-Tonbridge-Sevenoaks-Bromley South-Kensington Olympia-Coventry)-Birmingham International-Chester (and return)
25 Apr	Railtourer	2xWCRC 47	Peterborough-Doncaster-Carnforth-Sellafield-Carlisle-Hexham-Durham and return
25 Apr	Steam Dreams	34067	London Victoria-Bromley South-Tonbridge-Ashford-Hastings-London Victoria
28 Apr	Green Express	2xWCRC 47	Skipton-Shipley-Wakefield-Barnsley-Sheffield-Lickey Incline-Bath and return
28 Apr	Hertfordshire (BP)	2xRiviera 47	Tonbridge-Sevenoaks-Orpington-Bromley South-Brixton-York and return
28 Apr	ICMM	2xRiviera 47	Minehead-Blue Anchor-Watchet-Williton-Bishops Lydeard-Taunton-Weston super Mare-Bristol TM-Bristol Parkway-York and return
28 Apr	PMR Tours	6233	'The Cuneo Centennial': London Waterloo-Clapham Junction-Hounslow-Staines-Woking-Basingstoke-Salisbury-Sherbourne-Yeovil Junction (break/rev) and return
28 Apr	Vintage Trains	4965	Tyseley Warwick Road-Nuneaton-Leicester-Trent Junction-Chesterfield-Moorthorpe-York (break/rev) 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.

Hertfordshire line-up

Victa Westlink Rail, which acquired Hertfordshire after the collapse of FM Rail, has reinforced its commitment to the charter market by unveiling a programme of trains for the period running from April to August.

The tours will utilise Riviera Trains 'Great Briton Pullman' rake of refurbished Mk2 air-conditioned coaches together with Riviera Class 47s.

However, one exception to diesel haulage, and also probably the highlight of its programme will be the use of Merchant Navy No. 35028 *Clan Line* on 8 July on a train from London Waterloo for a run to Salisbury. After a break for servicing, the excursion proceeds via Romsey and Southampton to Eastleigh. Here the train reverses and heads for Poole, now with a diesel pilot (EWS Class 37 requested) with No. 35028 inside running tender first (due to the absence of turning facilities at Poole) for a further break.

Clan Line then heads the return to London via Bournemouth and Eastleigh (where water will be taken) followed by a non-stop run back to London. The train commemorates the 40th anniversary of the end of Southern steam. This trip is reported to be the only occasion this year that *Clan Line* will appear on anything other than a VSOE British Pullman working.

Victa Westlink also intend to continue with the 'Merrymaker' branding for general and enthusiast day excursions, the highlight of which will be a 9 June working from London Paddington to Minehead, which will also feature an optional sailing on the preserved paddle-steamer 'Waverley'. Later, on 28 July the company visits the Great Central Railway, with the train originating at Guildford.

The main 'Pullman' programme has a wide variety of destinations available, ranging from Chesterfield (for Chatsworth House) to The Eden Project and the Lost Gardens of Heligan.

BELOW: On the return of Hertfordshire's Intercity Merrymaker tour from Sheffield, Class 47/4s Nos. 47839 and 47805 approach Blue Anchor on 24th March. *John Whitehouse*

Are we in the right place?

ABOVE: Is this the farthest north that the South West Trains livery has reached? Having now been leased to First ScotRail, Class 158 No. 158786 awaits departure time from one of the new platforms at Edinburgh Waverley on 14 March with the 13.42 service to Glenrothes. *Richard Owen*

BELOW: A twist of fate? Now operated by Northern Rail Class 158 No. 158860 *Isambard Kingdom Brunel*, named while working for its previous operator, Wessex Trains, stands at Newcastle on 27 March, having just arrived with the 07.42 service from Hexham. This train passes through Wylam, the birthplace of Brunel's rival, George Stephenson! *Eezypeazy*

Unusual traction at Cockwood Harbour

ABOVE: Network Rail's Structure Gauging Train made a rare visit to the South-West when Class 31/1 No. 31285 'topped-and-tailed' with No. 31106 worked the 18.05 Exeter St Davids to Bristol Barton Hill, via Penzance. The train is pictured passing Cockwood Harbour in the last light of the day on 27 March.

BELOW: Still carrying its Trainload Freight 'triple-grey' colour scheme, Class 60 No. 60055 *Thomas Barnardo* was a rare visitor to the South-West, becoming the first '60' into Cornwall for many months, when it worked from Newport Alexandra Dock Junction to St Blazey on 23 March. After spending the weekend at St Blazey, the locomotive worked back to South Wales, piloting Class 66 No. 66193 on the 13.01 St Blazey to Newport Alexandra Dock Junction, seen crossing the causeway at Cockwood Harbour on 27 March, providing the spectacle of two locomotive-hauled trains passing this location on the same afternoon. *Both: Nathan Williamson*

Intermodal Electrics!

ABOVE: While several of Freightliner's electric locomotives have now been repainted into the company's familiar green and yellow livery, a number of the fleet still retain the previous triple-grey colour scheme with Freightliner branding. Here Class 90 No. 90042 passes through Cheddington on 17 March. *Alan Wallwork*

RIGHT: Classmate No. 90045 heads north through Rivenhall, near Witham, on the East Anglian mainline with a Trafford Park-Felixstowe intermodal service on 26 March. *James Welham*

BELOW: Out of all the Freightliner Class 86/6s, these two locomotives represent 66% of the fleet that have not yet been repainted! No. 86637 leads No. 86622 with the 14.03 Ditton - Felixstowe North service on 28 March through Elmhurst, on the Trent Valley section of the West Coast Main Line. *Chris Caley*

Porterbrook leasing helps Moseley

Porterbrook Leasing has donated two locomotive nameplates to the Moseley Railway Trust (MRT).

These nameplates, removed from Class 87 and Class 90 electric locomotives, will be sold at auction to raise funds for the MRT.

The locomotive nameplates *Earl Marischal* from No.87029 and *British Transport Police* from No. 90012 will be sold by the Sheffield Railwayana auction on 16 June.

Both nameplates are highly collectable relics which were fitted to the locomotives when they operated on the West Coast Main Line. The plate *Earl Marischal* is expected to be particularly sought after, as the second plate from this locomotive has been claimed by the Railway Heritage Committee. The plate sold on 16 June, therefore, will be the only one ever to be available to the general public.

ABOVE: **The East Lancashire Railway operated another of its popular 'NightRider' events during March. Class 24 No. D5054 awaits departure time from Bury Bolton Street in the early hours of 18 March, with the 00.24 service to Ramsbottom.** *Garry Sparks*

Diesel gala for Peak Rail

Peak Rail is holding a diesel gala weekend on 12/13 May featuring four ex-BR mainline diesel locomotives.

The locos in action should be Nos. 31270, 37152, D8 *Penyghent* and D9016 *Gordon Highlander,* all of which will be working passenger services between Rowsley South and Matlock Riverside.

Following the commissioning of the new passing loop at Darley Dale, the event will also feature diesel-hauled demonstration freight services.

A selection of locomotives from the Heritage Shunters Trust will be used for hauling brake van trains at Rowsley South, using the groups newly restored LMS Brake Van.

The event will be the first chance for enthusiasts to travel behind Class 55 'Deltic' D9016 *Gordon Highlander* on Peak Rail and the locomotive, which is currently carrying two-tone green, should also be sporting full yellow ends for the first time since the late 1960s. It is planned that No. D9016 will be repainted into BR-blue during the 2008 season.

BELOW: ***RH*** **reported last week on the new signal gantry in place at Cheddleton. The gantry is pictured, in the company of BR Standard 4MT 2-6-4T No. 80098 in mid-March.** *David Gibson*

Award for West Somerset

Following the British Travel Trade Fair at the National Exhibition Centre in Birmingham on 13/14 March, the West Somerset Railway stand was presented with an award for the Best Overall Participation. The award is given on the basis of the quality of the stand, the staff's approach and also the amount of work that is carried out before the show to make contacts and seek new business.

Great Central Railway buys Irish steam-heat vans

The Great Central Railway has acquired four steam-heating vans from Irish Rail for use on its winter services.

The vehicles are Mk1 brake carriages which were sent to Ireland and converted for their heating role. Bringing them back to the UK will involve them being placed on new bogies for standard gauge track. They are expected to be craned off a transport lorry at Quorn in early April.

"We plan to re-wheel two of these vehicles straight away for use at the GCR and sell two on to other heritage railways," said the railway's general manager Robert Crew. "Of the two we retain, one is likely to appear in maroon livery, the other in 'carmine and cream' to match our main operating sets. Some remedial body work is required and the boilers inside the vehicles will require an overhaul before they can be used. However, we don't think this will take too long and we look forward to the vehicles entering service relatively quickly."

The coaches will allow the railway's vital revenue generating 'Santa Specials' to be heated constantly during the day, easing the burden on steam locomotive crews. While the vans still retain a brake compartment which could be used by a guard, the boilers are designed to operate totally automatically.

The vehicles will also mean that GCR can look at increasing its range of heritage traction events. The lack of heating facilities on the railway's diesel locomotives, means that the railway has not previously been able to operate a diesel gala in January or November. The use of the steam-heat vans will now make this a possibility.

The Diesel Gala scene

ABOVE: Visiting the Mid-Norfolk Railway diesel gala event on 17 March was the South East Locomotive Group's Class 33 No. 33065 *Sealion*. Here the 'Crompton' approaches Yaxham with the 14.00 Dereham - Wymondham Abbey service. *Chris Nye*

RIGHT: The Bodmin & Wenford Railway held another of its successful diesel gala events on 24/25 March. Here, Class 20 No. 20166 *River Fowey* brings up the rear of a Bodmin General to Bodmin Parkway with No. 50042 *Triumph* leading through Quarry Curve. Rumours continue that the Type 1 could be leaving the railway shortly, although nobody from the railway was available for comment. *Brian Garrett*

BELOW: Recently repainted Class 31/1 No. 31119 arrives at Embsay on 24 March with a service from Bolton Abbey. Alongside is Class 47/0 No. 47004, which was unfortunately failed with technical problems for part fo the gala weekend. *Fred Kerr*

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The Railway Herald

SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT

WEST SOMERSET RAILWAY 2007 SPRING STEAM GALA

Welcome

Summer Saturdays in the West evoke many memories for rail enthusiasts around the country.

Through the ages, summer Saturday holiday trains have produced countless timeless pictures for those who photograph at the lineside as well as fond recollections for those who travelled on them.

The West Somerset Railway chose this subject as the theme for its latest highly acclaimed Spring Steam Gala held on the 16/17 and 22-25 March, recreating the days when the Great Western, the Southern and the Somerset & Dorset Railway's all carried people on holiday to the West Country.

In keeping with previous years, the gala has been staggered over two weekends, such is the popularity of the events now staged on the branch. After large amounts of preparation and hard work by volunteers behind the scenes, no less than 14 steam locomotives appeared during the gala weekends, some arriving by road from other preserved railways, while others worked onto the line under their own steam during the preceding weeks. Virgin Trains supplied one of its modern Voyager units on both weekends to operate a shuttle service for passengers between Taunton's mainline station and Bishops Lydeard.

Extensive cutting back by volunteers had again taken place on the branch over the winter months, completed just in time to allow the 100s of primroses and other wild flowers to grow through untouched.

Trains were diagrammed to be as authentic as possible, with a single loco and coaches, or double headed with classes which would have operated together during their mainline steam days. Trains conveyed a buffet and bar, while the 'Quantock Belle' was also in operation serving all day breakfasts on selected services.

A demonstration freight was limited to the Minehead to Dunster section, although with such an intensive passenger timetable in operation it is clear to see that there were no pathing opportunities to traverse the full length of the line.

Passenger loadings appeared to be good, with the added Virgin Voyager shuttle and free bus service, the railway now has additional capacity to allow people to choose how they wish to access the line. Both Minehead and Williton sheds have opened their doors to the public for a small entrance fee, allowing visitors to see the current restoration work on No. 34046 *Braunton* and No. 7828 *Odney Manor,* while other ongoing projects on the locomotive and coaching stock fleet could also be viewed.

Gala weekends not only give enthusiasts the chance to ride trains from their past, but they also allow lineside photography to permit holders throughout the length of the line.

While the line has an increased selection of steam locomotives, there have been several photographic charters arranged by numerous organisers which have provided the chance for people to relive some scenes from the past and have an enjoyable day out on the way.

FRONT COVER: Large Prairie tank No. 4160 leads 'Castle' class 4-6-0 No. 5051 *Earl Bathurst* through Nethercott, a few miles out of Bishops Lydeard on 16 March. *David Gibson*

BACK COVER: The driver of S&D 2-8-0 No. 88 has the loco working hard up the grade towards Stogumber with a service bound for Bishops Lydeard. *Brian Garrett*

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BELOW: Very little in this scene gives away the year, only the signalling system suggesting that it is a heritage line in 2007. With Crowcombe signal box locked out and the signals cleared for both directions, the driver of visiting 'Castle' No. 5051 *Earl Bathurst* waits patiently for the crew of visiting 'Manor' No. 7822 *Foxcote Manor,* during a brief pause in a photographic charter on 12 March. This must surely be preservation at its best! *Chris Perkins*

Photographic charter specials

With the visiting locomotives having arrived in the weeks preceeding the gala festivities, the opportunity was taken by a number of organisers to operate several photographic charter specials.

RIGHT: Ex-GWR 'Manor' No. 7822 *Foxcote Manor* and 'Castle' No. 5051 *Earl Bathurst* head a Russ Hillier Photographic Charter through the trees near Crowcombe on 12 March. *John Whitehouse*

BELOW: Another of these charter specials used Small Prairie No. 4160 and 'Castle' class No. 5051 *Earl Bathurst* on a rake of maroon-liveried Mk1 vehicles. Here the train passes through the Somerset countryside on a glorious spring afternoon, not far north of Bishops Lydeard on 16 March. *David Gibson*

Steam action from the gala!

ABOVE: Two locomotives were visiting the West Somerset Railway for the gala weekend from the Bodmin & Wenford Railway (BWR). The first of these, ex-GW 4200 Class No. 4247 crosses Yard Bridge before passing Kingswood and arriving at Stogumber.

BELOW: On 18 March, BR Standard 4MT 2-6-4T No. 80136 and the second visitor from the BWR, 'West Country' No. 34007 *Wadebridge,* double-head a Minehead - Bishops Lydeard service on the approch to Woolsten Moor. **Both:** *Brian Garrett*

ABOVE: One of the 'Small Prarie' tanks visiting the railway for the gala, ex-Taunton based No. 5521 is pictured with classmate No. 5553 (the latter the pilot engine) as the pair storm up the grade through the well known location of Castle Hill. After the gala, No. 5521 is due to make an appearance at a steam gathering in Poland, hence the newly fitted steam pump on it's smokebox. *John Whitehouse*

BELOW: Memories of winding along the Cambrian lines come to mind, as the Llangollen Railway's 'Manor' No. 7822 *Foxcote Manor* leads the Severn Valley Railway's No. 7802 *Bradley Manor* through Turks Cutting during the first day of the Spring Steam Gala, complete with the 'Cambrian Coast Express' headboard! No. 7802 arrived and departed the railway through two specially organised mainline steam charter services. *Brian Garrett*

ABOVE: Returning to the railway after its running in period, the National Railway Museum's ex-Southern Railway 'Lord Nelson' class 4-6-0 No. 850 *Lord Nelson* heads past the site of Leigh Loops with the 15.15 Minehead to Bishops Lydeard service on 23 March. This was an extra working after No. 5521 had failed prior to an earlier working. The locomotive is due to leave the West Somerset Railway on its first public mainline charter service, 'The Trafalgar Express' to Eastleigh on 31 March.

BELOW: One of the visiting star locomotives was recently returned to steam un-rebuilt West Country No. 34007 *Wadebridge* from the Bodmin & Wenford Railway. Here the Pacific skirts the coast at Doniford with the 17.05 Minehead to Bishops Lydeard service 23 March. *Both: Chris Perkins*

National network comes to the WSR!

Although the entire gala weekend was dedicated to West Somerset Railway steam traction, other forms of motive power did appear on the railway.

Hertfordshire Rail Tours, now operated by Victa Westlink, ran a charter from Sheffield to Minehead under its InterCity Merrymaker brand on 24 March, and Virgin Trains provided a Voyager unit on each Saturday and Sunday of the event.

The Voyager worked an additional service train from Bristol Temple Meads through to Bishops Lydeard before operating several shuttle services between Bishops Lydeard and Taunton during the day. The train then returned to Bristol Temple Meads during the late afternoon, again as an additional through passenger working.

Both of these operations have made use of the recently resignalled connection from the National Network, just south of Taunton station at Norton Fitzwarren.

RIGHT: **Having journeyed down from Yorkshire and the Midlands, Class 47/4 No. 47839 awaits departure from Wiliton station with the charter for Minehead on 24 March. The train returned north later the same afternoon.** *Mark Few*

BELOW: **Virgin Trains provided the incongruous sight of a Class 220 Voyager to work a shuttle service connecting visitors with mainline trains at Taunton. Here No. 220024 *Sheffield Voyager* passes Longlands Farm while working the 13:57 Taunton - Bishops Lydeard service.** *Brian Garrett*

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