

The Railway Herald

23 December 2005

No.25

The complimentary UK railway journal for the railway enthusiast



Season's Greetings to all our readers

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Issue 25
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Editor's comment

As this is the final Railway Herald before Christmas, it seems a good opportunity to thank you all for your support and contributions over the past ten months.

The readership of Railway Herald continues to grow and become stronger with each issue and we now have subscriptions and regular readers in a wide range of countries including Australia, New Zealand, France, Germany, Poland, Russia and the United States.

Many many thanks go to all our contributors who regularly volunteer photographs and news information for use within Railway Herald. Being a voluntary magazine, their only reward is seeing their work in print and for this we cannot thank you enough. Without those contributors we could continue to provide the quality of coverage that we do.

I would also like to thank all of the passenger and freight operators and the related railway companies who provide us with much help and assistance throughout the year.

We always welcome photographs, especially from new contributors and these should be sent to the editor, by e-mail at editor@railwayherald.co.uk

There will be a special, smaller Railway Herald published mid-week next week, so that you all have plenty to read and enjoy while the turkey settles! So look out for that.

One does wonder what response this familiar gentleman, observed at Lancaster station got when he rang

National Rail Enquiries for the times of direct services to North Pole via Lapland! Oh, and before anybody suggests it, no, it isn't your editor!



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Getting involved and contributing to Railway Herald

One of the most common questions we are asked by readers is can I submit news, information and pictures to you?

Yes, definitely is always the answer! Just like the printed magazines, we welcome submission from

all our readers. The only requirement that we have is that pictorial submissions are digital (with the aim of being a weekly magazine we simply do not have the timescales to allow prints and slides) and that the original file off the camera is available to us. To

be of suitable quality this file should be around a minimum of 1.5Mb, although the higher the better!

To submit to us, just drop an email to the editor - our contact address and details are contained in the yellow box on the left!

A very Merry Christmas to all our readers!

FRONT COVER: The first runs of one of the new Class 185 First Trans-Pennine Express DMU's under its own power took place on 22nd December from their temporary base at Manchester Longsight to Carnforth and back. Here, Siemens built Class 185 No. 185102 passes Lancaster on the outbound journey. **WILF SMITH**

BELOW: Carrying the original version of EW&S colours, together with a Highland Rail stag logos, Class 37/4 No. 37419 prepares to depart from Cardiff Central with the final scheduled loco-hauled passenger service to Rhyrne, 19.05 Cardiff-Rhyrne on 10th December, complete with wreath. **SAM FELCE**



First Group win Greater Western and Thameslink franchises

The Department for Transport (DfT) has awarded both the Greater Western and Thameslink/Great Northern franchises to FirstGroup plc, the current operator of the Great Western, ScotRail and Trans-Pennine franchises.

The new franchises see major changes affecting the respective regions, with the new Greater Western franchise combining First Great Western, First Great Western Link and Wessex Trains into one company. The new franchise will generate £1 billion in premium payments to DfT over the full 10 year period.

The Greater Western franchise, which runs for seven years with a potential three year extension, will come under First Group operation from 1st April 2006.

Several improvements are planned for the Greater Western franchise following the integration of the three companies next year, including a new timetable from December 2006.

In addition, a programme of continuous improvement and investment is planned providing increased capacity and service together with the creation of a new family of brands for the franchise. High speed intercity services will become known as First Great Western Express, suburban services out of London Paddington will remain as First Great Western Link, while the regional services, presently operated by Wessex Trains, will come under the brand name of First Great Western Local.

Around £200 million is to be spent in investments to the train fleet, mainly in the first two years. The interiors of the HST fleet are to be totally redesigned to provide better standards in passenger comfort, facilities and more capacity, with the first completely refurbished set being accepted into traffic within the first six months of the new franchise. To provide a more constant reliability, the fleet of HST power cars are to be overhauled and fitted with new quieter and more environmentally friendly engines.

The company plans to work with the Department for Transport with regards to the introduction of the HST2 project, which itself is designed to replace the existing HST fleet.

The benefits and refurbishment of the fleet are not limited to the high speed fleet of First Great Western Express. Both FGW Link and FGW Local fleets will undergo a programme of improvements and interior uplifts throughout the period for the franchise, which will include the installation of CCTV cameras with each coach.

Work is also to take place with station enhancements, occurring in the early years of the franchise, including new ticket machine technology and upgrades to passenger facilities such as waiting rooms, toilet facilities and ticket offices. It is planned to provide an additional 1,700 car parking spaces across the network, in addition to cycle parking

facilities at every station.

Introduction of new automatic ticket gates are to be introduced at Plymouth, Exeter St Davids, Bath Spa and Swindon, together with platforms 9-14 at London Paddington as new ticket issuing technology comes on stream.

One of the key commitments of the franchise, which has pleased many people, is the retention of the overnight sleeper services between London Paddington, Plymouth and Penzance.

The timetable improvements put forward by First Group include the retention of a half-hourly service between Paddington, Bristol and Cardiff throughout the day and a 20% increase in seats available during morning peak between Reading and London and more than 30% in the evening peak through investments in the fleet, more rolling stock and improved timetabling.

Other enhancements to the timetable include additional morning and evening peak services at Twyford, Maidenhead and Slough and new cross Bristol services with through trains between Worcester and Taunton, Cardiff to Westbury/Southampton/Weymouth and Weston-super-Mare and Filton, a regular hourly service between Westbury and London Paddington and an increase from hourly to half-hourly of the Reading/Gatwick service off peak.

As has occurred in other parts of the country, a fully integrated control centre is to

be designed to allow First and Network Rail to work more closely together to provide the service.

As previously mentioned, First Group have also gained the Thameslink/Great Northern Franchise, which is to be renamed First Capital Connect. This franchise will run for up to nine years, depending upon performance targets and implementation of the anticipated Thameslink programme and will result in an income to the Government of £808 million in premium payments.

First Group plan to invest more than £52 million, the majority in the first three years, to boost passenger service quality. Changes will include cleaner, smarter trains and stations, better ticketing facilities, customer friendly staff and better security combined with more reliable and punctual services.

The company intend to provide a more secure travelling environment through a wide range of security enhancements including additional CCTV cameras, help points and investment in a team of 24 dedicated Police Community Support Officers, five additional British Transport Police Officers and the investment programme mainly targeted at station improvements, including upgraded waiting facilities and toilets and enhanced passenger information systems.

Rolling stock enhancements are to be undertaken to improve reliability and the customer environment including upgrading the interiors of the Thameslink fleet and automatic ticket gates will be installed at eleven stations to improve security, reduce ticketless travel and cut vandalism.

One of key aims of the franchise commitment is to develop a 'round-the-clock' service, operating 24 hours a day between Gatwick Airport and Luton.

As part of the commitment to increase capacity on its services, the new Thameslink timetable boosts peak time capacity for commuters by up to 10,000 seats a day, with the extra capacity being split between morning and evening peaks. However, the majority of capacity improvements will be on Thameslink services north of London where trains are most crowded.



ABOVE: The northern stretches of First Capital Connect, as the new franchise operation will be known, will benefit from increased capacity during peak times. RICHARD TUPLIN

Hampshire DEMU derails at Meldon Quarry



ABOVE: On the night of the 20th/21st December, the Dartmoor Railway witnessed a derailment, when Class 205 'Hampshire' No. 205028 ran away and derailed on the catch points connecting the railway with the mainline to Crediton. The power car of No. 205028 was derailed and ended up, as shown, at an angle of 45 degrees. The unit is privately owned and recovery was due to take place on 23 December by use of a road crane. It is understood that both the HM Railways Inspectorate and the Rail Accident Investigation Bureau are investigating. It is not known as to why the unit's set number has been covered up.

NATHAN WILLIAMSON

Railway message boards

We have recently launched a new message board and photo-gallery section to the Railway Herald website, accessible to all readers via the website's home page.

Membership to the boards required to post messages and they are designed to encourage the discussion of railway activities and operations on both the national network and heritage lines as well as the freedom to share photographs between readers.

New Brighton-Ashford service

Southern's new direct rail service between Brighton and Ashford was flagged off on 11th December by Brighton Mayor, Councillor Bob Carden at Brighton station.

The new service has reduced the previous journey time by 35 minutes to about one hour and forty-five minutes, with the additional benefit of no changes of train, where previously it took two changes of train to get from Brighton to Ashford. The new service will provide a more convenient link to Eurostar services at Ashford and the future fast services into London.

To celebrate the new upgraded service, Southern is giving away free day return rail tickets.

Southern are offering passengers the chance to apply online for free return rail tickets for travel between Ashford and Brighton on selected days in 2005/2006.

To avoid overcrowding the free tickets will be based on the space available, and in any case will be limited to 100 per day.

The free tickets can be booked online by visiting their website.

GNER honours Edinburgh gunner

ECML passenger operator GNER, has named Class 91 No. 91122 Tam The Gun.

The naming was carried out in a short ceremony at Edinburgh Waverley on 6th December as a tribute to the late district gunner, Thomas 'Tam the Gun' McKay.

His widow, Mrs Joyce McKay together with family and close friends, carried out the naming.

Staff Sergeant, Thomas McKay MBE, affectionately known as 'Tam the Gun', fired Edinburgh Castle's One O'Clock Gun for over 25 years and was the longest-serving district gunner for Edinburgh.

Mr McKay was also a keen rail enthusiast and prior to his days as district gunner had worked as a steward on British Rail's restaurant cars between Edinburgh and London, the route now served by GNER.

To commemorate the train-naming, world-renowned model makers, Hornby, have commissioned a special limited-edition train-set which replicates the GNER electric 'Mallard' train carrying the 'Tam the Gun' name.

The model train will feature in Hornby's 2006 catalogue and will be available from Spring 2006.



ABOVE: The 'Queen of Scots' Pullman normally based at Clapham Junction has been temporarily moved to East Ham depot in East London, to allow maintenance work to be carried out. The set is pictured inside the depot on 14th December. BRIAN MORRISON



Class 185 makes first test run in UK

ABOVE: The first of the new Class 185 DMUs for First Trans-Pennine made its inaugural test run on 22nd December from Longsight to Carnforth and Barrow. The set, which had been sat at Wembley for several days awaiting clearance for a move north, is the first of the fleet to operate on the national network under its own power. A further two Class 185s are currently at Wembley Yard awaiting delivery to Manchester. Testing of the new fleet is to take place between Preston and Barrow and York and Darlington throughout the remainder of 2005 and well into the new year, with an introduction into public service on Manchester Piccadilly - Hull services, scheduled for mid-March 2006. **PETER HEPPENSALL**

FMRail 'Blue Pullman' 47s repainted

BELOW: The first two FMRail 100mph Class 47/7 locomotives to be repainted into the Nanking Blue colour scheme carried by the company's 'Blue Pullman' train have been released from WCRC depot at Carnforth, where they have been repainted. Still carrying their original Fragonset names, Class 47/7 Nos. 47703 Hermes and 47712 Artemis speed through Lancaster in fading light on 22nd December, bound for Derby. The final completion of the livery and application of the bodyside logos will take place at Barrow Hill, with the first public run scheduled for 12th January, a circular trip from London King's Cross via Cambridge. **WILF SMITH**



Virgin CrossCountry use HSTs during pre-Christmas period





In the two weeks prior to Christmas, Virgin CrossCountry hired-in a Midland Mainline HST set each weekday to form the 07.07 Leeds-Plymouth and 16.25 return service. The HST requirement was due to a number of Class 220 and 221 Voyager sets being out of traffic.

On the first day of operation, 14th December, the set started from Derby as the 06.05 Derby-Plymouth. Between 14-16th December powercars Nos. 43048/066 were used, while Nos. 43049/066 were provided for the second week of running.

A number of passengers seemed pleased at the return of HST stock to longer distance CrossCountry services, offering far more space than on Voyager stock, and providing much needed extra luggage space in the busy pre-Christmas period.

ABOVE: On a beautiful sunny winter morning, the 07.07 Leeds-Plymouth rounds the curve at Aller at the foot of Dainton Bank on 22nd December. The train is led by powercar No. 43066 and was running a few minutes behind schedule on this day due to traffic congestion in the Birmingham-Bristol area.

PREVIOUS PAGE: Pulling out of the 512yd long Parsons Tunnel between Dawlish and Teignmouth, the 07.07 Leeds-Plymouth with powercar No. 43066 at the front, heads towards Teignmouth and along the sea wall section on 19th December.

BELOW: Led by powercar No. 43049 Neville Hill, the 'down' service on 20th December passes below the wooden Rockstone footbridge mid-way along the Dawlish sea wall. It is worth noting that when this picture was taken not one single person was to be seen walking along the wall, likely due to the winter weather conditions. All: Colin J. Marsden





ABOVE: Driver John Webb and Mrs Webb with the presentation nameplate at Hertford North station on 20 December. The ceremony to name WAGN Class 317/1 No 317345 was to commemorate Driver Webb's 50 years on the railway where he started as an engine cleaner at Hertford shed in 1953, retiring from Hitchin in 2003 as a driver trainer. He was one of the last people to pass as a driver on steam. **BRIAN MORRISON**

£1.7 million work completed on Cambrian line

Following severe storms and natural erosion, complex engineering works to repair the sea defences at Friog on the Cambrian Coast line have been completed by Network Rail.

The works have taken almost eight months to complete and have cost over £1.7 million.

The sea wall at Friog has been closely monitored in recent years due to natural erosion problems. With a repair scheme developed and contractors poised to start work, the defences were hit by severe weather on 27 March, closing the line between Fairbourne and Llywngwriol for over a month.

Work has also been hampered as access could only be gained for 90 minutes each day due to the tides.

The area exposed by the collapse in early 2005 was rebuilt with large granite stone blocks at the base and a section of large timber joists at the upper level.

The stonework was re-pointed – filling the fractures with epoxy mortar to prevent further erosion behind the wall.

EWS wins 'Caledonian Sleeper' haulage contract

First ScotRail has awarded EWS a new contract to provide drivers and locomotives for the operation of the Caledonian Sleeper services.

The contract, which will commence on 1 January 2006 and

run until 2011, will see a total of five Class 90 locos rebranded in First ScotRail's livery.

Class 67 locomotives will be used between Edinburgh and Aberdeen/Inverness. While the contract will initially see Class

37 locomotives used between Edinburgh and Fort William. First ScotRail, EWS and Network Rail are developing plans to introduce regular haulage with Class 67 traction during the early stages of the contract.



ABOVE: Despite appearances, this train is actually an Arriva Trains Wales service! Class 57/3 No. 57314 Firefly passes Winwick Junction with 10.03 Manchester Piccadilly - Holyhead ATW service on 13th December. ATW is using Class 57/3s on this diagram until the end of January. **FRED KERR**



ABOVE: On 14th December, Cotswold Rail operated an empty stock move (as 5Z21) from Gloucester Horton Road to Long Marston, conveying several Virgin liveried Mark 3s (without branding) and a HST power car. The train, which had moved from Bicester COD to Gloucester on 13th December, is pictured arriving at Long Marston. It comprises Cotswold Rail Class 47/3 No. 47316, with Class 43 No. 43065 and HST Mark 3s Nos. 42294, 44088, 41148, 41169, 40402, 42320, 42321, 44091 and Mark 3a No. 17173. **PETER TANDY**

Cough-free zone on c2c 'Electrostars'

BELOW: Intermediate trailer No 74716 of Class 357/2 No 357216 is the first vehicle of the c2c Electrostar fleet to be given advertising vinyls, reliveried in this way at East Ham Depot. The vehicle is pictured here at London Fenchurch Street on 14th December, just a few hours after the relivery was completed! The coach, which has been sponsored by Benylin, is branded 'Cough-Free Zone'. **BRIAN MORRISON**



HSTs return to Cross Country duty

As readers will have noted from our previous photographic spread, Virgin Trains hired in a MML HST set for several days on the run-up to Christmas.

Due to the continuing number of sets out of traffic, it looks likely that the use of one or possibly two HST sets will continue into January 2006.

Snowploughs for FGW 57s

The first of First Great Western's Class 57/6 locomotives has been moved to Brush Traction at Loughborough for fitting of snowploughs.

The locomotive was moved by GBRf Class 73s from Old Oak Common to Loughborough on 22nd December.



Diesels supreme in blue

ABOVE: No more than six or seven years old when this photograph was taken, Class 56 No. 56057 powers away from Salisbury past Milford in April 1984, with an Eastleigh bound stone train that would have originated from the Torr Works at Foster Yeoman at Merehead

LEFT: In the days when Class 50s were still employed on Waterloo - Exeter services, No. 50026 Indomitable exits Fisherton Tunnel, Salisbury Tunnel Junction, on 2 October 1985.

ALL: CHRIS NEVARD



ABOVE: Class 33/0 No. 33032 is seen in superb autumnal sunlight as it powers a Portsmouth Harbour to Bristol train close to the site of Alderbury Junction (near Salisbury) in October 1985.

Diesels supreme in blue

As a special 'treat' for readers this Christmas, we take you back, through the lens of Chris Nevard, to a period when loco-hauled passenger services were to be seen across the country on a daily basis; when classes such as the 'Grids' and 'Hoovers' still roamed the rails and when the likes of the Type 3s and Type 4s would be around forever! So sit back, relax and enjoy a taste of the mid-1980s!

ABOVE: A sight that all enthusiasts would love to see today. BR Class 37 No. 37314 heads a trio of English Electric Type 3s though Great Wishford, on the ex-Great Western Wylve Valley route between Warminster to Salisbury line, with an aggregate service in April 1984. ALL: CHRIS NEVARD

