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RAIL EXPRESS

DB CARGO UK TO SELL 47 CLASS 60s

Freight operator issues two separate tenders

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NEWS



MODELLING SECTION

- Excellent EFE '70' Southern electric examined
- 'TT:120' HSTs Hornby reveals new models
- Tiny traction tested Industrial and narrow gauge models

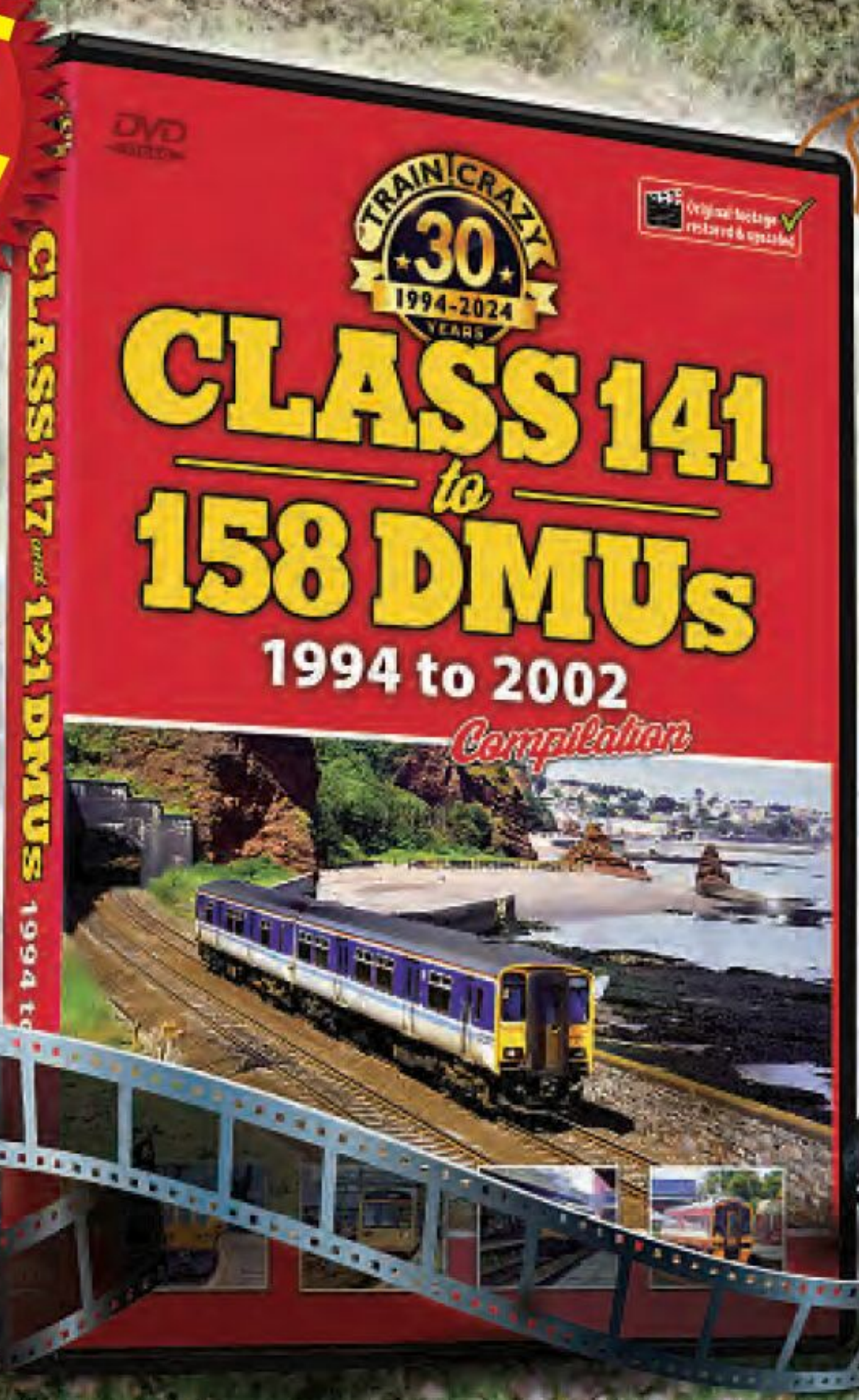
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2024 marks the 30th anniversary of Train Crazy railway videos and DVDs. Starting out as a hobby in 1994, then a full time job from 1998, over the last three decades, just about every type of locomotive and unit has featured, with more than 400 passenger, freight, cab ride and tram titles, released on VHS tape, DVD, Blu-ray and download.

Here's the good bit... In the last few years, software to restore old grainy and wobbly film has become more accessible. Previously it was expensive, slow and not very good, but in 2022 huge advances were made. The old film used on these new compilation programmes is all being reworked, improved, cleaned up and upscaled. For the first time, all of the film shot in standard-definition (720 x 576 or less) can be upscaled and presented in top quality high-definition (1920 x 1080).

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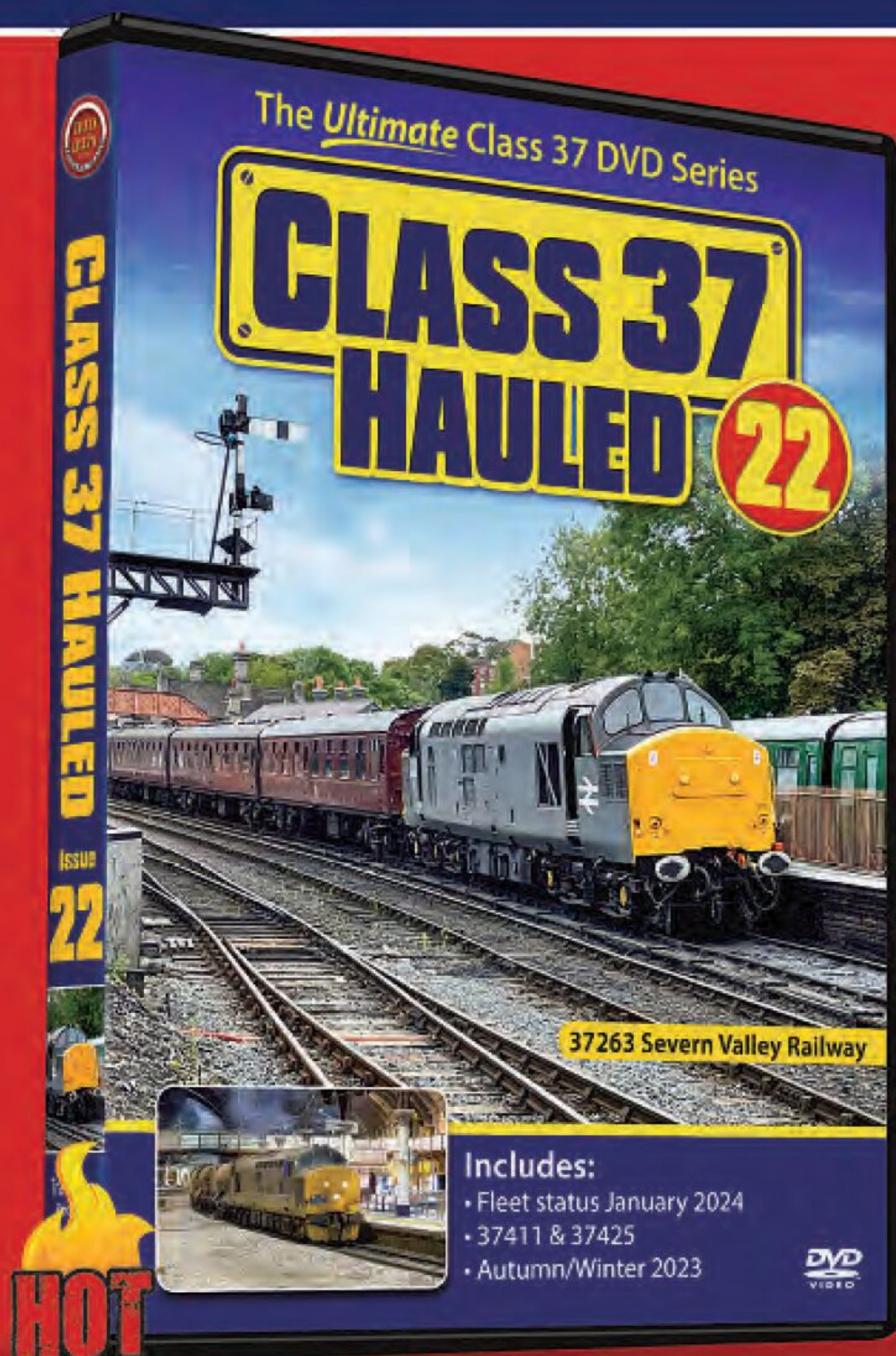
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Autumn/Winter 2023/24: 37 RHTT action from the autumn with DRS locos working off York for the final time; action from the Midlands with all the operational ROG 37s including 37901; 37418 to Blackpool; Cambrian Timber Trains; 37403 in Scotland; IM action at Derby; 37418 - first day out in new Loram livery.

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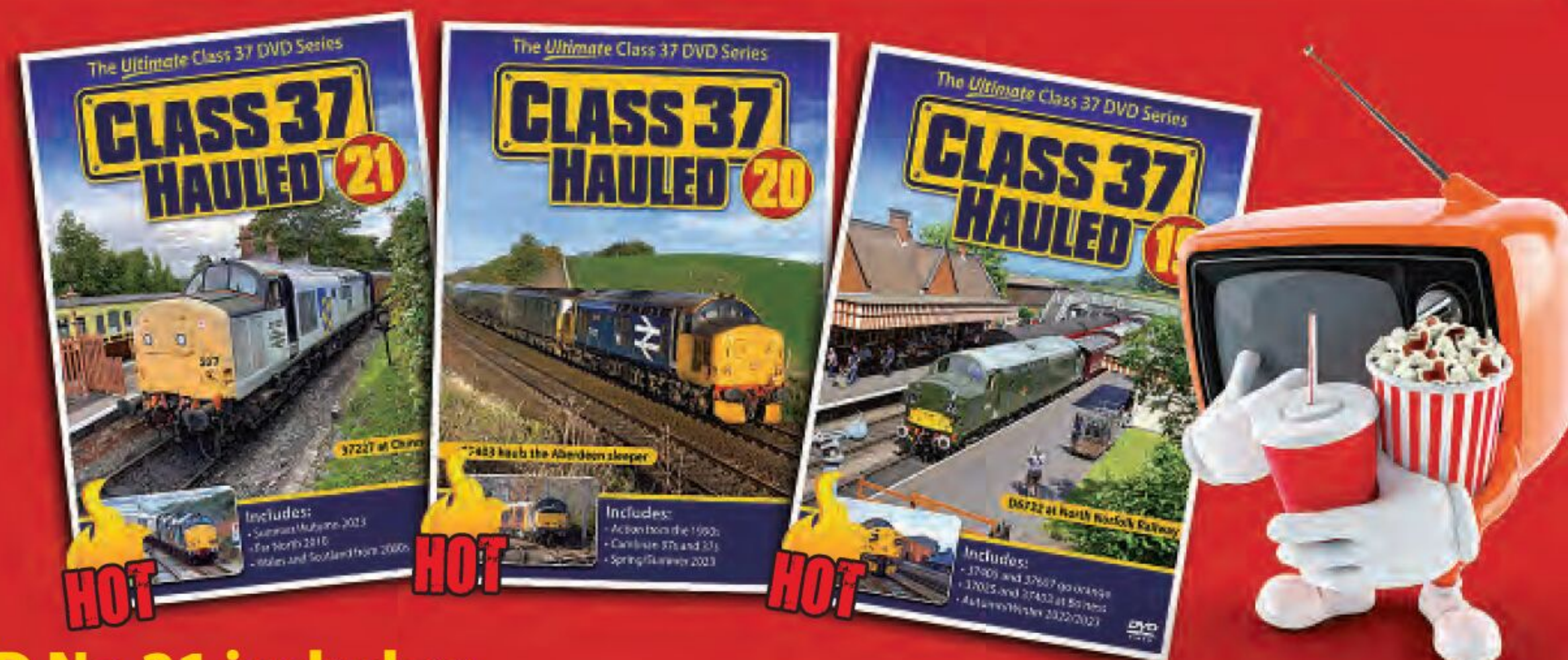
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DVD No.20	97 minutes	£14.95	TC520
DVD No.21	104 minutes	£14.95	TC521



DVD No.21 includes:

South Wales and Scotland from 2002 with 37/4s working a Boat Train from Cardiff to Fishguard and 37/4s and a few 37/5s working the Cardiff - Rhymney services. October 2010 with 37423+37610 right into the train shed at Thurso! 37227 at Chinnor.

Duration: 104 minutes **Price:** £14.95 **Code:** TC521

DVD No.20 includes:

Class 37 action starting in 1990 with footage from Dawlish and Exeter plus Warrington, Crewe and the North West. Spring/Summer 2023 with an extended feature on 37403 - from railtours and diesel galas to Mk5s and the Aberdeen sleeper.

Duration: 97 minutes **Price:** £14.95 **Code:** TC520

DVD No.19 includes:

Passenger and freight action from the 1980s and 1990s including the Cardiff based 37/4s at Crewe in 1989; long lost DRS locos including 37087, 37194, 37682 and 37688. An extended feature on the North Norfolk Railway's gala with D6732 (37032) and special guest 37401.

Duration: 100 minutes **Price:** £14.95 **Code:** TC519

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TFW Rail No. 197002 passes Ordsall Lane Junction, Manchester, on March 26, with the 1H87 11.42 Llandudno-Manchester Airport. Tom McAtee



Main picture: DB Cargo UK No. 60039 Dove Holes passes Plumley on March 31, 2021, with the 6H02 09.30 Warrington Arpley Sidings-Tunstead.
All photos: Richard Clinnick

RAIL EXPRESS

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RAIL EXPRESS

ON March 9, the second day of the Branch Line Society's 'BWC Two' tour, the snow-capped slopes of Beinn Dorain dominate the West Highland scenery as No. 37403 *Isle of Mull* traverses the hillside above the Highland Way and Allt Coire Chailein with the 1Z38 06.35 Fort William-Oban. The three-day tour featured the '37/4' hauling the 1Z36 11.13 Bo'ness-Edinburgh Waverley and 1Z37 12.56 Edinburgh Waverley-Fort William on March 8, before visiting Oban the following day. On March 10, the '37/4' visited Mallaig, Wemyss Bay, Glasgow Central and Glasgow Queen Street before returning to Bo'ness. GBRf No. 66776 *Joanne* was also used in the Central Belt during this part of the tour. To get the stock in place, two positioning moves ran, both hauled by GBRf No. 57303. The first was the 1Z36 09.49 Derby-Linlithgow 'Thunderbirds Are Go!' charter, with the return running as the 1Z44 10.43 Linlithgow-Derby 'International Rescue' charter. Funds raised were donated to the Martin's House Hospice and Great Ormond Street hospital charities. Tom Pickles

DB Cargo UK to sell 47 Class 60s

By Richard Clinnick

ALMOST 50 Class 60s have been put up for sale by DB Cargo UK.

The operator's chief executive Andrea Rossi had confirmed earlier this year that DBC would look to dispose of redundant locomotives (RE334).

Ten Class 67s, 12 Class 90s and 16 Class 60s had been put up for sale earlier this year (see *Power By The Hour*), but 31 Class 60s were made available on April 3. Should they all be sold, DBC will be left with five of the Brush Type 5s, a locomotive class it

has vowed to rid itself of. All 100 Class 60s joined the Wisconsin Freight fleet at the end of 1995 when five of the six trainload freight companies were privatised. DB inherited the entire fleet when it bought English, Welsh & Scottish Railways (EWS), and began disposing of the locomotives during the mid-2010s. The final DB examples were withdrawn late last year.

Put on the market on April 3 were Nos. 60003/005/023/025/027/030/031/033-035/041-043/045/049/051/053/054/058/067/069/071-073/082/083/088/091/094/097, 60500.

They join Nos. 60001/007/010/015/019/020/039/040/044/059/063/065/066/079/092, 60100 on the market, leaving DBC with only Nos. 60011/017/024/062/074 although these will likely also be made available.

The deadline for the latest tender is April 19, however the closing date for the '67s' and '90s' was January 19, and yet these are still listed as available for disposal by DBC.

The operator has recently sold 12 'demic' locomotives: 60012/032/036/037/048/052/068/077/078/084/089/093, to Land Recovery. At least

one locomotive spot-hire company has told *Rail Express* it is interested in acquiring 'Super 60s'.

Of the batch of 31 put up for sale, two are 'Super 60' locomotives overhauled by DBC at Toton during the 2010s (Nos. 60054/091). Of the five left on DBC's books, all were overhauled to 'Super 60' standard.

DBC is regearing 10 Class 66/0s to Class 66/6s to replace the '60s', with No. 66221 the first to be converted at Toton, and this will become No. 66651. These have been placed in the WBHT pool, which also contains Nos. 66149/156/161/164/167/171/181/183/194, suggesting that these will be converted.

As for the other locomotives available, as this issue of *Rail Express* went to press there was speculation that Freightliner had acquired some of the Class 90s in better condition, but sources were unable to confirm this. 

DB CARGO UK LOCOMOTIVES FOR SALE, APRIL 3

Class 60: 60001/003/005/007/010/015/019/020/023/025/027/030/031/033-035/039/040-045/049/051/053/054/058/059/063/065-067/069/071-073/079/082/083/088/091/092/094/097, 60100, 60500

Class 67: 67001/003/004/009/011/018/019/026/028/030

Class 90: 90019-021/024/026/028/029/034-037/039



DB Cargo UK No. 60091 *Barry Needham* passes Lostock Gralam on November 8, 2019, with the 6H02 09.27 Warrington Arpley Sidings-Tunstead. This is one of 47 DBC Class 60s up for sale. Tom McAtee.

Northern leaders call for Avanti West Coast contract cancellation

TRANSPORT for the North (TfN) officially passed a motion to write to Secretary of State for Transport Mark Harper, asking for Avanti West Coast to have its contract removed 'at the earliest possible opportunity'.

The motion was passed on March 20, and followed the submission of a report to the TfN Board that stated: "a continuation of the current situation is unacceptable to the North."

Speculation also suggested that around the same time of the motion being passed AWC would lose its contract, with the Department

for Transport (DfT) taking over and adding AWC to the list of 'nationalised' operators. That didn't happen.

TfN considered two options. One was to set a target for improvement by June or face 'further measures', or to terminate the contract straight away.

TfN chair Lord McLoughlin said: "The board was very clear. The performance on the West Coast Main Line by Avanti has been so poor, for so long, that action must now be taken."

"We will be writing statutory advice to the secretary of state, calling for Avanti to be relieved of its contract.

The travelling public deserve a service they can rely on. But Avanti has fallen far too short of expectations for far too long now."

In a debate on delays to rail reform and associated costs on March 21, Rail Minister Huw Merriman was asked by the shadow transport minister if the Government would strip AWC of its contract. Mr Merriman said: "No, we will not. The reason is that there are issues with the West Coast Main Line that will remain, regardless of who the operator is. It is essential to get underneath the bonnet, look at

the issues and fix them, rather than looking just at what is on the side of the car. To take just one four-week period from Christmas, 65% of the delays in that period were down not to the operator but Network Rail, and they involved weather-related issues as well as trespass and, sadly, suicides, which we need to minimise."

He also went on to claim that AWC was "unique" because "drivers will not double-trip" and tried to blame the agreement of the contract in 1997, when Virgin Trains won the franchise, for that situation.



Five more Class 221s for CrossCountry

AN additional five Class 221s will move from Avanti West Coast to CrossCountry. This is on top of a previous announcement that seven would move from AWC to XC, meaning that, in total, 12 five-car sets will be cascaded.

The trains will be used to strengthen trains from May next year and XC said this would increase capacity on north-south routes by more than 36,000 seats per week. Longer trains will be able to operate, with XC planning more, particularly on its Reading-Newcastle corridor.

Additional '221s' are expected to enter traffic from June, although they can only leave AWC once Class 805 bi-mode units begin entering traffic. It is expected that the '221s' will provide a capacity uplift of around 12,000 seats per week in time for the summer period.

XC said that although the additional trains will be brought into traffic as soon as possible, some services will see temporary changes to the timetable with some busier trains making fewer stops between June and September.

Stopping patterns will be adjusted

at Wakefield Westgate, Chesterfield, Basingstoke and Winchester to encourage passengers making shorter journeys to switch to other operators.

The planned cascade means 12 of the 18 AWC Class 221s have a new home, with six still to find a new operator. Two ex-AWC '221s' leased by Grand Central, Nos. 221142/143, are due to return to Beacon Rail in December. Various open access operators have expressed interest in using Class 22x units for the new services.

Greater Anglia yet to finalise Class 720 fleet plan

GREATER Anglia intends to accept all 133 Class 720 electric multiple units, with the final vehicles now completed by Alstom.

As this issue of *Rail Express* went to press, 116 of the five-car trains had been accepted, with Nos. 720102/138 the latest to enter traffic, both making their debuts on March 28.

A GA spokesperson told RE: "We

are still in the process of accepting all the remaining new Class 720 trains that were ordered from Alstom as part of our fleet replacement programme. We are working with Alstom to ensure a smooth process for the acceptance programme for the rest of the Class 720 fleet, which is expected to be completed over the next 12 months. We will decide how we best utilise and deploy

the remaining '720s' as they arrive with us."

It is understood that passenger demand is key to how many EMUs are required and that the operator is considering the possibility of sub-leasing the trains should a decision be made that not all are required.

Still to be accepted are Nos. 720101/104/139-144, 720502-505/509/510/516/519/534.

Porterbrook buys Long Marston site

PORTERBROOK has acquired the Long Marston Rail Innovation Centre from St Modwen.

The rolling stock leasing company has operated the site since June 2021 and invested more than £13 million to upgrade and enhance facilities across the centre.

CEO Mary Grant said the deal gives the company certainty to

move forward with its plans and to invest further in delivering "an exceptional facility for testing, training, maintenance and storage for the railway."

Since taking over three years ago, Porterbrook has worked on the 135-acre site by tarmacking roads to improve access, upgrade lights and install new security systems.

Training and office facilities have been upgraded and storage facilities have been replaced with similar structures. A £3m Asset Management Facility opened in April 2023 that features three pitted roads able to accommodate vehicles up to 23-metres-long which provides high-quality space for maintenance and upgrades.



Rescue services at work during the training exercise at Sutton Coldfield, which featured two Rail Operations Group Class 37s and two Eastern Rail Services Mk.3s. Network Rail

EASTERN Rail Services Mk.3s were used in an emergency services training exercise in a tunnel near Sutton Coldfield on March 16.

West Midlands Fire Service, West Midlands Ambulance Service, British Transport Police, West Midlands Police and West Midlands Railway joined Network Rail on the training exercise.

This involved a train provided

by Rail Operations Group, with Nos. 37884 *Cepheus* and 37901 *Mirrlees Pioneer* providing the power for ERS Nos. 10237 and 12091, and 'dressed' as if the train had struck a fallen tree that had brought down the overhead line electrification. The emergency services rescued volunteers from the train, who were posing as either passengers or crew. Some 250 people

were involved in the overnight exercise which also involved a lack of light, confined space underneath the tunnel, no power to the train and 'smoke' to imitate a fire.

The Mk.3s were returned to Castle Donnington following the exercise before being moved to ERS' Great Yarmouth base on March 26 (see *Coaches*).

IN BRIEF

CLASS 37 SET FOR SCRAP

NETWORK Rail No. 97301, stored at Peak Rail since last year, has been moved to Boden Rail Engineering Ltd's Colwick Junction depot for component recovery. The former No. 37100 is then expected to be sent for scrap. The locomotive was one of four Class 37s acquired by NR to operate trains on the Cambrian Coast but unlike Nos. 97302-304, it was fitted with European Rail Traffic Management System (ERTMS) acquired from Hitachi, a system subsequently not used by NR. The '97' had already donated its power unit to a classmate before moving to the heritage railway.

FREIGHTLINER CLASS 08 FOR BLS CHARTER

FREIGHTLINER No. 08785 is expected to pilot the Branch Line Society's 'Millbrook Meander' charter while on the operator's infrastructure on May 26. The charter runs from Eastleigh to Weymouth, covering freight-only track. A Class 20, FL Class 66 and No. 50008 *Thunderer* will also feature, with the London Transport 4-TC used as rolling stock.

GBRF CLASS 69 SET FOR PASSENGER DEBUT

GB Railfreight No. 69007 *Richard Trevithick* is due to haul the Branch Line Society's 'Jurassic Crompton' on May 9, and the return on May 12. This will be the '69's' passenger debut. The '69' will operate in top-and-tail method with preserved No. D6515 (33012) *Lt Jenny Lewis RN* with the London Transport 4-TC used as rolling stock (see *Railtours*).

'INNOVATION HUB' CLASS 319/4 SCRAPPED

PORTERBROOK No. 319454 was sent for scrap at Sims Metals, Newport at the start of April. The four-car electric multiple unit had been converted to an 'Innovation Hub' at Long Marston, but the rolling stock leasing company has now decided to dispose of the EMU. It was moved to South Wales by road on April 3 and 4.

'756' DRIVER TRAINING

DRIVER training using Class 756s began on the Core Valley Lines from April 4. Twenty-four tri-mode Stadler trains were delivered to Cardiff Canton last year and will enter traffic later this year.

GBRF'S EUROPEAN '66s' APPROVED FOR USE

The Office of Rail and Road (ORR) has approved the introduction of 11 Class 66/3s by GB Railfreight. The locomotives have been acquired from mainland Europe, leased via Akiem. Already Nos. 66306-308 have entered traffic, with Nos. 66309-316 to follow (see *Power By The Hour*). One locomotive, No. 66316, has yet to arrive in Britain.

Production lines stop at Litchurch Lane

By Richard Clinnick

ALSTOM has demobilised the production lines at Derby Litchurch Lane and is now consulting with staff, trade unions and its supply chain to provide as much certainty as it can regarding its future.

This follows the conclusion of the construction of the final Aventura vehicles for London Northwestern Railway (LNWR). While not all have been released for testing and not all trains have been released for Greater Anglia, West Midlands Trains or LNWR, Alstom has completed the order for 2651 vehicles.

An Alstom spokesperson told *Rail Express* on April 3: “We have worked constructively with the Government on securing a sustainable future for Derby Litchurch Lane, but after 10 months of discussions we have run out of time, and the production lines have stopped.”

There is currently no confirmed orders for the factory until 2026, when construction of the first HS2 trains is due to start. These are being manufactured in a joint venture with Hitachi, with the bodysells constructed at Newton Aycliffe before moving to the East Midlands for final assembly and fitting out.

Transport for London has suggested in the past year that it requires additional Class 345 electric multiple units to serve the new Old Oak Common station and the additional passengers expected because of the decision not to start trains at Euston when HS2 opens between 2029 and 2033, however that idea was first raised a year ago and no decision has been made.

Likewise, several operators are looking for new rolling stock while the Department for Transport has announced plans for a major invasive refurbishment of the CrossCountry Class 221 fleet, including 12 being cascaded from Avanti West Coast (a total of 38 five-car trains), however, no

contract for this, or the new train fleets has yet been awarded.

Shadow Secretary of State for Transport Louise Haigh raised the issue in a House of Commons written statement on March 21, claiming that 3000 jobs were at risk and that: “The Government told us that they were doing everything in their power to prevent these job losses, but they appear to be failing.” She also highlighted reports that Hitachi may be forced to close its Newton Aycliffe facility, which only opened in September 2015.

Rail Minister Huw Merriman replied: “The Secretary of State has led for the Department [for Transport] on the response to Hitachi and Alstom, and their understandable concerns about orders.

“As I have said, we have a challenge, in that while fleet can last from 35 to 40 years, the average age of our fleet is under 17 years. We have modernised 8000 out of our 15,500 carriages, and as a result there is a lag with the order book. We are doing everything we can to work with all four train manufacturers to bring more tenders through. Those will be for the TransPennine Express, Northern, Southeastern and, as the secretary of state mentioned, Chiltern Railways. The work to find a resolution

is done in partnership between train manufacturers, the secretary of state and the Department [for Transport], and we hope to find that resolution.”

Those orders were mentioned in a letter written by Mr Merriman on February 22 (RE335), which stated that the indicative contract award for Northern was 2025, for Chiltern Railways it was early-2025 while it was mid-2025 for TPE. Southeastern was also early-2025, however that could have been brought forward. The earliest any would be delivered, the letter stated, would be autumn 2027 for Southeastern if they were new vehicles.

Secretary of State for Transport Mark Harper published a letter on X, formerly known as Twitter, on March 30, that he had sent to Miss Haigh, in which he wrote that some of things she had said were not true. He claimed that: “All contracts need to be assessed thoroughly to demonstrate a business need for the trains and comply with the law. Train manufacturing is a competitive, commercial market which means there can be no guarantee of orders for individual manufacturers, and they need to factor this into their business planning and bidding decisions.”

He said he was “very aware” of the challenges facing Alstom, Hitachi and their supply chains but denied

that their “short-term shortage” of work before the start of the HS2 train manufacturing was in any way related to the decision by Prime Minister Rishi Sunak to cancel the future phases of HS2 north of Birmingham.

He claimed the Government was: “Committed to a thriving UK rolling stock industry. My Department [for Transport] works closely with rolling stock owners and train operators to understand when new trains are likely to be required and sees to ensure a regular flow of work for train manufacturing companies.” He claimed that because trains have a lifetime of 35-40 years there will “naturally be peaks and troughs in procurement cycles.” He also claimed that railway revenue remains around 20% lower than pre-pandemic and that Government had subsidised rail by more than £45 billion since the pandemic began. He claimed that the planned orders will offer more than 2000 new vehicles which equalled £3.6bn of “opportunities” for manufacturers. He didn’t give a date for when the order would be placed.

He encouraged Alstom to continue looking for export work (and Hitachi) and added that he has encouraged Hitachi to move its long-term crack verification programme for the ‘80x’ fleets to Newton Aycliffe. 

AVENTRA ORDERS

Units	Number of sets	Vehicles per set	Total vehicles	Status
Nos. 345001-070	70	9	630	In traffic with MTR Elizabeth Line
Nos. 701001-060	60	10	600	Five sets in traffic with South Western Railway
Nos. 701501-530	30	5	150	No sets yet in traffic with South Western Railway
Nos. 710101-130	30	4	120	In traffic with London Overground
Nos. 710256-273	18	4	72	In traffic with London Overground
Nos. 710374-379	6	5	30	In traffic with London Overground
Nos. 720101-144	44	5	220	35 sets in traffic with Greater Anglia
Nos. 720501-589	89	5	445	81 sets in traffic with Greater Anglia
Nos. 720601-612	12	5	60	In traffic with c2c
Nos. 730001-048	48	3	144	27 sets in traffic with West Midlands Trains*
Nos. 730201-236	36	5	180	Due to enter traffic in 2024.

Note: * West Midlands Trains ‘730/0s’ are being used by London Northwestern Railway until ‘730/2s’ are available.



◀ To mark the start of the run down of its Class 455 fleet, South Western Railway has repainted No. 455868 into blue and grey livery. The work was completed by SWR staff at Bournemouth and is close to the original scheme the trains were introduced in, in 1982, however, to meet modern accessibility regulations, the ‘455’ has grey doors. The ‘455’ returned to traffic on March 7. The Class 455s were refurbished and retractioned during the mid-2010s but were due to have all been withdrawn by the end of 2020 when all 90 Alstom Class 701s had been delivered. However, only five ‘701s’ have so far carried passengers, with the first having only made its debut in January. SWR is still only using the new electric multiple units for one weekday diagram, with 82 in traffic and eight scrapped. On its first day in traffic, No. 455868 stands at Basingstoke. South Western Railway

Glenfinnan Viaduct repairs

A £3.4 million investment to undertake repairs on Glenfinnan viaduct was due to commence as this issue of *Rail Express* went to press. Along with principal contractor AmcoGiffen, engineers will assess the condition and strength of the bridge while also carrying out work to protect it from water erosion, complete concrete repairs and complete repairs to ballast. Work is scheduled to take about a year but will not affect rail services.

First Class 47 reaches Oban on passenger train

No. 47712 *Lady Diana Spencer* became the first Class 47 to haul a passenger train to Oban on March 30, when it arrived with the 1Z62 08.23 from Edinburgh Waverley.

Operating with the Locomotive Services Group push-pull set, debut of the '47' at the West Highland station was part of a three-day 'West of Scotland Push-Pull' tour promoted by InterCity, which began with LSG No. D1935 (47805) *Roger Hosking MA 1925-2013* hauling the tour from Crewe to Carlisle, with the '47/7' part of the formation. The green '47/8' then ran light to Dumbarton while *Lady Diana Spencer* continued to Edinburgh Waverley.

The following day, the '47/7' powered the charter to Oban and back, while the green '47' ran light back to the Scottish capital.

On the third day, No. 47712 powered the charter to Wemyss Bay Junction, where after a reversal, the '47/8' hauled the train to Arkleston Junction before the '47/7' took charge

for the charter's trip to Ardrossan Harbour, where it was believed to be the first visit of a Class 47 since No. 47570 on November 1, 1980. They visited Ardrossan South Beach before No. 47712 became the first '47' to work to Largs since No. 1736 (47143) in 1972, although there are suggestions others have been there since. The plan for No. D1935 to haul the train back to Crewe was scuppered after the '47' developed a fault, and so the '47/7' hauled the train instead.

➔ No. 47712 *Lady Diana Spencer* stands at Oban on March 30, having made history by becoming the first '47' to haul a passenger train to the Scottish town since the locomotives were first introduced in 1962. The '47/7' had arrived with the InterCity 'West of Scotland Push-Pull' 1Z62 08.23 Edinburgh Waverley-Oban charter. This was part of a three-day tour which visited other branches rarely used by '47s' in the past. Tim Moran



'Tag a tank' scheme launched by C50A and Fifty Fund

THE Class 50 Alliance and The Fifty Fund have launched a 'Tag the Tank' fund-raising appeal whereby you can show your support and get your name professionally applied to the side of a Class 50 fuel tank.

The C50A needs to raise money to hire specialist services to clean the tank removed from No. 50049 *Defiance* so that it can be refitted to No. 50031 *Hood*. The latter's own tank had been fitted to its classmate to allow it to keep running. Specialist cleaning and repair of the fuel tank is currently estimated at around £5000.

The C50A and FF have launched their tank plan and, in return for donations, your name could be professionally applied to the side of the refitted tank, could appear on a 'hall of fame' plaque that will be displayed in the cab of *Hood*, and will be added to a specially-dedicated page on the C50A/FF website. More detail can be found at www.fiftyfund-alliance.co.uk/appeal.

The tank from *Defiance* was removed two years ago during work to resolve fuel starvation issues the locomotive was experiencing. During this procedure it was found that the suction

pipe within the tank had loosened and dropped into fuel residues that had accumulated in the bottom of the tank which was preventing correct fuel uptake and causing low power issues for No. 50049. This had been caused by years of hard work by the locomotive.

The work required to clean the tank and make it usable needs to be undertaken by specialists to ensure that the appropriate regulations are complied with. Volunteers will reinstall the tank to No. 50031 at Kidderminster as part of the locomotive's ongoing repairs.

Northern Powerhouse Rail 'progress'

THE next steps for the Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR) have been announced by Government following engagement with local politicians.

Local leaders and MPs expressed support for NPR to serve Warrington Bank Quay and Manchester Airport, and for using broadly the route previously proposed between Liverpool and Manchester. The Department for Transport has confirmed that this will be the primary option for the next stage of the development of the route.

DfT said that it will "continue to assess alternatives that meet the objectives of Northern Powerhouse Rail in line with standard requirements for business case approvals. Any scheme must be affordable and demonstrate value for money for the taxpayer, while seeking to support the rail capacity needs of central Manchester and deliver faster journey times and better connectivity across the North."

The DfT claimed that NPR could see journey times cut by up to a third – from around 50 minutes to 35 between Manchester and Liverpool – and that passengers will benefit from a 'turn-up-and-go' service. It also claimed that an extra 2100 seats per hour will be available between Leeds and Liverpool. The retention of the station planned for HS2 at Manchester Airport is also part of the plans. Government plans to seek permission from parliament to adapt the High Speed Rail (Crewe-Manchester) Bill to remove the scope in place for HS2 (which it has cancelled), and use that for NPR instead.



Greater Anglia unveiled a Pride livery on four-car bi-mode No. 755421 at Norwich on April 3. The livery features both the Pride and transgender flags adjacent to the driver's cab on both ends, and both sides of the '755'. The word 'Pride' is also applied beneath the windows of the driving vehicles in colours supporting the progress flag and representing visibility for marginalised LGBT+ people. This is the second GA train to receive a Pride livery after No. 720506 was unveiled at London Liverpool Street last July. Greater Anglia

West Coast Railways suspends 'Jacobite' as CDL row rumbles on

By Richard Clinnick

WEST Coast Railways suspended its 'Jacobite' steam service from March 20 as it still had no exemption to operate Mk.1 coaches without central door locking (CDL).

The Office of Rail and Road (ORR) had revoked WCR's previous exemption to use stock without CDL on January 10, after a judicial review rejected the operator's challenge against the decision to ban such vehicles (RE334). That decision meant that only stock fitted with CDL could be used by WCR, although it remains free to operate trains on behalf of others.

WCR confirmed it had applied for a new exemption on March 8, and on March 14, the ORR told *Rail Express*: "We are assessing an application made by West Coast Railways on March 8, for an exemption from Regulation 5." RE understands that this decision could take up to four months to be made while the regulator assesses all the details.

Regarding the decision to suspend the 'Jacobite', WCR commercial manager James Shuttleworth said: "We are disappointed to have to suspend this service and we are sorry for the inconvenience caused to our customers who have booked trips. We again appeal to the ORR to reconsider our request for a temporary exemption.

"The Jacobite service is enjoyed by thousands of customers every year. It boosts the local economies of Mallaig and Fort William and brings an estimated £20 million into the UK's tourism sector. If the ORR does not grant us a further exemption, we believe this could lead to up to £50 million in lost value to both local and national communities.

"We remain committed to working with the ORR to find a long-term solution which safeguards the future of heritage services on the main line."

An ORR spokesperson said of WCR's decision: "All heritage operators were told several years ago that in



Preserved No. 86259 *Les Ross/Peter Pan*, passes Atherstone on February 25, with the 1Z86 09:24 Liverpool South Parkway-Wembley Central 'Footex'. On the rear was West Coast Railways No. 86401 *Mons Meg*. The train was operated by WCR, using Riviera Trains coaches. WCR has applied for an exemption to use stock not fitted with central door locking after the rail regulator revoked an exemption that had previously been in place, forcing WCR to either use a rake of air-conditioned Mk.2s fitted with the equipment or stock hired from RT. David S.Bridger

order to operate after March 31, 2023, they either needed to fit Central Door Locking or obtain an exemption from us. West Coast Railways' application for an exemption failed and they made a claim for judicial review. A temporary exemption was granted in order to maintain the status quo, enabling WCR to operate whilst the litigation reached a conclusion.

"Despite this, WCR chose to sell tickets when it was far from certain that a new application for an exemption would be granted, either in time for the commencement of services or at all. It submitted an exemption application on March 8, which we are now assessing. ORR is disappointed that WCR appears not to have made sensible contingency plans for the benefit of their customers."

The ORR added that Regulation 5 states that no person shall operate, and no infrastructure controller shall

permit the operation of any rolling stock on a railway line if the rolling stock has hinged doors for use by fare paying passengers for boarding or alighting from the train (other than doors which have a means of centrally locking them in a closed position). The regulation came into force on January 1, 2005.

Regulation 6 of the Railway Safety Regulations (RSR) 1999 permits ORR to grant exemptions from the prohibition at Regulation 5. Any such exemption may be subject to conditions, subject to a time limit and revoked by a certificate in writing at any time.

The ORR said it has been emphasising the need for compliance since 2018 and that Regulation 5 came into force on January 1, 2005. WCR was granted an exemption on May 1, 2005 that lasted until March 31, 2013, and a new exemption was granted in 2012 that expired on March 31, 2023. A series of temporary exemptions were granted until the outcome of the judicial review, after which the ORR revoked the exemption on January 10 this year.

Regarding the application for a new exemption, a WCR spokesperson told RE on March 14: "WCR has submitted a Regulation 5, RSR 1999, exemption application to the Office of Rail and Road (ORR). WCR is in regular contact with the regulator and hopes for a temporary exemption to be granted swiftly so that it can operate its summer programme in full."

When asked by RE how long

the exemption would last, and what vehicles were included, the spokesperson said: "The contents of the submission remain private, we will not be clarifying the scope of submission at this time."

Since the ORR revoked the previous exemption any WCR train has been operated using either a rake of air-conditioned Mk.2s that were fitted with CDL but which had not seen regular use for several years, or a rake of air-conditioned Mk.2s supplied by Riviera Trains. The latter were used on Pathfinder Trains tours, including steam-hauled trains, and a 'football special' that ran from Liverpool South Parkway to Wembley Central, powered by Nos. 86259 *Les Ross/Peter Pan* and 86401 *Mons Meg*, on February 25 (RE335). The Northern Belle has also been operating, with the stock also having CDL (see *Coaches*).

WCR has a fleet of Mk.1s that it did use on various steam and diesel-hauled trains, including the 'Jacobite', which operates on the West Highland Line extension between Fort William and Mallaig.

Other operators of stock without CDL have agreed plans with the ORR regarding how it will be fitted, and are working to deadlines agreed with the operator.

Passengers with bookings for the 'Jacobite' will be offered a full refund and they can contact WCR at enquiries@westcoastrailways.net for more details.

Depot planned for Shipley

A new depot will be built at Shipley to service electric multiple units operating in the area.

It is expected that additional EMUs to be introduced on routes as part of the Transpennine route upgrade (TRU) will be based here.

Construction of the facility, which will be known as Shipley TrainCare Centre, is expected to begin next year.

Rob Warnes, Northern strategic

development director, said that the depot will be "the future home for most of our electric train fleets for West Yorkshire," and would: "play a key part in helping us to deliver our plans for the Transpennine route upgrade and beyond."

The Department for Transport (DfT) claims that up to 100 jobs will be created at the site and that 80% of the workforce will be recruited from within a 40-mile radius.

Cornish resignalling project complete

TRAINS began running again in Cornwall on March 11, following the resignalling scheme that saw more semaphores replaced and signalboxes closed (RE335).

The new digital signalling system came into use that day, with control moved from Lostwithiel, Par and Truro boxes to Exeter. Further work was undertaken around Plymouth between March 16 and March 21, with 21 new signals installed and track removed at Hemerdon. Control of these signals remains at Plymouth.

→ The 144-year-old Truro signalbox was closed by Network Rail at the end of February, as part of the Cornish resignalling scheme. Network Rail



Great Central Railway shed relocation

THE locomotive shed at Loughborough North on the Great Central Railway (GCR) is to be relocated to enable the construction of a double track mainline north from the station.

The GCR said that by removing the shed this will also allow the railway to rearrange where it services, repairs and overhauls its fleet.

The decision has been recommended by the board steering the reunification project and has been approved by the main GCR PLC board. The shed, although not completely obstructing the route, prevented track between the two railways being re-laid in the best possible place, said the GCR.

Malcolm Holmes, GCR general manager, said: "there's no escaping the fact, that while tracks could have been squeezed around the outside of the building to reconnect both halves of the Great Central, it would be far better to dismantle the shed, put the tracks through the centre of the site and have a fully authentic double track main line heading north. We're now developing our plans for our future covered accommodation for locomotives, carriages and maintenance, carefully bearing in mind the needs of our local community, our workforce and stakeholders."

Charnwood Borough Council

has allotted money from the Loughborough Town Deal Fund to improve the structure further but no public money has yet been spent. The GCR expects the shed to have a working life of another five years.

A project group is now examining possible locations for a new engine shed from across the entire 18-mile line, which includes the Great Central Railway (Nottingham) section, and a review is also being conducted into the uses of existing shed buildings. The GCR said that a full plan would be announced in due course.

The existing shed first moved to the railway in 1973.

Chiltern marks 125 years of Marylebone station



CHILTERN Railways celebrated the 125th anniversary of London Marylebone by naming No. 168215 *Marylebone* 125 in a ceremony at the terminus on March 15.

The event also included the unveiling of a new exhibition at the station and a reception to celebrate the social and economic impact the station has had on communities across the Chiltern network.

The naming was carried out by Chiltern Railways managing director Richard Allan, Lord Mayor of Westminster Coun Patricia McAllister and CEO of Baker Street Quarter Partnership Penny Alexander.

← The new name on No. 168215 is unveiled at London Marylebone on March 15. Chiltern Railways

New director general, rail services for DfT

ALEX Hynes has been appointed director general, rail services by the Department for Transport (DfT). Mr Hynes started his role as this issue of *Rail Express* went to press.

The DfT confirmed that it will be a two-year secondment from Network Rail where he was managing director of Scotland's Railway. Prior to that, he was MD of Northern.

The DfT also confirmed that interim director general Anit Chandarana has returned to NR,

as planned, following the end of his secondment.

The DfT explained that the Rail Infrastructure and Services Group will bring together most of the existing passenger services directorate and rail infrastructure group to help reflect wider plans involving bringing the oversight of track and train together under Great Britain's Railways (GBR) and coming together as part of a planned wider reorganisation in the DfT.

Tables for Greater Anglia '745/1s'

GREATER Anglia is to fit tables to its 10 Stansted Express Class 745/1s. The 12-car electric multiple units were delivered by Stadler without tables as they were designed for Stansted Express services and so have more luggage capacity, but no first class, catering facilities or tables.

When ordered it was expected that one '745/1' per day would operate on the Great Eastern Main Line (GEML) between Norwich and London Liverpool Street, however

in reality more are used daily and passenger feedback has seen GA respond by announcing plans to retrofit the tables. The work will be undertaken at either Norwich Crown Point, where the EMUs are based, or Orient Way, where the EMUs are stabled.

The fitting of tables will mean the '745/1s' will have broadly the same interiors as the Stadler Class 755 bi-modes which are used both on rural routes and on the GEML.

IN BRIEF

THETFORD DERAILMENT INVESTIGATION LAUNCHED

RAIL Accident and Investigation Branch (RAIB) has confirmed it will investigate an accident at Thetford on February 6, which saw East Midlands Railway No. 158856 derailed after it struck fallen trees at 83mph. The '158' was forming the 1L15 15.51 Liverpool Lime Street-Norwich when the accident happened at 20.53. The impact caused the leading wheelset to derail and run for around 680 metres before the '158' stopped. Thirty-one passengers and two staff were on board with one reported minor injury. The '158' has since been moved by road to Derby Etches Park for repairs.

TEN-WEEK CLOSURE FOR BLACKHEATH TUNNEL

BLACKHEATH Tunnel, between Blackheath and Charlton, will close for 10 weeks from June 1-August 10, with Southeastern trains diverted. The one-mile-long structure, which opened in 1849, is prone to leaks and water damage, and while Network Rail said that the structure is safe the conditions are damaging track and causing electrical damage, with more than 1000 minutes of delay caused last year. NR will replace thousands of damaged bricks and install a new concrete lining. Several filled-in shafts will be strengthened too.

HS2 LAUNCHES ANOTHER TUNNEL BORING MACHINE

A third tunnel boring machine (TBM) was launched by HS2 Ltd at Victoria Road, West London. The TBM, named *Emily* after Emily Sophia Taylor who helped establish the Perivale Maternity Hospital in 1937, will dig almost 3.4 miles of the 8.4-mile Northolt Tunnel, from Victoria Road Crossover Box, near Old Oak Common, to Greenpark Way, Greenford.

EXETER ARTWORK

NEW artwork has been unveiled at Exeter St David's for World Book Day. Drawn by local artists it celebrates the city's UNESCO City of Literature designation and has been supported by Great Western Railway's Customer and Community Improvement Fund.

£60 million refurbishment plan for EMR regional fleet

By Richard Clinnick

EAST Midlands Railway (EMR) plans to refurbish its Class 158 and '170' diesel multiple units and Class 360 electric multiple units.

The operator has confirmed a £60 million refurbishment plan that will be delivered in partnership with rolling stock leasing companies Angel Trains, Porterbrook and Eversholt Rail, which own the trains, and Siemens, which maintains the '360s'.

Once completed it will mean that EMR will have a fleet of either fully-refurbished or brand-new trains.

EMR said that the Class 360s, which operate between St Pancras International, Kettering and Corby, as well as the EMR Connect and Luton Airport Express trains, will be upgraded with 2+2 seating throughout the trains with a mixture of airline-style and bay seats, luggage racks, charging points and new passenger information systems (PIS). The EMUs were cascaded from Greater Anglia following the introduction of the Class 720s. The value of the work planned for the '360s' is £28m.

Class 170s operate predominately in the East Midlands, although some are rostered to work on the Norwich-Liverpool route. They have been cascaded from ScotRail, Govia Thameslink Railway and Transport for Wales, meaning they have different interiors. EMR said that the refurbishment will create a 'consistent customer experience' across the fleet. All the '170s' will receive new seat foams and covers, an extensive refresh as well as new PIS and CCTV.



East Midlands Railway No. 158866 passes Lakenham, near Norwich, on April 11, 2023, with the 1L08 08.51 from Liverpool Lime Street. The '158s' are to be refurbished as part of a £60 million project. Richard Clinnick

Will Rogers, EMR managing director, said: "This multi-million-pound investment into our Connect and Regional fleets is fantastic news for our customers and the regions we serve."

EMR confirmed that further details

of the upgrade have yet to be finalised.

When Abellio took over the EMR franchise in August 2019, it was originally planned that the '158s' would be replaced, and that the Nottingham-Liverpool service would transfer to

another operator, however, both plans have since been cancelled. With the '158s' expected to remain in traffic until at least 2031, it means that the oldest examples will be more than 40 years old when they are finally retired. 

EMR CONNECT AND REGIONAL FLEETS

Class 158: 158770/773/774/777/780/783/785/788/799, 158806/810/812/813/846/847/852/854/856-858/862-866/889
Class 170: 170201-208/270-273, 170416-420/422-424, 170501-517/530-535
Class 360: 360101-121

Road-rail shunters to take over at Cardiff

Porterbrook has purchased three Zephir road/rail shunters for use at Cardiff Tidal, which will replace the Harry Needle Railroad Company Class 08s currently employed. The trio will be delivered from October and leased to GB Railfreight, which has the contract to provide shunters at the Celsa steelworks in Cardiff Docks. The replacement of the

HNRC shunters has been on the cards since last autumn following a contract dispute between the firm and GBRf, with several possible options investigated, including the Class 18s.

Examples of the Zephir road/rail vehicles have previously been trialled on a limited basis over the internal rail system at the Celsa plant, with the order

being for the LOK 16.300 variant, which is rated to haul up to 3200 tonnes. These will be diesel-powered as the intensity of operations precludes the use of battery-powered variants but will still offer considerable fuel and emissions savings compared to the Class 08s.

Maintenance will be carried out by Zephir's UK distributor Depot Rail.

Mid-Cornwall Metro plans

SECRETARY of State for Transport Mark Harper discussed plans for a Mid-Cornwall Metro during a visit to the county on March 27.

He claimed that the scheme, which will offer an hourly coast-to-coast service between Newquay, St Austell, Truro and Falmouth, will cost £50 million and could be delivered as early as May 2025.

The scheme requires a second platform at Newquay and an additional passing loop. Trains will link the county's largest urban areas. Great Western Railway and Network Rail both said that by delivering the scheme then the number of trains running between Par and Newquay can be doubled, thereby adding an extra 700,000 seats per year along the route. NR western route director Marcus Jones said the work would begin later this year.

Direct Rail Services open day returns in July

DIRECT Rail Services will hold its charity open day at Carlisle Kingmoor on July 6. This is the first such event the freight operator has held since 2022, with its previous open days having been an annual event prior to the pandemic.

The depot will be open between 10.00 and 16.00. Attendees will be able to visit cabs of several locomotives, talk to industry experts

and much more. There will also be a naming ceremony.

Tickets will cost £7.13, including a booking fee, for adults, with under-16s free. £5 from each ticket will be donated to UK charities and community causes.

Gottfried Eymmer, Nuclear Transport Solutions managing director of rail, said: "This will be my first open day and

I am very excited to welcome guests to this wonderful family experience."

Tickets can be ordered at tinyurl.com/43atewsx. They cannot be bought on the day. Under-16s still must have a ticket even though they have free access.

Exhibitors can book space at the open day by emailing communications@ntsglobal.uk



Porterbrook to finance Bletchley depot rebuild

PORTERBROOK will finance the £66 million upgrade of Bletchley depot. The site is to become the principal maintenance base for West Midlands Trains' Alstom Class 730 fleet.

The upgrade includes the installation of improved overhead line equipment, new 10 and five-car sidings, full refurbishment of existing depot buildings and installation of modern security systems.

The rolling stock leasing company said that the work will be completed in autumn 2025.

Three-car Class 730/0s are being rolled out across WMT routes although most are currently operating from London Euston, but these will move north to the West Midlands when the first five-car Class 730/2s enter traffic later this year. The '730/2s' will be used by London Northwestern Railway (LNWR) from London Euston and it is these which will be based at Bletchley, with the '730/0s' based at Soho.

New Direct Award contracts planned for three operators

THE Department for Transport (DfT) plans to extend the Direct Award rail services contracts at c2c, London North Eastern Railway and South Western Railway.

The c2c deal is due to expire on July 20, 2025. Currently operated by Trenitalia, the new Direct Award is expected to last between three and eight years.

DfT OLR Holdings Limited (DOHL) currently operates LNER, with the contract due to expire on June 22,

2025. Under the new contract it is envisaged that the London King's Cross-Glasgow Central and Stirling trains would be removed (a public consultation regarding this decision is underway), and that the new deal would last between two and five years.

The SWR deal is operated by First Group and MTR and is due to expire on May 25, 2025. The new deal is also expected to last between three and eight years.

Freight operators partner with safety scheme

DB Cargo UK and Freightliner attended a joint 'gold disc' presentation to mark their partnership with education programme Rail Safe Friendly.

The operators joined Rail Safe Friendly as gold level partners and were presented with their discs at an event at Freightliner's Crewe Basford Hall site.

The programme was launched last year by Stuart Heaton, Learn Live and Rail Safe Friendly managing director, following the death of 11-year-old Harrison Ballantyne who received a fatal electric shock after climbing over a fence to retrieve his football at a depot.

IN BRIEF

TAP-AND-GO FOR MERSEYRAIL

TAP-and-go payments will be introduced across the Merseyrail network. Merseyrail says that this will give passengers the best price for their journey.

The system will arrive in two phases, with tap-and-go available at all Merseyrail stations from this autumn for those passengers using a Metro Card linked to their bank account. The second phase, launching next year, will allow passengers to use their bank card or device, without the need for a MetroCard. Fares will be capped daily and weekly through the smart system. Season tickets as well as daily and return tickets will still be available.

LOSTWITHIEL FOOTBRIDGE

NETWORK Rail is to install a temporary footbridge at Lostwithiel, offering uninterrupted access over the railway for the first time in more than half a century. The new structure will be constructed this summer while plans for a permanent bridge are developed. NR said that currently the level crossing barriers at the Cornish town can be lowered for an average of 22 minutes an hour.

WELSH STATIONS MADE ACCESSIBLE

NETWORK Rail is carrying out work at six stations in the Wales and Borders to make them fully accessible for the first time. Abergavenny, Cwmbran, Llanelli, Flint and Newton will all receive new footbridges with lifts, while Ludlow will have a lift added to its existing footbridge. The work will be complete early next year.

NEW LIVERPOOL DIRECTOR OF TRANSPORT

JAMIE Ross is the new director of transport at Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (CA). He had been interim director of rail at the CA. His role includes progressing plans for further devolution of the region's rail network.

PETTS WOOD UPGRADE

PETTS Wood station now boasts step-free access, following the completion of a £10.79 million programme of accessibility improvements including the installation of four new lifts.

LNWR SIGN LANGUAGE

LONDON North Eastern Railway (LNWR) has introduced fully-integrated British Sign Language (BSL) on digital departure screens following a trial last December. It will be introduced at Berwick-upon-Tweed, Durham, Doncaster and Peterborough in the coming months. Integrated signing will be introduced at Darlington, Wakefield Westgate, Retford, Newark Northgate and Grantham.



Northern Nos. 195104 *Deva Victrix* and 195133 derailed at Grange-over-Sands on March 22. Two days later, the CAF diesel multiple units stand at the accident site awaiting recovery and repairs. David Dockray

'195s' derail at Grange-over-Sands

TWO Class 195s derailed at Grange-over-Sands after they crossed a section of unsupported track which gave way as the diesel multiple units passed.

The track had become unsupported because a cavity had opened in the embankment on which the railway sits.

Northern Nos. 195104 *Deva Victrix* and 195133 were working the 2J37 05.18 Preston-Barrow and were travelling at 56mph when the accident happened.

No. 195104 struck a wall at the top of the embankment following the derailment. It remained upright and came to a stand around 31 metres beyond the cavity.

The Rail Accident and Investigation Branch (RAIB), which will investigate the accident, said that there were four staff and four passengers on the train when the derailment happened. There were no reported injuries although both the derailed '195' and railway infrastructure were severely damaged.

The incident resulted in the line

being closed for an extended period, and Nos. 195101/113/121/122 being marooned at Barrow-in-Furness.

RAIB said that the investigation will seek to identify the sequence of events that led to the accident, including the condition of the railway and nearby drainage, the planning and management of relevant railway maintenance activities, how the railway infrastructure at the location was managed in response to local flood risks, and any underlying management factors.



Open access plans progress

By Richard Clinnick

SIGNIFICANT developments surrounding open access operations occurred during March, when the Office of Rail and Road (ORR) approved Grand Union Trains' plans to run trains between London Euston and Stirling; and Alstom announced plans to operate trains to Wrexham in partnership with SLC Rail.

ORR approved the GU plans on March 7, with the aim of the trains beginning running from June next year. Four trains per day will call at Milton Keynes Central, Nuneaton, Crewe, Preston, Carlisle, Lockerbie, Motherwell, Whifflet, Greenfaulds, Larbert and Stirling. GU plans to use off-lease Class 22x units, which are likely to be former Avanti West Coast Class 221s, of which six have yet to be accounted for (12 are bound for CrossCountry, while a further two are on short-term lease to Grand Central until December).

The ORR said it found that service would increase the choice for passengers and significantly increase

direct journey opportunities between London and central and southern Scotland. These will be the first open access services on the West Coast Main Line. The ORR has already approved GU's plans to operate between London Paddington and Carmarthen, although these have yet to start running.

Stephanie Toby, director, strategy, policy and reform at ORR, said: "By providing more trains serving new destinations, open access operators offer passengers more choice in the origin and price of their journey, leading to better outcomes for rail users."

Meanwhile, on March 14, Alstom confirmed it was working with SLC Rail on the open access operation Wrexham, Shropshire and Midlands Railway (WSMR).

Should the ORR grant approval, then five trains per day would run in each direction on Mondays to Saturdays, with four travelling both ways on Sundays.

Trains will call at Gobowen, Shrewsbury, Telford Central,

Wolverhampton, Darlaston (when it opens), Walsall, Coleshill Parkway, Nuneaton and Milton Keynes Central. They will start and terminate at London Euston and Wrexham General. Trains will avoid Birmingham by using the currently freight-only Sutton Park line.

WSMR estimates it would serve a core catchment area of around 1.5 million people, a population set to grow by 16% over the next decade.

The new operator is expected to create around 50 new jobs, most of which will be based in North Wales and the Midlands.

WSMR wants to use off-lease Class 22x units, which like GU's fleet, are likely to be former AWC Class 221s, the trains will operate between London Euston and Wrexham Central. This is the first time Alstom will operate a rail service in the UK.

"As the country's leading supplier of rolling stock and train services, it makes perfect sense that we now move into operating our own fleet to serve passengers directly. Having been

part of the fabric of UK rail for two centuries, we're excited to enter this new era as an open access operator," said Nick Crossfield, managing director UK and Ireland at Alstom.

"From the Welsh borders to the Midlands, our routes will forge new connections, linking overlooked regions of England and Wales with direct services to and from London. Passengers will benefit from more competitive fares and new technology to simplify ticket purchasing for our new services.

"Delighting the customer will be at the forefront of what we do; we want WSMR passengers to experience a new excellence in customer service on board our intercity trains," said Ian Walters, managing director at Midlands-based SLC Rail.

Rail Minister Huw Merriman said: "Competition delivers choice for passengers and drives up standards, which is why we continue to work with industry to help make the most of open access rail."

£45.4 billion improvement plan published by Network Rail

NETWORK Rail revealed its £45.4 billion rail improvement plan on April 3, which it says will deliver a simpler, better, greener railway.

Of this, £40.6bn is in England Wales and is funded by the Department for Transport, while £4.8bn is for Scotland and funded by Transport Scotland.

NR chief executive Andrew Haines said: "Delivering a better railway for passengers and freight users is at the heart of our new five-year investment plan. Tackling climate change, safely improving train performance, adapting and responding to changing commuter habits, whilst managing an ageing

infrastructure, requires the whole industry to rally for the benefits of all rail users.

"Whilst there are challenges and opportunities ahead, our mission is constant – we're here to connect people and goods with where they need to be. The railway is part of the fabric of our everyday lives and has been for generations. It provides essential services to society, underpinning economic growth and our plans will support that over the next five years – a period that will mark the railway's bi-centenary."

The money will be spent during Control Period 7, which runs from April 1,

2024, until March 31, 2029. During that period NR will spend £19.3bn on renewals, £12.6bn on maintenance, £5.3bn on support functions (safety and standards, timetabling, HR and IT), £4.4bn on operations, and £1.8bn on a 'risk fund' which is a pot to be used as and when, to cope with significant unforeseen events.

Throughout the period, NR's income will come via £29.8bn in Government grants (from the Scottish and Welsh Governments as well as Westminster), £13.8bn in track access charges and £1.7bn from commercial income.

Mr Haines said: "Train performance

has been suffering and the industry must come together and make this, and tackling climate change, our main focus.

"Our role is to deliver a safe railway that people can rely on, whatever the weather, with trains that turn up and arrive at their destination on time, and where passengers have confidence they are in safe hands. This is what we must deliver daily and what we should, and will, be held to account for."

NR said its focus on improving train performance will include reducing the impact of external factors including weather impact, fatalities, trespass and vandalism by harnessing new technology. It also aims to reduce infrastructure failures by replacing, or carrying out heavy maintenance, on more 3100 miles of track as well as over 3000 sets of points and a heavy investment in new signalling.

NR also wants to build on the capability of the workforce with investment in training and new technology to improve decision making and cross-industry working, improve timetables by removing bottlenecks, conflicts and unrealistic timings at and between stations and introduce a faster recovery from incidents so fewer trains and customers are delayed when things happen.

Mr Haines said: "Over the next five years we aim to rejoin track and train with a new structure at the heart of our railway, with a guiding mind, at arms-length, from Government. This would create a simpler railway to better respond to the needs of rail users with its constituent parts joined up with common objectives and incentives, delivering for passengers and freight users."

→ **Tri-mode No. 93006 undergoes testing at Stadler's Valencia factory on March 20.** The locomotive is one of 10 ordered by Rail Operations Assets Ltd (ROAL), of which only one, No. 93001, has so far been delivered to Britain (RE327). The Office of Rail and Road (ORR) has approved the use of the locomotives in this country (RE335), and as this issue of *Rail Express* went to press, main line testing was due to start imminently. A user for the locomotives has yet to be confirmed, however *RE* understands discussions are ongoing for their use. Howard Lewsey





On April 8, GB Railfreight No. 57310 stands outside UK Rail Leasing, Loughborough. The locomotive is the first of GBRf's Class 57/3 fleet to receive the operator's corporate colour scheme. Also in the GBRf fleet are Nos. 57301/303/305/306/312.
Rob Reedman

IN BRIEF

NEW READING WEST BUILDING

GREAT Western Railway opened a new station building at Reading West on March 19. This new structure in Oxford Road includes new ticket gates, new lighting and CCTV cameras. The £5 million project is the centrepiece of the station upgrade and features an information counter, customer toilet and retail space. GWR has installed new ticket gates at the Oxford Road and Tilehurst Road entrances. There is also a new bus interchange, improved cycle parking and a pedestrian crossing.

HOPE VALLEY UPGRADE LAUNCH

THE Hope Valley Upgrade was launched on April 8, when Rail Minister Huw Merriman officially opened the new platform at Dore & Totley station.

TransPennine Express Nos. 185139/121 were actually the first to serve the platform on March 25, forming the 1B61 05.08 Sheffield-Liverpool Lime Street.

This new platform, which means the station has two platforms for the first time since the 1980s, is one of the key improvements delivered as part of the upgrade which also includes signalling improvements, a new overbridge at Hathersage West and a new loop between Bamford and Hathersage. Additional track has also been installed to the south of Dore & Totley to relieve a longstanding bottleneck for rail freight.

Locomotive Services operates to Mallaig

LOCOMOTIVE Services operated trains between Fort William and Mallaig on April 8 and 9, after being asked to cover services on the route.

Heritage operations by West Coast Railways are currently suspended due to the Office of Rail and Road (ORR) revoking the exemption for hinged-door stock to operate without central door locking (CDL – see page 12).

LS told *Rail Express* on April 4, that it had been asked to operate a return trip each day. Passengers were able to

either book ahead or they could pay on the day.

LS sent Nos. D6851 (37667) *Flopsie* and 37409 *Loch Awe* and part of its ScotRail push-pull set, with Nos. 9707, 10404, 11082 and 12111 to Fort William. The train operated as the 1Z37 08.52 Fort William-Mallaig and 1Z38 11.34 return on both days. Discussions regarding a longer-term solution were expected to take place after this issue of *Rail Express* went to press.

Meanwhile, despite being unable to carry passengers, WCR sent two Class

37s and eight Mk.1s to Fort William on April 5, with the intention of operating in its booked 'Jacobite' paths from April 8. Nos. 37676 *Loch Rannoch* and 37685 *Loch Arkaig* ran north from Carnforth with Nos. 1840, 4951, 13306/320, 21266, 94225, 99326/329. WCR ran in its booked paths, which were the 2Y61 10.15 Fort William-Mallaig and 2Y62 14.10 return.

A WCR spokesperson told *RE* that they were unable to comment on the reasons for the '37s' and Mk.1s being sent to the West Highlands.

MPs write to rail minister in support of West Coast Railways

EIGHT MPs have written to rail minister Huw Merriman, asking him to consider whether the Office of Rail and Road's decision to revoke West Coast Railways' exemption for operating stock without central door locking is based on legitimate regulatory reasons.

The MPs, who represent constituencies in which WCR operates, or who have an interest in the UK's heritage railways, claim in the letter that they "are deeply concerned it is not." This relates to the ORR's decision to revoke the exemption for WCR to

operation hinged-door stock not fitted with Central Door Locking (see page 12).

The letter was submitted to the minister on April 5, and states that the ORR's policies allow for exceptions to fitting CDL for heritage carriages, that the ORR should therefore consider WCR's application, designed to meet one of those exceptions, with an open mind, that in applying for a temporary exemption while their long-term application is being considered, WCR is asking no more than to be treated in the same way as its peers who are currently

operating hinged-door rolling stock on the main line, that if the ORR is allowing other operators to use hinged-door carriages on the mainline, there can be no safety reason to justify the refusal of the temporary exemption for WCR and that the ORR's approach 'should not be clouded by the fact that WCR has not to date made an application to fit CDL.'

James Shuttleworth, WCR commercial manager: "We are grateful to the MPs for voicing their concerns. The points in the letter concern the fairness of the regulator's approach to us, which

has been wholly overlooked. Our priority is to get a temporary exemption in place as soon as possible to minimise potential disruption to our programme and our customers.

"We remain committed to working with the ORR to find a long-term solution which safeguards the future of heritage services on the main line and again appeal to it to reconsider our request for a temporary exemption."

As this issue of *Rail Express* went to press, the ORR had not responded to *RE* regarding the situation.

Railway Heritage Designation Advisory Board launches UK-wide consultation

THE Railway Heritage Designation Advisory Board (RHDAB) has launched a UK-wide consultation of heritage railways and museums to help inform the board's new collecting policy and protect unique railway artefacts.

Established in 2013, the RHDAB aims to preserve and protect the UK's railway heritage and the new collecting policy will, it believes, help the RHDAB have a better understanding of the type of railway items that potential recipients are interested in collecting.

The RHDAB said it will contact more than 100 heritage railways, local and national museums and railway companies to invite them to respond to a questionnaire which will provide information to add to the current strategy and improve how it works with partners.

Tim Dugher, RHDAB chair, said: "The past 10 years have seen significant progress in preserving more than 200 important railway items for posterity. Despite this

success, there is always room for improvement and we know there are some misconceptions about how railway heritage is designated, which can lead to difficulties finding homes for designated items.

"We are inviting heritage organisations and the rail industry to complete our survey and tell us about the types of railway related objects that are of interest."

The RHDAB is responsible for preserving railway heritage and covers

railway infrastructure, archives and smaller items such as paintings and furniture, as well as locomotives and carriages. Designated items are protected by law under the Railway Heritage Act, 1996.

The Board identifies important items of British railway heritage and works with heritage organisations to determine which institutions (such as museums or heritage centres) should receive items once they are no longer required by the owner.

DB Cargo UK to sell more Class 60s

It's been a varied few weeks for the Brush Type 5 fleet with locomotives up for sale, others finding new homes and at least one to be reinstated.

DB Cargo UK put 16 Class 60s up for sale, most of which have been stored within the past 12 months, as this column went to press. A second tender was issued a few days later (see *Headline News*).

The locomotives put up for tender are Nos. 60001/007/010/015/019/020/039/040/044/059/063/065/066/079/092 and 60100. The latter has been designated by the Railway Heritage Committee but is still up for sale.

This tender follows the conclusion of the drawn-out process of selling 12 Class 60s which had been put up for sale in January 2023.

All 16 locomotives put up for sale are currently stored at Toton and have been transferred to the WQDA disposal pool.

The most recent '60' up for sale to be taken out of service is No. 60040 *The Territorial Army Centenary*, which was stopped on December 12, having run out of engine hours. Only four have been out of traffic longer, with Nos. 60019 *Port of Grimsby & Immingham* and 60039 *Dove Holes* both stored in 2022, No. 60063 in September 2021 and No. 60079 in August 2015.

The tender is also notable for putting the first 'Super 60s' on the market, although No. 60099, which was sold to DC Rail in 2022, was the prototype for several of the mechanical aspects of the life extension programme.

While DC Rail and GB Railfreight also operate four and 10 Class 60s respectively that are to the equivalent standard, these were completed as part of the contract with DBC to acquire the locomotives. No. 60065 *Spirit of Jaguar* is the odd one out having never been refurbished. Despite this, it managed to eke out a swansong as a 'super shunter' at Toton, with the odd run out on the main line, before it was removed from traffic in April 2023. The other six upgraded Class 60s remain stored at Toton (Nos. 60017/054/062/074/091) and Warrington Arpley (No. 60024).

Rail Express understands that Land Recovery has acquired the 12 Class 60s put for tender last year. These locomotives, Nos. 60012/032/036/037/048/052/068/077/078/084/089/093, were all stored between 2006 and 2011. However, there has been no official confirmation from the

aggregate recycling company, based in Alsager, that it is adding the '60s' to its existing rail fleet of 30 WH Davis-built JNA box wagons.

The first fruits of this sale took place on March 1, when Nos. 60032/048/093 were removed from the yard at Toton to the depot for likely road extraction, following the removal of any fluids. They swapped position with Nos. 60035/045/049, all stored between 2014 and 2016.

Meanwhile, DCR No. 60099 moved from UK Rail Leasing's Leicester depot to the same company's Loughborough facility in early March for reactivation work, although this trip was delayed by a day due to the planned motive power for the move, No. 56098, being more urgently required elsewhere for DCR. The large logo Class 56 dragged the former *Ben More Assynt*, which still carries its DB Schenker-branded Tata Steel livery, the short distance between the two towns on March 5.

Locomotive Services Group No. 60081, not yet reunited with its cast *Isambard Kingdom Brunel* name or numberplates, was moved by road from Toton to the One:One Collection at Margate on March 18, the celebrity Great Western Railway green machine arriving at its Kent destination two days later.

Elsewhere, GB Railfreight now has two of the three famed North Yorkshire

'Peaks' on its roster with the renaming of No. 60095 as *Whernside* during a recent visit to Toton in February for attention. This follows the reapplication of the *Penyghent* nameplates to No. 60021 in 2019. This Class 60 was originally christened *Crib Goch*, after the knife-edged Welsh mountain, in January 1992, but this was removed after just five years. Both carry nameplates in the Class 44-style, from Nos. 44006 and 44008 respectively, and are joined by No. 60026 *Helvellyn* (from No. 44002) and the recently-renamed No. 60085 *Snowdon* (from No. 44009).

The naming almost completes the association of the Class 60s with the beloved original 'Peak' locomotives that was never completed by British Rail. While the name *Snowdon* was allocated, it was subsequently dropped by BR after the realisation that No. 86257 had been running around with this name since January 1981. Meanwhile, *Whernside* (the highest of the classic 'three peaks') was ignored in favour of the nearby Great Whernside (for No. 60020). This just leaves the full *Scafell Pike* name to be applied (from No. 44001), following the minor controversy when No. 60049 was dedicated *Scafell* only (referring either to the range or the smaller neighbour) rather than specifically honour the tallest mountain in England. ■

Locomotive Services Group No. 60081 leaves Toton on March 18. The Type 5 was withdrawn in 2005 following a major engine failure. It has been bought for display at the One:One Collection museum in Margate and has been cosmetically restored by DB Cargo UK for its new owners. Bill Pizer



NEWS ROUND-UP

ANGEL TRAINS

Former Great Western Railway No. 43029 arrived at Eastern Rail Services' Great Yarmouth facility on March 11, becoming the sixth High Speed Train power car currently stored at the Norfolk coastal town. The former *Caldicot Castle* departed Laira depot in the first week of March, by road, and joins Nos. 43006 (43206), 43027, 43112 (43312), 43238 and 43319 in Great Yarmouth. The '43' was removed from traffic in December with Nos. 43027/094/122, 43153-156/194, although the '43s' were only officially stored in February.

BALFOUR BEATTY

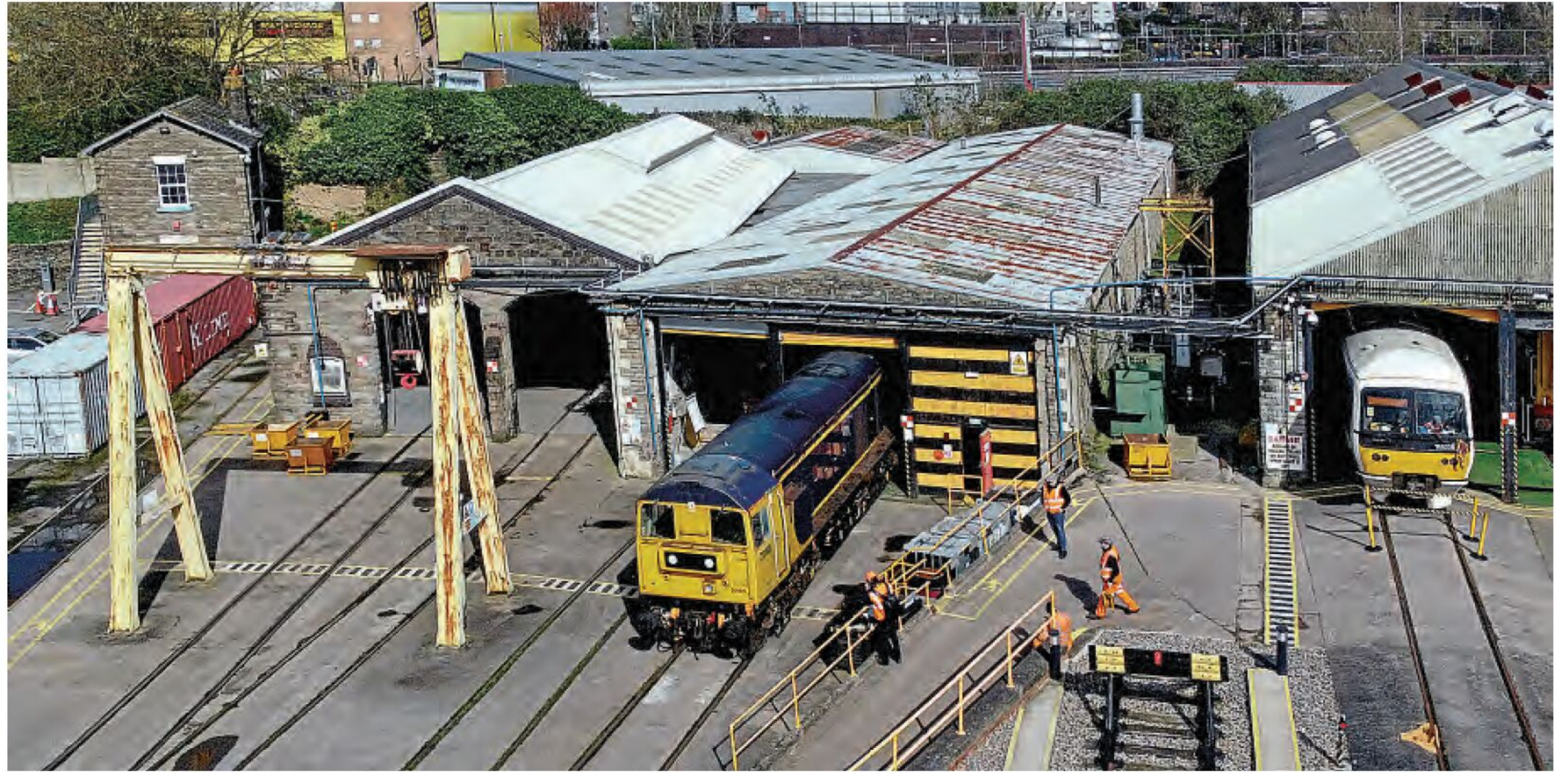
Nos. 20901 and 20905 have commenced the fourth chapter of their long careers, officially transferring to the new BBXX Balfour Beatty pool. Built as D8101 (20101) and D8325 (20225) in November 1961 and November 1967 respectively, the pair were sold to Hunslet Barclay and modified to Class 20/9 configuration in 1989, along with four other EE Types 1s, for use on weedkilling trains, where they also gained the names *Nancy* and *Iona*. No. 20905, along with Nos. 20902/903 also received long-range fuel tanks.

The six transferred to Direct Rail Services in August 1998, but were never considered long-term assets. In fact, No. 20905 never turned a wheel for the Kingmoor-based operator, despite being repainted in full DRS livery ahead of the Doncaster Works open day in July 2003. One year later and the small fleet was on the move again, being acquired by Harry Needle Rail Company in November 2004. While No. 20902 was scrapped in September 2011, Nos. 20901 and 20905 have been among the most active Class 20s on the main line in the intervening years, initially on spot hire duties before being leased to GB Railfreight for London Underground S-Stock movements from 2012. More recently they have been hired to DC Rail and Rail Operations Group.

Following the attention of HNRC staff, Nos. 20901 and 20905 departed Barrow Hill on March 22, working an 0Z20 to Bristol Barton Hill for repainting into their new owner's livery at the Arriva Traincare depot. HNRC is expected to continue providing mechanical support for the '20s'.

COLAS RAIL

Despite having GB Railfreight No. 59003 *Yeoman Highlander* and Freightliner No. 70009 on hand to tackle its motive power crunch, Colas has now taken a second GBRf Type 5 on hire in the form of No. 66791. Meanwhile, No. 67023 has returned to Westbury following attention at Crewe International Electric Maintenance Depot (IEMD).



Balfour Beatty No. 20905 stands at Bristol Barton Hill on March 22. This, and classmate No. 20901, arrived at the depot that day for repainting after their sale by Harry Needle Railroad Company. Eddie Holden

FREIGHTLINER

The third of four planned export Class 66s has emerged from Leeds Midland Road depot in the form of No. 66956, which now also wears the 12-digit UIC number 92 70 0066 956-8. This is due to follow Nos. 66529 and 66955, which departed Immingham Docks in January, to join Freightliner Poland. The final member of the quartet will be No. 66599. Meanwhile, in a nice touch, No. 66526 *Driver Steve Dunn (George)*, which was dispatched to Poland in October 2023, now carries a Polish-language version of the name on one side *Maszynista Steve Dunn (George)*.

GB RAILFREIGHT

Following its repaint into standard GBRf livery at UK Rail Leasing, Loughborough, and subsequent move to Leicester depot on March 1, No. 66311 was dragged to Doncaster Roberts Road two days later by No. 57303, and then to Progress Rail/EMD at Longport on March 5, with No. 69009 *Western Consort* courtesy of No. 66711 *Sense*. Meanwhile, the third of the Akiem-leased Class 66/3s has made its introduction into service, No. 66308 being released from Roberts Road on March 17. It worked the 0M18 07.20 Doncaster Decoy Yard-Toton and 7M18 light engine move to Toton and returned with the 7E20 12.56 Toton-Doncaster Decoy Yard engineer's train.

No. 69011 has leapfrogged No. 69010 in the queue for repainting at Arlington Fleet Services, Eastleigh Works, and was due to re-enter traffic as this issue of *Rail Express* went to press. While the former No. 56065 continues to run around in primer green, what was previously No. 56032 ran south to Eastleigh on March 13 as the 0Z69 09.00 Longport-Eastleigh Works.

Resident at UKRL Loughborough since October 12, 2022, Caledonian Sleeper No. 92006 has returned to active service for GBRf. No. 47749 *City of Truro* hauled the '92' as the 0A42 10.51 Loughborough-Wembley.



No. 57311 made its Locomotive Services Group debut on March 26, hauling a charter from Bristol Temple Meads to Southall where it gave way to No. 46100 *Royal Scot* and recently-repainted No. D1924 (47810) *Crewe Diesel Depot*. Carrying lined black, the '57' passes Taplow with the 1Z46 06.11 Bristol Temple Meads-Canterbury West.

LOCOMOTIVE SERVICES GROUP

Following the delivery of No. 60081 to Margate (see main story), the return road journey took No. 47841 *The Institution of Mechanical Engineers* to Crewe Diesel Maintenance Depot. *Rail Express* understands that the '47/8' has been extracted to provide further spares, after which it is likely to be scrapped. It had been on secondment to the One:One Collection since August 2019 and will be replaced at the yet-to-open museum by No. D1944 (47501) *Craftsman*, which has been withdrawn with traction motor damage and recently donated its Sulzer power unit to No. 47614 (47853). Meanwhile, No. D1924 (47810) *Crewe Diesel Depot* has been given a new coat of two-tone green paint following a visit to Arlington Fleet Services at Eastleigh. It returned on March 22, as the 5Z20 09.44 Eastleigh Works-Crewe DMD with barrier coaches Nos. 6393 and 6394.

Also repainted, again into Railfreight red stripe, is No. 20132, courtesy of Crewe DMD. This follows the similar refresh of No. 20118 *Saltburn-by-the-Sea* in December. Like

its colleague, No. 20132 has a long association with this livery and was only the second main line locomotive, other than a Class 58, to gain the scheme after No. 20023, both in the first half of 1985. Other than a brief period between 2005-2010 when it was restored to BR green it has only worn red stripe since then. The two Class 20s were sent out on a crew training run to Chester on March 19, although due to issues with No. 20118, had to be rescued by No. D6851 (37667) *Flopsie*.

With the West Highland Pullman set to debut in the summer, LSL has acquired another High Speed Train power car. Porterbrook No. 43050 was transferred from store at Nemesis Rail, Burton-upon-Trent, to Crewe DMD by road for repairs and will be painted in Blue Pullman livery in due course.

Finally, LS black No. 57311 debuted on passenger work in its new guise. The facelifted Class 57/3 was employed on a 1Z46 06.11 Bristol Temple Meads-Canterbury West as far as Hanwell Up Loop, Southall, where it handed over to No. 46100 *Royal Scot* and No. D1924 (47810).

NEWS ROUND-UP Continued



RailAdventure Nos. 43467/423 pass Birmingham Moor Street on March 5, with the 0246 14.33 Leamington Spa-Kidderminster. The '43s' were undergoing testing having received repairs at the Severn Valley Railway maintenance facility. The '43s' are destined for a return to traffic with RA, joining Nos. 43465/468/480/484. Stuart West

RAILADVENTURE

Moved from Eastleigh Works to Kidderminster for final rectification work on February 21, Nos. 43423 and 43467 made their first main line runs under their own power for RailAdventure on March 5. The buffer-fitted High Speed Train power cars ran to Leamington Spa as the 0243 10.58 from Kidderminster before forming the 0244 12.32 to

Birmingham Moor Street, 0245 13.48 Birmingham Moor Street-Leamington Spa and 0246 14.33 Leamington Spa-Kidderminster. The pair had previously ran two shakedown runs along the Seven Valley Railway in the second half of February.

SCOTRAIL

Following severe cab damage after hitting a tree on December 27,

No. 43129 has now moved to Brodie Engineering at the former Wabtec/Brush/Barclay works at Kilmarnock for repair, with No. 43150 following it. Meanwhile, Nos. 43305 and 43367, both used by London North Eastern Railway before the former later worked for East Midlands Trains, made the trip from Ely Papworth to UK Rail Leasing, Loughborough, in the third week of March to provide spares to repair

'Inter7City' fleet members Nos. 43128 and 43169. Incredibly, despite being on ScotRail's books since June 2018, the former has yet to turn a wheel passenger service north of the border due to being used as a 'Christmas tree' to keep other members of the fleet operational. This pair arrived at Loughborough on March 20 and 22.

DISPOSALS

Just 15 of the original 31 Class 91s remain following the cutting of No. 91104 at C F Booth Ltd, Rotherham. This was retired by London North Eastern Railway in February 2020 and had managed to escape the gas axe since arriving at the scrap yard in March 2022. It was moved to the Yorkshire scrap merchant along with Nos. 91103/108, which were both dispensed with in May and August of the same year. The other 13 scrapped 'Electras' were all processed by Sims, No. 91132 in March 2021 at Beeston, and the rest at Newport, as follows: Nos. 91102/113/126/129 in May 2021, ex-Data Acquisition & Testing Services Ltd (DATS) Nos. 91128 in July 2022, and 91122 in August 2022, and Nos. 91112/115/116/118/121/125 in February 2023. No. 91104 was completed by BREL at Crewe Works as No. 91004 in June 1988 and was refurbished as a Class 91/1 in March 2002. Named the *Red Arrows* between November 1989 and December 1996, this was followed by *Grantham* (in vinyl style) under the control of GNER between September 1999 and November 2007. It was the sixth of the GEC-designed ECML thoroughbreds to be released for disposal.



ScotRail No. 43128 stands inside Haymarket depot on December 11, 2022. The '43' has never operated a passenger train for ScotRail but has now moved to Loughborough for modifications and reactivation. Richard Clinnick

Tata receives seventh Clayton

The second of the additional CDB90 hybrids ordered last year arrives at Port Talbot.

CLAYTON Equipment has completed the construction of the two additional CDB90 shunters ordered by Tata Steel last year, with the departure of the second hybrid machine from its Burton-upon-Trent workshops on March 13. This was delivered to Port Talbot two days later after a rather circuitous

tour of the road network and gives the steel company a total of seven of the 90-tonne locos.

The newcomer is works No. B4666/2, which will become No. 936 in Tata's internal system once commissioned and numbered. Like its classmates, it carries the company's light blue and

white livery with grey underframe.

Tata received the first of its CBD90s in the spring of 2019, No. 930 going on to be joined by Nos. 931 and 932, which were ordered the same year, and then Nos. 933 and 934, which were procured in 2021. The first of the most recent order, No. 935 or works No. B4666/1, was delivered to South Wales in October last year, its construction already being well advanced when the order was first announced during the summer.

The arrival of No. 936 is expected to have an impact on the veteran Brush Bagnall Bo-Bos, the oldest trio of which, Nos. 901-903, are just a year away from their 70th birthday. Of these, No. 902 has already been removed from traffic. Only a couple of years younger are Nos. 904-906, which date from 1957, while three more of the class were extensively rebuilt by Hunslet Barclay in 1993/94 and today are numbered as Nos. 07-09. 

INDUSTRIALS

■ Further work has taken place at the Shipley yard of Crossley Evans with the northern part of the site now largely cleared of scrap and extensively tidied up. As a result, the end has finally come for the pair of Ruston & Hornsby 88DS that have lingered in increasingly derelict condition for many years, with 1950-built No. 284838 and No. 425483 of 1958 both scrapped on site in January. Still remaining are Hunslet No. 7159 *Prince of Wales* and Ruston No. 459519 *Venom*, although both are now for sale.

■ Railway Support Services has

acquired a further Sentinel to support its expanding industrial hire business. Built in 1966 by Rolls Royce, No. 10252 had arrived at Wishaw by mid-February to await developments. In recent years, this had been stored in the Portland yard of South Coast Steam, the long-term exposure to the sea air having done little for its bodywork.

■ The latest addition to the Harry Needle Railroad Company fleet is Hunslet No. 7189 *Gaffer*, the 1970-built 0-6-0DH having latterly languished out of use at the Stobart container terminal at Widnes after

more than 20 years in residence.

March 6, saw it collected and moved by road to Worksop.

■ Fresh from engine repairs, GECT-built No. 5430 has returned to action at the Daventry International Rail Freight Terminal. Currently part of the Ed Murray hire fleet, much of 2023 was spent on the sidelines before moving to the Hunslet workshops at Barton-under-Needwood, the work also including a fresh coat of black and yellow. Dating from 1977, the former British Steel shunter still retains its 261 identity on the cabsides.

NEWS ROUND-UP

Freightliner

The six-month stay of No. 08531 at Nemesis Rail's Burton workshops was almost over in late March, with the shunter being rolled out following the completion of an exam and repaint into Freightliner's orange and black livery. Last employed at Felixstowe, it had arrived on September 29 last year.

Hunslet

No. 08472 has returned to traffic after a nine-month stay in the Stoke yard of Reid Freight Services following its arrival from Craigentinny in June 2023. On March 4, it was dispatched to Bardon Hill quarry to act as a standby to the industrials hired to Aggregate Industries by Hunslet. Class 08s have never been common at the Leicestershire terminal with industrial shunters traditionally favoured instead.

PRESERVATION

March 25, brought an exchange of shunters at the **Bodmin & Wenford Railway**, with No. 08359 departing back to the Avon Valley Railway. This is part of the Diesel Electric Shunter Company fleet and will now undergo repairs including fitting a new radiator assembly prior to going out on hire again later in the year.

Taking its place at Bodmin as cover for No. 08444, which is receiving an overhaul, is Class 10 No. D3489 *Colonel Tomline*, the former Felixstowe Docks pilot arriving from the Helston Railway on the same day. The shunter briefly visited Bodmin for around six weeks at the end of 2023 during a weather-disrupted transfer from the Spa Valley Railway, but will now enjoy a longer loan until at least the end of the year.

With No. 08359 returned to Bitton on March 26, the low-loader then collected No. 08202 and departed north, initially for Wishaw. After spending the Easter break at the Midlands yard, the locomotive, which belongs to Valley Rail Preservation, was delivered to the **Llangollen Railway** to begin a 12-month hire contract.

A 2ft gauge South African Railways Class 91.000 diesel has arrived in the UK following shipping from Durban. Dating from 1973, No. 91.016 was one of 20 Bo-Bos built by General Electric in Erie, Pennsylvania, the 700hp

machines being the largest 2ft gauge diesel-electrics in the world and with bodywork based on a traditional American 'hood' design.

Following unloading, the loco was

moved by road to the East Midlands workshops of the **Darnall Locomotive and Railway Heritage Trust** and will require a full overhaul before it can be used.



No. D3489 *Colonel Tomline* stands at Prospidnick at the Helston Railway on March 2. The Class 10 had arrived from the Spa Valley Railway but has now moved to the Bodmin & Wenford Railway to cover for unavailable Class 08s. Andrew Triggs

GTR to lease Class 379s from Porterbrook

Introduction of 30 Electrostars on Great Northern to trigger rolling stock cascade.

GOVIA Thameslink Railway has signed a £50 million contract to lease all 30 four-car Class 379 Electrostar electric multiple units, currently stored at Worksop, from Porterbrook. The new lease coincides with a change in ownership of the fleet, which has been acquired by Porterbrook from Akiem.

The Class 379s entered service with National Express East Anglia between 2011 and 2012 and were taken out of traffic by its successor, Greater Anglia, and handed back to Akiem in 2022. Originally owned and financed by Lloyds Banking Group, the '379s' were sold to Macquarie

European Rail along with the rest of Lloyds' rail leasing business in 2012. In April 2020, Akiem, which lease trains to operators across Europe, bought Macquarie European Rail.

Since their removal from service in 2022, the Class 379s have been kept in operational condition, being moved from Worksop to Doncaster periodically to be powered up. Some work on the units is to be carried out before they return to service, which is expected to take place later this year. They are to be put into use on Great Northern services out of King's Cross, enabling the Class 387/1 fleet to be cascaded onto Southern services. In

preparation for this, Gatwick Express No. 387208 undertook a gauging run to Southampton and Portsmouth Harbour on March 24.

The transfer of the '387/1s' onto routes south of the River Thames is expected to release several '377s' for transfer to SouthEastern, which will enable more of its Class 465 and 466 Networkers, which are over 30 years old, to be taken out of service. There are already Class 465/2s, '465/9s' and '466s' stored (see table); unlike

the '465/0' and '465/1' sub-classes, these fleets were never upgraded with new traction equipment. Presently, there are 24 Class 465/9s and 30 Class 466s in traffic and it is likely that many of these will be taken out of traffic. In the meantime, overhauls of these units are continuing, and Nos. 466034/038 returned from Wabtec, Doncaster to Slade Green behind GB Railfreight No. 66731 *Capt. Tom Moore* on March 23/24. **E**

STORED 'NETWORKER' CLASS 465 & 466 UNITS

Ely Papworth: 465236-240/243-246/248-250.

Wabtec, Doncaster: 465235, 466016.

Worksop: 465241/242/247, 465905/915/917/918/920/921/930/931/933/934, 466001/005/009/010/013/017/024/027/030/032/033.



Almost 50 CAF Class 197 diesel multiple units are now in traffic with TFW Rail. One of the more recent debutants, No. 197120 stands at Manchester Oxford Road on February 29, paired with No. 197012, forming the 1D34 09.25 Manchester Airport-Holyhead. The '197/1' carries branding depicting it was made in Wales. Alex Ayre



On March 25, Rail Operations Group No. 37901 *Mirrlees Pioneer* leads the 5W78 08.39 Crewe Gresty Green-Landore through Newport, taking off-lease former TFW Rail No. 175011 for handback repairs. On the rear is ROG No. 37800 *Cassiopeia*. Martin Turner

DMU

CLASS 121 BUBBLE CAR

LOCOMOTIVE Services' single car No. 55022 *Flora* ran from Crewe to Kidderminster on March 18, in readiness for an outing over the Severn Valley Railway two days later, conveying guests behind No. 60532 *Blue Peter* which hauled the unit from Kidderminster to Bridgnorth and back.

CLASS 150 SPRINTER

THE first Class 150 to be taken out of traffic by TFW Rail, No. 150236, made its final revenue-earning runs on March 8, and on March 20, ran from Cardiff Canton to Landore pending handback to its owner, Porterbrook.

Also planned to be taken out of use in the coming weeks is No. 150281. This unit is one of a small number of '150s' to have been based at Cardiff Canton for virtually all of its career. Delivered from BREL York in September 1987, it has been based at Cardiff since new, except for a few weeks in early 1995 when it was loaned to Tyseley, and a spell from 2008 to 2010 when it was part of the First Great Western fleet based at St Philip's Marsh.

To date, only two Class 150 cars have been scrapped, both being early

accident victims. No. 52209 (from 150209) was less than two years old when it derailed near St Helens and hit a bridge in November 1988, while No. 52212 (from 150212) was in service for an even shorter period; new in April 1987, it was involved in a collision with an engineer's crane at Seamer on December 15 that year.

Other Train Operating Company Class 150s are still undergoing overhauls. Released from Wolverton following a six-month visit for C6 overhaul and corrosion repairs, Great Western Railway No. 150207 ran back to Exeter on March 4.

CLASS 156 SUPER SPRINTER

MAROONED south of Ayr at Girvan/Stranraer since the fire at Ayr Station Hotel, which put the through lines out of use, on September 25, 2023, ScotRail Nos. 156495 and 156503 were moved by road to Corkerhill in early March. Both were back in regular service by the end of the month.

CLASS 166 TURBO

FOLLOWING its C4 overhaul at Wabtec, Doncaster, Great Western Railway No. 166208 returned to St Philip's Marsh on March 2, with No. 166207 being sent north the next day. No. 166207 was subsequently released on March 16.

Refurbishment work is continuing at Wolverton, and on March 8, No. 166214 returned to St Philip's Marsh, with GWR No. 166204 heading the opposite direction. Similar moves on March 23 saw No. 166213 run from Wolverton to St Philip's Marsh and No. 166219 dispatched for attention.

CLASS 170 TURBOSTAR

HAVING moved from Cardiff Canton to Derby Etches Park on January 28, former TFW Rail No. 170208 entered traffic with East Midlands Railway in early March. The unit retains Transport for Wales colours.

CLASS 175 CORADIA

IN recent weeks, more '175s' have visited Central Rivers for handback work. Arriving under its own power from Crewe Gresty Green on February 26, was No. 175109; it departed for Landore sandwiched between Rail Operations Group Nos. 37800 *Cassiopeia* and 37608 *Andromeda* on March 7.

A Holyhead to Central Rivers move on February 28 conveyed No. 175112, traction being supplied by No. 37608 with No. 37611 *Denise*. The same pair of '37s' similarly moved No. 175105 from Holyhead to Central Rivers on

March 12. Another move, the 5Q99 07.58 Landore-Central Rivers on March 25, was operated using Nos. 37800 and 37901 *Mirrlees Pioneer*. The two locomotives had, three days earlier, worked the 5W78 08.39 Crewe Gresty Green-Landore with No. 175011.

Another two units have been sent to Ely Papworth for storage. Nos. 175005 and 175104 arrived under their own power from Landore on March 19.

CLASS 180 ADELANTE

FORMER East Midlands Railway No. 180110, which had been on lease to Grand Central since August 2023, has been handed back to Angel Trains and returned to Ely Papworth from Crofton on March 11. The former EMR '180s' may well see further use with Grand Central from December when its two Class 221s (Nos. 221142/143) are due to go off-lease.

CLASS 197 CIVITY

RECENTLY put into traffic with TFW Rail have been Nos. 197116 (March 5), 197122 (March 9) and 197103 (March 23). It brings the total number of '197s' in service to 46, comprising Nos. 197001/002/004-021/042-051/101/103-112/115/116/118/120/122.



GB Railfreight No. 69009 *Western Consort* passes Hademore, near Lichfield, on March 25, hauling the 5Q62 12.55 Widnes-Wembley Reception Sidings with South Western Railway No. 458422, on its way back to Bournemouth following refurbishment and reforming from a five-car to four-car unit. Paul Keightley.

EMU

CLASS 321

MARCH 20 saw the departure of the last two Class 321s from Worksop, when Rail Operations Group No. 37884 *Cepheus* departed for Sims Metals, Newport with Nos. 321337 and 321440. However, only one of the sets was destined for disposal; after depositing No. 321337 at the South Wales scrapyards the following day, the English Electric Type 3 formed the 5Q96 10.29 Newport Docks-Northampton

Kings Heath with No. 321440 in tow, the '321' having been bought by Varamis Rail for its expanding logistics operation (see pages 80-81).

CLASS 390 PENDOLINO

ON March 16, No. 390049, which had replaced No. 390047 at Alstom, Widnes earlier in the month, emerged following its refurbishment. In its place went No. 390008 *Charles Rennie Mackintosh*, which was due to be released at the end of the month. Due to be dealt with before the end of June are (in order) Nos. 390042/046/002

Stephen Sutton/020/010 *Cumbrian Spirit* and finally 390013 *Blackpool Belle*.

CLASS 398

THE last remaining TFW tram-train at Melton Rail Innovation & Development Centre (RIDC), No. 398002, departed for South Wales on March 21, when Nos. 20189 and 20205, top and tail with No. 20142 *Sir John Betjeman*, took the unit to Kings Norton where it recessed overnight. The next day saw the 'Choppers' form the 6Q22 18.26 Kings Norton OTP Depot-Radyr

conveying the unit which, upon arrival at Radyr, was collected by No. 398007 and hauled to Taff's Well depot in the early hours of March 23.

CLASS 458 JUNIPER

RELEASED from Alstom, Widnes in recent weeks have been Nos. 458415 (ex 458515) on March 12 and 458422 (ex 458522) on March 25. They were taken south, initially to Wembley yard and then on to Bournemouth, by GB Railfreight Nos. 69008 (No. 458415) and 69009 *Western Consort* (No. 458422) respectively.



Great Western Railway No. 802101 departs London Euston on March 19, as the 5Q85 13.49 to North Pole International depot. The nine-car GWR bi-mode was being used for testing purposes ahead of GWR using London Euston for diversions due to Paddington being closed for engineering work relating to HS2. The '802' also visited London Waterloo. Brad Joyce

Heading the opposite direction, leaving Bournemouth for Widnes behind No. 69008 on March 14, was No. 458521. Similarly, on March 26, No. 69009 worked the 5Z66 20.18 Bournemouth-Eastleigh East Yard with No. 458501 in tow; the ensemble departed for Widnes the next evening.

The trailer car removed from No. 458522, No. 74424, was moved from Widnes to Cockshute Sidings in mid-March.

CLASS 507

FOUR more Class 507s were stopped during March, reducing the operational fleet to 15 sets. Nos. 507002/030, which had been removed from traffic a week or so earlier, left Birkenhead North for Sims Metals, Newport behind Rail Operations Group No. 37884 *Cepheus* on March 11, while Nos. 507020/031 were, on March 27, collected by ROG No. 37800 *Cassiopeia* which formed the 5Q78 09.55 Birkenhead North-Crewe South Yard.

Still in service in late March were Nos. 507001/003/007/010/011/014-018/021/023/028/029/033.

CLASS 701 ARTERIO

RETURNING to Alstom, Derby for attention, No. 701012 was brought north from Eastleigh by GB Railfreight No. 47727 *Edinburgh Castle/Caisteal Dhùn Èideann* on March 1. Also returning to Derby after almost two years at Worksop is No. 701007. The cars which make up this unit are being taken from Worksop to Derby by road; it is understood the set has had some parts removed which prevented it from being moved by rail.

Heading the opposite way to No. 701012, No. 701005 was hauled from Derby Litchurch Lane to Eastleigh by GBRF No. 69008 on March 18. The following day saw the '69' used to haul No. 701016 back to Eastleigh after a spell in store at Marchwood.

On March 7, No. 701036 became the fifth set to be used on passenger services on the Waterloo to Windsor & Eton Riverside route.

CLASS 720 AVENTRA

MOVEMENT of Greater Anglia '720s' between Alstom, Derby and Worksop for work to be carried out has been continuing. Sent from Derby to Worksop have been Nos. 720140 (March 5), 720141 (March 8), 720139 (March 14) and 720144 (March 21), while heading the opposite way have been Nos. 720101 (February 23), 720503 (February 28), 720143/519 (February 29), 720142 (March 7), 720140 (March 14) and 720141 (March 21).

Hauled from Derby to Litchurch Lane to Willesden by GB Railfreight No. 47749 *City of Truro* on March 15 were Nos. 720102/138. Following mileage accumulation runs on the West Coast Main Line, No. 720102 ran from Wembley to Ilford on March 19, with No. 720138 following the next day.

CLASS 730 AVENTRA

NEW into traffic on Euston workings have been Nos. 730031 (February 27),



Merseyrail Nos. 777017 and 777028 stand at Kirkdale on March 22, forming the 2G54 15.04 Ormskirk-Liverpool Central. This was one of the first trial runs using eight-car Class 777 formations. James Garthwaite

730001 (March 4), 730030 (March 6) and 730003 (March 19). Similarly, in the West Midlands, Nos. 730032/033 made their debut passenger runs on March 19 and March 6 respectively. Both these sets had been at Melton Rail Innovation & Development Centre (RIDC) in the preceding weeks, having returned on February 27 (No. 730033) and March 5 (No. 730032). Other sets have also visited Melton RIDC for short periods.

After a spell at Gascoigne Wood, No. 730038 was moved to Doncaster Belmont Yard by Rail Operations Group No. 37800 *Cassiopeia* on February 28. A similar move occurred on March 25 when ROG No. 37884 *Cepheus* hauled Nos. 730023/024 from Gascoigne Wood to Doncaster Belmont Yard.

Emerging from Alstom, Derby on March 15 was No. 730220, which was hauled to Oxley by ROG No. 37608 *Andromeda*. The same loco had, the previous day, moved No. 730217 from Worksop to Oxley; the '37' had taken it to Worksop for attention on March 8.

CLASS 777 STADLER

HAVING been brought from Dollands Moor to Wembley by DB Cargo UK No. 66133 earlier in the day, Nos. 777038/051/053 were moved to Northampton by RailAdventure's power cars (Nos. 43465/484 and 43468/480) on March 9. They continued to Walton Old Junction two days later, from where No. 777053 was dispatched to Long Marston on March 21. Two sets located at Long Marston, Nos. 777039/041, departed for Walton Old Junction on March 7,

subsequently moving to Kirkdale for commissioning.

Entering revenue-earning service on March 6 was No. 777032. From March 21 trial running of an eight-car formation, comprising Nos. 777017/028, began on the Ormskirk branch.

IET

CLASS 805

NEWLY-released from Hitachi's Newton Aycliffe factory, No. 805010 ran from Merchant Park Sidings to Oxley on March 11.

DEPOT TALK

Correct to March 21, 2024

Allocations

175004/005/009 CH/HLHQ-HQ/SCEC
175104 CH/HLHQ-HQ/SCEC
180110 HT/ECGC-HQ/SCEC
197050 HQ-CH
197116/118/122 HQ-CH
197125 newly delivered HQ/HLHQ
319214 sent for disposal
321337 sent for disposal
321429 HQ/SAXU-GW/VRMU
507002/030 sent for disposal
701036 HQ-WD
710270 HQ-WN
720139-141 newly delivered HQ/EBHQ
730001/003/030-032/047 HQ-BY
730220 newly delivered HQ/EJHQ
777027/032/033 HQ-KD
777038/051/053 newly delivered HQ/HEHQ

Liveries

South Western Railway: 444040, 450116, 458420

Renumbered

458520 – 458420

Now in passenger traffic

197050
197116/118/122
701036
710270
730001/003/030-032/047
777027/032/033

Stored/stopped locations

Central Rivers: 175105/112
Derby Litchurch Lane: 701012, 720140-143, 720503/519
Doncaster Belmont Yard: 730038
Eastleigh: 701005/016
Ely: 175005, 175104, 180110
Landore: 150236, 175109
Long Marston: 777053
Northampton: 321440
Old Dalby: 730015
Oxley: 730217/220, 805010
Walton Old Junction: 777038/039/041/051
Worksop: 720139/141, 730217

Disposals

Sims Metals, Newport: Arrival dates: February 27: 62904; February 28: 77316; February 29: 71785; March 7: 77317 (all 319214); March 11: 507002/030; March 21: 321337

Northern Belle set reformed

A replacement *Warwick* is added to the Northern Belle rake as set gains Central Door Locking.

THE Northern Belle dining set made its first passenger outing of the year on March 15, having been fitted with Central Door Locking (CDL) and a new vehicle being inserted into the formation.

Mk. 2f First Open (FO) No. 3313, which previously carried West Coast Railways maroon, has been outshopped in Northern Belle livery and named *Warwick*. The coach replaces the previous *Warwick*, Mk.2d FO No. 3182 which suffered fire damage at Carnforth in August 2020; since then, the set has operated with one of the Metro-Cammell Pullmans in its place. No. 3313 was previously used on luxury dining excursions as part of the short-lived FM Rail and later Cotswold Rail Blue Pullman which ran between 2006 and 2009, after which it joined the WCR fleet.

During its period of maintenance at Carnforth, the passenger coaches in the Northern Belle set were fitted

with CDL, enabling their continued use on charter trains. Discussions between WCR and the Office of Road and Road concerning other rolling stock continues (see *Headline News*, page 12). One FO, No. 3174 *Glamis*, did not return to traffic until late March, its place in the set on March 15, being temporarily taken by Mk.2f FO No. 3392 which carries WCR maroon.

The table below details the Northern Belle fleet. Mk.1 Gangwayed Brake (BG) No. 92904 is normally only used on multi-day trips for storage of passenger's luggage, while Mk.3 Sleeper No. 10703 provides cover for the other two Sleeping Cars when required. Not included in the listing is Mk.1 Restaurant Kitchen No. 1566, which has not been used since early 2023. Another Kitchen car, No. 1953, has since taken its name, *Caerdydd*.

Meanwhile, four non-CDL fitted coaches were hired to the East

Lancashire Railway to provide extra capacity during its steam gala on March 15-17. Mk.1 Tourist Standard Open (TSO) Nos. 4905/73 and Mk.2 TSO Nos. 5171 and 5216 were hauled from Carnforth to the ELR by WCR Nos. 47237 and 37676 *Loch Rannoch* on March 13. **E**

NORTHERN BELLE COACHING STOCK FLEET

Number	Type	Name
325	Mk.1	DUART
1953	Mk.1 RK	CAERDYDD
3174	Mk.2d FO	GLAMIS
3247	Mk.2e FO	CHATSWORTH
3267	Mk.2e FO	BELVOIR
3273	Mk.2e FO	ALNWICK
3275	Mk.2e FO	HARLECH
3313	Mk.2f FO	WARWICK
10703	Mk.3a SLE	-
10729	Mk.3a SLE	CREWE
10734	Mk.3a SLE	BALMORAL
17167	Mk.2d BFK	MOW COP
92904	Mk.1 BG	-

Network Rail acquires entire Hanson & Hall Mk.3 fleet

THE seven former Greater Anglia Mk.3 coaches owned and operated on charters by Hanson & Hall Rail Services Solutions have been purchased by Network Rail.

The vehicles involved are Buffet Standard Open (RMB) No. 10406, First Open (FO) Nos. 11092/093/099, 11101 and Standard Open (SO) Nos.

12125/154. Last used on a Branch Line Society/Hanson & Hall charter in July 2023, they were moved from Chaddesden Sidings to Melton Rail Innovation & Development Centre at Asfordby by H&H No. 50008 *Thunderer* on February 14.

The seven coaches had been used on charters since 2022 and

were branded 'The Real Charter Train Company', this being a trading name of Hanson & Hall. Initially acquired by Third Life Rail, an associated company, they passed into Hanson & Hall ownership in 2023. For its charter trains with No. 50008 *Thunderer* this year, London Underground's 4-TC set is being used.

Rail Operations Group No. 37901 *Mirrlees Pioneer* passes Bungalow Lane, near Norwich, on March 26, with the 5Q48 08.33 Castle Donington-Great Yarmouth empty coaching stock move, taking Eastern Rail Services Nos. 10237 and 12091 back to their owner's depot. Richard Clinnick



PURCHASED by Eastern Rail Services earlier this year (RE335), Mk.3a Restaurant First Modular (RFM) No. 10237 was released from Lorum, Derby, where it had been undergoing attention, on February 26.

It was taken to Castle Donington, where it joined ERS' No. 12091, by Rail Operations Group Nos. 37800 *Cassiopeia* and 37884 *Cepheus*. The two coaches were used in connection with an overnight emergency

exercise at Sutton Coldfield during the early hours of March 17. Subsequently, they were hauled from Castle Donington to Great Yarmouth by ROG No. 37901 *Mirrlees Pioneer* on March 26.

IN BRIEF

ANOTHER FIVE-COACH TFW MK.4 SET IN TRAFFIC

THE latest TFW Rail Mk.4 rake to gain an additional vehicle is HD06, which has had No. 12461 added to its formation. The set made its debut outing in its extended guise on March 25, when, with DB Cargo UK No. 67010 providing traction, it undertook a test run from Crewe to Hereford and back. Put into service earlier in the month was HD07, which has gained No. 12452.

HST COACH SECTION ON THE MOVE

THE surviving short section of Mk.3 Trailer Restaurant First Buffet (TRFB) No. 40729, retained at Neville Hill for training purposes when the coach was cut up in 2017, has recently been moved to Reid Freight Services' Cockshute yard. Around 10ft of one end of the sectioned body was kept when the former East Midlands Train coach, which was written off following a derailment and collision in 2009, was scrapped.

TPE MK.5A MOVES

MARCH 12 saw TP09, formed of Nos. 11509, 12725-727 and 12809, moved from Longsight to Long Marston by No. 68026 *Enterprise*. Heading the opposite direction for scheduled maintenance with the same locomotive the next day was TP04, made up of Nos. 11504, 12710-712 and 12804; like TP03, which returned to Longsight on February 22 (see RE335), it has lost its TransPennine Express branding.

DEPOT TALK

Correct to March 21, 2024

- Liveries**

TPE branding removed: 11504, 12710-712, 12804
- Formations**

HD05: 12224+12326+10321+11320+12477+82200

HD06: 12222+12323+10330+11321+12461+82227

HD07: 12210+12316+10301+11322+12452+82230
- Stored/stopped locations**

Great Yarmouth: 10237, 12091

Long Marston: 11509, 12725-727, 12809

Longsight: 11504, 12710-712, 12804



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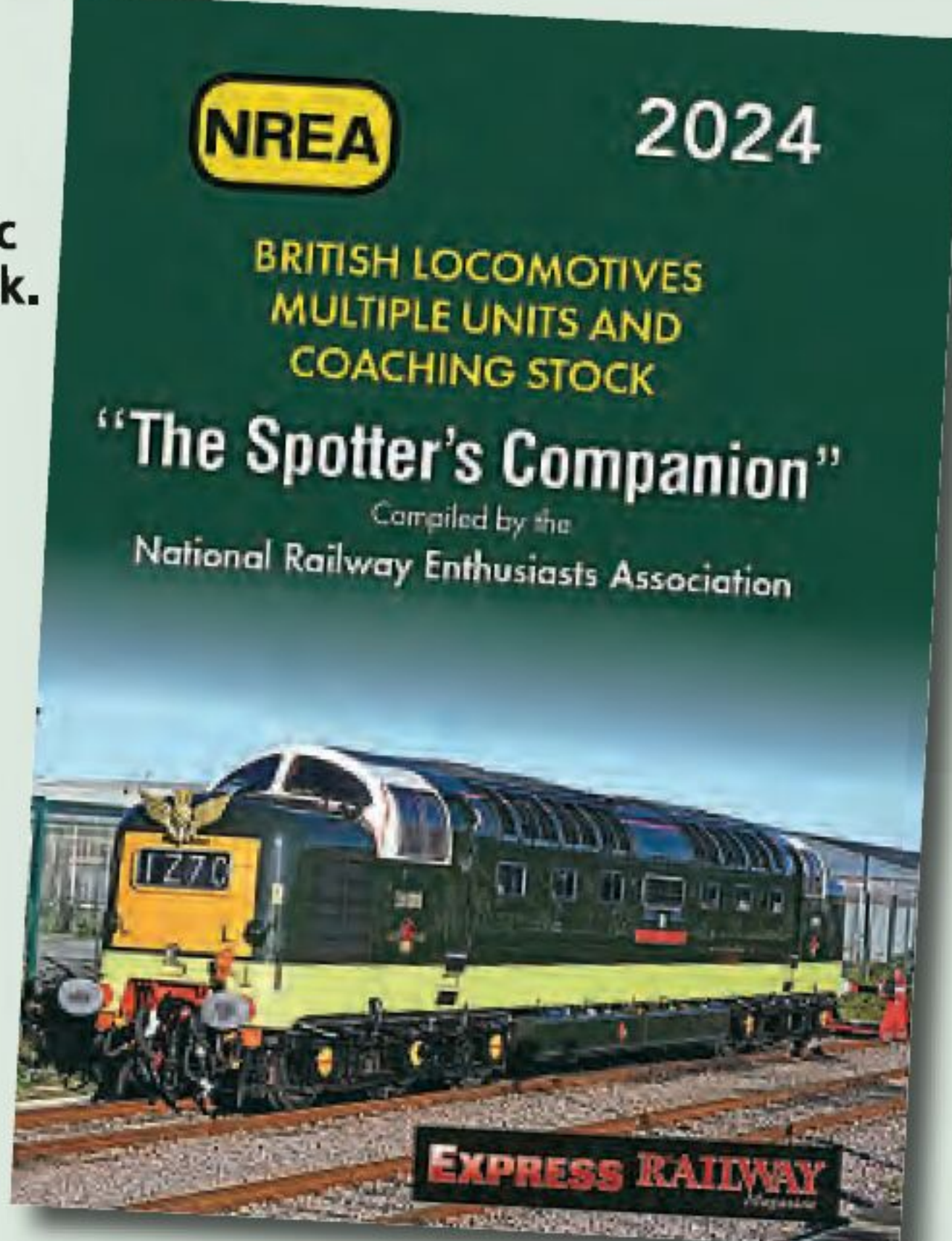
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CLASS 20

Nos. 20189 and 20205 passed Birmingham New Street station on March 18, forming the 5Z33 17.35 Soho-Kings Norton sandwiching translator vehicles and West Midlands Trains electric multiple unit No. 323240. Three days later the same '20s' top-and-tailed the 6Q21 11.55 Old Dalby-Kings Norton with No. 20142 *Sir John Betjeman* moving TFW Rail tram-train No. 398002 on the first leg of its journey to South Wales. Next day the whole entourage continued its journey to Radyr before the three Class 20s returned the barrier vans to Kings Norton as a triple-header on March 23. By March 28, Nos. 20142 and 20189 had been paired to take WMT

No. 323203 from Soho to Tyseley for tyre turning.

Due for a repaint into Balfour Beatty livery, Nos. 20901/905 travelled light from Barrow Hill to Bristol Barton Hill on March 22. Harry Needle Railroad Company Type 1s Nos. 20302/311 were also leaving Barrow Hill on March 21, when noted at Derby and Leamington Spa behind Locomotive Services Group No. 57003 bound for Arlington Fleet Services at Eastleigh for a repaint. Chester hosted four English Electric Type 1s from the LSLO pool on March 19. Initially, Nos. 20118 *Saltburn-by-the-Sea* and 20132 arrived at 10.43 before a problem resulted in LSG No. D6851 (37667) *Flopsie* being sent from Crewe to recover them. Another

pair, Nos. D8096 (20096) and D8107 (20107) *Jocelyn Feilding* 1940-2020 arrived at 14.00 and departed as the 0K44 15.11 Chester-Crewe.

CLASS 37

Preserved No. 37403 *Isle of Mull* has proved itself a reliable performer in recent weeks. On March 8, it set off with the Branch Line Society's ambitious long weekend tour (see also Class 57), initially leaving Bo'ness for Edinburgh Waverley. Thereafter No. 37403 handled the 1Z37 12.56 Edinburgh-Fort William before a return trip to Oban the next day. The itinerary for March 9, featured the 1Z40 08.15 Fort William-Wemyss Bay albeit via Mallaig and thence to Glasgow's two

main line stations, top and tailing from Wemyss Bay with GB Railfreight No. 66776 *Joanne*. Finally, No. 37403 returned to base with the 1Z43 21.47 Glasgow Queen Street-Bo'ness.

The Rail Operation Group duo of Nos. 37884 *Cepheus* and 37901 *Mirrlees Pioneer* took Mk.3 coaches Nos. 10237 and 12091 from Castle Donington to Sutton Coldfield on March 16, ready for use in an overnight emergency exercise. No. 37901 was charged with taking the two Eastern Rail Services coaches back to Great Yarmouth on March 26. Harry Needle Railroad Company orange Nos. 37405 and 37607 were kept well apart during the month. For example, on March 12, No. 37607 took a test train from

Under a threatening sky, Locomotive Services Group's Blue Pullman, led by No. 43055 *Geoff Drury* 1930-1999 *Steam Preservation and Computerised Track Recording Pioneer* with No. 43049 on the rear, passes Moorhouses, Eaglescliffe, on March 5, with the 1Z44 14.35 Whitby-Nantwich, the return leg of 'The Whitby Jet'. Rich Mackin



Exeter Riverside overnight to Penzance visiting Looe and Newquay on the way. Meanwhile, No. 37405, after taking a Kirow crane DRK81612 and runners from Rugby to Bescot on March 14, travelled to Scotland less than a week later and, paired with No. 37610 (which is also hired from HNRC by Colas Railfreight), powered the 6K10 23.58 Millerhill-Upper Tyndrum autoballasters late on March 20.

The movement of multiple unit stock both new and old continues to provide plenty of work for ROG Type 3s. With the last of the Merseyrail Class 508 electric units leaving Birkenhead North depot for scrap in January, the Class 507 fleet (nearly 46 years old) is suffering further inroads with Nos. 507002/030 leaving for Sims Metals at Newport Docks behind No. 37884 on March 11. Nos. 507020/031 left for temporary storage at Crewe South on March 22, hauled away by No. 37800 *Cassiopeia*, leaving only 15 of the original 33 Class 507s on Merseyside.

Meanwhile, former Transport for Wales Class 175 diesel multiple units, dating from the turn of the century, are being moved around the system with their future unresolved. On March 12, ROG Nos. 37608 *Andromeda* and 37611

Denise took set No. 175105 from Holyhead to Central Rivers, No. 175011 left Crewe Gresty Green for Landore in the care of Nos. 37800 and 37901 on March 22, while the same Type 3s took No. 175101 from Landore to Central Rivers on March 25.

CLASS 40

Locomotive Services Group's hired-in No. D213 (40013) *Andania* prepared for a few days of touring by taking a test run from Crewe to Chester and back on March 11. Two days later, and tailed by No. D1935 (47805) *Roger Hosking MA 1925-2013*, the Type 4 set off with Saphos Trains' 'Golden Arrow' running as the 1Z46 05.30 Kidderminster-Canterbury West as far as Hanwell Bridge Loop, the train having had to reverse at Worcester owing to a line blockage at Kemble. Fortunately, the return journey was able to go via the planned route departing from Kemble at 22.53. The same diesel locomotives were used on the 1Z46 06.30 Northampton-Worcester Shrub Hill on March 16, with steam locomotive No. 46100 *Royal Scot* taking over from the '40' at Hanwell, with the roles reversed during the evening return journey.

CLASS 43

Noted passing Acton Bridge station, Cheshire, on March 15, RailAdventure power cars Nos. 43465/484 had Railvac No. 2 in tow on the 6X45 11.44 Bo'ness-Crewe Basford Hall. Earlier that day Nos. 43468/480 'powered the 125 Group's Mk.3 coaches on the 1Z43 06.48 Sheffield-Marylebone Retro Railtours' 'Master Cutler' charter marking Marylebone station's 125th anniversary. A return trip to Banbury followed before power car No. 43468 led the 15.21 return journey from the London terminus to Sheffield. Previously, on March 11, Nos. 43468/480 hauled the 6Q45 14.15 Northampton North Junction-Walton Old Junction conveying three new Class 777 electric multiple units (Nos. 777038/051/053) before all four RailAdventure power cars teamed up to move No. 777053 to store on the 5Q79 08.29 Walton Old Junction-Long Marston on March 21.

CLASS 47

Unplanned work befell West Coast Railways No. 47812 and Freightliner No. 47830 *Beeching's Legacy* during the month. On March 4, GB Railfreight No. 66784 *Keighley & Worth Valley Railway* failed at Healey Loop, west of Sheffield, while hauling the 4M03 12.41 Doncaster Decoy-Peak Forest. Newark 'Thunderbird' No. 47812 was sent to the rescue and hauled the whole train back to Doncaster. The Freightliner '47/8' performed a similar role early on March 12, collecting the 6Y23 02.00 Earlestown-Basford Hall engineers' train following the failure of FL No. 66523.

The '47/8' later returned to attach to the Freightliner Class 66 and hauled that to Basford Hall. For much of the remainder of March, Nos. 47812 and 47830 undertook road learning, the former based on the East Coast Main Line while No. 47830 covered many trips to Nuneaton, Walsall and later Carlisle. On March 13, WCR Nos. 47237 and 37676 *Loch Rannoch* hauled four coaches from Carnforth to Castleton for use on the East Lancashire Railway's weekend gala.

Working its first passenger train for some while, preserved No. 47828 (hired by Locomotive Services Group) accompanied No. 47712 *Lady Diana Spencer* (also hired by LSG but this time from the Crewe Diesel Preservation Group) on the 1Z89 06.56 Nantwich-Portsmouth Harbour Statesman tour on March 2. A month after visiting Eastleigh Arlington for a repaint, an immaculate No. D1924 (47810) *Crewe Diesel Depot* departed for Crewe on March 22, hauling two barrier vehicles, and was back in use on a Saphos Trains tour four days later (see Class 57).

No. 47712 then became the first of its class to visit Oban on March 30, quite an achievement after more than 60 years! The occasion was the running of an InterCity push-pull weekend tour from Crewe, No. 47712 arriving at the West Highland terminus with the 1Z62 08.23 from Edinburgh. LSG No. D1935 (47805) *Roger Hosking MA 1925-2013* had accompanied the tour train from

Crewe on March 29, and having rejoined it in Edinburgh two days later both '47s' formed the 1Z64 08.25 Edinburgh-Gourock on Easter Sunday, March 31.

Three tours involving Class 47s as back-up to a steam locomotive ran on March 2. WCR No. 47815 *Great Western* tailed 'Black Five' No. 44871 on the Railway Touring Company's 'Cheshireman' charter (1Z72 07.13 London Euston-Chester), while a little further along Euston Road, LSG No. D1935 (47805) was at the buffer stops on the 1Z07 05.57 London King's Cross-York ready to depart behind A4 Pacific No. 60007 *Sir Nigel Gresley*. Around the same time, albeit at Birmingham Snow Hill, Nos. 7029 *Clun Castle* and 47773 were in top and tail mode as the 1Z29 07.13 Vintage Trains' tour to Salisbury. WCR No. 47848 teamed up with Black Five No. 44871 on the 1Z47 07.29 York-Edinburgh on March 23.

Steam-hauled charter trains accompanied by Brush Type 4 diesels passed one another outside Preston station at 17.40 on March 16. The 1Z87 14.17 Carlisle-London Euston in the charge of Pacific No. 34067 *Tangmere* and tailed by WCR No. 47815 approached off the Blackburn line as the 1Z44 15.05 Carlisle-Birmingham New Street departed behind Castle Class No. 5043 *Earl of Mount Edgcumbe*. The latter was shadowed by another green-liveried Type 4, No. 47773, running as the 0Z48 15.21 Carlisle-Crewe, having gone north that morning as far as Carnforth atop the 1Z43 06.56 Birmingham New Street-Carlisle 'Shap Mountaineer' tour.

CLASS 56

Still on hire to DC Rail, GB Railfreight's large logo blue No. 56098 was accompanied by No. 60029 *Ben Nevis* on the 6Z27 09.23 Quainton Road-Aylesbury on March 1, the pair having arrived at Quainton Road from Willesden. Three days later No. 56098 passed Hoo Junction with the 6Z70 05.04 Willesden-Grain returning to Willesden in mid-afternoon and to Leicester the next day. There it collected long-term stored No. 60099 for transfer to UK Rail Leasing, Loughborough, before taking a break until March 26, when it was noted at Acton Yard having arrived on the 4Z44 15.33 from Wembley Reception. Double heading of the Carlisle Yard to Chirk logs by Colas Railfreight Type 5s occurred on several occasions during March, with Nos. 56049 *Robin of Templecombe* and 56105 covering the duty on eight occasions including March 12 and 13, when the train ran via Shap rather than the Settle & Carlisle line, as it did on eight days. Other pairings featured Nos. 56049 and 56096 on March 14, and Nos. 56096 and 56113 on March 19 and 21. Engineering work on Anglesey resulted in Colas No. 56094 hauling the 6C97 06.50 Gaerwen-Bescot long welded rail train on March 10. The following Sunday 6C97 ran again in the care of Colas No. 56051 *Survival*, noted passing the site of Bagillt station at 08.47.



→ GB Railfreight trialled a Class 69 on its sand train operation from Middleton Towers at the end of March, to assess if they could replace the Class 66s currently used. On March 27, BR blue No. 69007 *Richard Trevithick* passes Silt Drove, with the 4H98 08.16 March Up Yard-Middleton Towers empty sand train. GBRf No. 66789 *British Rail 1948-1997* was provided for insurance. Alan Clegg

CLASS 57

Showing off its London North Western Railway lined black livery, LSG No. 57311 returned to action on March 26, top and tailing the 1Z46 06.11 Bristol Temple Meads-Canterbury West with No. D1924 (47810) *Crewe Diesel Depot*, noted leaving Trowbridge at 06.57. Later, the '57/3' handed over the reins to 4-6-0 No. 46100 *Royal Scot* at Hanwell Bridge Loop. No. 57311 was created in 2003 from the bodyshell of 47817, a locomotive that once carried Porterbrook purple and white livery. Another former Class 47, previously numbered 47187, is today's WCR No. 57006. Without a passenger working since June 2021, No. 57006 had a test run from Carnforth to Hellifield and back on March 22 in the company of No. 47854 *Diamond Jubilee*. Nos. 57311 and D1924 (47810) teamed up again on March 30, to take the 1Z46 05.53 Poole-Canterbury West to Hanwell Bridge where once more the '57/3' was substituted by *Royal Scot*.

The Northern Belle season began on March 15 (see *Coaches*) when WCR Nos. 57313 *Scarborough Castle* and 57601 *Windsor Castle* provided the motive power for the 1Z24 08.45 London Paddington-Evesham on the occasion of the Cheltenham Gold Cup. The stock was serviced at Honeybourne as Long Marston was too full of stored rolling stock to accept the train. The following day the '57s' and coaches ran empty from Southall to start the 1Z68 12.10 Coventry-Shrewsbury trip



via Crewe, Chester and Wrexham. Both '57/3s' then powered the 1Z86 09.03 Manchester Victoria-Carlisle on March 30, No. 57313 being replaced by Pacific No. 34067 *Tangmere* at Carnforth for the journey over Shap and the Settle & Carlisle line back to Preston that evening.

GB Railfreight No. 57303 powered the 1Z36 09.49 Derby-Linlithgow initial leg of the Branch Line Society's weekend tour on March 7, the '57' returning participants to Derby via Carlisle and the Tyne Valley four days later. The locomotive's next work was to assist No. 69010 in the transfer of Greater Anglia electric multiple unit No. 720139 from Derby Litchurch Lane to Worksop on March 14.

CLASS 66

The DB Cargo UK pair of Nos. 66050 and 66070 'top and tailed' a Pathfinder Railtours special on March 9. Running outward as the 1Z95 07.14 Burton-on-Trent to Cwmbargoed, the tour also visited the East Usk branch as well as the line from Ystrad Mynach to Cwmbargoed which saw its last coal train during February (RE335). GB Railfreight No. 66308 made its operational debut on March 18, handling the 6E20 12.56 Toton Yard-Doncaster Belmont and five days later hauled its first passenger train. The occasion was the running of UK

Railtours' 'Gateway Galloper' when Nos. 66306 *SCS Logistics* (also making its passenger debut) and 66308 powered the 1Z49 07.23 London King's Cross to East Midlands Gateway via Grantham and Nottingham. The return journey began at Derby and took in Toton, Nottingham, Lincoln, Spalding before regaining the ECML at Peterborough.

Another GBRf example to experience passenger train work was No. 66776 *Joanne*. On March 10, it ran light from Mossend to Wemyss Bay in order to 'top and tail' the Branch Line Society tour with No. 37403 *Isle of Mull* (see Class 37). The pair set off with



DEPOT TALK

Correct to March 21, 2024

Allocations

20901/905 HNRL-BBXX
60001/007/010/015/019/
020/039/040/044/059/063/
065/066/079/092, 60100
WQBA-WQDA
66105 WBBT-WBAT
66164 WBAT-WBHT
66174 WBHT-WBAT

Liveries

DB Cargo red: 66174
GB Railfreight: 66311

Renumbered

66221 – 66651

Named

60095 *Whernside*
69008 *Richard Howe*

Renamed

66526 *Driver Stan Dunn (George)/*
Maszynista Steve Dunn (George)

Names removed

37407 *Blackpool Tower*
37419 *Driver Tony Kay 1974-2019*
37422 *Victorious*
37425 *Sir Robert McAlpine/Concrete*
Bob

Sold

Land Recovery Ltd: 60012/032/036/
037/048/052/068/077/078/084/0
89/093

For Sale

60001/07/10/15/19/20/39/40/44/
59/63/65/66/79/92, 60100

Stored/stopped locations

1:1 Museum, Margate: 60081
Brodie Engineering, Kilmarnock:
43129/150
Great Yarmouth: 43029
Brush Traction, Loughborough:
43128/169, 43305/367

Operational

66306-308



↑ On February 28, Colas Rail No. 70803 stands at the redundant T49 down main inner home signal at Truro at the west side of Carvedras Viaduct, which is unlit and had been disconnected as part of the Cornish resignalling scheme completed at the start of March. The '70' later powered the 6C25 04.32 Truro-Westbury with Colas No. 66846. Alan Peters

the 1Z41 19.20 Wemyss Bay-Glasgow Central and then the 1Z42 20.27 Glasgow Central-Glasgow Queen Street via a reversal at Shields. Pathfinder Railtours' charter on March 29, the 'Easter Chieftain', ran as the 1Z68 05.10 Eastleigh-Aviemore with DBC No. 67005 *Queen's Messenger* hauling the train to Carlisle where DBC Nos. 66034 and 66110 took over. The following morning the '66s' top and tailed the 1Z70 10.04 Aviemore-Kyle of Lochalsh and 18.59 return.

Former Fastline '66/3s' (now with GB Railfreight) Nos. 66301/302 took a train of long welded rail from Eastleigh

to Eastbourne on the evening of March 12, returning next day by way of Haywards Heath to Redhill (reverse) and the Arun Valley line through Pulborough to Havant. A little over a week later, however, No. 66302 found itself on the West Highland Line arriving at Tyndrum Upper on the morning of March 21, with the 6K02 01.50 from Millerhill Yard with 10 loaded HQA hoppers. Once back in Edinburgh, No. 66302 was seconded to accompany Caledonian Sleeper No. 73971 on the 1S25 04.21 to Inverness on March 23. GBRf 66307 *Ipswich Town* towed Avanti West Coast electric multiple unit No. 807002 on

the 5Q33 18.21 Darlington-Merchant Park on March 4, the Hitachi unit having travelled from Oxley albeit via Edinburgh. GBRf No. 66311 began a journey from Leicester to Longport on March 3, initially being taken to Doncaster Roberts Road by GBRf No. 57303. The move was completed two days later between GBRf Nos. 66711 *Sence* and 69009 *Western Consort*.

CLASS 68

Chiltern Railways 'Greener Future' No. 68014 (XHCE) handled the 6D95 14.56 Bescot-Toton and 6K97 19.33 Toton-Basford Hall on March 8, hauling

JZA wagons on the latter. It then visited Leeds Midland Road for tyre turning, heading back to Crewe Gresty Bridge with Direct Rail Services No. 66427 on March 19 and running light to Wembley four days later. Another XHCE example, No. 68013 *Peter Wreford-Bush*, took charge of the 6K05 12.29 Carlisle Yard-Basford Hall on March 12, but suffered low power when hauling 18 loaded wagons and set back to split the train at Appleby. No. 68013 then formed the 6K05 13.30 Appleby-Basford Hall on each of the following two days.

Elsewhere, DRS No. 68007 *Valiant* had a Beilhack snowplough for company on the 7Z33 11.45 Crewe-Chester and back on March 7, while No. 68026 *Enterprise* hauled the former TransPennine Express Mk.5A rake TP09 (Nos. 11509, 12725-727, 12809) from Longsight to Long Marston on March 12, and next day took the debranded Mk.5A set TP04 back to Manchester. Keeping the path alive should it ever be required again, DRS Nos. 68005 *Defiant* and 68018 *Vigilant* ventured to Anglesey with a single flask forming the 6D43 07.30 Crewe-Valley and the 6K41 14.05 return on March 12. This was only the second use of the path this year and the first since January 16. DRS Nos. 68034 *Rail Riders 2020* and 68033 *The Poppy* provided motive power for a Kirow crane on March 27, running as the 6X66 22.06 Ulverston-Carlisle Yard. The crane had been used to rerail the two Northern Class 195 diesel multiple units following their derailment five days beforehand (see *Headline News*). ➤

◀ DC Rail continues to hire GB Railfreight No. 56098 to cover for unavailable members of its own fleet. On March 4, the large logo blue Class 56 approaches Hoo Junction with the 6Z70 05.04 Willesden-Grain aggregates train. The '56' had been used to replace DCR No. 60055 *Thomas Barnado*, which had failed. Adam McMillan





↑ No. D213 (40013) *Andania* passes Heamies Farm, near Stafford, on March 17, with the 5Z51 13.30 Northampton-Crewe empty coaching stock. On the rear was Locomotive Services Group No. D1935 (47805) *Roger Hosking MA 1925-2013*. The stock had been used the previous day on a charter from Northampton to Worcester Shrub Hill which employed the '40', the '47' and No. 46100 *Royal Scot*. Brad Joyce.



↑ Colas Railfreight 70802 passes east of Kirby Bellars March 4, with the 6L40 08.40 Longport-Whitemoor Yard, conveying reclaimed ballast in Land Recovery JNA-V open box wagons. In the background is the St Peter's Church in Kirby Bellars, a former priory built between 1319 and 1359. Land Recovery has recently acquired Class 60s from DB Cargo UK (see Power By The Hour). Ben Wheeler

CLASS 69

Undertaking its first duty since a repaint into maroon livery, GB Railfreight No. 69009 *Western Consort* took the two Arlington Fleet Services barrier coaches from Leicester to Widnes on March 25. Once there it collected refurbished South Western Railway electric multiple unit No. 458422 and departed as the 5Q62 12.55 Widnes-Wembley destined for Bournemouth. The next day it passed Hounslow forming the 5X64 11.46 Wembley Reception-Southampton Down Goods Loop, going forward to Bournemouth, as 5Q64 prior to collecting SWR No. 458501 for dispatch to Widnes. A similar move saw GBRf No. 69008 *Richard Howe* leaving Widnes on March 12, hauling SWR No. 458415 delivering it to Bournemouth the following day and collecting SWR No. 458521 for Widnes, reached in the early hours of March 15. Meanwhile, GBRf No. 69011 left Progress Rail, Longport, on March 13, bound for repainting at Eastleigh Works.

CLASS 70

During its hire period to Colas, No. 70009 broke new ground by working the 6M43 02.26 Haverton Hill-Preston Docks (CR Ribble) bitumen tanks and the 6E44 10.05 return on March 12, recorded passing Hebden Bridge at 11.32. No. 70009 returned the following morning and covered the turn again on March 15. Colas examples Nos. 70803 and 70806 were at either end of the 6C25 04.40 Westbury-Totnes on March 18, the purpose of their visit being the disconnection of Hemerdon Loop. A few days later, on March 22, No. 70803 was a surprise visitor to High Wycombe hauling tamper DR75016 on the 6Q65 10.09 West Ealing-Kidderminster.

CLASS 73

GB Railfreight Nos. 73202 and 73212 *Stephen Eaves* were used to assist the rerailing of South Western Railway electric multiple units Nos.

450056/092 following their derailment at Walton-on-Thames early on March 4. The Electro-Diesels were summoned from Tonbridge West Yard leaving in mid-afternoon and heading to site via Chertsey. The rerailing was successfully accomplished that night and Nos. 73202/212 stabled at Woking at 02.00 before heading back to Tonbridge on March 6. When leaving Sevenoaks Tunnel on March 27, atop the 4065 12.04 Ferme Park-Tonbridge West Yard, GBRf No. 66792 *Collaboration* ground to a halt. Once again No. 73212 was in a position to rescue, hauling the Class 66/7 and train to its destination.

GBRf Nos. 73201 *Broadlands* and 73213 *Rhodalyn* visited Newhaven Marine on March 4, with a snow and ice treatment train. Caledonian Sleeper No. 73970 (formerly No. 73103) was back on its old home ground on March 17. Having travelled south from Craigentinny to Doncaster on March 16, along with GBRf Nos. 66304 and 66745, the '73/9' was hauled from Doncaster to Eastleigh Yard behind No. 66718 *Peter, Lord Hendy of Richmond Hill of Imber in the County of Wiltshire* via a rather circuitous route through Leicester, Nuneaton, Bromsgrove, Cheltenham, Kemble, Reading and Basingstoke. Heading in the opposite direction after four months at UK Rail Leasing, Loughborough, CS No. 73968 was hauled to Doncaster by GBRf No. 69010 on March 15, resuming its work on Caledonian Sleeper duties six days later. Meanwhile, No. 73970 was back at Craigentinny on March 29, hauled there from Doncaster by GBRf No. 66745.

CLASS 86

On March 16, preserved No. 86259 *Les Ross/Peter Pan* hauled the 1Z86 06.35 London Euston-Carlisle 'Cumbrian Mountain Express' as far as Carnforth with Pacific No. 34067 *Tangmere* and West Coast Railways No. 47815 *Great Western* going forward in top and tail mode. Later, the Class 86/2 ran light to Preston to take over the return

working. Four days later No. 86259 was at London King's Cross ready to depart as the 1Z50 06.00 to Whitby, which the ac electric took as far as York. Stanier Black Five No. 44871, with No. 47815 then powered the tour to the Yorkshire coastal town.

CLASS 92

Following a lengthy spell under repair at UK Rail Leasing, Loughborough, Caledonian Sleeper No. 92006 departed behind GB Railfreight No. 47749 *City of Truro* on March 11, and three days later undertook a test run from Wembley to London Euston, Rugby and back to Wembley, resuming empty stock workings between Wembley and Euston station four days later. On March 30, the '92' was at London King's Cross to meet the 1E39 20.45 from Inverness which had arrived in the care of CS No. 92014. On March 1, No. 92043 *Andy Withers* was hauled from Leicester to UK Rail Leasing, Loughborough, behind No. 69008 *Richard Howe* and remained under repair at Loughborough at the end of the month. 

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↑ Class 20s Nos. 20205, 20189 and 20142 *Sir John Betjeman* power RailAdventure's 6Z24 13.58 Pengam Sidings-Kings Norton barrier vehicle move through Wentloog on March 23. The '20s' had delivered TFW Rail tram-train No. 398002 to Radyr the previous night. Martin Turner.

IN BRIEF

CLASS 37 TO BE REUNITED WITH POWER UNIT

THE return to service of the Class 37 Locomotive Group's No. 37003 has moved a step closer; the English Electric Type 3, which is presently at UK Rail Leasing's Leicester depot, is to be reunited with its overhauled power unit in the coming weeks. The new power unit, which replaces the previous one which was found to have cracks in the main crank, came from an industrial location and has been rebuilt using top end components from the original power unit.

No. 37003 last ran just over 10 years ago, being stopped in December 2013 owing to a leaking cylinder liner. Before it returns to service at the Mid-Norfolk Railway, it is to undergo bodywork repairs and be repainted into green as No. D6703.

WARSHIP ENGINE REPAIRS

LEAKING cylinder liners has resulted in the 'B' end engine from No. D821 *Greyhound* being lifted from the loco for stripping and repairs. The exhausters and compressor have also been removed from the locomotive for repairs. The Diesel Traction Group hopes to have the locomotive back in service before the summer, enabling the 'Warship' to cover its rostered workings, the first of which is planned to take place on May 11.

CLASS 47 BACK IN ACTION

FOLLOWING completion of recommissioning work, No. 47292 made a test run at the Churnet Valley Railway on March 27. Other than a leak on a hose, it performed well and, as well as a relaunch event, it is expected to see some use on Saturdays on the line over the summer months, as well as on Polar Express trains towards the end of the year.

BLUE FOR NYMR CLASS 37

REFITTED with nose end skirts and round buffers over the winter period, North Yorkshire Moors Railway-based No. 37264 has been outshopped in 1970s-style BR blue with 'domino dot' headcodes.

CHOPPER GAINS HEADCODE DISCS

KENT & East Sussex Railway-based No. 20087 has been reunited with a set of headcode discs, having previously had them removed by British Rail during the 1980s.

WESTERN CREW TRAINING RUN

IN preparation for its forthcoming main line railtours, No. D1015 *Western Champion* undertook a crew training/light engine test run from Kidderminster to Oxford and back on March 14.

Green Class 60 moves to Margate for static display

Locomotive Services Group '60' arrives at One:One Museum

FOLLOWING cosmetic restoration in Great Western Railway Brunswick Green by DB Cargo UK, No. 60081 left Toton for Margate on March 18 (see *Power By The Hour*), arriving at the One:One Museum the next day. The Class 60, which is not operational, has yet to receive its cast numbers, crests and *Isambard Kingdom Brunel* nameplates.

No. 60081 had been stored at Toton for almost 19 years, which is five years longer than it spent in active service. Having lost its original *Bleaklow Hill* nameplates in 2000 upon being repainted in green and becoming *Isambard Kingdom Brunel* in 2000, it was stopped in April 2005, after suffering a major power unit failure. Put up for sale in 2019, it was bought by Locomotive Services Group for display at its new museum.

Leaving Margate on the same road transport on which No. 60081 was delivered was No. 47841 *The*

Institution of Mechanical Engineers which has returned to Crewe for spares recovery. Its place at Margate will be taken in due course by No. D1944 (47501) *Craftsman*. Other modern traction on site includes Nos. 37190, D9016 *Gordon Highlander* and Eurostar power car No. 3304.

■ The previous *Isambard Kingdom Brunel*, the Pioneer Diesel Loco Group's No. 47484, remains in store at Wishaw, awaiting its turn in the restoration queue; work on No. 45105, which is also owned by the Group, is nearing completion at Barrow Hill. **B**



The Midlands Diesel Photo Charters held an event at the Great Central Railway (Nottingham) at Ruddington on March 30, featuring most of the resident diesel fleet including recent arrivals Nos. 31210/235. The latter is expected to be scrapped once component recovery has been completed. From left to right are Nos. 03118, 31235, 37009, 20154 and D5830 (31463). Chris Gee

BRE-Leyland R3 Railbus to return to mainland UK

MORE than 40 years since it was shipped to Northern Ireland, BRE-Leyland R3 railbus No. RDB 977020 is to return to the mainland in the coming months, following its disposal by the Downpatrick & County Down Railway to the Gwendraeth Valley Railway in South Wales. The unit is to be regauged back to 4ft 8½in, which will enable it to operate at its new home once it has been restored to working order.

Constructed by BREL at Derby Litchurch Lane in association with Leyland in 1980/81 and resembling a Leyland National Mk.2 bus, No. RDB977020 was used in passenger service on the Severn Beach branch in October 1981. The following year, it was sold to Northern Ireland Railways and, after being regauged to enable it to work on 5ft 3in tracks, it was dispatched to its new home for use on the Coleraine to Portrush shuttle. Withdrawn in the early 1990s, it moved to Downpatrick in 2001 and last saw

use as a hauled vehicle in 2012.

Explaining the reasoning behind the decision regarding the railbus, the Downpatrick & County Down Railway's vice-chairman Mike Beckett told *RE* that the line was never going to have the resources in terms of volunteers or finance to restore it to working order, and that it was impractical for its trains due to limited capacity and accessibility issues for the mobility impaired. He added that the DCDR preferred it to go to an operating railway and preferably be returned to working order, or at the very least be accessible to the public and kept safe.

The Gwendraeth Valley Railway ticks all these boxes and has the contacts and parts available to regauge the railbus. Incidentally, it is one of a small number of vehicles which ran in passenger service on the main line when carrying a Departmental Coaching Stock identity. Another such vehicle, No. RDB 977091, is

already based at the Gwendraeth Valley Railway, this being a Leyland bus body mounted on a Mk.1 underframe; it was trialled on Cross-Country services for a short period in 1983.

The railbus escaped major damage during the DCDR's flood in late 2023 as its engine and mechanical transmission were above the floodwaters. Of the diesel fleet, 141 Class No. 146 has been declared serviceable, but is being treated gently until it has been run in. Similarly, No. G617 is available for shunting. The Irish Traction Group's 'A' Class No. A39R has had remedial works undertaken on its traction motors and brushes, along with static loading followed by mobile loaded tests; the railway and ITG do not have the facilities, manpower and finances to lift and send away the traction motors.

Infrastructure work is also needed, and the DCDR's flood appeal is still open; donations can be made by visiting www.downrail.co.uk/appeal/

DIESEL DIARY

GB Railfreight '69' and '73' for Severn Valley gala

GB Railfreight is expected to supply two locomotives to the Severn Valley Railway for its gala in May.

Pencilled in to attend are Nos. 69009 *Western Consort* and 73119 *Paul Taylor*. The latter is particularly appropriate as Paul Taylor, who passed away in 2022 after developing cancer, was instrumental in arranging provision of engines by GBRf to the

SVR and other lines for special events. A second visitor from Freightliner has also been revealed, with a '59' joining the already announced Class 70.

The Swanage Railway will play host to a pair of Harry Needle Railroad Company Class 20s, with Nos. 20302/311 due to attend its event in May. Other guests include Class 24 No. D5054 from the East Lancashire

Railway along with No. 50021 *Rodney*, currently undergoing bogie work at Arlington, Eastleigh, and No. D1015 *Western Champion*. The 'Western' is also expected to attend the Keighley & Worth Valley Railway's gala in June.

There are two new events in this month's diary – a DMU gala at Butterley, and a diesel weekend at the Tanfield Railway, both on September 21/22.

2024 GALA DATES

April 26-28: Great Central Railway

May 10-12: Swanage Railway

May 16-19: Severn Valley Railway

May 18/19: Great Central Railway (Heritage Railcar weekend)

May 24-26: Bo'ness & Kinneil Railway

May 25-27: Mid-Norfolk Railway

June 1/2: Llangollen Railway

June 6-8: West Somerset Railway

June 7-9: North Norfolk Railway (Rails & Ales)

June 14-16: North Yorkshire Moors Railway

June 20-23: Keighley & Worth Valley Railway

June 27-29: East Lancashire Railway

July 12-14: Gloucestershire-Warwickshire Steam Railway

July 12-14: Mid Hants Railway

July 20/21: Midland Railway – Butterley (Rail Riders Show)

July 25-28: Ecclesbourne Valley Railway (14s@60)

August 2-4: Spa Valley Railway

August 2-4: Caledonian Railway

September 6-8: Great Central Railway

September 13/14: East Lancashire Railway

September 14/15: Dean Forest Railway

September 20-22: Epping Ongar Railway

September 21/22: Midland Railway – Butterley (DMU gala)

September 21/22: Tanfield Railway

October 3-6: Severn Valley Railway

October 5/6: Llangollen Railway (Heritage Railcar weekend)

Llynclys base for surviving Class 503 car

HAVING left Margate at the end of February, Class 503 Driving Motor Brake Second Open (DMBSO) arrived at its new base, the Cambrian Heritage Railways site at Llynclys, on March 12. The Heritage Electric Trains Trust has entered into an agreement with the Welsh line for it to be stored there; covering the vehicle with a suitable tarpaulin is seen as a priority, but any other work is subject to support being forthcoming.

Highlighting the issues faced with electric multiple unit preservation and the decision to dispose of the other two cars, HETT Chairman Graeme Gleaves told RE: "Looking to the future, we will be lucky see a few single vehicles restored for static display at museums and heritage centres where they offer some local or cultural interpretation. Sadly, most classes of EMU are utterly useless to the

heritage sector once they leave the main line. It is a difficult pill to swallow, but the figures don't lie."

Meanwhile, the cab and front body section of the other driving car from the set, No. 29289, has been acquired by The Cab Yard and, following scrapping of the vehicle by J Watson & Sons at Stafford, it was moved to the Llanelli & Mynydd Mawr Railway during March.



More than 280 miles of Class 50 haulage was available at the East Lancashire Railway over the four-day Easter Bank Holiday weekend, with No. 50015 *Valiant* in action between March 29 and April 1. On March 30, the '50' crosses Roch Valley Viaduct with the 1055 *Rawtenstall-Heywood*. Tom McAtee

COACH NEWS

NYMR DISPOSES OF MK.3 SLEEPER VEHICLES

THE North Yorkshire Moors Railway has disposed of its two Mk.3 Sleeping Cars, with the first, No. 10591 departing on March 6 for Cockshute Sidings. It had been a resident on the line since 1999 and was used as volunteer accommodation until recently when it was condemned by the railway. Along with No. 10689 which departed a few days later, it has been bought by a new owner who plans to restore and sell on both vehicles.

MK.1 BSK MOVEMENT

PREVIOUSLY located at Llynclys, Mk.1 Brake Second Corridor (BSK) No. 35334 was moved the short distance to Oswestry on March 12, where it is to be used to strengthen the existing active coaching stock fleet.

MK.1 RETURNS TO NORTH YORKSHIRE MOORS

ON loan to the Derwent Valley Railway since 2021, Mk.1 Tourist Second Open (TSO) No. 4990 has been returned to the North Yorkshire Moors Railway.

ECCLESBOURNE VALLEY ADDS MK.1 RMB TO FLEET

THE Ecclesbourne Valley Railway took delivery of Mk.1 RMB No. 1813 on March 27. Owned by Fox & Edwards Events, it was previously based at the Gwili Railway.

MULTIPLE UNIT DEVELOPMENTS

'507' OFFERED HOME AT TANAT VALLEY

THE embryonic Class 507 Preservation Society, which hopes to save No. 507001 after it has been removed from service with Merseyrail, has been offered a home for the unit at the Tanat Valley Railway/Nant Mawr Visitor Centre. Agreement has been reached with the relevant parties to take ownership of the unit, and an appeal to raise £10,000 to cover the transport costs is being launched.

LSG BUBBLE TO MOVE TO CHOLSEY & WALLINGFORD

AFTER more than four years on loan to the Ecclesbourne Valley Railway, where it arrived in early 2020, Locomotive Services bubble car No. 55034 is due to move to the Cholsey & Wallingford Railway in the coming weeks.

FIRST PASSENGER OUTINGS FOR CLASS 153 AT GCR

FOLLOWING staff competency training the previous week, No. 153371 was put into passenger service at the Great Central Railway over the Easter weekend (March 30/31). It still carries London Midland colours and is also due to be used during the line's diesel gala on April 26-28.

50 more JNA-X box wagons for GBRf

GB Railfreight to lease a further 50 brand-new box wagons.

GB Railfreight and Porterbrook have signed a contract for the lease of a further 50 of the revised JNA-X variant

of the ubiquitous JNA (UIC code Ealnos) box wagon, to be built by Greenbrier/Astra Rail and delivered in the third quarter of 2024.

Introduced in 2016 and originally TOPS coded JNA-T, some 1192 of the 77-tonne capacity vehicles were constructed in Romania up until

the most recent batch of five were delivered in September 2023.

Of these, 200 carry GBRf livery, 50 leased from Wascosa Rail in 2017, 100 leased from Ermewa in 2019, and the debut batch of 50 JNA-X from Porterbrook that was delivered in two groups between October 2022 and

January 2023. The primary spotting difference on the latter derivative is the covered end steps.

GBRf has indicated that the new boxes will replace existing life-expired vehicles and will be deployed on bulk materials services such as carrying stone for the construction sector, and ballast. 

WH Davis completes DRS box wagon order

DIRECT Rail Services has taken delivery of 25 JNA-V box wagons from W H Davis that it ordered in mid-2023.

Nos. 81 70 5932 812-836 were collected from W H Davis' Langwith Junction workshops in Nottinghamshire by DRS No. 66427 on March 20, and departed north as the 4Z10 12.20 Shirebrook-Sellafield with No. 66126 in tow.

Financed by VTG Rail UK, they are the first rolling stock to carry the latest iteration of the DRS logo complete with 'Part of NTS' (Nuclear Transport Services) branding. The wagons are part of a 60-strong order, with the rest (so far) not having a user

→ **Direct Rail Services No. 66427 hauls brand-new JNA-V box wagons away from W H Davis' Langwith Junction site on March 20.** DRS



DEVELOPMENTS

■ **DB CARGO UK:** BYA 'Nissen hut' hooded steel coil carriers are again being accumulated at DBC's maintenance facility in Stoke-on-Trent. The first to arrive were Nos. 966039/133/91 on March 4, and these were followed by Nos. 966001/104/6 on March 13, and Nos. 966066/101/206 on March 18. These are likely for hood removal as before but could be repurposed as another batch of 'Stegasaurus' hot coil carriers. Thirty-one BRA and BYA were stripped of their covers in late-2022 and early-2023, while 70 of the more extensively converted 'Stegasaurus', so named because of the distinctive angled coil pockets, were rebuilt in 2021 and 2023.

The former Marcroft Engineering wagon works has also bid adieu to WIA five-unit car carrier No. 85 70 4971 047-1 on March 4, following its annual check-up. This had arrived at the Potteries site on February 12. It was replaced a week later by No. 85 70 4971 043-0, which had arrived on the trip from Arpley with YKA 'Osprey' track carriers Nos. 996300/65/508.

■ **GB RAILFREIGHT:** The clockwork schedule of FEA-G arrivals for GBRf continues with the latest batch of 10 'twins' from Greenbrier in Poland to make their way through the Channel Tunnel after their long journey from

Swidnica/Olawa. GBRf No. 66793 was top and tail with No. 69002 *Bob Tiller* CM&EE on March 4, on a 4Z66 02.59 Dollands Moor-Peterborough Westward Sidings comprised of Nos. 81 70 4663 321-340.

■ **NETWORK RAIL:** Loram Rail continues to accept MRA donor vehicles and dispatch rebuilt JNA-Y 'Hawk' ballast boxes from its headquarters at the Derby Railway Technical Centre. On February 7, No. 37418 *An Comunn Gaidhealach* was in charge of a 6Z38 18.46 from Toton North Yard back to Derby with MRA side tippers Nos. 501320/40/98-400. On February 27, it worked a 6Z37 13.30 to Toton with bright yellow 'Hawks' Nos. 81 70 5831 233-238 and returned to the RTC site as the 6Z38 15.30 from Toton with Nos. 501308/28/62-64 and JNA-Y No. 81 70 5831 176-9. The latter had departed Loram Derby on October 10, so is likely returning for remedial attention. The final move during the period under review took place on March 5, when No. 37418 ran light engine to Toton to collect donor MRAs Nos. 501314/34/80-82. The latter move was the 6Z38 08.00 to Derby.

Following the last runs of Direct Rail Services Class 37s on snowploughs (RE335), two further test runs have taken place using alternative

motive power. On March 7, DSR No. 68007 *Valiant* was partnered with ZZA 'Beilhack' snowplough No. ADB 965577 (ex-Class 40 bogie) on an out and back 7Z33 11.50 from Crewe Coal Sidings via Chester. This was followed on March 19, by the use of No. 57308 *Jamie Ferguson* on March 19 with ZZA independent plough No. ADB 965241 on a 7Z55 11.35 from Crewe Gresty Bridge and return, also via Chester.

■ **DISPOSALS:** Two-axle ballast wagons continue to be dispatched to various scrappers around the country at breakneck speed. On February 16, EMR Kingsbury accepted MHA/MPA Nos. 394036/70/90/206/61/37 2/85/527/30/76/627/818 and 396015/33/48 from Toton. This was followed by the delivery of MFA Nos. 391143/357/593, MHA/MPA Nos. 39 4001/43/62/94/140/201/78/92/6/386/95/519/58/604/73/84/780/867/964 and 396071 to C F Booth Ltd, Rotherham, on February 27, all ex-Doncaster Belmont. Meanwhile, on March 15, it was the turn of MFA No. 391252 and MHA Nos. 394668/838 to head for oblivion at EMR Attercliffe along with MXA 'Lobster' No. 950421 and YKA 'Osprey' No. DB996632. These were all from Toton.

Finally, HTA coal hoppers Nos. 310349/685/756/822/904/11/25/88, 311097/120 were removed from

Newport Alexandra Dock Junction for scrapping at Sims Newport on March 5.

■ **PRESERVATION:** With the once 1150-strong MHA 'Coalfish' fleet reduced to double figures, the National Wagon Preservation Group (NWPg) has secured the future of the first of the type, No. 394001, from C F Booth Ltd. Rebuilt by RFS(E) Doncaster in 1997, using the underframe of 1981-built HAA No. 365673, it will aid the NWPg in telling the full story of the Merry-Go-Round hopper family of wagons. The MHA moved to its new home at the Telford Steam Railway on March 8. The deal also included a quantity of spares to help the group restore and maintain its existing fleet of HAA derivatives.

Following the preservation of WBB Minerals and former British Industrial Sand PAA covered sand hopper No. WBB 30025 in 2018, the Churnet Valley Railway has welcomed a second example to the line in the form of No. WBB 30006. While mostly associated with the Middleton Towers-Monk Bretton/Barnby Dun trains, these wagons were also used in the latter years of sand traffic from Oakmoor Moneystone Quarry in the late-1980s. Unfortunately the new arrival has been stripped of a considerable amount of components but research is underway to assess what parts are required to return the PAA to the same condition as its colleague.

Bakerloo Line upgrade plans confirmed

Preparatory work underway for possible extension to Underground line.

A list of contracts valued at greater than £100,000 reveals the extent of works already underway to upgrade and even extend the Bakerloo Line.

Previously, the Bakerloo Line was due to be upgraded as part of the Deep Tube Upgrade Programme (DTUP), established in 2012. This would have seen both signalling and rolling stock replaced across the Piccadilly, Bakerloo, Central and Waterloo & City lines.

However, these upgrade works were solely limited to the Piccadilly Line in 2019/20. Instead, plans to replace rolling stock and signalling systems were merged to include the proposed extension beyond Elephant & Castle, creating the Bakerloo Line Upgrade and Extension (BLUE) Programme. This is broken down into two distinct elements. The Bakerloo Line Upgrade (BLU) and the Bakerloo Line Extension (BLE). The Bakerloo Line Upgrade (BLU) element has been divided into two stages, Stage 1 to replace the rolling stock, with Stage 2 upgrading the signalling and control systems.

Currently, modelling and feasibility is being explored, including the hiring of staff to conduct this work. There is also active upgrade work being undertaken, such as the fitting out of line infrastructure, including the provision of resources for preparation of signal designs and work to upgrade the Bakerloo Control System Upgrade Project (BCUP) and fitting out of the Control Room at Baker Street. This 'strategic and tactical level' infrastructure work, including at depots, stabling points, power, track, legacy signalling, CCTV and communications would enable the new fleet of rolling stock to be introduced.

Whilst the entire project, including the extension, is likely to cost up to £8 billion, the estimated Gross Value Added (GVA) benefit is believed to be £1.5bn annually. The project anticipates that 24,400 homes would be built, the creation of 9700 jobs, whilst reducing daily car trips by more than 20k.

LINE EXTENSION WORK

The options being explored include extending the current 14.4-mile line a further 4.6 miles underground to Lewisham (Phase 1), with a further proposal to take over current Network Rail infrastructure to Hayes (Phase 2).

If Phase 2 came to fruition, this would almost double the length of the current Bakerloo line, although there are insufficient finances to fund the work in the immediate future.

"Whilst the upgrade is not dependent on the extension, the extension can only be considered in conjunction with, or following, the upgrade, to resiliently respond to future levels of demand. To achieve



Showing its age, one of the few examples of a 72 Tube Stock Mark 1 unit that serves the Bakerloo Line, slows with a northbound service at Embankment on August 20, 2011. Christopher Westcott

full benefit, the upgrade and extension should be delivered together," said the *Moving London Forward* document, published in February.

TfL is now seeking to develop further feasibility designs for extension works at Lambeth North and Lewisham to optimise the route and design. Further station design work is also to be undertaken throughout the proposed extension route. Meanwhile further works are to be conducted at Elephant & Castle, to provide tunnelling in readiness for any future extension of the line, to connect with the redevelopment of the town centre site.

Whilst the extension project is formally on hold currently, these feasibility studies would assist if funding was obtained. This might allow work to commence around 2030, enabling the line to complete the upgrade.

MAINTAINING THE 72 TS FLEET

The current trains operated across the Bakerloo are the 72 Tube Stock that first entered service on June 26, 1972. Examples were manufactured in two batches, known as Mark 1 and Mark 2, with the Bakerloo operating a mixture, although most examples are from the Mark 2 variety. All were designed to be replaced around 2008, meaning that they are now the oldest non-preserved rolling stock in operational passenger service in the UK. Having already lasted 16 years past the intended lifespan, each car now costs approximately £55,000 to maintain annually, compared to £26,000 for S8 cars that form Metropolitan Line services,

introduced in 2010. Meanwhile failure rates exceed those of the 09 Tube Stock by around 400%, which operate on the Victoria Line.

By the mid-2030s, the majority of the 72 Tube Stock will be more than 60 years old. They are already being overhauled once every two years on average just to keep them in service. Consequently, maintenance is costing TfL dearly, precisely at a time when the organisation needs to spend wisely to guide it through fiscally choppy waters. In 2024 alone, contracts are being awarded for the supply of parts, such as pneumatic equipment, dampers, the overhaul and repair of brakeheads, metal fabrication, centre pivots between cars.

With intended train services per hour across the line having fallen from 24 to 20, it makes economic sense to replace the rolling stock. Once Stage 2 of the Bakerloo Line Upgrade is completed, passenger services will be able to increase to 27 trains per hour.

REPLACEMENT ROLLING STOCK

Historically, LU units have an anticipated passenger service lifespan of 36 years, hence the intention to replace the 72 TS units around 2008. There have been anomalies such as the 83 Tube Stock, which were withdrawn in July 1998 having lasted in passenger service a mere 14 years. At the other extreme, 1938 Tube Stock, served London for more than half a century, before a few cars were overhauled and sent to the Isle of Wight, operating in passenger service until January 2021.

TfL is currently investing £500,000 into a feasibility study of delivery strategies for the Bakerloo Line. This work also includes a rolling stock specification for the design and build delivery phases, as well as interfacing with infrastructure assets, including modifications that are to be undertaken prior to delivery. The current latest contractual date to exercise an additional order for rolling stock based upon the 24 Tube Stock currently being manufactured by Siemens Mobility for the Piccadilly Line, is in November 2026. [E](#)

IN BRIEF

TRANSPORT FOR LONDON CONFIRMS OPERATING SURPLUS IN 2023/24

TRANSPORT For London (TfL) has declared that, further to the publishing of its 2023 Business Plan, it is 'on track to deliver an operating surplus of approximately £162 million in 2023/24'.

It highlights that journey growth has increased by 7%, higher than it targeted, with passenger journeys having increased to 90% of pre-pandemic levels.

This is despite year-on-year inflation of 9% (operating costs rose 6%), which contributes towards the cash balances being lower than the Budget, being below £1.2 billion.

Belfast terminal to close but Grand Central won't be ready to replace it

A series of ongoing planned closures have begun to alter infrastructure ahead of new station's opening.

GREAT Victoria Street (GVS) in Belfast is planned to close in mid-May, however Translink has confirmed that trains will not be using its replacement, the new £200 million Belfast Grand Central, until the autumn.

Construction and fitting out of the new station is progressing well with preparatory work in connection with the installation of further track and associated signalling continuing. Great Victoria Street's closure is required so that its approach from Westlink Junction, platforms and associated infrastructure can be removed as that part of the area is required for the bus infrastructure for the new station.

A prelude to the numerous possessions and substitutions that are planned during the commissioning period over the summer months for the new station, as well as track alterations and signalling renewals on the Belfast-Lisburn corridor, occurred during the weekend of March 2/3.

There was a total possession to facilitate signalling and ballasting work in the Westlink Junction/Central Junction to Lanyon Place area, which saw Lanyon Place station handle Bangor, Larne and Londonderry/Portrush services, while Great Victoria Street was used for Lisburn/Portadown/Newry trains and the Cross Border 'Enterprise' service.

Preparations for the use of GVS by the locomotive-hauled 'Enterprise' trains included a gauging test run to platform 2 from Lanyon Place on February 18. This was worked by GM

No. 206 and Mk.3/De Dietrich set with Driving Brake First Open (DBFO) No. 9001, during the layover period after forming the 12.00 Dublin Connolly-Lanyon Place and 16.05 return. The test was successful and in order to retain the locomotive at the Belfast end of the set, the test train ran to and from GVS via Central

Junction. On March 1, GM No. 231 ran light from York Road to Adelaide Traincare Depot to act as standby locomotive during the weekend.

The normal 'Enterprise' service pattern on weekdays of eight trains in each direction, with five on Sundays, was operated with slightly later departures of one or two minutes from GVS as the distance between it and Connolly is one-mile shorter than Lanyon Place. Refuelling was carried out at Connolly. Two sets were each positioned at GVS

platforms 2 and 3 late on March 1, for the early morning departures the next day with the following noted in use during the weekend: No. 206 with set No.9002, No. 227 with set No. 9003 and No. 8208 with set No. 9001.

The 19.00 ex-Connolly on March 3, hauled by No. 227, brought the diversionary service to a close and this was planned to be the last time GVS will host an 'Enterprise' train. No. 231 returned light to York Road from Adelaide Traincare depot on March 4. **E**

Opened on September 30, 1995, the centrally located Great Victoria Street was seen at the time as the final part of the plan to extend the rail network within Belfast, which had been made possible with the opening of the Cross Harbour Rail Link the previous year.

The original 1839-built GVS, parts of which had been requisitioned in the 1960s and early 1970s to provide extra space for buses and a major new hotel, had closed in April 1976, when the former Belfast Central Railway between Central Junction and the isolated Bangor line (which had been closed in 1965 with the track subsequently lifted) was reinstated and two new stations, Botanic and Belfast Central (now Lanyon Place) were built.

While this Government-funded cross-city scheme reconnected the Portadown/Cross Border and Bangor lines, the new stations were on the periphery of the city and from the outset the Northern Ireland Railways (NIR) management strived to regain access to the city centre. The GVS site had been earmarked for a major road scheme which never materialised but part of it was used to extend the adjacent bus station.

When most of the site and its approaches from the Central Junction direction remained relatively undeveloped into the 1980s, NIR, after a hard-fought campaign, received planning permission and funding to once again have rail access to the city centre. Part of the Europa bus station was used to accommodate the compact station building and because of insufficient funding, the two platforms, which had four faces, were initially quite short, the canopies offered limited cover and Platform 4 had no canopy at all.

On the positive side, a new curve at Blythefield was built which gave a direct connection from the Central Station direction (City Junction) into GVS via another new junction, Westlink Junction, and with the reinstatement of Central Junction this meant that with the triangle of lines the new station could be accessed from both the Lisburn and Central station directions. The extra time spent running into and from it was thought to be worthwhile given the "benefit of city centre penetration" as NIR management liked to say, but Central station continued to host the

Cross Border 'Enterprise' service.

However, a major re-laying project that required the total possession of the Central Station to Central Junction section from May 23, to August 30, 1999, saw GVS host the Cross Border service, a role that the original station had played between August 1947, and April 1976. To enable it to handle the front-rank service the platforms were extended and limited servicing facilities provided for the De Dietrich trains. Should more major work have been required stock could be transferred to York Road Works by utilising the Lisburn-Antrim branch and the mothballed Antrim-Bleach Green Junction line which had received some minor track repairs.

Although GVS has proved to be a successful terminus with high passenger numbers, capacity issues made the provision of a much larger station necessary. With Government policy becoming more pro public transport and with funding and the adjacent Grosvenor Road site being available, the opportunity to have a large integrated transport hub for the city was grasped by Translink.



071 class No. 074 makes a rare appearance on the Howth branch platforms at Howth Junction on March 1, hauling an empty materials train from North Wall. The train was collecting scrap rail located a quarter of a mile outside Howth Junction. Stephen White

Enhanced timetable planned for Cross Border route

The jointly operated Belfast to Dublin 'Enterprise' service is planned to be increased from the current eight trains each way on weekdays, and five on Sundays, to an hourly service pattern if the plan comes to fruition.

The Irish Government has stated that €12.5 million is available to finance the scheme, with a similar amount forthcoming from the Northern Ireland Executive. With both administrations apparently keen to adopt pro rail policies outlined in the Draft All Island Strategic Rail Review, the scheme is seen as an interim measure until the introduction of new trains later this decade.

The plan is to use the existing locomotive-hauled trains supplemented by Northern Ireland Railways 3000 Class diesel multiple units and IE 22000 Class ICR units with the start of the enhanced service planned for early next year. The Cross Border service will benefit from two new running lines between Connolly and Malahide if a €1.2m European Union study recommends that this would improve operating flexibility in the current nine-mile double track section which also sees intensive DART and commuter suburban services.

NORTHERN IRELAND RAILWAYS (NIR)

■ **NEWS:** The new station building, footbridge and canopies at Yorkgate were almost complete by mid-March. The name of the station which was built in 1992 to replace York Road will be changed to York Street Station when the new facilities are opened, which Translink said will be: "this spring."

March 21, saw the centenary of the opening to traffic of the Bann River Bridge at Coleraine and its associated deviation line. Planned by the Midland Railway (Northern Counties Commission) in 1914, but completed by the London, Midland and Scottish Railway (NCC) in 1924, the main contractor was Armstrong Whitworth.

The 800ft long steel structure has 11 spans, with one of the bascule type, which allows shipping to pass through. The bridge has provided reliable service over the last 100 years and received a refurbishment in 2019.

Flowbird ticket vending machines have been installed across the system but have not yet been commissioned.

Driving car, No. 3323 of three-car diesel multiple unit No. 3023 has had a very large circular Translink logo applied in the area below its windscreens but the cab front of the other driving car of the unit, No. 3423, remains blank. The design was thought to have been discontinued after the introduction of a hexagon design



Iarnród Éireann 071 class No. 087 stands at Islandbridge Junction on March 15, with a loaded spoil train from North Wall yard. The locomotive would later run round its train before heading to Greystones. Stephen White

IARNRÓD ÉIREANN/IRISH RAIL

■ **IE NEWS:** The railway between Limerick and Ennis was temporarily closed from March 18, because of flooding of the line at Ballycar between Sixmilebridge and Ennis. Bustritution was introduced and it was stated by IE that the closure would be lengthy due to the extent of the flooding and the slow draining characteristics of the affected area. The problem is longstanding and a resolution has yet to be found. Work is in progress at Galway on the construction of new platforms and major alterations to the train shed and concourse. A new footbridge and lifts have been built at Little Island station between Cork and Glounthaune. Each of the eight First Class Mk.4 locomotive-hauled coaches is to receive a refresh during a rolling programme. The work includes a deep clean, new leather upholstery, tables, USB ports and refreshed toilet.

■ **IE 22000 CLASS:** The commissioning and rolling introduction of the 41 new ICR 22000 Class intermediate cars and reforming/reconfiguring of sets by using the new cars and/or existing vehicles is continuing, with five-car sets Nos. 22x36 and 22x38 reinstated to six-car formations. GM No. 076 transferred new cars Nos. 22519+22522 from Inchicore to Laois Traincare Depot on March 4.

■ **IE TRAFFIC AND TRACTION:** The Up sidings at Dublin Fairview adjacent to Clontarf Road station are now being used to stable Northern Ireland Railways 3000 Class diesel multiple units during layover when specials from Northern Ireland visit Dublin Connolly. Previously these had laid over at Drogheda, which involved 63 miles of empty running. The first occasion when the sidings were used

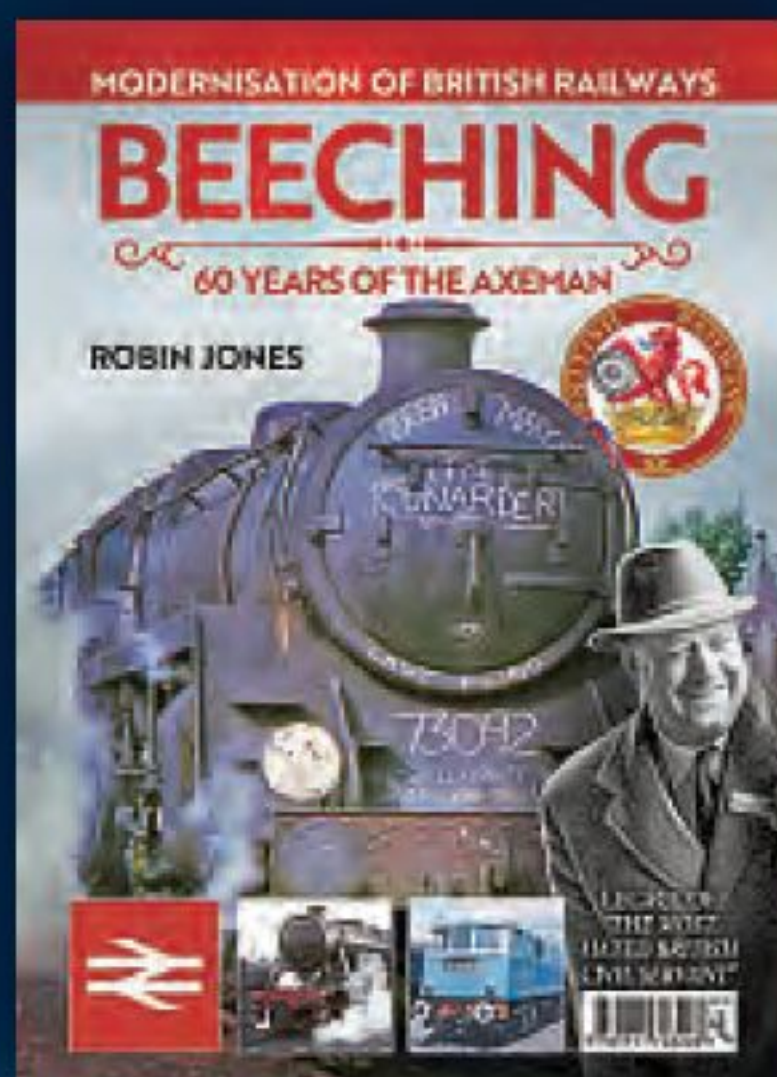
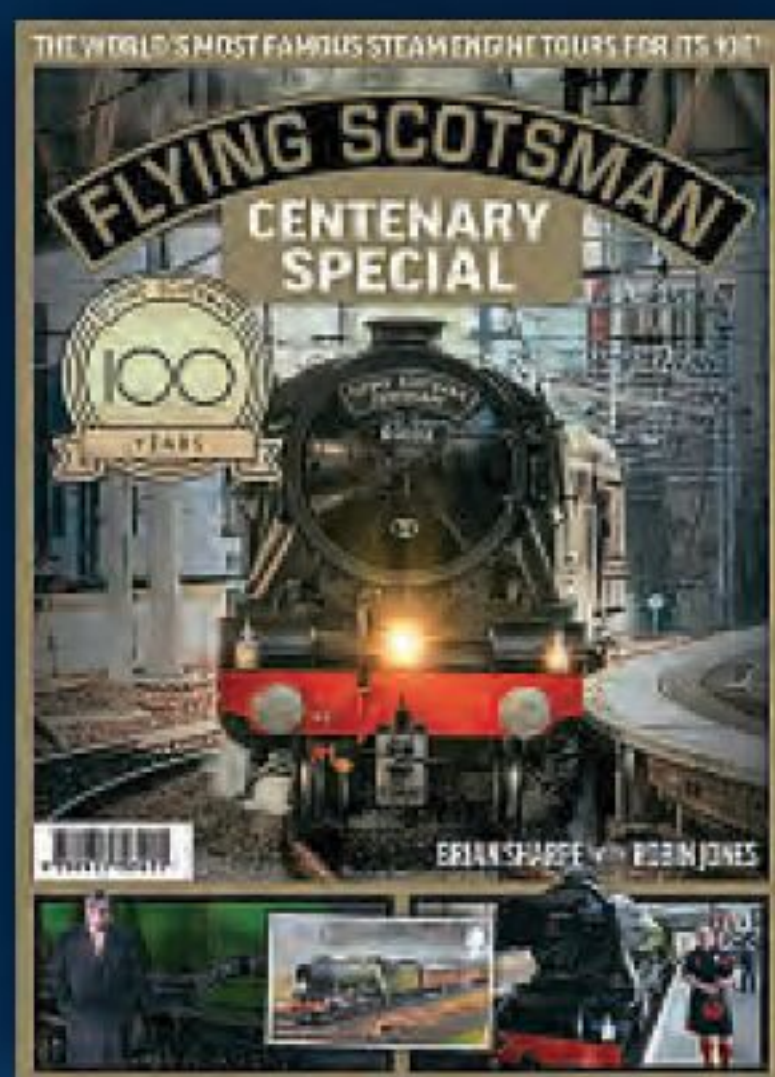
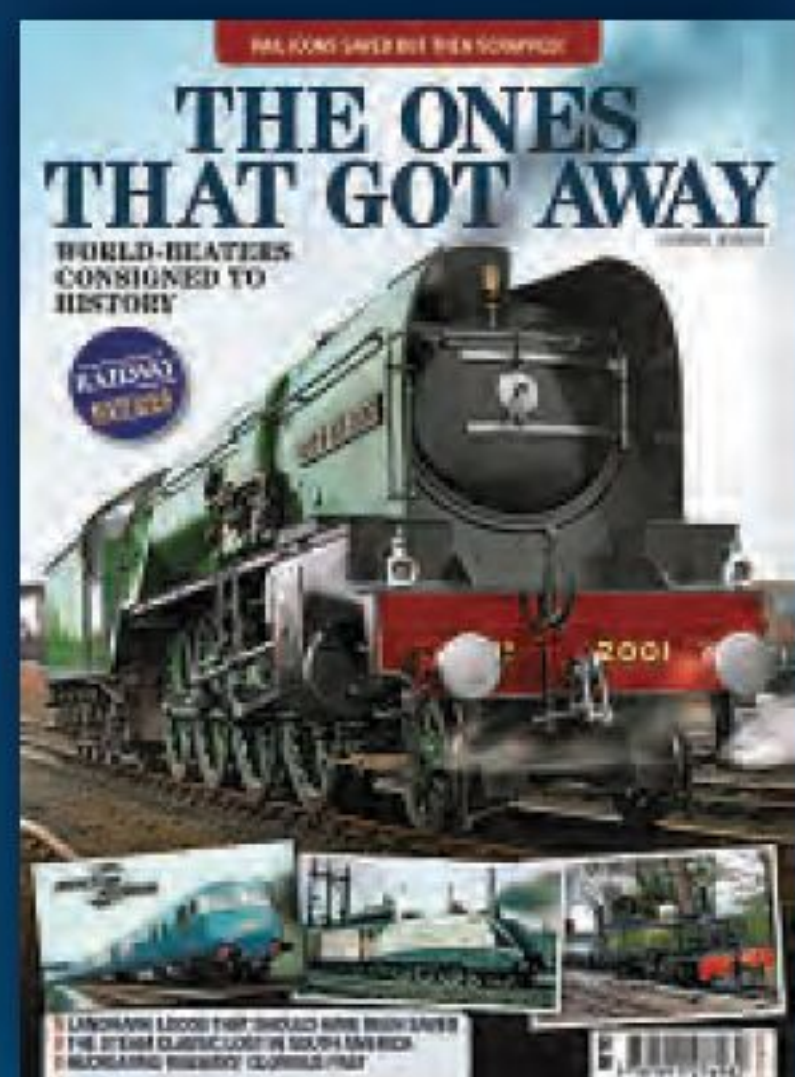
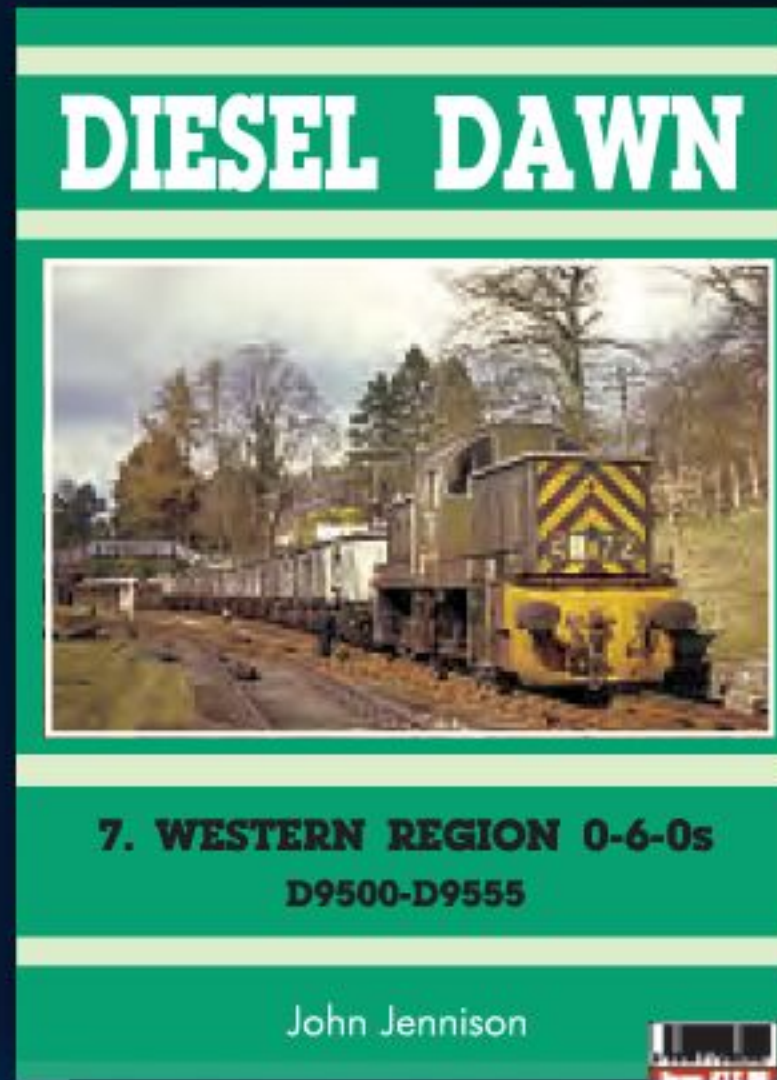
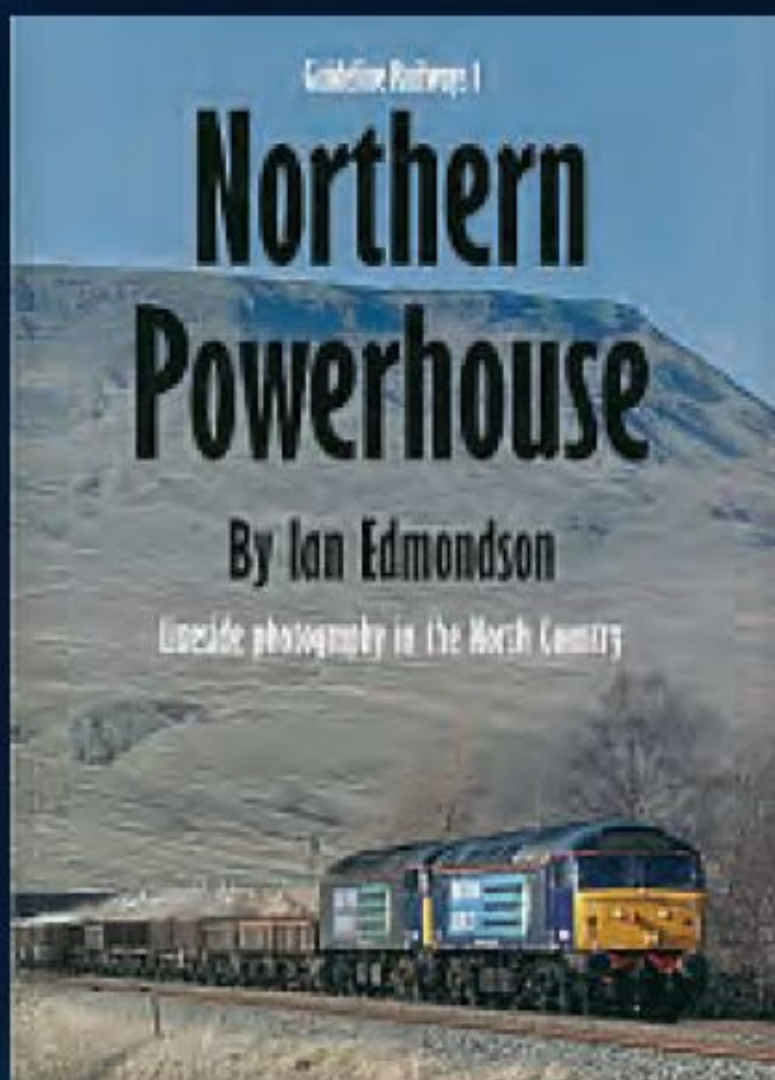
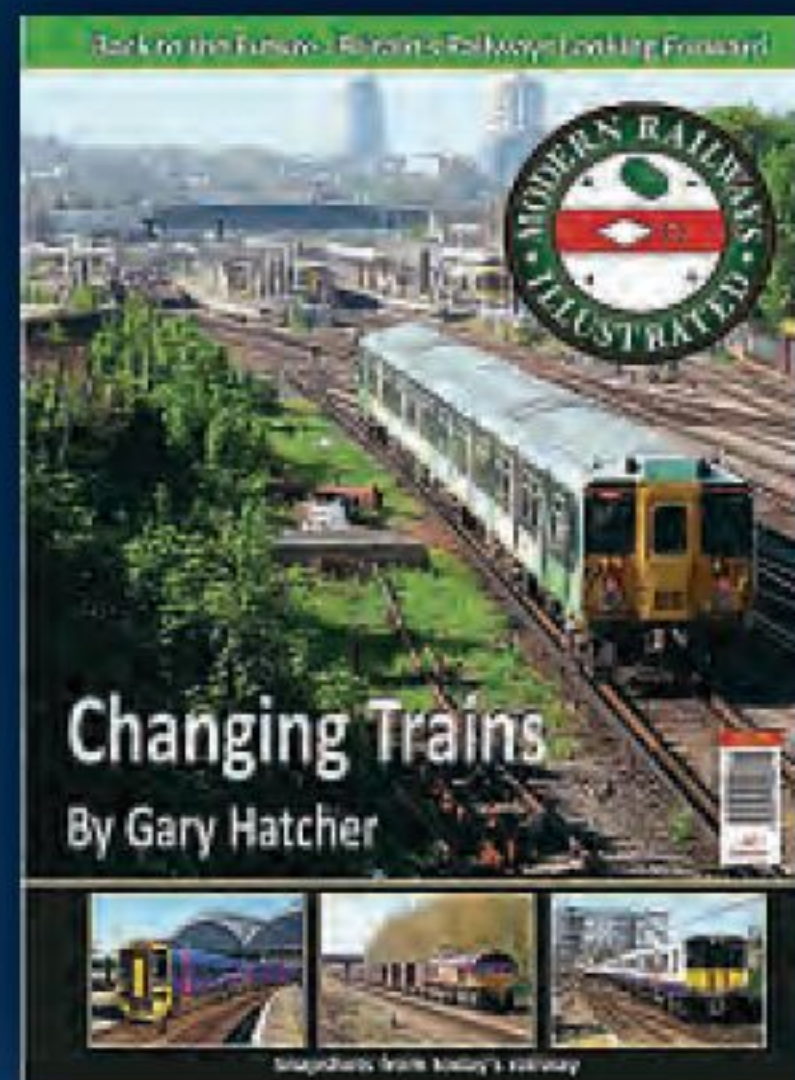
by NIR units was on February 24, when Nos. 3001/3002 were noted there after working a 'rugex'. NIR DMUs also used the sidings on March 16. Four refurbished container pocket wagons (CPWs) were transferred from Limerick to Dublin North Wall yard by GM No. 084 on February 27. Freight traffic continues to be buoyant with the IWT container service between Ballina and Dublin Port consistently having fully loaded trains. Locomotives noted on the IWT flow during the period under review included Nos. 071, 072, 074, 082, 088, 215 and 233. The loads noted on the Ballina-Belview XPO container service continued to vary with some trains well loaded and some with space to spare. On March 11, No. 085 hauled the Belview to Ballina train as far as Kildare where a planned swap with No. 088 occurred with the latter hauling the train to Ballina. Other locomotives noted on the XPO service

included Nos. 072 and 082. Timber traffic between Ballina/Westport and Waterford continued to be buoyant with Nos 074, 076, 085 and 088 each being noted on the flow.

■ **PRESERVATION:** "Small" GMs Nos. 147, 162, 171 and 177 continue to be stored unserviceable at Inchicore to provide parts for Railway Preservation Society of Ireland (RPSI) locomotives. The flood recovery operation at the Downpatrick and County Down Railway made good progress during the period under review with repair work on most of the operational locomotives and diesel electric multiple units being successful. The railway has received financial support from both local sources and further afield. The Connemara Railway project at Maam Cross has taken delivery of more track materials from IE and track laying is continuing.

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ELECTRIC ERA
MODELLING

Southern Electric gets a boost

EFE Rail Class 70 examined



5 Newsdesk: 'TT:120' intermodals, signals and HSTs

Hornby reveals the next phase of its 'TT:120' range including a useful intermodal wagon which will have appeal for collectors here and in Europe.

6 Newsdesk: New wagons from Bachmann
'Palvans' in 'OO' and anchor mounted tank wagons in 'N' make a surprise appearance from Bachmann.

7 Newsdesk: CIÉ fuel oil tank wagon revealed

Irish Railway Models adds to its Bulleid triangulated underframe project with a useful early diesel-era tank wagon.

10 Review: Will the Bulleid Booster boost your layout?

The first newly tooled D&E-era locomotive model from EFE Rail is put through its paces and checked for reliability.

14 Review: Hornby industrial reviewed

The first of two critters to be thoroughly tested and checked is the Ruston & Hornsby 88DS. How well did it perform?

19 Review: 'OO' gauge cut and shut hopper

The 'OO' gauge HRA hopper follows on from the 'N' gauge version reviewed last month.

22 Review: Modern narrow gauge traction

The second critter to be given a thorough examination this month is the tiny but mighty 70hp Baguley-Drewry locomotive, modelled in 4mm scale for '009' gauge track.

25 Review: EWS charter stock tested

Box sets of coaches and a Class 67 carrying EWS livery for charter work is released by Hornby. It is set out on the test track for the usual test and examine procedure!

29 Modelling: 'Dace' from a printed kit

A little known range of printed resin kits prompts a test build of the 4mm scale ZCV 'Dace' ballast wagon including where to find some of the parts needed to finish it.

RAIL EXPRESS MODELLER EDITOR

Nigel Burkin

REMeditor@mortons.co.uk

LMS 10000 & 10001

in N Scale from Graham Farish



The LMS 'Twins' were the first mainline diesel locomotives to be built in Great Britain and for the first time, models of this iconic duo are available in N scale thanks to Graham Farish.

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TT403IC	GWR, Mk3 Trailer Standard Open, 42300 - Era II			
TT403ID	GWR, Mk3 Trailer Standard Open, 42579 - Era II			
TT4040	GWR, Mk3 Trailer First, 41146 - Era II			
TT404I	GWR, Mk3 Trailer Guard Standard, 44040 - Era II			
TT4042	GWR, Mk3 Buffet Car, 40715 - Era II			

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Intermodal wagon in TT:120 announced

IN APRIL, Hornby revealed its new TT:120 range for 2024 which includes a useful intermodal wagon which has been constructed in large numbers and sees regular use on Network Rail. The Sffgmss IFA is a single intermodal

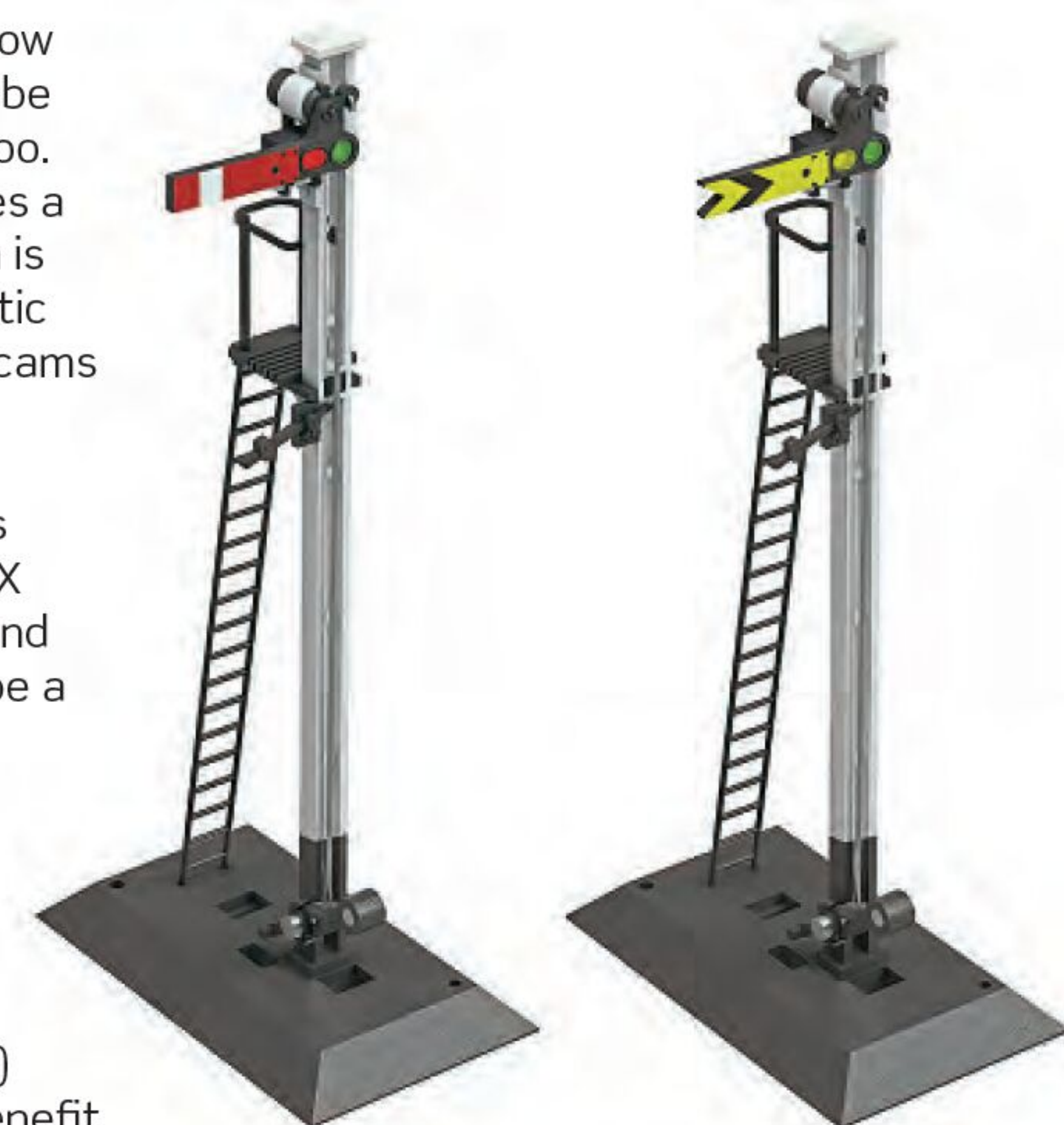
wagon with drawgear at each end. It is capable of carrying a single 40ft or 45ft container, or a combination of 20ft containers.

The model is suitable for both UK and European operations, being passed

for Channel Tunnel operation. Its low deck allows the transport of hi-cube containers on certain UK routes too. Specification of the model includes a cast metal spine for weight which is fitted with injection moulded plastic details along with close coupling cams and NEM pockets.

The model is to be released under the Hornby TT:120 brand as three separately numbered TOUAX wagons with Hapag-Lloyd, DFDS and Hanjin 45ft containers. They will be a good match for the forthcoming Class 66 models.

The single Sffgmss IFA is no stranger to Arnold collectors. It was released in Arnold-branded boxes last year with Maersk, DHL and Ocean Network Express (ONE) liveries. It shows the true scale benefit of TT:120 which allows models and ranges to cross borders. Hornby could expand its range with international appeal by producing more international freight vehicles cleared for operation in the UK including various ferry vans. 



New accessories are also added to the range including home and distance semaphore signals in single and junction format. The image suggests a rail-built version, possibly with a Southern Region flavour.



Sffgmss IFA single intermodal wagons have been added to the Hornby TT:120 range with three wagons set for release in November loaded with 45ft boxes. It is hoped that other containers and intermodal wagon types will be added to the range in the near future. Prices remain to be announced at this stage.

TT:120 HST POWER CAR PACKS ARRIVE



↑ An HST train set pack with two power cars and two HST trailers is added to the 2024 range. It will include track and a suitable controller given that a TXS sound version will be available.

THE first HSTs and trailers arrived in the shops during March, including BR InterCity versions and a pair of GWR power cars. The balance of the trailers is set to arrive during the summer to complete the HST train sets. The GWR and original BR InterCity versions are available in DCC-ready (£219.99) and TXS digital sound format (£329.99) whilst there is no sound version for the InterCity Executive pack.

The models are fitted with NEXT18 decoder sockets with through wiring for a sound speaker. A miniature socket is provided to connect the sugar cube speaker supplied with TXS sound decoders

making soldering unnecessary unless an alternative speaker is desired.

All wheel drive and current collection; running lights and cab lights, along with some detail tailored to fit the applied livery are among the features of the model which is to be reviewed in considerably more detail in a future issue.



← In common with the '00' gauge models, one power car power pack is unpowered, but has lighting and a decoder socket.



→ A more up-to-date era is represented with the GWR power car pack with *The Welshman* legends.



→ Detail is tailored to suit the format of the models including the headlight fittings and the exhaust deflector.

HELJAN'S RETOOLED CLASS 47 IS HERE



← The replacement for the original Heljan Class 47 has arrived with dealers in several forms including Crewe-cut, early and mid-life formats. No. 47214 in Railfreight red stripe livery is one of the mid-life Class 47 models with full bufferbeam fairing, underframe tanks and associated details. Bufferbeam mounted brake hoses and the coupling are fitted to both ends of the model at the factory.



← The new model is seen as an improvement over the original which, despite being slightly over-width, was welcomed by most modellers, being the first Class 47 model to feature a heavy metal chassis, frame-fitted motor and twin bogie drive. The new model follows the same drive format with upgraded electronics. www.heljan.co.uk

BR 'Palvan' revealed by Bachmann

AN INTERESTING freight vehicle in the form of the BR 12t 'Palvan' has been added to the Bachmann 'OO' gauge Branchlines range, with the first pre-production models being revealed in mid-March.

Nearly 2400 'Palvan' wagons were constructed between 1954 and 1961 to cater for the growing use of pallets. The wagons were fitted with a larger



↑ Numerous incarnations of the BR 12t 'Palvan' have been revealed by Bachmann with pre-production prototypes being assessed prior to the arrival of livery samples. Numerous variations are planned for release, including those with Morton and clasp brakes. Buffers, wheels and axle boxes will be applied to suit the underframe type.

than normal loading door on each side allowing pallets to be loaded. This gives the wagon a distinctive appearance in addition to the use of heavily braced plywood for the body.

They follow the growing trend where build differences are incorporated in the tooling to produce several models of a wagon type with specific features. Bachmann plans to release models with features covering

each construction batch of the wagons including four-shoe Morton brake underframes and later designs with eight-shoe clasp brakes. Variations tooled into the models include different axle box types, spring detail and buffers. Wheels are also carefully researched, and the appropriate type will be chosen for the underframe type.

Decorated samples are expected in the summer and will be revealed

as part of Bachmann's quarterly statement in early May. In the meantime, we can expect new toolings to be announced outside the now well-established quarterly statements following feedback from modellers who feel that more time between announcements and release should be given to assist modellers with planning. www.bachmann.co.uk



↑ One of the 'Palvan' prototype models will be equipped with clasp brakes and roller bearings. The brakes are shown built up of numerous small fittings whilst the body is finely tooled to include hinge detail on the doors and separate grab rails.

GRAHAM FARISH ANCHOR-MOUNTED TANK WAGONS



↑ Anchor-mounted tank wagons make an unexpected appearance in the Graham Farish range and will please steam and transition-era modellers.

'N' gauge modellers were not left out of Bachmann's mid-March announcement of new wagons. Pre-production models of an intriguing tank wagon were unveiled, one that would suit layout themes from the 1940s through to the 1960s. Scale 14t and 20t anchor-mounted tank wagons have not been produced in 'N' gauge before, making the various versions of this wagon particularly welcome for the steam to diesel transition era layout. They were built in number from the early 1950s for the major oil companies, but soon made obsolete by the introduction

of larger vacuum-braked tank wagons.

Both Class A and Class B tank wagons can be modelled from the tooling which includes variations such as outlet pipes, discharge valve wheels, walkways and ladder configurations.

When closely examined, the photographs of the prototype models show separately applied brake gear, filler hatch with locking clamps and etched access ladders where appropriate.

Livery details, prices and delivery schedule will be revealed in the next Bachmann quarterly announcement.



➔ Different barrel segment toolings will allow the different position of filler hatches and walkways to be incorporated in the models. Small fittings will also vary depending on the owner livery and class of the wagon.

'LMS TWINS' IN 'N' NOW IN THE SHOPS

BACHMANN started to deliver its brand-new LMS 10000/10001 locomotive models in March, with the first models of what became known as the 'LMS Twins' appearing in LMS black and silver. It is anticipated that these models will sell out quickly given the popularity of minority diesel and electric locomotive classes.

The anticipated delivery date for the BR green versions, including those fitted with digital sound, is May or June.

Two different BR liveries are expected: BR green with late crest along with BR green with small yellow panels, the latter applied to No. 10001.

The specification for this brand-new model is comprehensive, with

➔ One of the first points to note about the model is its slightly shiny finish, as if ex-works. First impressions are of a neat, trim-looking model which has retained the character of a pioneer diesel.

all-wheel drive and current pick-up; factory installed sound speaker and NEXT18 decoder socket. BR No. 10001 in green with small yellow panels will be reviewed in the next issue of *Rail Express Modeller*.



↑ The brand-new LMS 10000/10001 model is making an appearance already with the LMS black and silver version available to buy at the time of writing. The BR green version with small yellow panels will be reviewed next month.



BANANA VANS LAND WITH ACCURASCALE



← Another brand-new set of models to arrive in the first quarter of this year is the Accurascale Southern Railway banana vans. No less than 12 packs of wagons have been produced in liveries ranging from Southern Railway stone livery through to BR bauxite including departmental versions, one of which will be examined in time for the next issue.



← Two diagrams are included in the tooling suite. Diagram D1478 and Diagram D1479 types are different from each other, requiring different body toolings. A Diagram D1479 model is shown in this picture. www.accurascale.com

IRM fuels up Irish diesels



A single triple-pack of the CIÉ fuel oil tank wagons is available for pre-order from IRM for €89.95. They are built on the Bulleid triangulated underframe and were introduced in 1956.

The wagons were used as internal user wagons to carry fuel oil for the CIÉ diesel and road fleet. Whilst only 21 wagons were built, they are an important part of the 1950s to late 1970s Irish railway scene.

THE SECOND new tank wagon to be revealed in March is an Irish prototype from the early Corás Iompair Éireann (CIÉ) diesel era. Built in 1956, the 21 locomotive depot fuel tank wagons were based on the Bulleid triangulated underframe design which was used as a standard for modern freight stock of the time.

The wagons were moved within mixed freight trains to transport fuel from Dublin Port to various locations throughout the CIÉ network. They

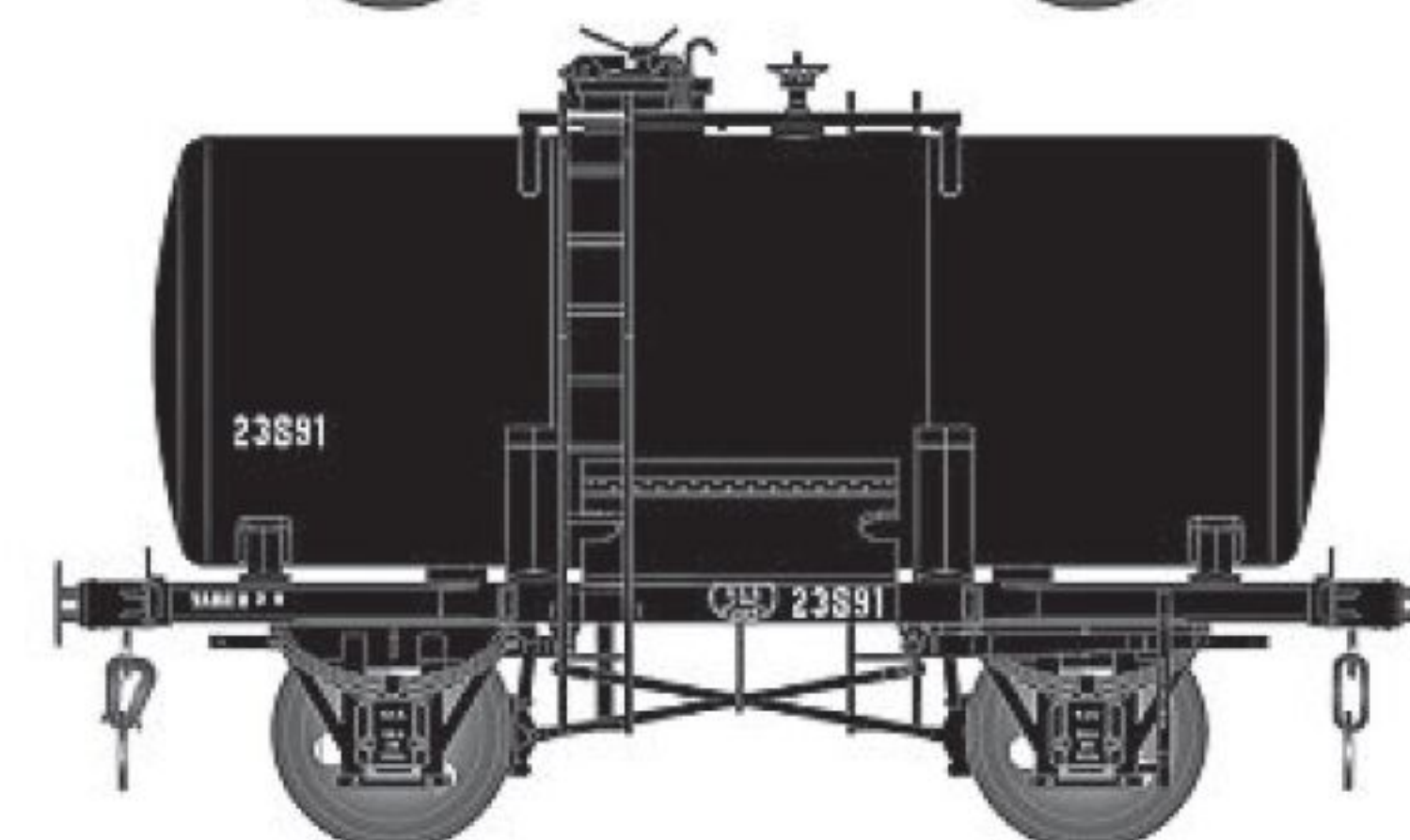
lasted for around 30 years until replaced with newer vacuum braked stock towards the end of the 1970s.

The new 'OO' gauge model is the latest triangulated underframe based wagon to be announced by IRM, continuing the series which promises to deliver quite a broad range of stock for Irish railway modellers. IRM has already announced corrugated open wagons based on the same underframe.

Production of the models was complete as this issue went to press,

with delivery expected in May. A flat wagon version is not far behind with livery samples being received during March.

The new tank wagons will follow the same pattern as the open and flat wagons in being straightforward to convert to 21mm gauge. They will be fitted out with small metal details, sprung buffers, etched ladders and properly profiled metal three-hole disc wheels. Delivery of the triple wagon packs is indicated to be in the third quarter of this year. Each pack is priced



The wagon pack contains three authentically liveried wagons finished in black.

at €89.95 and prompt pre-ordering is recommended given how quickly IRM's models sell out. www.irishrailwaymodelling.com

ACCURASCALE MK.2B COACHES WIDELY ACCLAIMED

Accurascale swept the board in the 2023 Model Rail Awards in all three 'OO' gauge categories, and it is likely that the new BR Mk.2b coaches may help the company to further recognition of the same kind in 2024. *Rail Express Modeller* readers have already seen a hint of what the new Mk.2b and Mk.2c stock looks like with the review of the IRM NIR Mk.2b coach pack featured in the last issue. Read the review of the BR version in the next issue!

www.accurascale.com



AIRBRUSH SURVIVAL KIT

How many of us have expensive but inoperable airbrushes lying around? How many of them could

be put back into full working order with a thorough service and clean? The Airbrush Company thinks so and has compiled a handy restoration kit containing the same tools and materials used by its service engineer. The 'Save Our Spray' emergency cleaning kit priced at £10 and is available from airbrushes.com. It will be given a thorough test as soon as we can find a suitably neglected airbrush to test it on!



CLASSIC DMUS FROM HORNBY

Two Class 101 models from the Privatisation era have arrived from Hornby. No. 101695, a two-car set dressed in SPT livery and adorned with ScotRail 'Whoosh' logos from the National Express franchise will be popular. The model stands up well with neat flush glazing, a heavy powered car and interior detail.



Network Rail yellow No. 901002, known as *Iris 2*, is a close fit to the 'Railroad' range model. The various grilles and features relating to the unit's departmental role are printed in place. The release of the Class 101s is welcomed, although some modellers would like to see some three-car sets appear in classic BR liveries as well as SPT orange and black. The two-car sets are priced at £134.99. www.hornby.com

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Several versions of the Bulleid 'Booster' locomotive were released by Bachmann for the EFE Rail range during February, including one finished in late life condition as BR No. 20001.

Southern Legends: The Class 70 'Booster' in 'OO'

Southern Electric collections can be further completed with the brand-new 'OO' gauge Bulleid 'Booster' locomotive model added to the EFE Rail range.

OUR model locomotives rely on kinetic energy from flywheels to overcome minor interruptions in electrical supply from the rails. The booster devices designed by Alfred Raworth for the Bulleid 'Booster' locomotives worked in a similar way to mitigate gaps in the conductor rail. Granted, we do not have miniature motor generator sets incorporated in our models, but the use of flywheels to smooth out model operation is an accepted technology today.

The boosters, in what became designated as Class 70 electric locomotives, served several purposes, the primary one was to assist the locomotive over gaps in the conductor rail and to smooth out operation where gaps occur, thus avoiding snatching of couplings.

A booster is a motor generator set with a large one-tonne flywheel mounted on the common shaft. One was fitted for each bogie of the locomotive, powering three traction motors.

In the simplest terms (because operation of booster sets is quite complex) the booster motor drew current from the conductor rail, and this drove the generator set, which in turn supplied the traction motors depending on the selected controller position. The flywheel would store kinetic energy from the motor, and this would continue to run the generator when the locomotive crossed gaps in the conductor rail for uninterrupted power supply to the traction motors.

The generated power could be

supplemented by current from the conductor rail boosting power to the locomotive's traction motors. Further, to mitigate efficiency losses, control of the locomotive was through the booster sets instead of wasteful resistance control. The selected control 'notch' would determine exactly how the boosters performed.

Three Bulleid 'Boosters' were built between 1941 and 1948. The first two, Nos. CC1 and CC2 shared the same bodyshell and cab design. The third locomotive was very slightly longer and had a cab design similar to 4SUB EMUs. The brand-new EFE Rail model is a neat replica of the first two locomotives as built at Ashford.

For a minority class, the 'Boosters' were quite long-lived and saw service with British Railways. During that time, the Southern Railway stencil headcode boxes and train reporting marker lights were replaced with Southern Region roller blind headcodes. No tail-lights were fitted, the rear aspect eventually being provided by red blinds.

Model features

The model enjoys era-specific detailing with early to mid-life condition models available with a combination of headcode boxes and train reporting marker lights, together with air whistles. Also modelled are the original sand boxes, shoe beam flash guards and axle boxes.

One late-condition model is included: No. CC1 (No. 20001) in BR blue fitted with roller blind headcodes and air horns mounted on the roof.



The model has era-specific detailing appropriate to the applied livery. The BR blue version has air horns instead of a whistle, and also features roller blind headcode boxes.

Although not detailed to the same level as some diesel locomotives, the model has the principal features expected by modellers today, including running lights and cab lights; 21-pin DCC interface with through-wired sound speaker; NEM coupling pockets and a frame-mounted motor powering both bogies.

Bodyshell

A single piece bodyshell moulding incorporating the buffer beams is employed on the model, fitted out with wire hand rails and a range of small, moulded parts such as the cab roof air horns, roof ventilators and moulded cab door hand rails of the correct pattern. It has well cut-in moulding for the bodyside grilles present on one side of the locomotives. The tooling is smooth, with even curvature of the cab roofs and accurate proportions too.

Although some of the small parts such as lamp irons, are not fitted as neatly as one would expect, the bodyshell is neat and shows no sign of distortion, sink marks or other flaws.

It sits neatly on the model's chassis and is simple to remove once the sprung buffers are unclipped and four retaining screws are released.

Underframe and bogies

Being an electric locomotive, there is little equipment between the bogies to comment on other than the neatly reproduced steps for access to the centre doors. The bogies are simple mouldings with much of the detail integrally moulded with the side frames. It is crisp enough and looks the part when viewed from normal layout distances.



The shape and character of the full-size locomotives has been replicated well despite some basic levels of detailing.



No. 20001 was the only 'Booster' locomotive to be painted in BR rail blue livery. The model is well finished in the livery, although the shade of BR blue is a touch on the dark side for the era.

Sand box and shoe beam details are separate mouldings, as are the line fuse boxes applied to earlier condition models. They are neatly applied and secure too. The collection shoes are supplied as separate fittings, allowing the modeller to decide if there is sufficient clearance with the layout's conductor rail to use them safely. No brake blocks are present on the bogies.

Despite much of the wheels being hidden from view, it is good to see the Bulleid pattern wheels neatly modelled. They are chemically blackened and fitted to 2mm diameter axles, which in turn run in metal bushes fitted to the bogie inner frames. Testing of the model quickly revealed that not all of the wheels made contact with the rails or a flat plate glass surface, with diagonally opposite outer wheels being affected on both bogies by about 1mm.

Decoder and lights

LEDs are used to power the running lights including train reporting marker lights and the two-digit headcode boxes, both roller blind and stencil type. Micro switches are not used on this model for analogue lighting control.

A magnetic wand is supplied instead which is used to control the cab lights.

A 21-pin DCC interface is fitted to the model, which, with the correct decoder, provides control of the leading running lights on Function F0 and cab lighting with functions F3 and F4. The model does not have red tail-lights because in usual Southern Region practice, the rear is marked with red blinds.

The design of the lighting boards has been done well, with moulded enclosures for the light guides preventing light leakage into the cab area.

Drive performance

A frame-mounted motor and flywheels drives all axles of both bogies, providing sufficient traction to replicate the power of the full-size locomotive. They are mounted on a heavy cast metal chassis which brings the model's weight up to 440g or 73g per powered axle. Consequently, models of heavy Newhaven boat trains and Ascot race day trains will not challenge this model to any extent, nor will the typical freight trains which provided the

locomotives with regular employment.

Gearing is well engineered, providing a good level of control and a realistic speed range to match that of the real locomotives which had a top speed of 75mph. It was a controllable model which moved smoothly and quietly, even though the wheels are cast rather than turned.

Closing notes

Finishing of the sample model is not as refined as on other models currently available, with the printed numbers and BR logos being slightly soft in appearance. The shade of rail blue is a touch dark too. Overall finishing is good, with good colour separation between the warning panel yellow and rail blue shades. Bufferbeams are finished in vermilion and are of a slightly lighter hue than expected.

The EFE Rail model is an honest one for the price, with good electrical features and drive. The technical issue with the bogies being out of true resulting in wheels not sitting square on a flat surface is a quality issue to be resolved at the factory in time for the next issue of the model. Despite

MODEL FEATURES

- Additional detail parts included in the box.
- LED headcode and cab lights.
- 21-pin DCC interface.
- Softly sprung yard pantograph.
- Through wiring for digital sound introduced.
- Sprung buffers with correctly modelled shanks.
- Bogie-mounted NEM coupling pockets.
- Correct pattern of wheels.
- All-wheel drive.
- All wheel current collection.

this, the model is a good replica of the legendary 'Booster' locomotives and leaves modellers wondering when the final gap in Southern Electric traction, in the form of the Class 74, will be filled. 

 Produced by Bachmann Europe Plc.
www.bachmann.co.uk

 RRP:
£184.95

'BOOSTER' LOCOMOTIVE IN DETAIL



↑ Cab front detail

No. 20001 in BR blue is modelled with roller blind headcode boxes. Windscreen wiper detail and lamp irons are fitted using metal whilst the train brake pipe is a separate plastic moulding. Train heating pipes (electrically generated steam heating) are supplied in the box for the modeller to fit.



↑ Bodyside grille moulding

Tooling of side detail such as rivet heads and side grilles is neat and crisp. It has good definition and matches the full-size locomotives well.



↑ Bogie shoe beams

Differences in the shoe beam detail is apparent on all versions of the model, including the type of flash guard and the presence of line fuse boxes.

↙ Bogie features

All wheel drive and current collection is fitted to the motor. Note the Bulleid pattern wheels and bogie-mounted NEM coupling pocket.

→ Cab roof detailing

The cab roof dome shape of prewar Southern Railway EMUs, used on the first two 'Booster' locomotives, has been replicated well on the model. Airhorns replaced the traditional Southern Railway warning whistle.



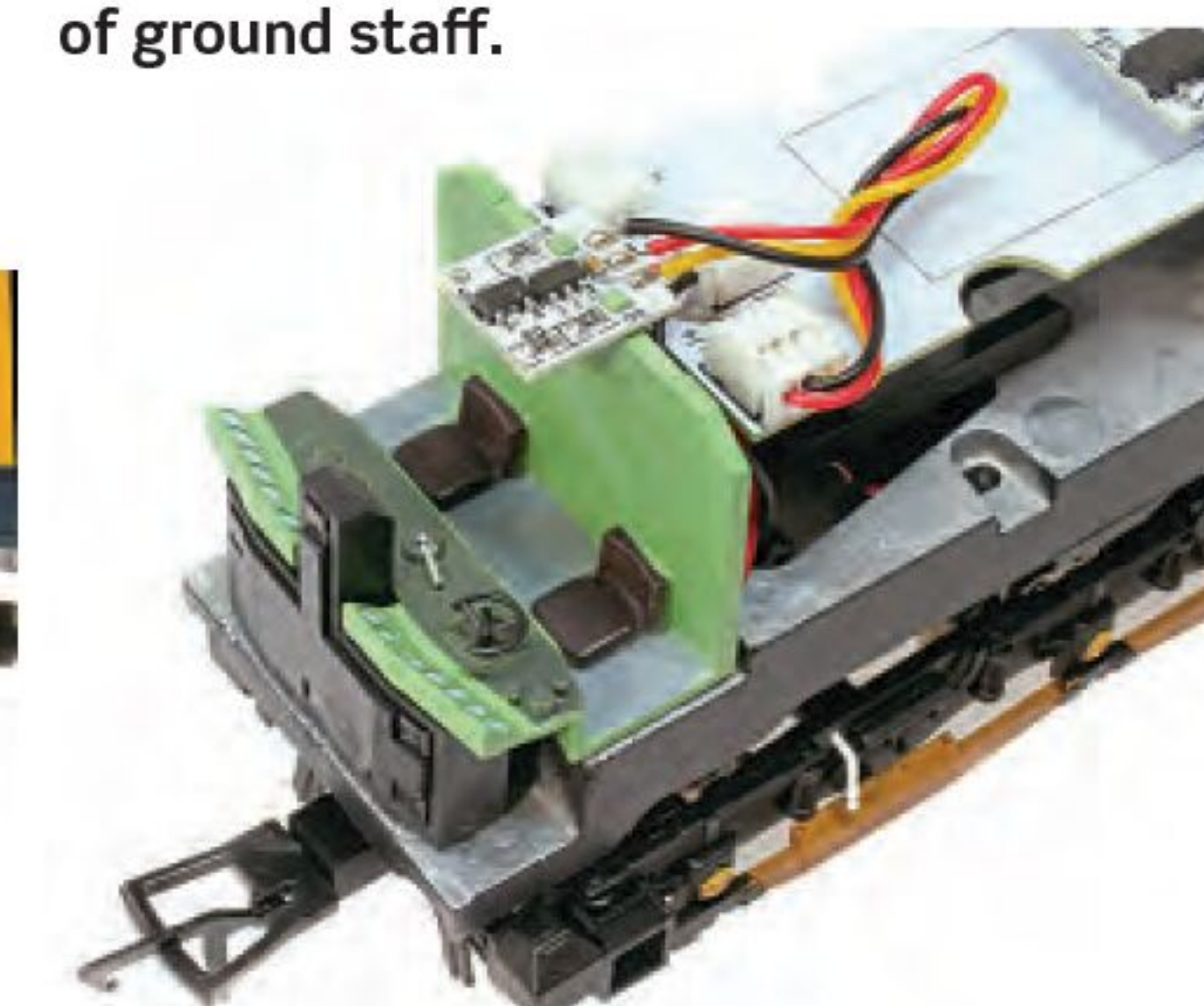
↑ Bogie side frames

Separate fittings applied to the bogie side frames include the shoe beams, sand boxes (of the correct number for the locomotive's condition) sand pipes and footsteps.



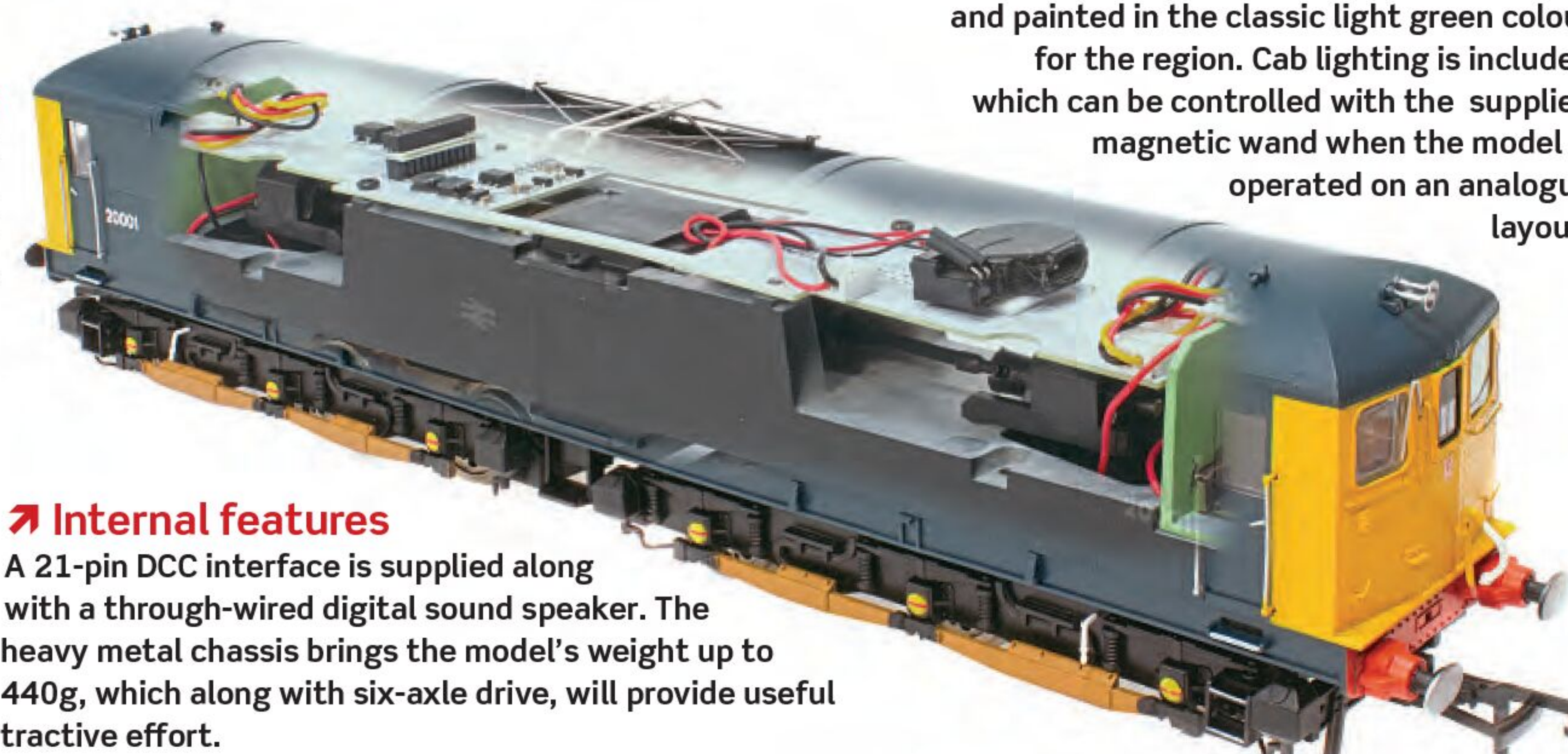
↑ Pantograph

A very good feature of the model is the sprung pantograph which has a good balance between delicacy of appearance and robustness. They were used in yards equipped with overhead wires instead of conductor rail for the safety of ground staff.



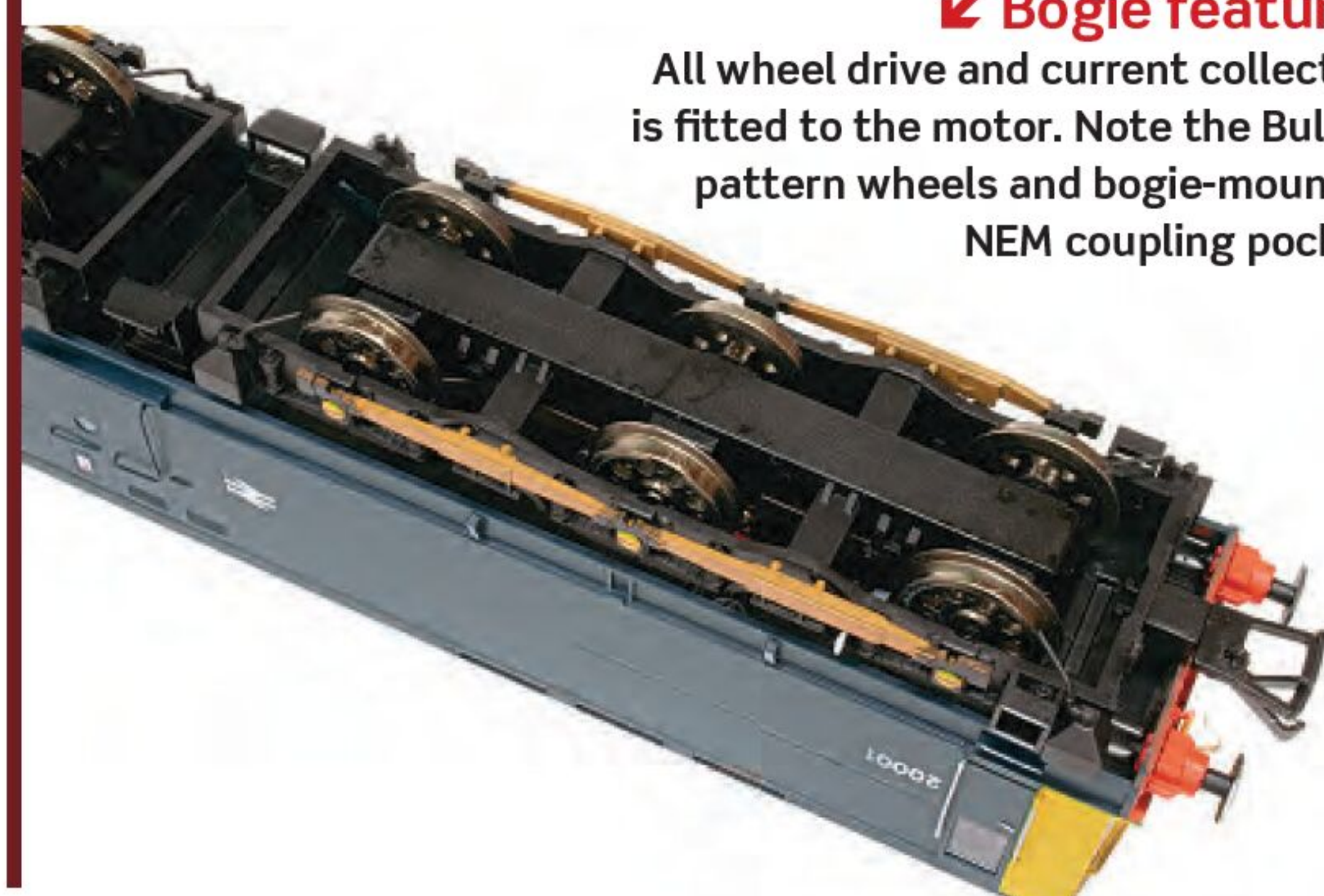
→ Cab interior detailing

Whilst not as comprehensive as that seen on some models, the cab is correctly detailed and painted in the classic light green colour for the region. Cab lighting is included which can be controlled with the supplied magnetic wand when the model is operated on an analogue layout.



↗ Internal features

A 21-pin DCC interface is supplied along with a through-wired digital sound speaker. The heavy metal chassis brings the model's weight up to 440g, which along with six-axle drive, will provide useful tractive effort.





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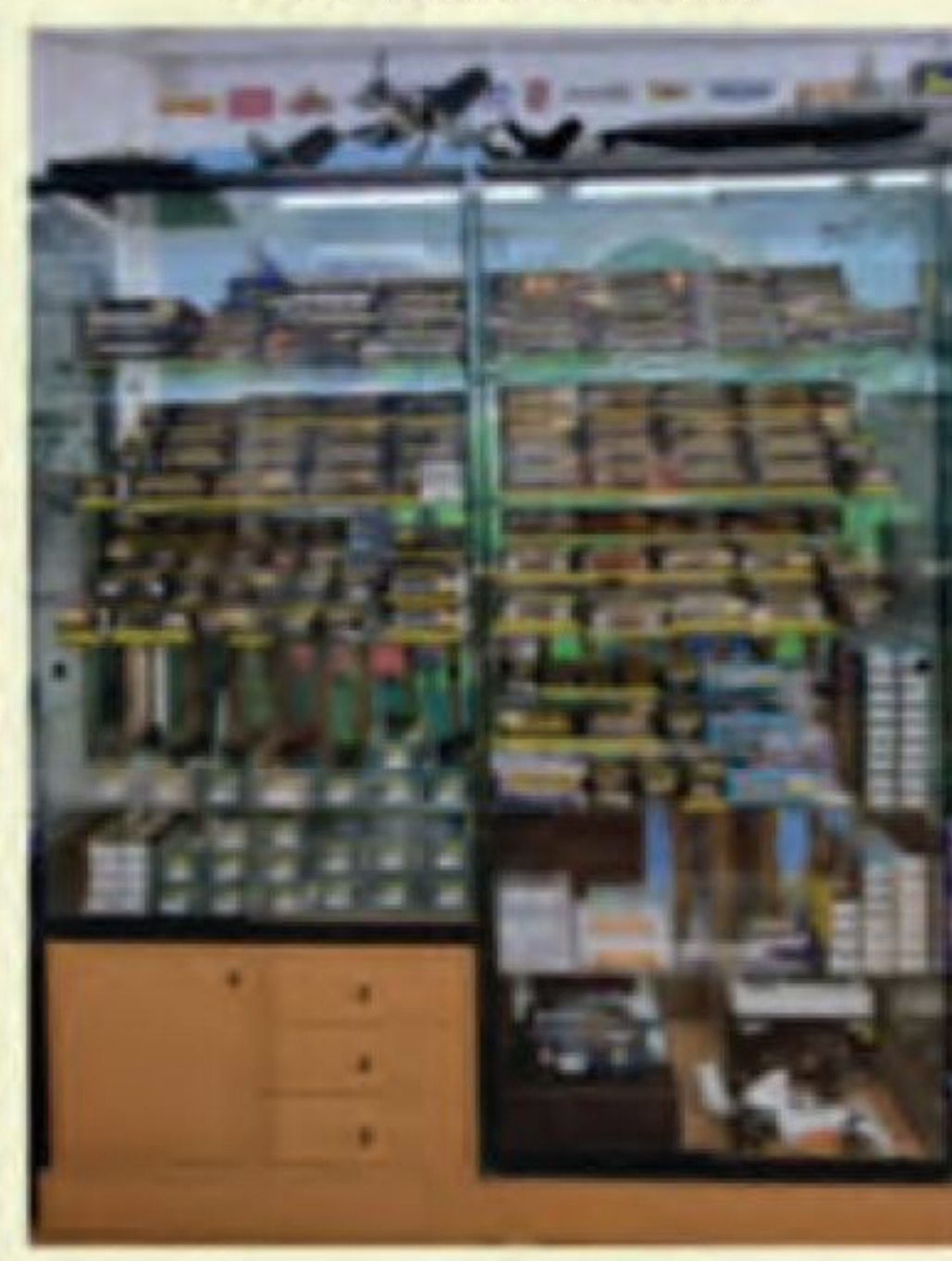
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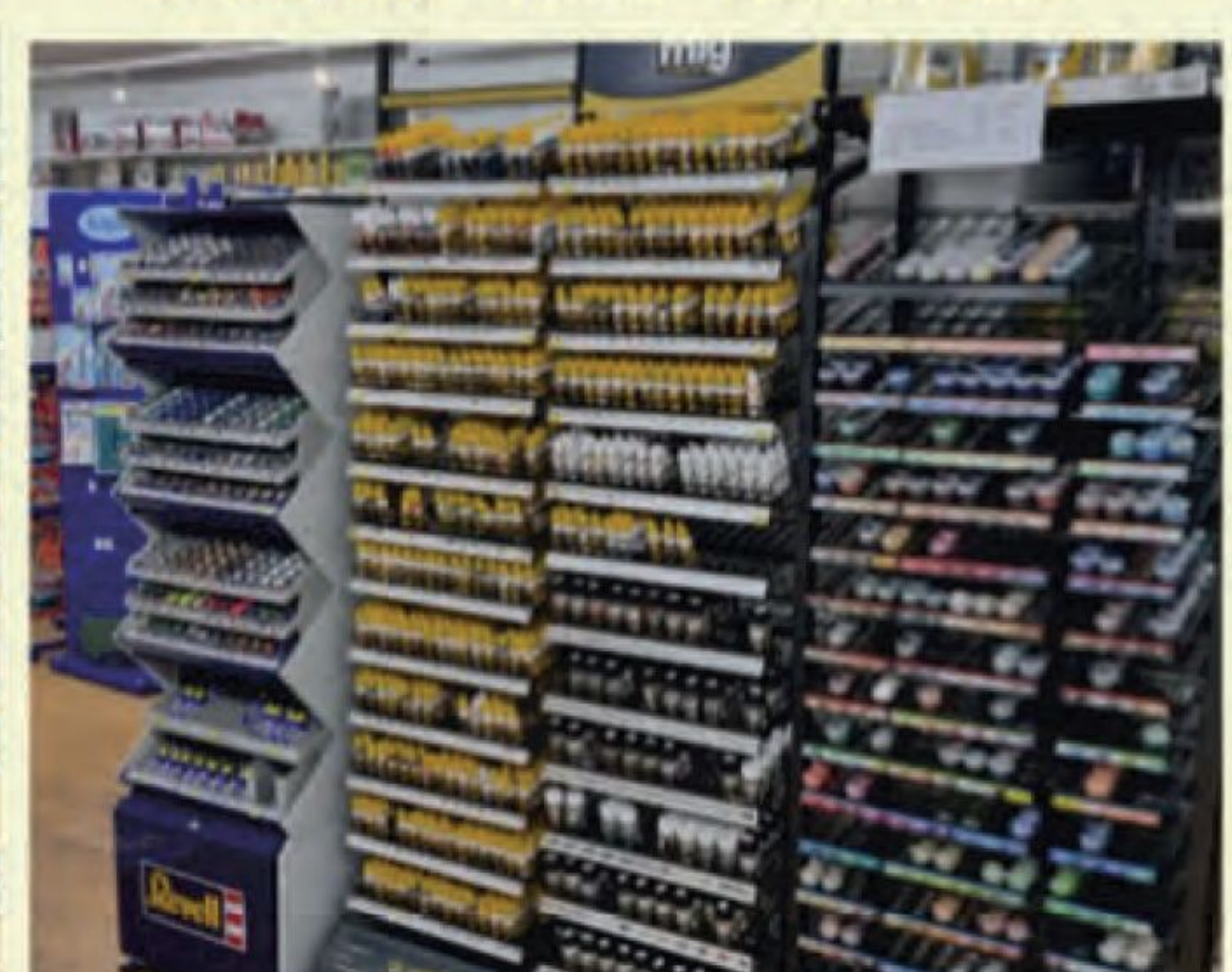
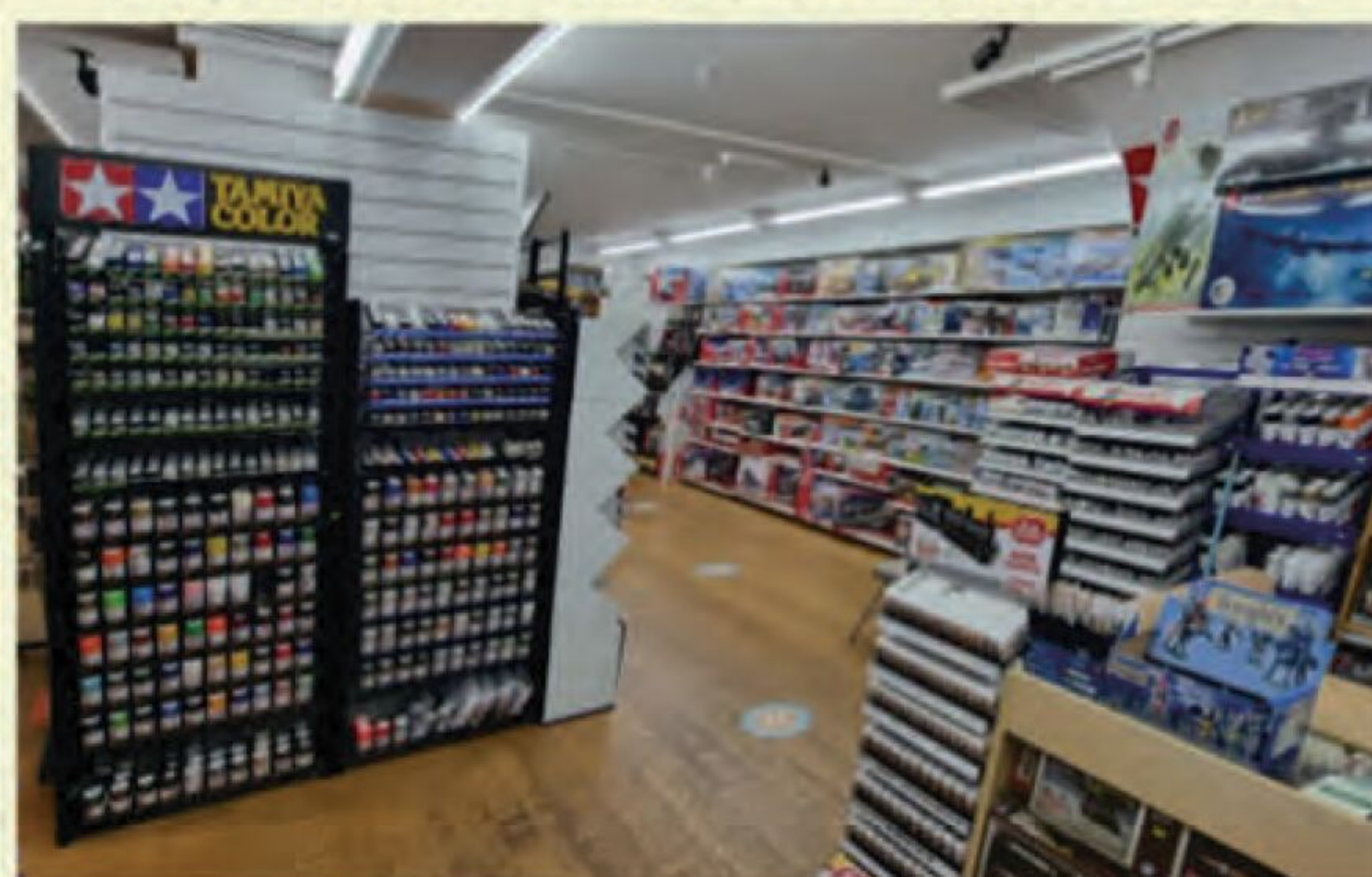
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Hornby's Ruston 88DS shunts in



➤ A small fleet of Ruston & Hornsby 88DS shunters arrived from Hornby in February, including BR departmental No. 84 and Rowntree & Co. Ltd. No. 3 Ken Cooke which are examined carefully in this review.

Hornby's liking for small industrial shunters continues unabated with the delivery of the Ruston & Hornsby 88DS in BR and industrial liveries.

HORNBY'S brand-new Ruston & Hornsby 88DS shunter is cute, just like its smaller brother, the 48DS locomotive which was released a few years ago and reviewed in the February 2020 issue of *Rail Express* (REM190).

The new Ruston 88DS upholds the fine work applied to the 48DS and shares similar technology, including geared drive to both axles. The longer wheelbase has prompted Hornby to forgo the match truck with its pick-ups which was supplied with the 48DS model.

Immediately favourable impressions were formed, first by the fine finishing and lining applied to the model. When unboxed, its weight was a surprise. It weighs 125g which is a useful 62g per powered axle. Although the prototype could handle very heavy trains when fitted with outside frame ballast weights, I suspect the model won't be quite so capable. However, tests showed it could manage more than 10 four-wheel wagons with ease, which may be sufficient for many modellers' needs.

Bodyshell assembly

The bodyshell and running plate assembly is neatly designed around the chassis. The cab is a separate metal casting of the correct shape fitted with a plastic roof, fitted directly to the frame. The frame casting is also composed of metal, adding to the model's impressive weight. A separate plastic moulding is used for the bonnet.

➤ Good first impressions were formed by the excellent quality of finish applied to these tiny locomotive models, particularly the fine lining around the bonnet panels.



Small details are applied to the bodyshell and running plate frame assembly including frame weights applied to the Rowntree & Co Ltd No. 3 model, along with footsteps and separate bufferbeams.

Moulded detail is excellent including the cab door, cab side rivets and bonnet side detail, including the panel grilles. There is nothing heavy or overdone with this model which gives it the minimalist appearance of the prototypes.

Designing the body as one complete assembly of cab, bonnet and running plate frame means the join with the chassis is neatly concealed. There is no discernible gap between the bonnet and running plate detracting from the model's lovely appearance.



Assembly quality is also very good, with both models featured in this review being neatly put together with no moulding flash showing on small detailing parts. Small details include a tiny air horn and exhaust pipe.



Hornby has created another small and appealing model with character, but small details like the orientation of the BR crests need checking.

Small details

There is no lack of fine detailing applied to the Ruston & Hornsby 88DS, and they include metal hand rails and knobs along the shoulders of the bonnet. Cab side hand rails are of plastic and finely moulded with tiny hand rail knobs at the top and bottom. The main headlights are also cosmetic, fitted to the bonnet end and cab. The lenses are painted silver.

The bufferbeams are neatly finished with large round industrial buffers with shanks composed of plastic and fitted with metal heads. The shallow dimples present in the buffer heads are correctly modelled.

Coupling hooks are fitted too, with the choice of three-link or other coupling left to the modeller to fit should more authentic shunting be desired. A blanking plate is provided to slot in to the NEM coupling pocket to complete the bufferbeams.

Cab detail

A tiny motor and gear assembly are confined to the bonnet leaving the driving cab completely clear for detailing with a crew. Flush glazing is fitted throughout the cab with almost no edge to any of the glazing pieces. Furthermore, it is very clear and without distortion, allowing a good view of the cab interior fittings.

Inside the cab are driving controls, some applied as separate tiny details, and painted accurately too. Removing the cab from the running plate frame to allow a crew to be installed is not easy. Roof access to the cab interior is equally as difficult, but not impossible.

Chassis

Diecast metal forms part of the chassis structure which gives the model its 125g of weight and good tractive effort for a model with such a short wheelbase. The inner section of the chassis runs to the bufferbeams whereas the full size locomotives have a distinct space behind the headstocks at each end. The excess metal could be removed, but does add weight to the model.

In common with its smaller brother, the 88DS model has gearing on both axles, with the final drive gears being exposed in the wheel retaining plate. It is a smooth and controllable model with only the slightest whirring from the gears being heard during tests. Test running following a period of running-in did not reveal any kicks or binding in the drive in any of the samples.

Decoder fitting

Removing the body to gain the interior and the decoder socket is simple. There is an easy to see screw in each corner of the running plate frame. The body and frame assembly slides off the chassis with ease to reveal the six-pin decoder balanced on top of the motor casing.

The lack of working running lights means that the only wiring is between the pick-ups and motor via the decoder socket, and this is quite delicate. Sufficient room exists for most six-pin decoders, although care will be needed to insulate decoders from the metal motor casing, which should be done by



↑ A view from the ends

Hornby has captured the shape and proportions of the model well, including the shape of the bonnet and cab.



↑ Rowntree & Co Ltd No.3.

Fine lining and printed details give the Rowntree model a refined appearance. It could be adapted for a freelanced industrial railway theme by removing some of the livery details.

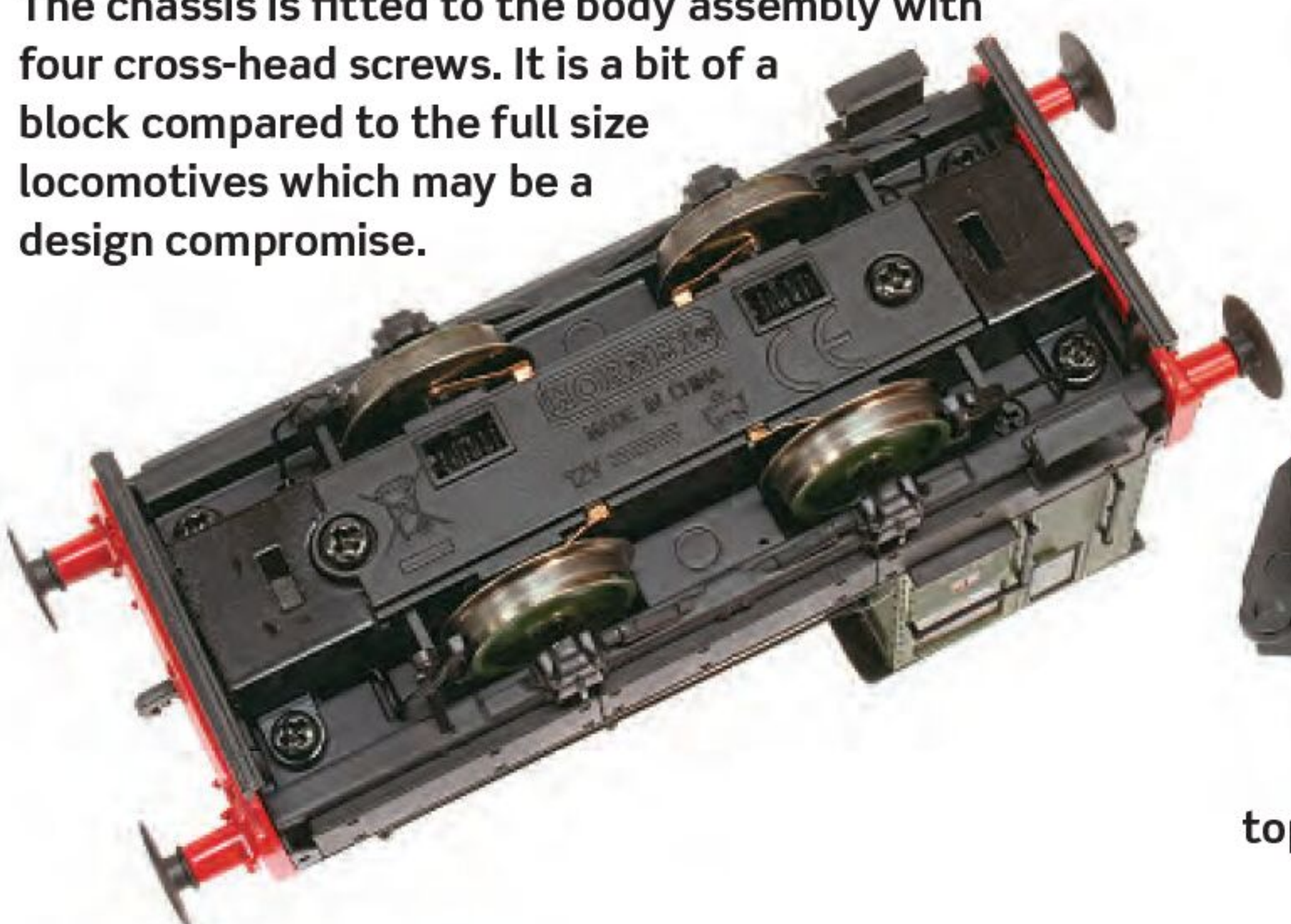
→ Cab interior

Beyond the glazing is a detailed set of driving controls, some of which is applied using small details.



↘ Chassis features

The chassis is fitted to the body assembly with four cross-head screws. It is a bit of a block compared to the full size locomotives which may be a design compromise.



applying thin insulation tape to it and other exposed metal surfaces. Little room exists in the body structure for a sugar cube speaker or small stay-alive unit unless the cab space is used.

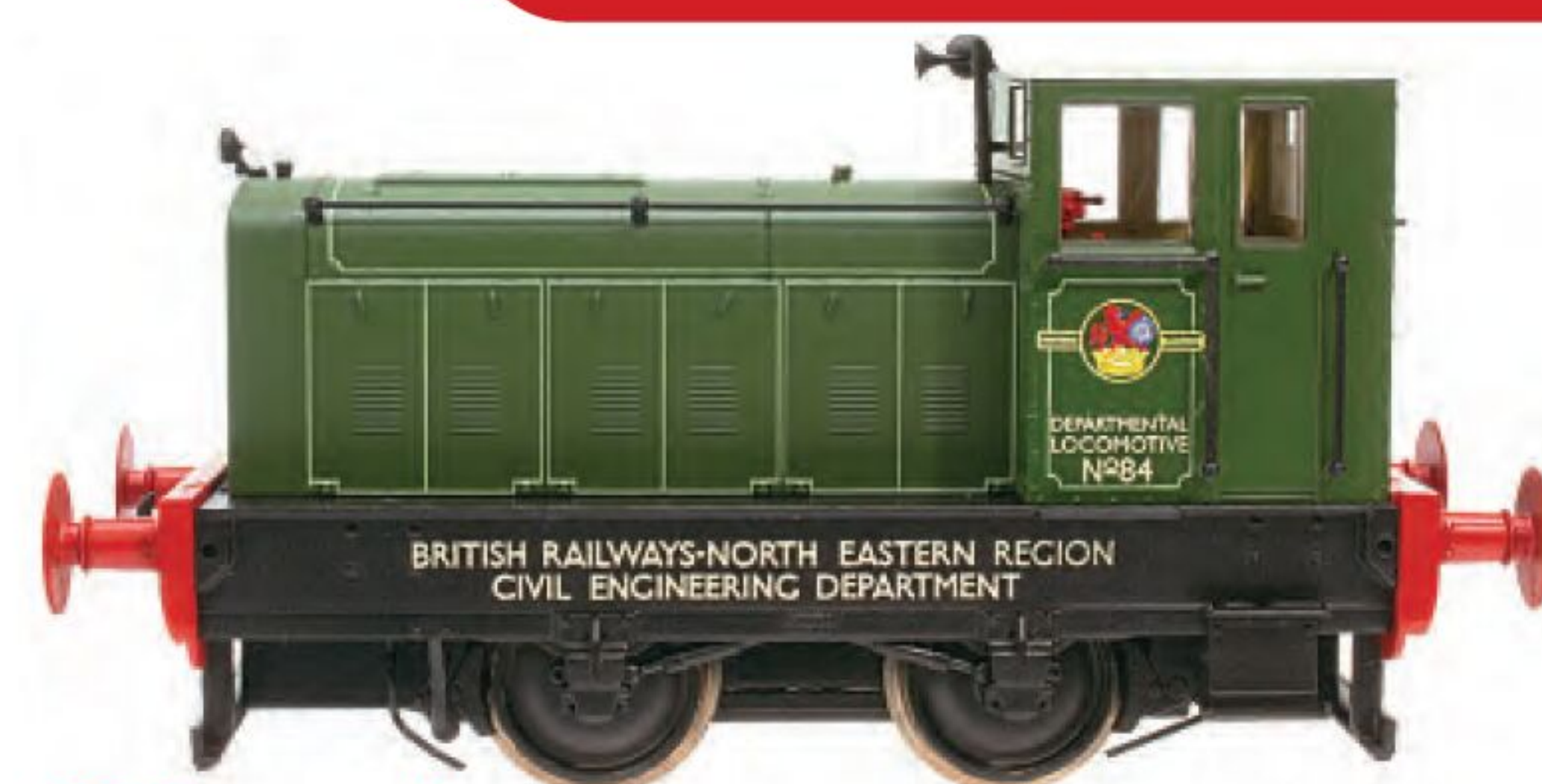
Final analysis

Hornby has done well by the Ruston & Hornsby 88DS locomotive, producing a neatly detailed and finely finished model in several liveries, and with some specific detailing such as the frame side weights. Overall, it looks well, although some modellers may wish to chop the inner chassis frame to remove the excess metal from the ends.

Performance of both sample models is excellent, an important requirement of shunting locomotives which have a

top speed of around 15mph, but not on dead or insulated common crossings. A stay-alive will help with performance, but where should it be hidden? Hornby could have looked at this issue when designing the model, along with a more secure decoder socket and wiring set-up.

Whilst it is understandable that authentic liveries should be produced on the models, Hornby could consider releasing models in plain or lined green with no embellishments to allow modellers to apply their own markings, nameplates and numbers. After all, industrial railway modelling has more potential for freelancing than any other, and is well supported by specialist manufacturers. **M**



↑ BR green livery

One of the four releases is decorated in BR green livery with fine lining. The legend places it in the North East Region's civil engineering dept where it would have been used as an internal user at a permanent way depot or similar location.

→ External cab detail

A mix of metal and plastic hand rails are used to detail the cab exterior which is fitted with clear flush glazing.



↑ Wheels and brakes

Disc wheels of the correct pattern are fitted to the model, along with brake shoes aligned with the wheels. The chain drive fittings are modelled too and align correctly with the centre of each wheel.



← Motor and electronics

The chassis is a neat assembly fitted with a tiny three-pole motor. The six-pin decoder interface balances precariously on

top of it. Exposed metal surfaces are best covered with insulation tape to protect any decoder fitted to the model.

MODEL FEATURES

- Die-cast metal frame for weight.
- Six-pin DCC interface.
- Fully modelled driving cab.
- Twin axle drive.
- Strong plastic cab side handrails.
- Metal bonnet hand rails.
- Clear flush glazing.
- NEM coupling pockets.
- Coupling pocket blanking plates.

Produced by Hornby Hobbies Ltd.
www.hornby.com

RRP:
£113.99

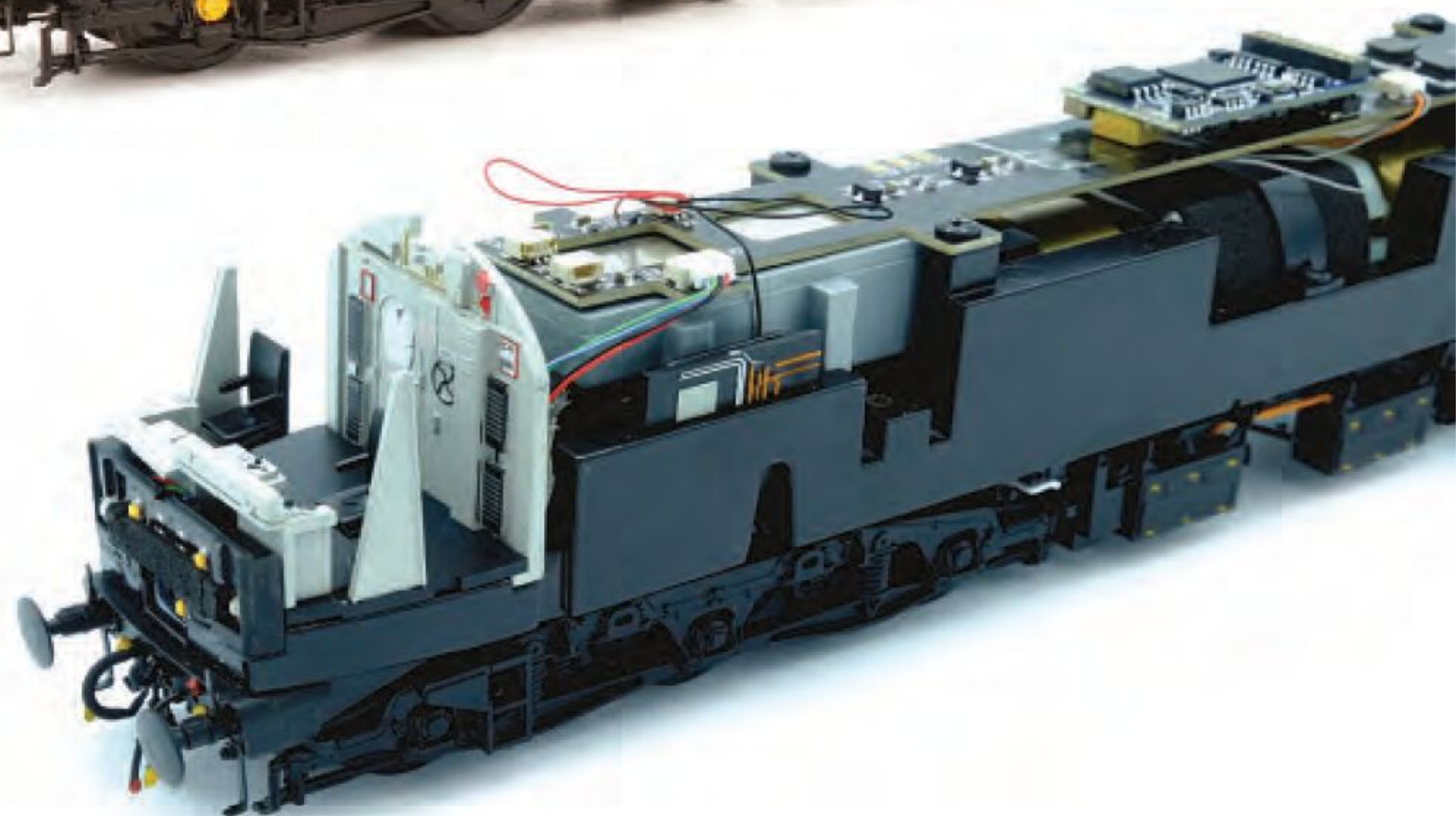


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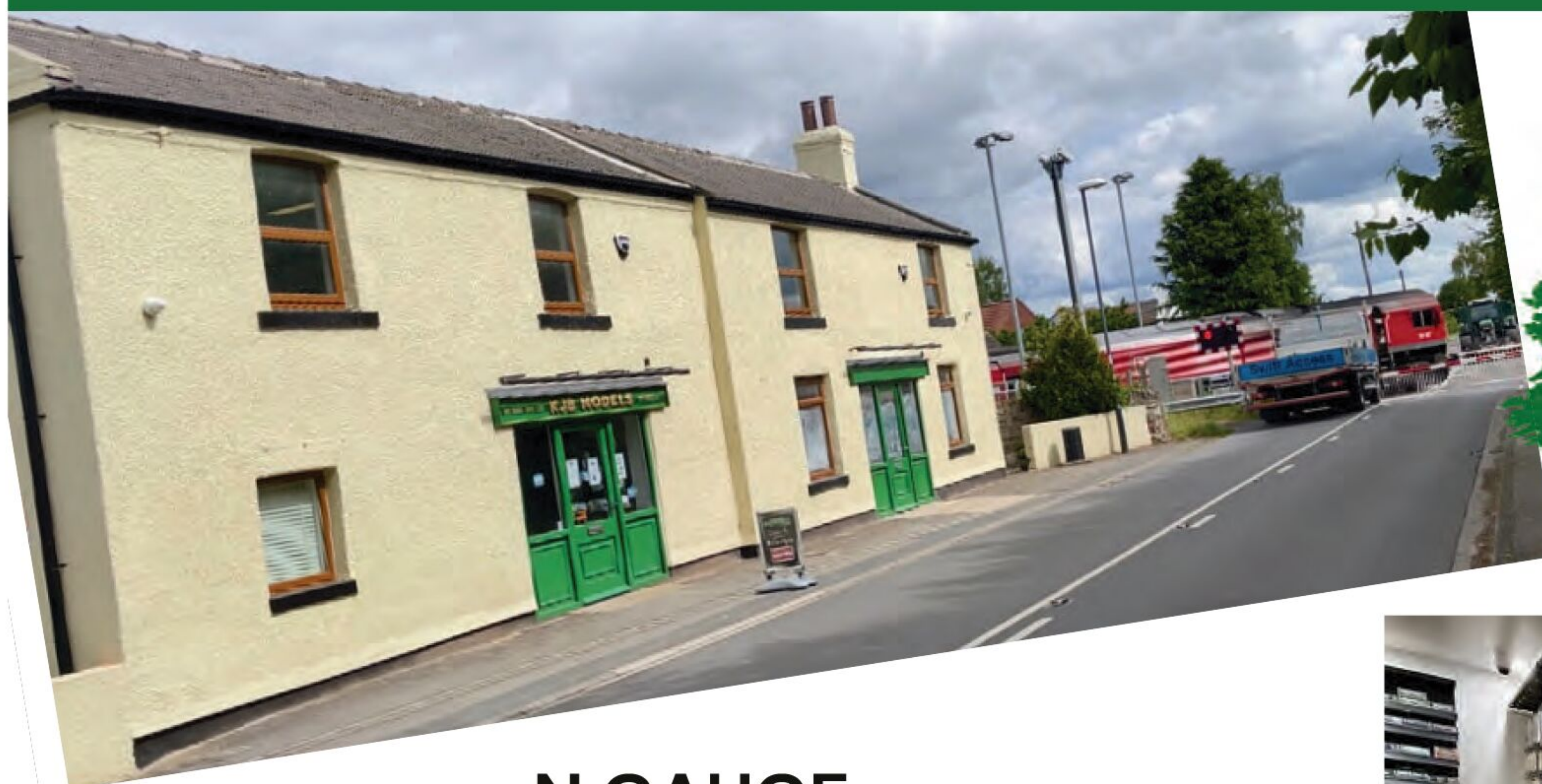
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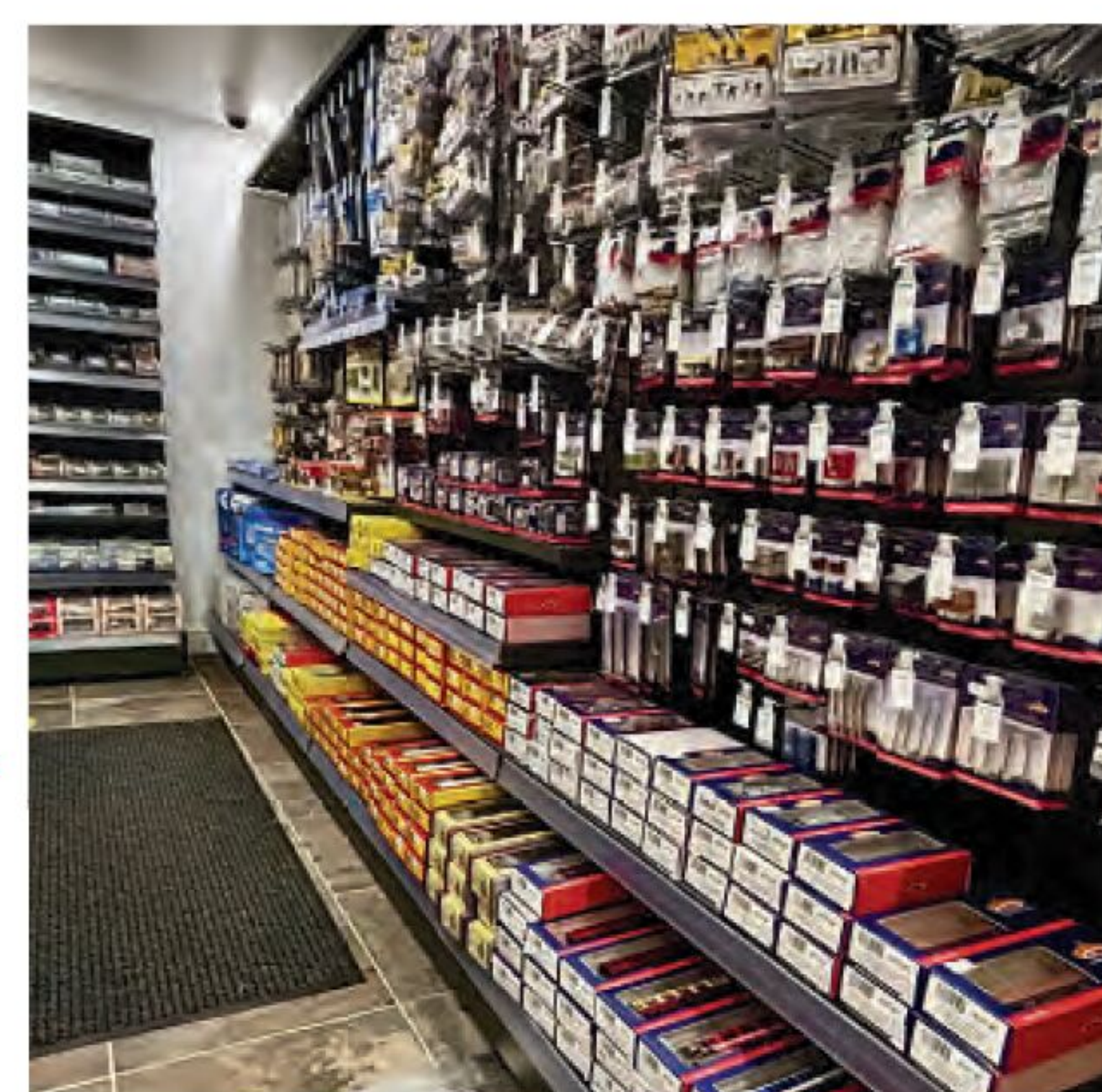
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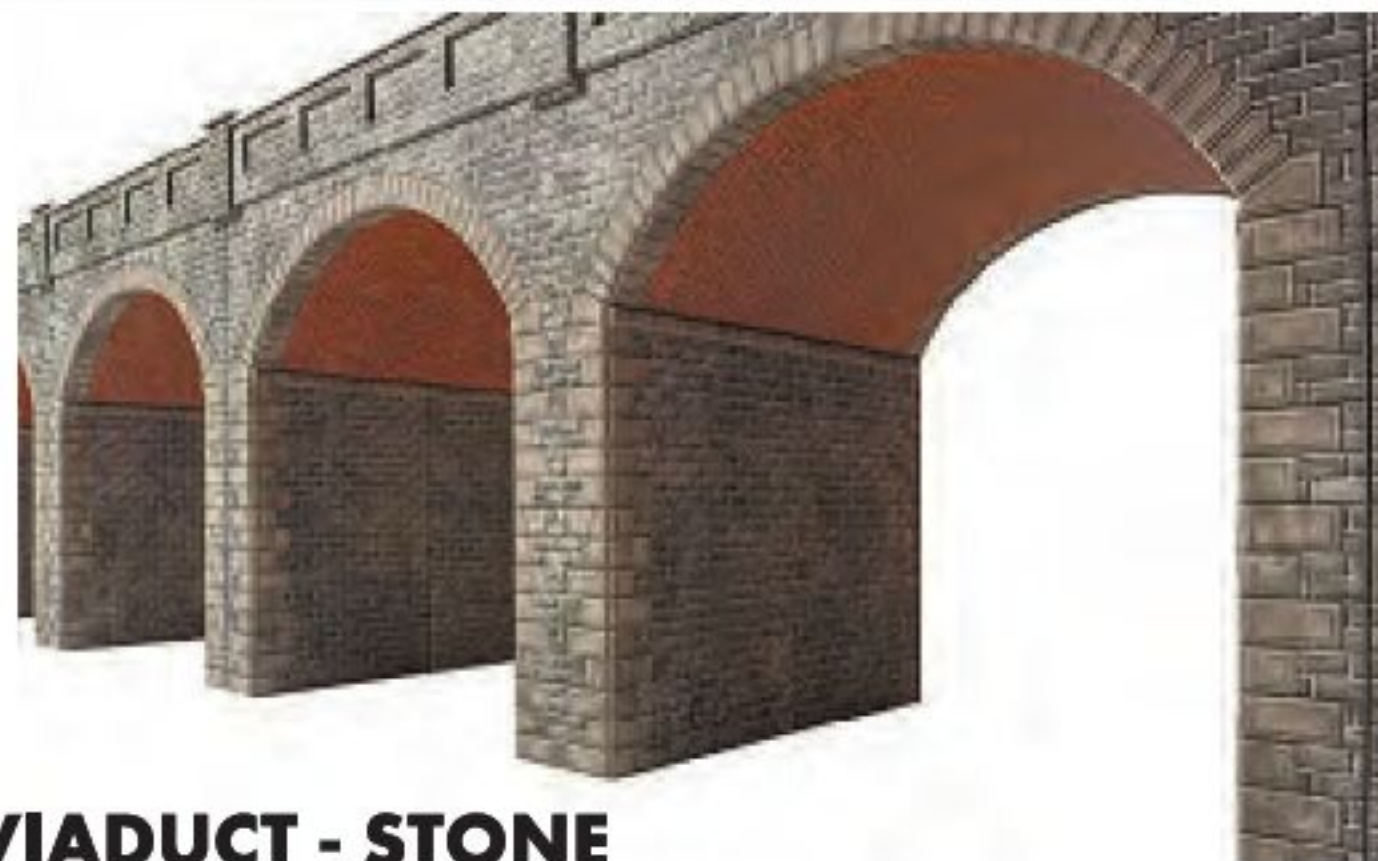
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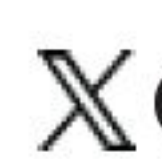
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Cut and shut wagon: The HRA aggregate hopper

DB CARGO UK has undertaken a programme to shorten the HTA coal hopper wagon fleet it inherited from EWS, to adapt them for aggregate traffic. Effectively, one bay was removed from the middle of the wagon and the remaining sections welded together, reducing its length and the risk of overloading. Thus, the cut-down version of the HTA was created and recoded as HRA.

DB Cargo red livery is applied, along with UIC numbering and the large DB logos. Aggregate traffic is very aggressive to wagons, and they soon showed signs of wear, staining from stone dust and fading of the red finish to a pinkish shade of red.

The model

Bachmann continues its support for contemporary freight operations by offering the HRA in 'N' and 'OO' gauge, the former being reviewed in last month's issue. The new model uses parts common with its HTA model, and the same overall shape, bogie type and underframe features of the HTA coal wagon can be seen in the new model.

Four models are now available through Bachmann stockists, issued with individual running numbers which will help modellers build up a suitable rake, which on the full-size railway can be as long as 25 to 27 wagons which is likely to be too long for most layouts. The running numbers issued in the first run of this model are Nos. 41 70 6723 036-3, 062-9, 073-6 and 101-5. Although there are only four individually numbered wagons, short formations have been documented with as few as three or four HRAs making up a train.

Areas of operation include flows of aggregate from the Mendip quarries to the Home Counties and from the Derbyshire Peak District to terminals in the North West. Sand traffic from Brett Marine to Home Counties terminals such as Tolworth also see HRA wagons. Changes in traffic flows have seen some HRAs stored along with other types of aggregate hopper wagon as DB Cargo continues to shed market share.



The lower hopper and solebar moulding are fitted out with separate mouldings for the discharge chutes which are properly shaped to match the lower section of the hopper. They are fitted with separate discharge door mouldings, giving this area of the model a particularly detailed appearance.



Models of the cut-down HRA wagons have been issued by Bachmann in 'OO' gauge, priced at £69.95 each. Four models with unique running numbers and coded HRA are available in the first run. More are likely to be needed if modellers are to have the chance to build up authentic-looking trains.

On the subject of disposals, modellers may be wondering about the fate of the remaining HTA wagons. Well, many (but not all) of them were stored at various locations before being cut at Kingsbury, Attercliffe and Liverpool Alexander Dock as the leasing companies disposed of assets unlikely to be further utilised.

Hopper detail

The Bachmann 'OO' gauge HTA has always been regarded well as a superb replica of the full-size wagons and the HRA is no different, with good proportions, sharp angles between the top hopper sections and a correctly modelled interior dividing panel between the two bays. The upper hopper section is a separate moulding comprising of sides and ends. The lower hopper and underframe moulding is a separate piece with space for the discharge chutes and that too is a crisp tooling. The two assemblies fit together well to produce a model with no distortion on its structure.

Exterior detail is applied as separate fittings including the pipework associated with the braking system, the hand brake wheels and hopper discharge door levers too.

The assembly is considerably more refined than the 'N' gauge model which used more integral moulding to model the finer details. For example, the discharge chutes fit into the lower hopper and underframe moulding and are equipped with separate door mouldings.



Bogies are quite deep mouldings with an excellent level of exterior detail. They include the mount for NEM coupling pockets which are supplied with the model.



The end panels that would cover and protect the brake equipment are accurately detailed. Holes are provided in the headstocks to fit the supplied buffers to model 'outer' wagons, even though these holes do not exist on the full-size wagons.



The new HRA follows the same assembly pattern as the HTA model, with a single moulding for the upper hopper sides and ends. This is fitted with internal panels for the two hopper bays. The weld seams where the wagons were closed after being shortened are also modelled.

Bogies, wheels and couplings

The bogie mouldings have a great deal of relief to them, replicating their heavy-duty character well. Brake fittings present on the inside faces of the bogies and NEM363 coupling pocket mounts are integrally moulded in the bogie frame. There is sufficient distance between the inside faces of the bogie side frames to accept closer to scale wheels.

Wheel sets of the correct pattern are fitted to the bogies and were found to be fully concentric during tests. They are smooth too, which helps with noise levels when long trains are run and they are finished in the same shade of black as the bogies.

Two coupling options are available with this model, in common with the HTA model. They come fitted with working buckeye couplings similar to a popular North American design and are intended to replicate those on the prototype. They are easily removed and replaced with the NEM362 coupling pockets supplied in the box. The pockets clip into the mount in

MODEL FEATURES:

- Four different running numbers.
- Separate underframe hopper fittings.
- Accurately applied livery.
- NEM coupling pockets.
- Buckeye couplings fitted to the wagon frame.
- Free-rolling metal wheels.

the bogie frames and will allow the use of tension lock couplings or other types used on the locomotives intended to haul the HRAs. The buckeye couplings will work well on 'inner' wagons.

Overall finish

Application of the livery on the various segments making up both the upper hopper, the end plates that would protect the brake equipment and the lower hopper is consistent. There is no variation in the red shade applied to the sides, ends and smaller detail fittings. Sharp printing with no sign of misalignment is used for the DB logo and the various data panels.

Despite its shortened stature compared to the HTA, the HRA in 'OO' is an impressive and well-finished wagon, and a rake of 10 or more behind a Class 66 will look impressive on the layout. The chosen traction will need to be powerful – the model weighs 145g!

Produced by Bachmann Europe Plc.
www.bachmann.co.uk

RRP £69.95



Lettering and data panels are opaque, sharp and in the case of the small instruction notices, legible too. The white contrasts well against the bright red DB livery.

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Modern narrow gauge: The Baguley-Drewry 70hp locomotive

Locomotive origins

THE FIRST diesel locomotive to be produced for the Bachmann narrow gauge range, designed to run on '009' gauge track (9mm gauge) is the tiny Baguley-Drewry 70hp locomotive which has been produced in five liveries.

It is a relatively modern locomotive built in the early 1980s for internal operation at Royal Navy Armaments Depots in Wales. They were later transferred to the RNAD site at Dean Hill. They were sold to private railways after Dean Hill closed in 2004.

The locomotives are quite tiny with a single cab fitted with driving controls and a sideways driving seat. Couplings are composed of link and chains fitted to large coupling blocks which also add weight to the locomotive.

Model features

For such a small model, the Drewry has many good features packed into a small space. Within the bonnet, which is made of cast metal, is a powerful coreless motor and brass flywheel. It sits in a large chassis block which adds to the model's weight of 45g, which is immediately apparent when the model is unboxed – it is a heavy little critter!

On top of the motor is a small circuit board fitted with a NEXT18 decoder socket. There is plenty of room in the model for a decoder which is easy to fit.

A fully detailed cab is visible through the clear cab windows and populating it with a driver is simple. The body is secured with four tiny screws and once undone, the body and separate cast metal frame skirt lift off the chassis block with ease, allowing access to the cab and the decoder socket.

Detailing

Small details abound on this model and include separate coupling blocks with cut-outs for the '009' couplings mounted on the locomotive skirt.



↑ A metal underframe skirt hides most of the chassis detail, including the wheels, brake blocks and sanding pipes. Be assured, these details are present on the models.



↑ Bachmann's growing narrow gauge range has been supplemented by a modern diesel hydraulic locomotive design, the Baguley-Drewry 70hp locomotive. Five models are offered including the featured British Industrial Sands (BIS) version and a yellow Royal Navy Armaments Depot (RNAD) locomotive.

An alternative set is supplied in the box should the supplied '009' type couplings not be needed. A tiny metal pin is fitted to the coupling blocks and this feature could be made operational, albeit making coupling awkward!

The cab is fitted with fine flush glazing, cosmetic headlights and a driver's seat. Externally there are windscreen wipers, a separately fitted exhaust condenser, brake shoes and sanding pipe detail, the last two details are hidden behind the skirt!

Model build quality

Although the model is constructed of three assemblies, they fit together neatly and almost seamlessly. Noteworthy is the excellent join between the cast bonnet and the thin-walled plastic cab. The detailing parts are all fitted neatly along with the tiny pieces of cab glazing.

The cab detail is mounted on the circuit board which can be seen



↑ The model is composed of three main assemblies which fit together very neatly. Four screws hold it all together. Note the use of cast metal for the bonnet moulding.

← Modellers might find the chassis useful for other projects including freelance diesels. It runs smoothly, has all-wheel drive and current collection too. Note the use of NEM coupling pockets which can be removed when the complete coupling blocks are to be fitted.



↑ The rear of the cab with its flush glazing and windscreen wiper. Part of the circuit board is visible, something which could be made to 'disappear' with a spot of paint.



↑ The bonnet with a finely moulded radiator grille, printed builder's plate and the removable coupling block.

at various angles through the cab window. A spot of paint soon hides the reference numbers!

Overall, the build quality is excellent given the mix of materials in the model. It feels durable and capable of some rugged use too!

BIS livery

Livery application of the BIS version (392-029) is immaculate with the camel and logos being accurately reproduced. The builder's name is neatly printed on the bonnet front above the radiator grille. The finish is eggshell and pristine, with no weathering applied.

As the livery shows, the model could be freelanced to suit a whole host of industrial railway themes. They could be used for transfer haulage between clay pits to brick and cement works, or from sand pit to loading and processing plant. You could even model their intended use on internal

MODEL FEATURES:

- Coreless motor and flywheel.
- All-wheel geared drive.
- Fully concentric blackened disc wheels.
- Detailed cab interior including controls.
- NEXT18 decoder socket.
- NEM coupling pockets.
- Alternative coupling blocks.

railway systems at military depots using the wagons previously released by Bachmann if you like. It is a lovely addition to the Bachmann narrow gauge range, and some modellers will find alternative uses for the chassis too, without doubt. 

 Produced by Bachmann Europe Plc.
www.bachmann.co.uk

 RRP
£119.95



↑ Bachmann's first narrow gauge diesel locomotive is a very neat and accurate model of the Baguley-Drewry 70hp locomotives. Its specification is excellent given its tiny size, particularly the drive which is fitted deep in the chassis to leave much of the cab clear for a driving seat and controls.

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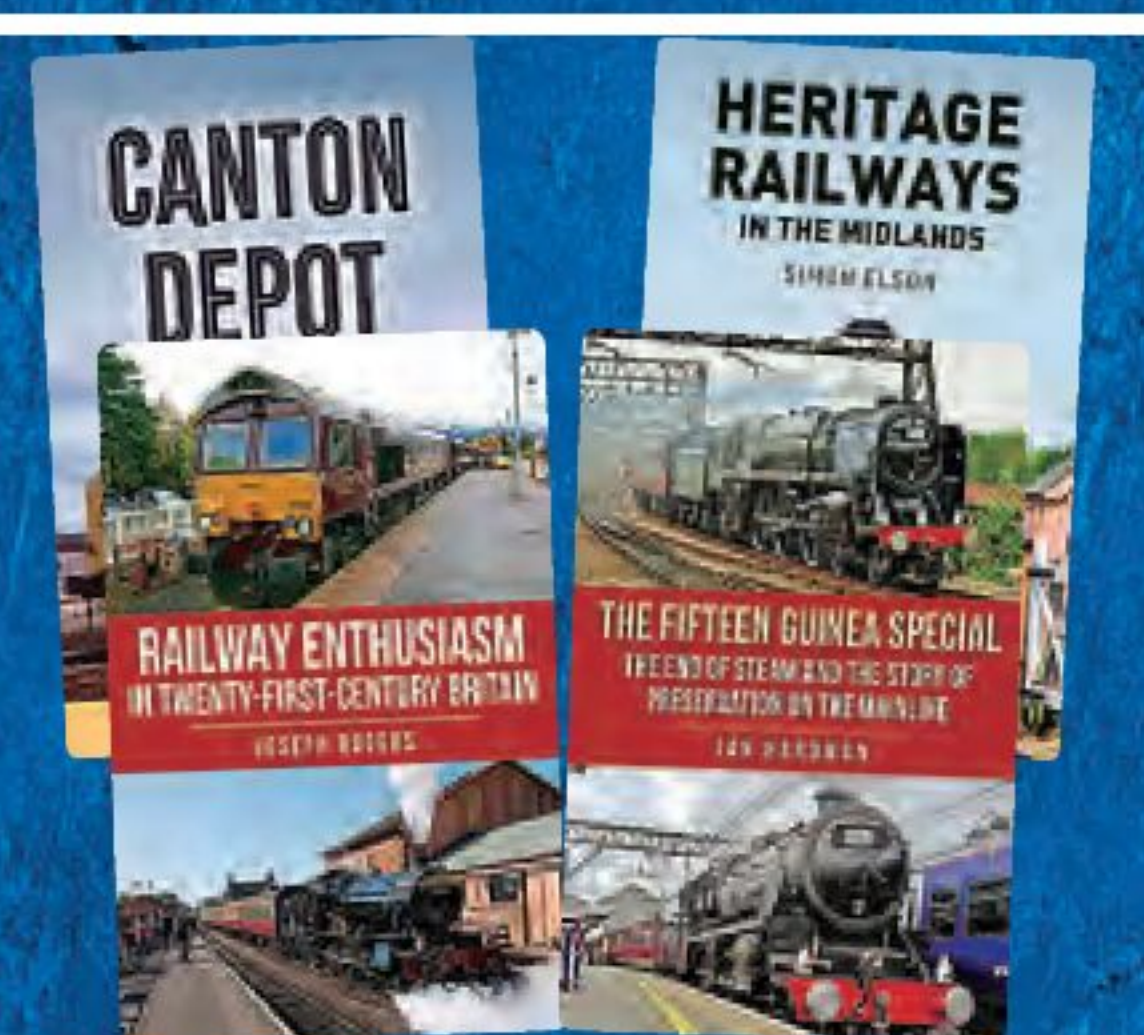
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Here at *Rail Express* magazine we are getting all geared up for Father's Day and taking a look at products you can buy for that special someone on June 16... or even things you can drop a few hints about as a treat for yourself.

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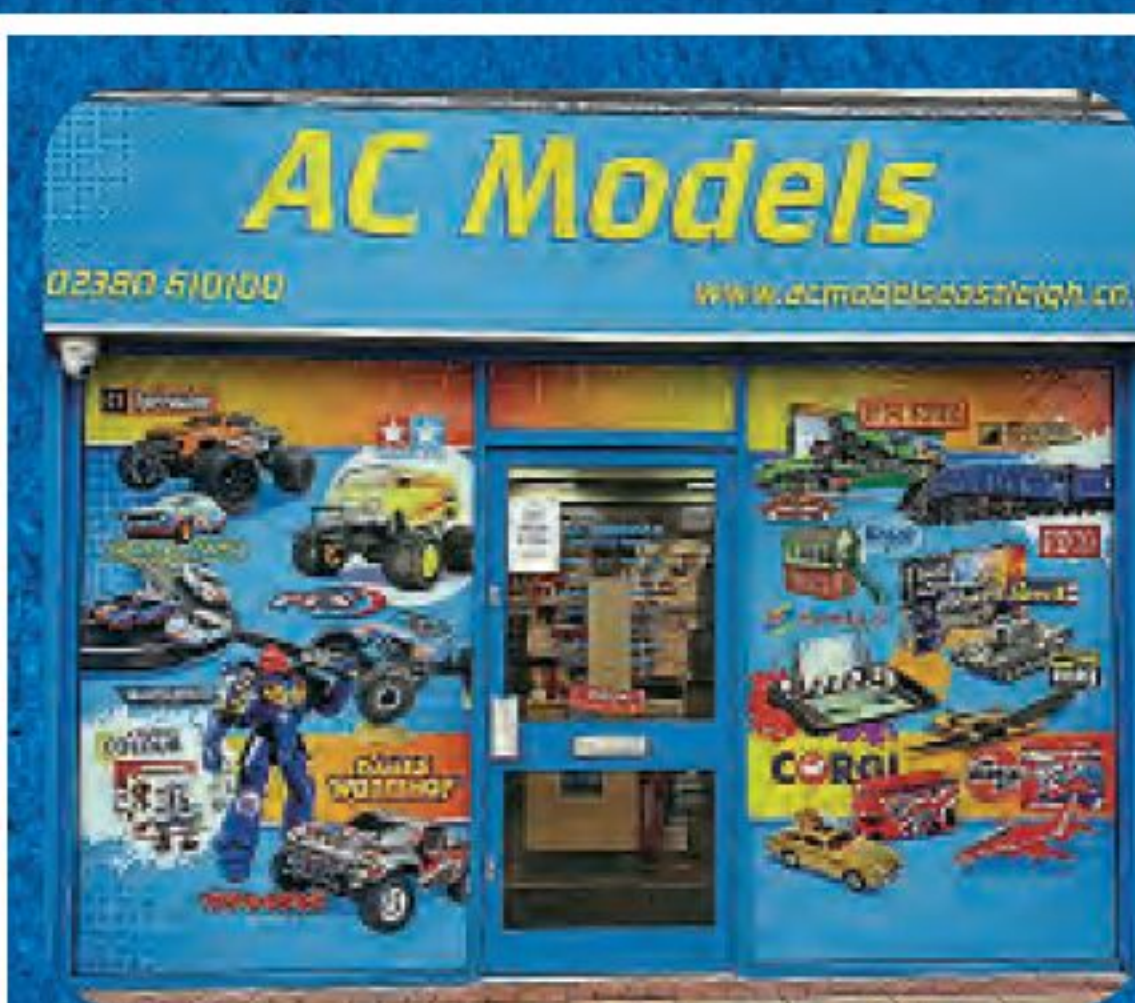
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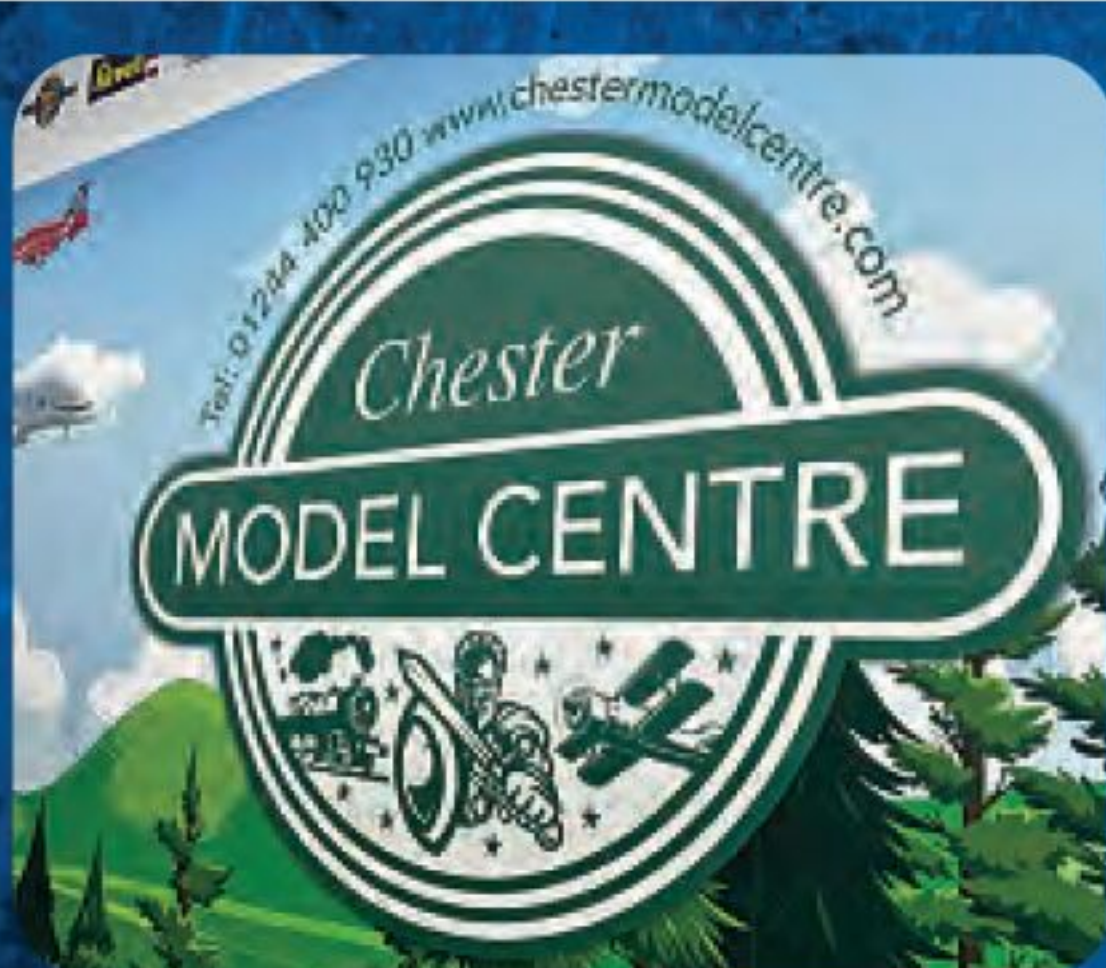


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Hornby have released a train pack and additional runner pack of four coaches covering EWS charter stock. Both packs combine to create a train long enough for modelling charter trains or documented train formations observed between 2008 and 2015 including Fife Circle suburban services.

EWS Business Train pack

Hornby regularly exploits its coaching stock range to produce themed train packs. The EWS charter train stock pack and a matching set of coaches is the latest to be released. How useful is it to the Privatisation era modeller?

SCOTRAIL modellers may be the ones that benefit the most from the latest train pack from Hornby. Labelled as the 'EWS Business Train', it contains one of Hornby's super detailed Class 67s rather than the former Lima model and three Mk.2e/f coaches based on tooling released a couple of years ago. It is supported by an add-on pack of four Mk.2f coaches decorated in the same simple lined maroon livery.

Although 'EWS Business Train' is the title for the train pack, Hornby has, in effect, produced part of the EWS charter train fleet which was assembled to take advantage of the lucrative charter market of the 2000s. A fleet of Mk.2e/f stock was painted ready for hire around 2006 or 2007. In reality, it saw little use, with many

charter trains being made up of stock owned by other private operators which was in better condition and better set up to cater for the demands of dining trains and charter train passengers.

Instead, the stock was hired to train operators to cover for shortages. Examples include Grand Central which used sets of four coaches to cover for low HST availability in 2008. Traction was hired in and included Riviera Trains Class 47s working in top-and-tail formation on shuttles working between York and Sunderland. Formations included two TSO, one FO and a BSO along with a similar formation which included an RFB First Buffet. Further, a six coach set was used in April 2008 between Sunderland and King's Cross which included an RFB as well as the



A single Class 67, EWS No. 67002 *Special Delivery* is supplied in the train pack. It is the detailed Hornby model which has enough power and weight to handle the seven coaches with ease. A second model may be required for authentic representation of some of the train formations made up from this stock.

other coach types. Traction was top-and-tail Class 67s with No. 67002, the locomotive included in the train pack, being observed on the service.

Eventually, the stock saw intensive use on Fife Circle suburban services from late 2008 with top-and-tail Class 67s where six coaches including a single BSO were used in the trains. The stock soon became mixed with

blue and grey Cargo-D stock until the contract was lost to DRS and the EWS coaches placed in store.

Train pack contents

Two TSOs and a single FO coach make up the EWS Business Train Pack (R30251) along with a single Class 67 to provide traction. The coaches are correctly finished in EWS maroon with lining making them similar in appearance to BR maroon livery. The coaches are embellished with the EWS 'three beasts' logo and carry markings on the coach ends appropriate to the era. The coaches are numbered as FO No. 3255, TSO No. 5922 and TSO No. 5959. Each one is supplied with Hornby's brake pipe magnetic couplings which are designed to fit NEM coupling pockets. The buck-eye type might have been a better choice to include in the pack.



First Open No. 3255 is included in the train pack alongside two TSO coaches. It is the only Mk.2e coach in the collection and represented with the correct tooling.



Mk.2f TSO No. 5959 which is also included in the train pack. The central door lock lights and controls are printed details on the Hornby models.

◀ Extension pack

Three coaches are not enough to make up any of the train formations observed in the relatively short time the EWS stock was active. An extension pack of four coaches comprising of BSO No. 9531, FO No. 3279 and No. 3318, together with TSO No. 6139, is also available to strengthen the fleet, bringing the collection up to seven coaches. ScotRail modellers will find themselves with an extra coach if making up a complete six-coach EWS set for Fife Circle trains. The extension pack is needed in addition to the train pack to obtain the BSO.

However, it would be possible to use the extension pack on its own if the short four-coach formations used by Grand Central in 2008 are to be replicated. The missing coach is the RFB which has not been offered in the Mk.2f Hornby range so far.

The lack of a BSO in the train pack means that ScotRail modellers will need to buy an extension pack to obtain one unless they plan to model a Fife Circle set using Cargo-D coaches in the rake too. Even then, some formations used an EWS BSO, so the balance of coaches between the two packs is not ideal.

Revisiting the Mk.2f coach

Hornby's Mk.2f coach is not as sophisticated as its up-to-date steam-era coaching stock, with simplified detail including the bogies. It has no provision for interior lighting, nor does it have any current collection pick-ups on the bogies, a feature being fitted as standard on Bachmann coaches. The NEM coupling pockets are bogie fitted rather than frame-mounted too, making for quite a basic model by today's standards.

The tooling models the coaches in as-built condition including the interiors. It has no central door lock lights or door release knob mouldings. This detail is printed in place because the toolings are also used for early BR condition models. Overall, they are accurate models with a one-size-fits-all approach with regards to era specific detailing. The flush glazing is very well designed and fits with minimal edging to the individual pieces. Underframes are neatly modelled as are the bogie side frames which have the right damper detail. It is noted that the slight imperfections noted in the roof of the coaches when first reviewed in *Rail Express Modeller* have not been addressed, nor has the

colour of the Mk.2f end doors which should be beige.

Livery application

Hornby has achieved a clean, smooth finish on the models with straight and level lining and accurately printed details on the coach ends. The footsteps are lined in white on the models which is correct. During the Fife Circle operation, some coaches gained yellow safety paint instead of the white footstep lining.

Overall, the finish applied to the coaches is neat and accurate with a good dense and opaque shade of maroon colour which does not impact on any moulded detail, including the commode handles and BSO hand rails which are picked out in white. Underframes are plain black except for safety notices applied to the battery boxes.

Closing thoughts

On the whole and when combined with other coaches, the EWS Business

Train Pack and extension pack allows the close representation of several documented train formations including those that worked the Fife Circle from late 2008. With only one Class 67 provided in the train pack, another will be needed for both Fife Circle trains and the six-coach formations used between Kings Cross and Sunderland. The lack of a buffet car is something Hornby could address for its Mk.2f range too.

Close examination of the coaches shows they have the same issues as earlier releases, including the roof imperfections and a tendency for the underframe to bow slightly below the bottom edge of the coach. The latter can be remedied by the modeller but faults with the tooling are more difficult to address. **M**

Produced by Hornby Hobbies Ltd.
www.hornby.com

Train pack RRP: £299.99
Extension pack RRP: £169.99



↑ Four coaches including a BSO are included in the add-on coach pack. All of the coaches are models of Mk.2f stock. They are supplied with Hornby's excellent magnetic bar couplings.



↑ One end of a Mk.2f TSO with gangway moulding and the end door detail. The doors on Mk.2f stock should be a pale beige colour.



↑ Some detail applied to Hornby's Mk.2e and Mk.2f coaches is moulded and finished with careful printing including commode handles, end hand rails and electric train supply fittings. The interiors have good seat moulding detail, and the flush glazing is excellent.



↑ Underframe fittings as applied to the BSO model showing the printed safety notice detail which is sharp and neatly applied.



↑ Mk.2f BSO No. 9531 which is supplied in the separate pack of four coaches.



↑ The train pack coaches and EWS No. 67002 *Special Delivery* as seen assembled on the test layout. The coaches are not fitted with frame-mounted close coupling cams.



↑ Overall, the livery is well-applied, with straight lining and a smooth finish to the main livery colour. It is consistent across the train pack coaches and those supplied in the four-coach add-on pack. The reality was quite different for this stock which soon weathered down to a dull finish towards the end of the ScotRail contract.

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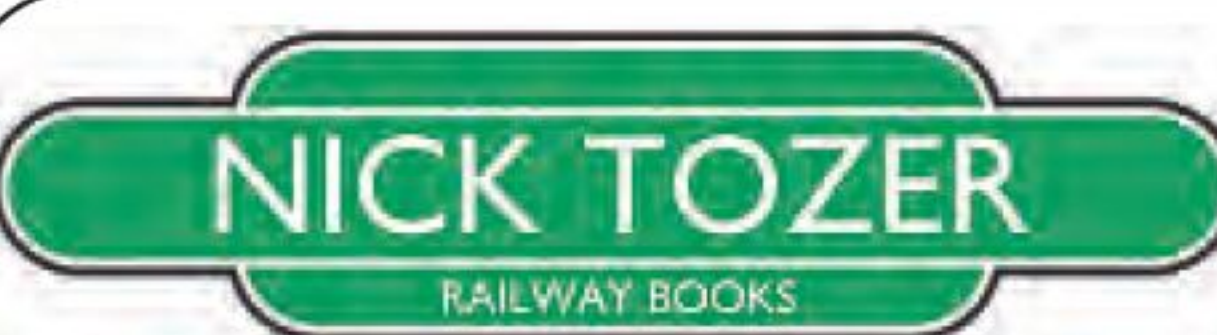
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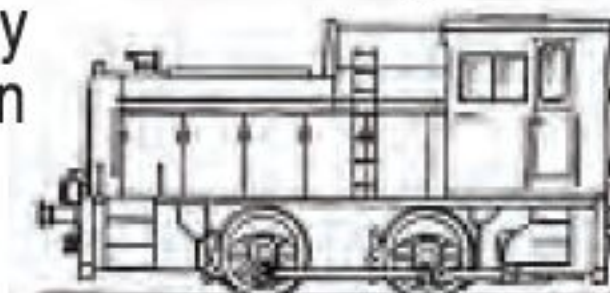
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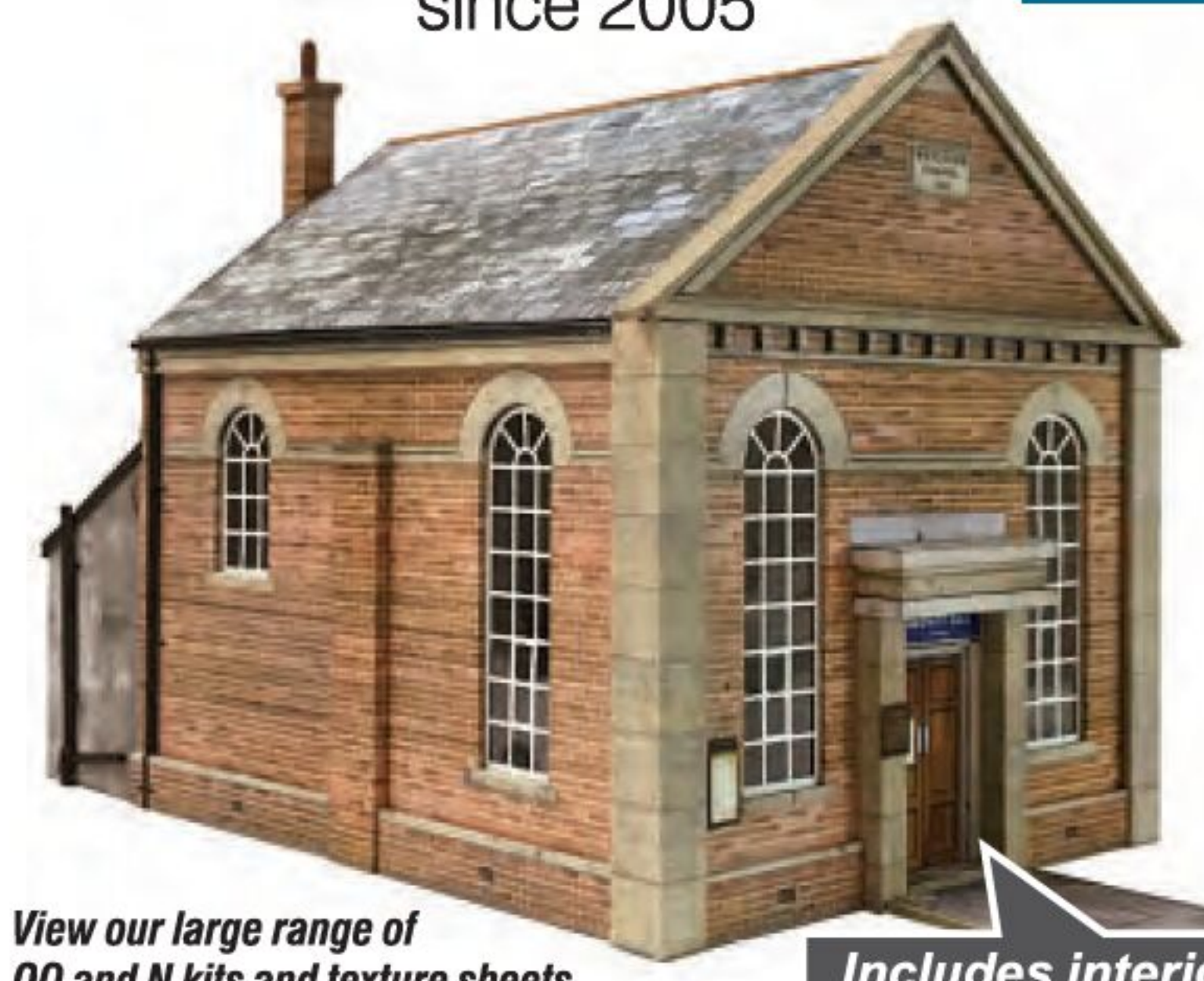


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Resin kits, either from a mould or printed, pave the way to modelling common wagons that are not available off-the-shelf. This brace of 'Dace' ballast wagons took around 20 hours each to complete, but added a different angle to the wagon collection.

A brace of 'Dace'

Is it possible to build an ace 'Dace' from a 3D resin print? We have a go at the Scale Model Innovations print to build an important 1980s ballast wagon in 4mm scale.

KIT BUILDING has numerous benefits for railway modellers, and saving money over buying ready to run models is the last of them! More importantly, kit-built rolling stock will fill gaps in signature vehicles for a given era and location.

Southern Region modellers will immediately think of several four-wheel ballast wagons currently not available ready-to-run, and unlikely to be so. One is the ZCV 'Crab' which fortunately has a kit available to model it, along with the 'Lamprey'. They are produced by Chivers Finelines (www.chiversfinelines.co.uk) and are reasonably priced too.

Another wagon type is the former Diagram 1/058 'Shochood B' which were converted to ZCV 'Dace' engineers' wagons. No kit for this signature wagon has been made available in plastic, and scratch building a reasonable number of them, either as revenue wagons or converted to ZCVs, would take dedication, even if some common parts were cast in resin.

The ZCV 'Dace' print

Enter the resin print from Scale Model Innovations. It solves a lot of problems for 4mm scale modellers! It is a one-piece print incorporating the body, headstocks, solebars and axleguards. It has a great deal of detail incorporated into it, including the internal slots which were intended to hold wooden battens. Externally the print has corrugated ends and is finely detailed with rivet heads, axle boxes and reinforced top ribs.

It is supplied attached to its supporting sprue which is pretty dense and has support points attached throughout the body, including the internal batten slots. The material is quite hard at room temperature but becomes more flexible if it is warmed up, allowing adjustment with gentle finger pressure. Once cooled, the changes are retained because the material does not appear to have any 'memory'.

The underframe will accept 26mm pinpoint axles which means closer-to-scale wheels can be used. The project



The Scale Model Innovations 'Dace' print arrives with a lot of supporting sprue! Xuron sprue cutters were used to snip away the various pieces of sprue.

models were fitted with 'EM' gauge three-hole disc wheels supplied by Wizard Models (www.wizardmodels.ltd) which worked well in the print after some preparation.

Finally, hand washing is recommended after handling the print until it has been primed. However, it is advisable to avoid priming until all the parts are fitted. CA glue grabs resin vigorously, a characteristic to be used to advantage when assembling the model.

Finding the needed parts

A pack of printed detailing parts for brake shoes, cylinders and levers is

offered by Scale Model Innovations which is very helpful. There are alternatives too and spares left over from building numerous Parkside Models 'Grampus' wagons were used to detail the 'Dace', including brake levers and vacuum cylinders.

There are other sources of parts including MJT Scale Components for the clasp brakes; Accurascale Oleo buffers and detailing parts from Lanarkshire Models and Supplies. A little scratch building is needed for some small parts including grab rails and footsteps. A piece of 20-thou styrene was used to model the steel floor in 'Dace' wagons. ➤



↑ Duplicate parts left over from plastic kit construction can be stored ready for projects such as the 'Dace'. The models were fitted with brake levers and fittings remaining from building Parkside Models Diagram 1/574 'Grampus'.



↑ Helpful sources of parts for 'Dace' wagon building.

Pre-assembly preparation

Building wagons from prints is quite different to building them from plastic kits. Whilst the structure is tough and can withstand repeated handling, some fine detail is easily broken, such as the vertical ribs on the exterior of the body. Missing sections were replaced with tiny pieces of 10-thou styrene glued in place.

Care is needed when snipping away the sprues. It is easy to leave marks on the model which would be awkward to repair or fill. Time was taken over this task and the sprue cleaned away carefully. Once done, the print was thoroughly washed and dried before detailing work commenced.



↑ The model is freed from the complex network of sprues. It is washed and dried before parts are fitted.

Wheels and bearings

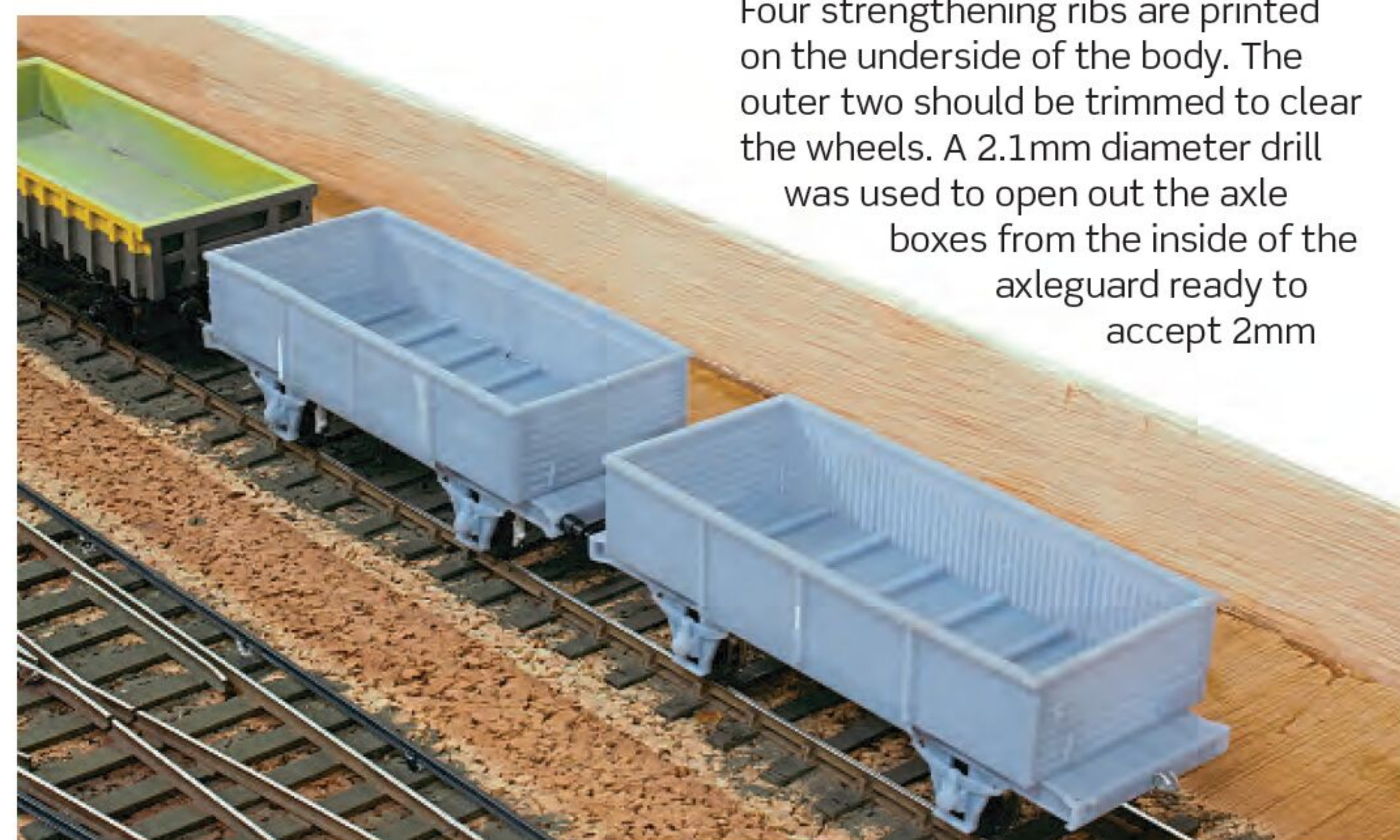
Four strengthening ribs are printed on the underside of the body. The outer two should be trimmed to clear the wheels. A 2.1mm diameter drill was used to open out the axle boxes from the inside of the axleguard ready to accept 2mm

pinpoint bearings. Each bearing was filed short by about 0.5mm and test fitted along with the wheels until the fit was right.

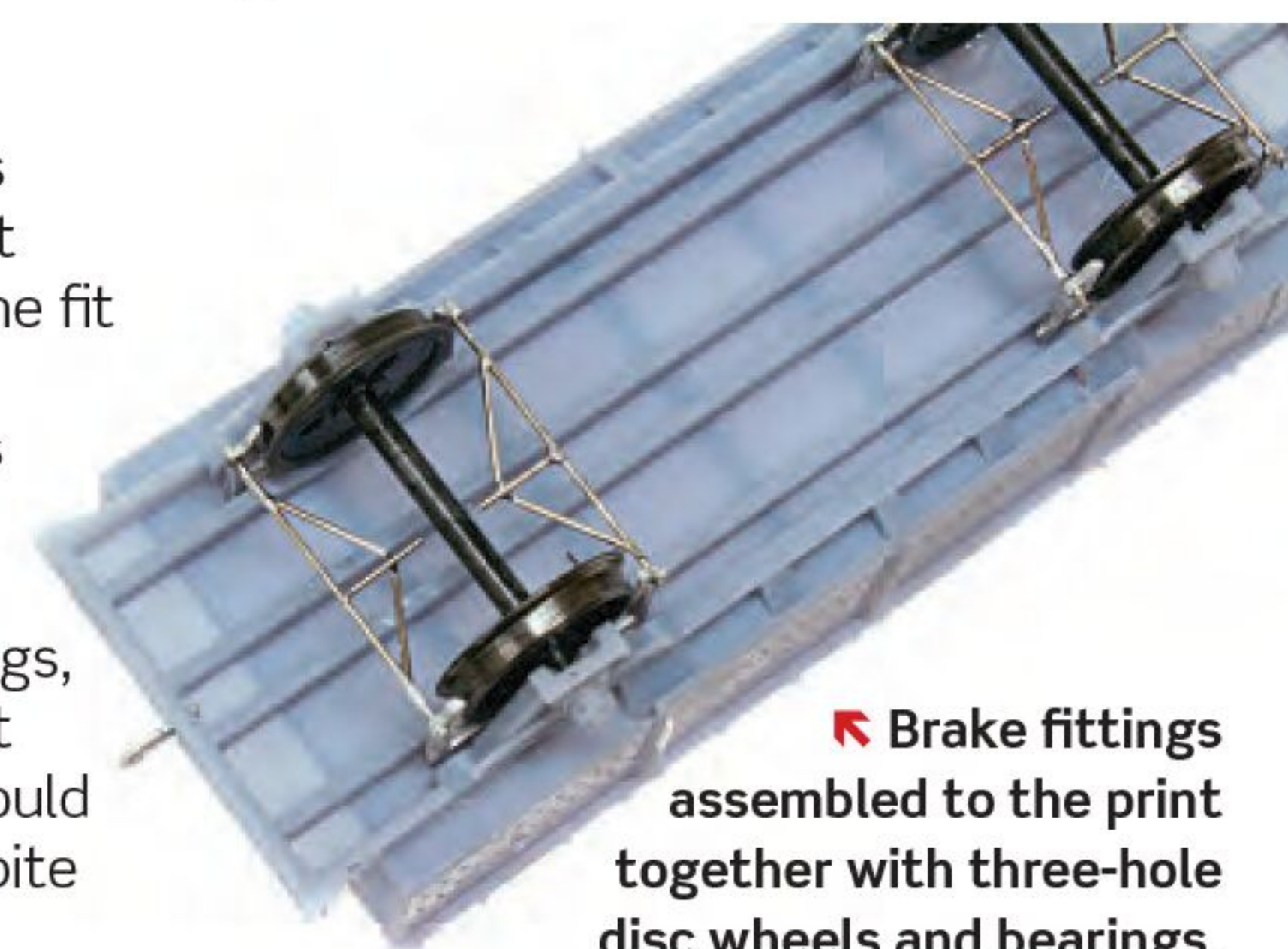
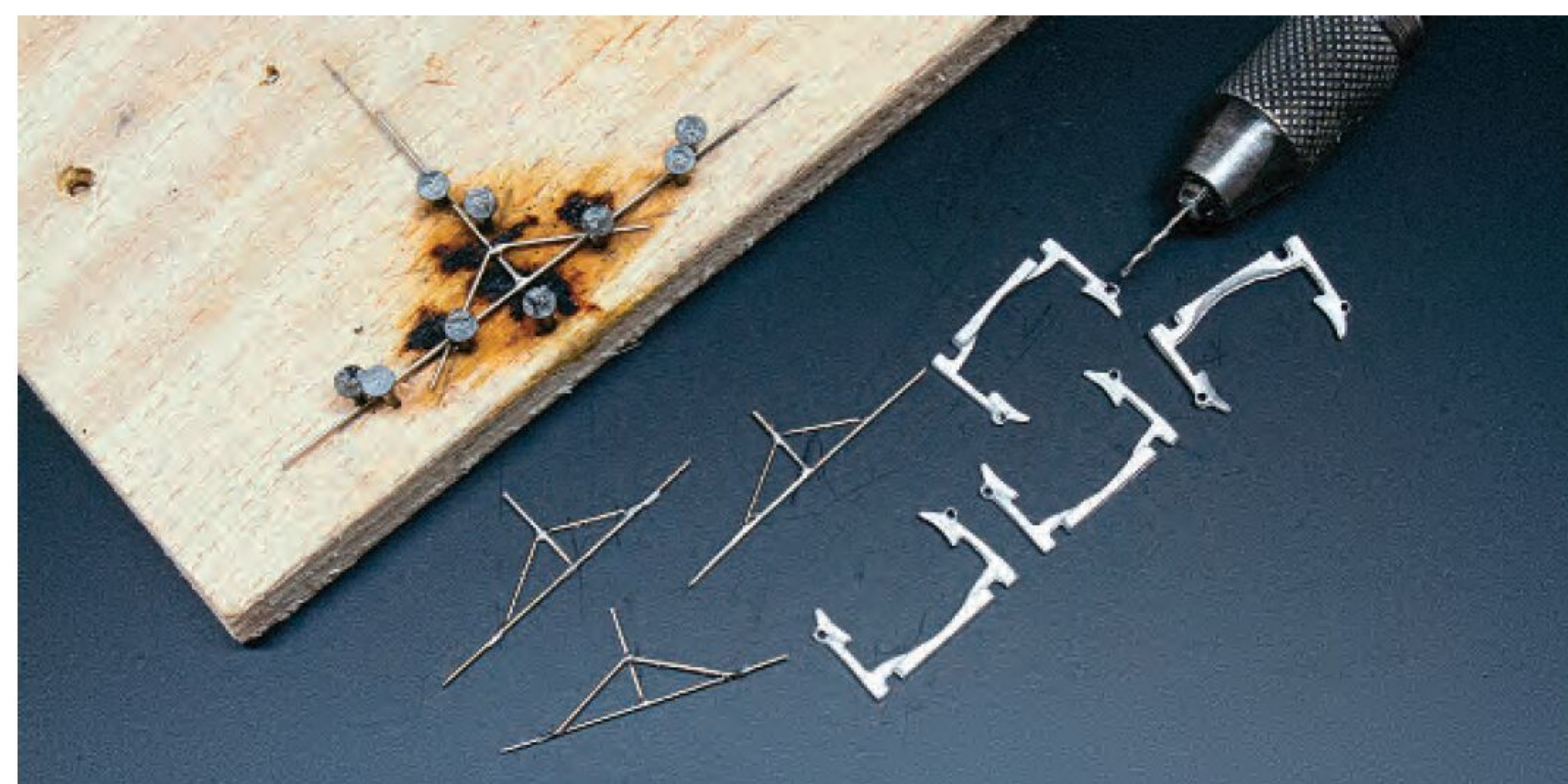
This part of the build is perhaps the most important. Wheels must be able to rotate freely in the bearings. After adjusting the bearings, the models were checked for height and alignment on the track. They could be pinged along the layout too despite their light weight.



↑ There are four long ribs on the underside of the body which strengthen it. The outer pair can interfere with wheels and are trimmed accordingly. The axle boxes are drilled out for 2mm pin point bearings.



↑ Initial preparation is completed including test fitting of the wheels. The model, or models, depending on whether they are built in batches, are placed on plain track and checked for levelling and alignment with each other.



↖ Brake fittings assembled to the print together with three-hole disc wheels and bearings.



↑ With assembly of the main parts complete, the models are layout tested to check the ride height and stability.

↖ Although not absolutely necessary, the brake yokes can be soldered up from nickel-silver wire. Holes are drilled in the clasp brakes to accept the yokes before fitting to the model.

Brake fittings

Having set up the wheels and bearings, detailing the models commences with the clasp brake shoes. Cast metal ones produced by MJT Scale Components were first prepared by cleaning away moulding flash and drilling out each brake block to accept yokes soldered from 0.45mm diameter metal wire. Fitting to the print was straightforward, being secured with CA glue which set almost immediately. Adjustments are inevitable and important to ensure that the models remained free-rolling.

Whilst much of the underframe detail will be hard to see from normal viewing positions, the lack of brake yokes is apparent at the wagon ends. If soldering up yokes does not fill you with enthusiasm, they can be represented with a single piece of wire linking pairs of brake blocks together.

Alternatively, take some measurements and set up a soldering jig with track pins as guides to hold the wire in place whilst it is soldered to make up the triangular yokes. Use overlength pieces of wire which will help with handling the yokes. They are measured and trimmed before fitting to the holes drilled in the brake blocks.

Having fitted the brakes and checked that the blocks are vertical and align with the wheels without touching, attention can turn to fitting the vacuum cylinders (photographs show that 'Dace' have two), vee-hangers and brake levers. When using vee-hangers from Parkside 'Grampus' kits, make sure to fit them the right way round relative to the vacuum cylinders.

TOOLS AND MATERIALS

Tools and materials include the following in addition to the usual workbench hand tools:

- Grade 1200 abrasive paper.
- 'Plastic Weld' solvent cement or similar.
- Cyanoacrylate adhesive.
- Cyanoacrylate accelerator spray.
- 10- and 20-thou styrene card.
- 0.5mm diameter plastic rod.
- 2.1mm diameter drill.
- 0.5mm diameter drill.
- Grey plastic primer.
- BR engineer's olive-green paint.
- Matt black and white paints.
- Matt varnish.
- Weathering colours: Rust and coal dust shades.
- Ballast weight (lead-free shot etc.).
- 0.45mm diameter metal wire.

Optional items for scale modelling:

- Scale Instantan couplings and hooks (Springside Models).
- Cast metal coupling hooks (Lanarkshire Models & Supplies).
- Clasp brake shoe castings (MJT Scale Components and 12A Models).
- Cast vacuum brake hoses (Lanarkshire Models & Supplies).
- Oleo buffers (Accurascale and Lanarkshire Models & Supplies).
- Metal cup bearings for pinpoint axles.
- There-hole disc wheels (Wizard Models type were used).



↑ New 'Dace' wagons are checked for height and alignment with ZCV 'Crab', a type they were commonly seen working with in the same trains. They were found to work well with each other, and the slightly uneven sides replicate the battered appearance of the real vehicles towards the end of their working lives.

The brake levers are also handed and attached to the hangers from the inside before being connected across the underframe with a piece of styrene rod. Linkages between the brake cylinders and the rod are made with small pieces of styrene card. The link between the cranked brake lever and solebar can also be modelled too.

Small details

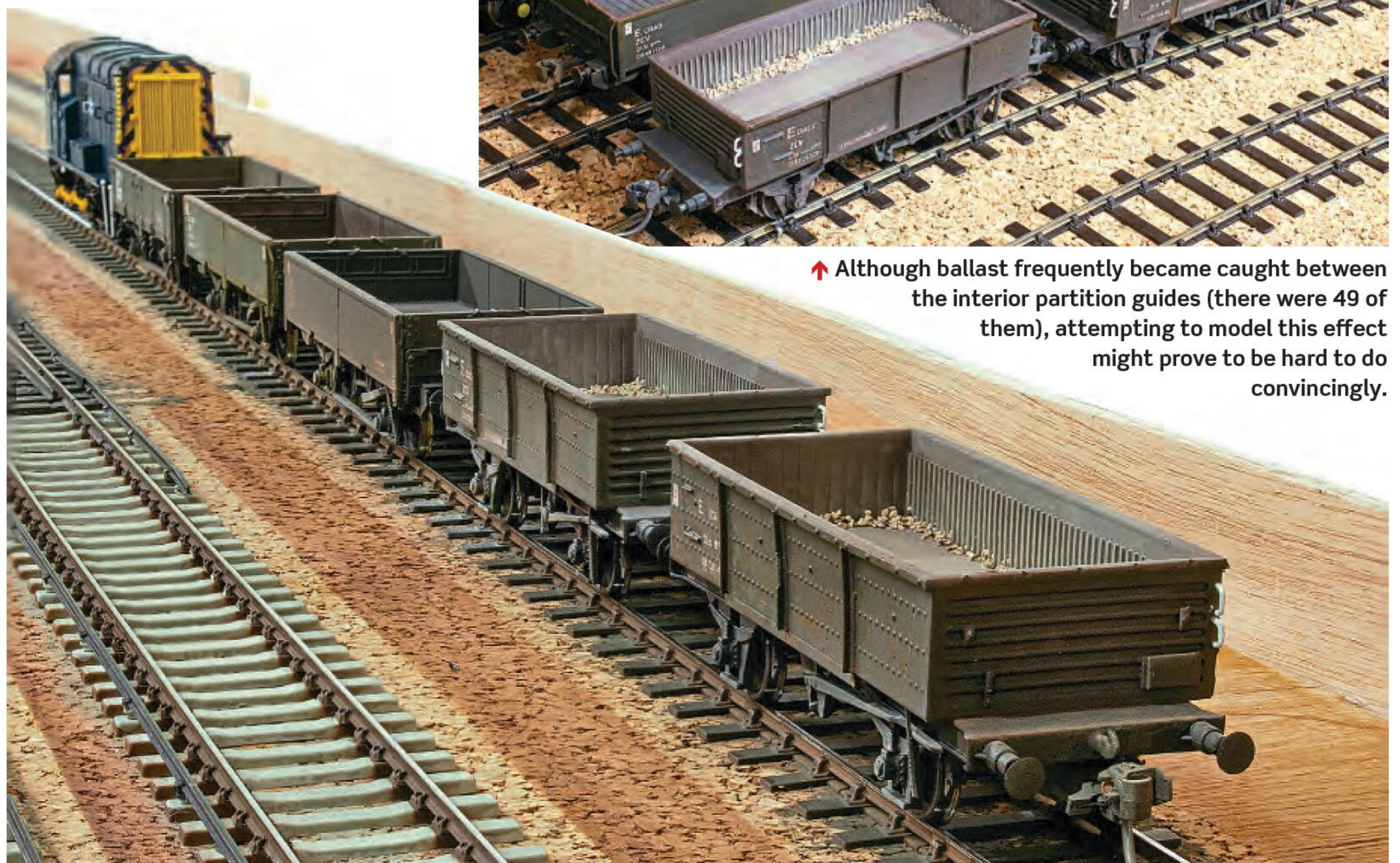
One of the last details to be fitted are the buffers. There are several types that can be used including the neat sprung Oleo buffers by Accurascale which were ones chosen for the 'Dace' models. They are not fitted before the model is primed! Other details include the tiny grab rails on the wagon ends; cosmetic coupling hooks (unless scale working Instantan couplings are to be used) and a floor of 20-thou styrene card. After painting, the lovely Lanarkshire Models and Supplies vacuum pipe castings can be used if the wagons are not to be handled too frequently.



↑ Painted, battered and weathered: the brace of 'Dace' is about finished and being test run on the layout. Paint colours include dark rust from LifeColour and matt brown from Tamiya. The interior is dusted with a mix of dust paints from LifeColour.



↑ Although ballast frequently became caught between the interior partition guides (there were 49 of them), attempting to model this effect might prove to be hard to do convincingly.



↑ The 'Dace' wagon might not be glamorous or eye-catching as more specialised rail vehicles, but they were part of the ordinary railway scene. Modelling the 'ordinary' can make a fleet of rolling stock more believable.

◀ Adding weight

The use of cast metal details is not enough to give the model enough weight for good performance, yet it is not desirable to over-ballast it either. Two options are available for ballasting the model.

Thin strips of roofing lead fitted between the ribs printed on the underside of the wagon floor is one option. It provided just the right amount of weight, with the models weighing about the same as other four-wheel wagons in the collection. Lead has its problems, health being one of them. If not properly isolated from water based modelling products, it can oxidise and expand, so make sure it is completely covered with non-water based glue when using. Small diameter shot ('liquid lead' type product) will do the same job as the strips and the same rules apply. Cover it completely and wash hands after handling it.

The alternative is to use model rail ballast to provide weight. This should be carefully weighed out so not to overload the model, and fitted to a false floor. This options means that empty trains cannot be run. Ballasting with a load is something which should be left until the model has been painted and weathered.

The point about not overloading

the model is particularly valid with cast or printed resin models. It is not as rigid as injection moulded plastic models and can slowly distort over time. Place too much weight in these models and there is a risk that the axleguards may eventually splay out.

Priming and painting

Printed resin has to be thoroughly washed and primed before painting. Make sure that the pin point bearing cups are covered with a square of masking before starting this stage of the project. Priming was done using Halfords grey primer intended for plastic. Two thin coats were applied, and the model checked for obvious flaws.

Assuming all is well, the livery is simple, with BR engineers' olive applied to the body and black to the underframe and axleguards. Transfers are tricky though which is often the case when working on less frequently modelled wagons. They were made up with a mix of transfers from Fox Transfers, RailTec and Modelmasters. Note that some 'Dace' retained the three vertical stripes applied to the wagons when they were operated as 'Shochood Bs'. A small number were painted in engineers' yellow and grey livery. However, the bulk of them remained in olive green livery.

Finishing touches

The project models were lightly rusted down with LifeColour dark rust colours thinned by half, and applied both as washes and spots of rust. This was blended in with a dusting of dust and grime colour, particularly to the underframe.

Interiors were painted with Tamiya matt brown and finished with lighter rust shades by LifeColour before being stippled with ballast colours and a stiff paint brush. Light stone dusting was introduced using an airbrush.

It will be interesting to see how well the printed wagons will cope with layout operations over time. However, if you need a 'Dace' or two for your engineering wagon aquarium, it's the only method at the time of writing. The models could be finished in a matter of a weekend if desired, but that would depend on the level of detail required.

In the end, the models build up well and they fitted in with the rest of the fleet of ordinary, four-wheel ballast and spoil wagons. The Scale Model Innovations 'Dace' were certainly a very welcome development. The range includes other wagons of interest, including the 'Shochood B' in original condition and tantalisingly for some Southern Region modellers, the

PGAs used to carry gypsum from Mountfield.

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A related wagon project

Careful observation of photographic and video references, along with reference to notes, indicates that 'Dace' primarily worked in trains with ZCV 'Crab' on a regular basis during BR days. For the short time they remained in traffic after Privatisation, they soon became mixed with other ballast wagon types as well, including ZCV 'Clam'.

The 'Crab' is a much simpler proposition and the ideal plastic wagon kit for the newcomer to attempt. It comprises of a simple sides, ends and floor superstructure which is easy to assemble with solvent cement. To this is fitted axleguard and solebar mouldings together with long link brakes. The tricky part is assembling the brass supports for the end doors which fit over the buffers which were removed from some wagons following repairs. Nonetheless, several could be built and finished over a long weekend at the workbench assuming all of the additional parts such as three-hole disc wheels, paints, transfers and couplings are collected together beforehand. 



ZCV No. B726364 was photographed at Dicot on June 28, 1996. It was looking battered, rusted and nearing the end of its working career. The wooden strengthening strips fitted along the top rail were long gone by this stage.



A wagon commonly seen with 'Dace' is the ZCV 'Crab'. It was built for the same purpose and once quite common in the south of England. No. DB991256 was also photographed at Tonbridge West yard on March 7, 1992.



The origins of the ZCV 'Dace' wagons are traced back to the Shochood B wagons of which 300 were built at Derby in 1962 and 1963 numbered B726225-524. The original numbers were retained by the 'Dace' conversions which includes No. DB726522 photographed at Tonbridge West Yard on March 7, 1992. Note that the wooden end panelling is long gone to reveal the corrugations in the ends.



The battered condition of many older vacuum braked ballast and spoil wagons can be explained by this picture. The train, which was photographed near Hungerford, consists of quite a mix of wagons including one 'Grampus' with quite bowed and damaged sides. It is a 'Dace' that is being unloaded.

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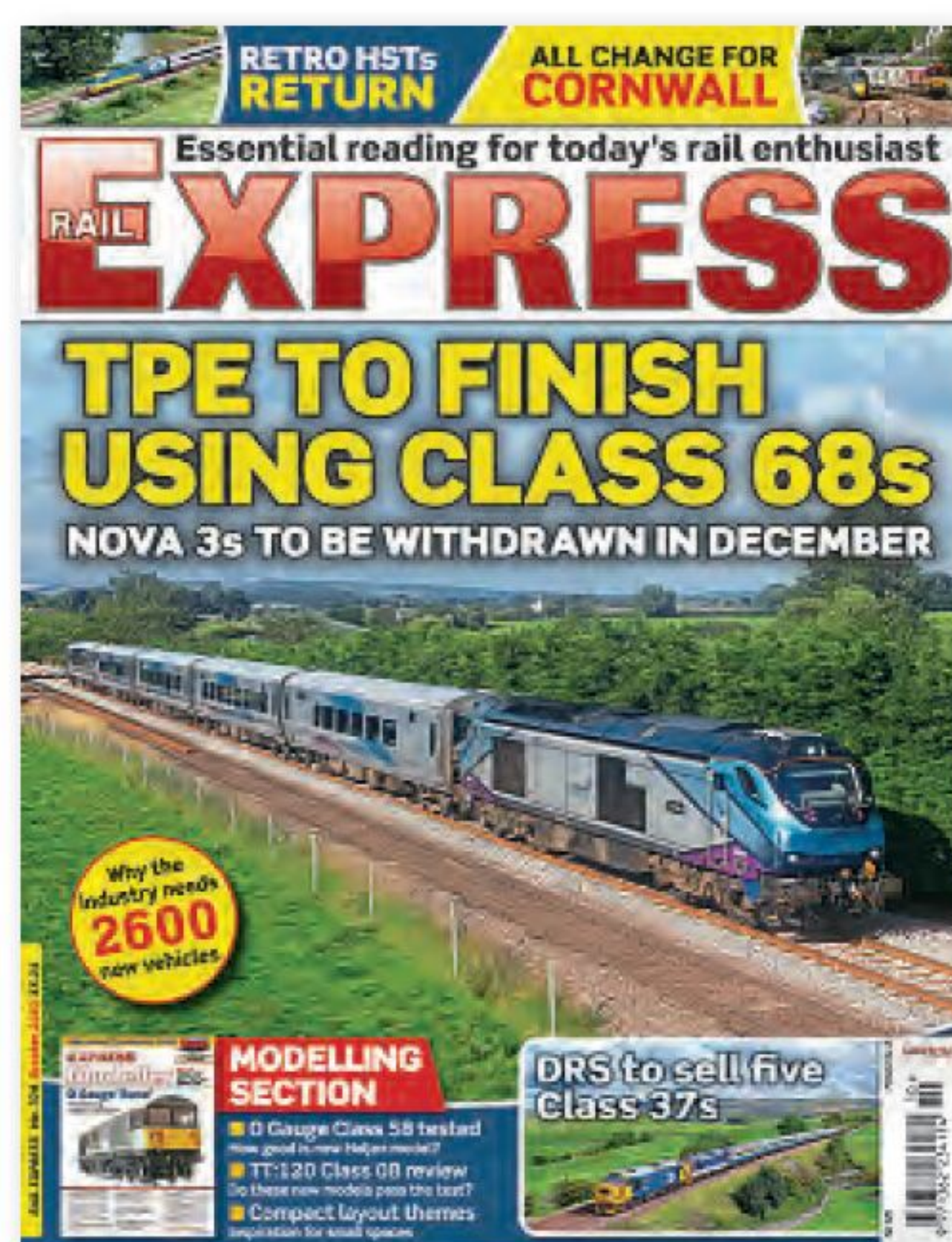
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HSTs near Nigerian passenger debut

Former CrossCountry and Great Western Railway High Speed Trains are about to enter traffic in Nigeria. **Richard Clinnick** reports.

ELEVEN Class 43 High Speed Train power cars and 11 Mk.3s were exported to Nigeria towards the end of 2023 by ROMIC Consulting.

The vehicles had all been withdrawn last year, with one of the power cars, No. 43008, used by CrossCountry on its farewell HST charter to Swanage.

After being sent off-lease, all 22 vehicles made their way to Great Yarmouth, most by rail under their own power (the '43s') before being prepared for export by Eastern Rail Services at its base at the Norfolk town. They were the second batch to set sail from the Norfolk port following an initial tranche that went to Mexico in August (where more have subsequently been shipped to).

ROMIC managing director Robert Coleman, said: "We have ongoing commitments for further exports, which speaks volumes for the quality and longevity of the HST, and we are proud to have played a part in ensuring a continuation of the service life of these trains."



Freshly-painted No. 43008 stands at Oyingbo station. This was one of two power cars released from Laira in retro liveries last August (*RE328*) ahead of the final weeks of their use with CrossCountry. This '43' had carried InterCity Swallow livery.

All photos: Ian Cable/ROMIC.



The Mk.3s to be used on the railway have all received new-style interiors using the seats fitted during the 'Castle' refurbishment.



He explained: "At the time we received the initial enquiry for the HST sets, we were very focussed on the sale of US rolling stock to our global clients, and I am very proud of how our team responded to the engineering and logistical challenges this project presented."

He explained that a feasibility study concluded that the MTU repowering program, combined with lower operating speeds and shorter trains would enable the HSTs to operate in new environments for many more years.

"Our focus is on providing an end-to-end service, we are not just selling locomotives and passenger coaches," he says. "Our technical teams are there to assist the new operator through a detailed handover and an ongoing supply of parts to ensure they have the technical knowledge and resources to effectively maintain the sets."

As part of the process, ROMIC and ERS have installed a large number of track panels at Great Yarmouth's Outer Harbour for the storage of vehicles bound for export, and Mr Coleman says that the HST project is expected to continue for a further two to three years with further shipments to both Mexico and Nigeria in the planning stages.

It was November 5, 2023, that the *MV Panthera J* sailed from Great Yarmouth with the 22 HST vehicles bound for Nigeria. Those exported to West Africa were former GWR power cars Nos. 43009/010/016/040, 43172/192 and ex-XC power cars Nos. 43008, 43184, 43239, 43304/366 while all the Mk.3s sent abroad were former GWR 'Castle' vehicles



Ex-Great Western Railway No. 43009 stands at the newly-built Yemi Osinbajo station in Kajola during March. This is being prepared for a return to traffic. The '43', along with No. 43004, was one of the first pair of power cars to be fitted with an MTU engine and was withdrawn by GWR last year. The Mk.3s it is coupled to are all former GWR 'Castle' coaches.

modified with sliding doors, which entered traffic from 2018 onwards. Those sent to West Africa were: 48101/103/113/115/125/131-133, 49101/107/111.

ROMIC is assisting with the commissioning of the power cars and driver training in Nigeria. They will be operated by First Metro on the Lagos Red Line which opened on February 29, and is part of the Lagos Rail Mass Transit system. That line will connect Lagos (Oyingbo) with Kajola (Yemi Osinbajo). The repainting of the power cars and Mk.3s, and the refitting of the coaches, is taking place in Kajola with the commissioning underway in Lagos.

The Lagos Red Line is a 16.7-mile railway with eight stations, with estimates that it will cost \$135 million (£104.58m) to build, funded by the Greater Lagos Urban Transportation Project managed by the Lagos Metropolitan Area Transport Authority (LAMATA).

While the Nigerian HSTs are not yet in traffic, the first Mexican vehicles entered service at the start of 2024. The first power cars to Mexico were ex-GWR Nos. 43022, 43158/170, which were joined by a selection of former East Midlands Trains, First Great Western, GWR and London North Eastern Railway slam-door Mk.3s, Nos. 41091, 41100, 42026, 42179, 42401/42405, 44034/061/063/094. These have entered traffic on the Tehuantepec Isthmus Railroad, located around 186 miles between the Gulf of Mexico and the Pacific Ocean. They have since been joined by Nos. 43007, 43295, 43306/307/316/378 and Mk.3 Nos. 40750, 40902, 41026, 41193, 42036/052/053, 42366/373/378/380, 42402/408, 42585, 44017/052/072, 45002/005. More are expected to follow from the former XC stock currently stored at ERS' Great Yarmouth site. [B](#)



With No. 43009 to the left, former Great Western Railway 'celebrity' No. 43172 stands in sidings at Kajola during preparation for a return to traffic. As part of the centenary commemoration of the First World War, GWR renamed the power car *Harry Patch - The last survivor of the trenches, the longest surviving soldier of the Great War* and applied a special livery to the '43' that included the words from Laurence Binyon's *Ode to Remembrance*. It lost the name and livery when it was converted for use as a 'Castle' power car.



Ex-CrossCountry No. 43366 stands at Oyingbo during March, having been rubbed down in preparation for repainting into the colour scheme already applied to Nos. 43008 and 43184. The '43' had carried XC livery.



Another CrossCountry power car to carry a retro livery prior to withdrawal was No. 43184. This has also been repainted, and during March it stands at Oyingbo with No. 43239, which had yet to receive its new colours.

TPE's Class 397s - serving Scotland in style

The Class 397s have settled into duties with relative ease and stay out of the headlines. **Andy Flowers** looks at the history of the fleet and what the future holds for the CAF trains.

CONSTRUCCIONES y Auxiliar de Ferrocarriles (CAF) Class 397 electric multiple units (EMUs) are part of the Spanish manufacturer's Civity family of units, with 12 owned by rolling stock leasing company Eversholt Rail Group and leased to TransPennine Express for use on Manchester Airport and Liverpool Lime Street to Glasgow Central and Edinburgh Waverley routes.

The five-car EMUs were branded Nova 2 by TPE as part of its Nova Fleet (Nova 1s being Hitachi Bi-Mode Class 802s and Nova 3s being the now replaced Mk.5A locomotive-hauled sets). Options were put in place in the contract for further orders if needed (particularly if electrification was extended and passenger numbers carried on increasing).

The '397s' represented a major step up in performance and passenger comfort from the Class 350/4 sets they replaced (the Siemens sets previously operating over the routes between December 2013 and April

2020). The Class 397s feature extensive luggage space, 125mph capability, 60% of seating at table, four toilets per five-car set, room for two wheelchairs and advanced passenger information facilities.

The trains are fitted with wi-fi throughout with media streaming options, USB sockets at each seat, a real-time information system and live electronic seat reservations (with highly visible red and green lighting above seats to indicate reservation status). Another unusual passenger feature for new rolling stock is full alignment between windows and seating.

In terms of railway operations, the units have been designed to reduce weight and lower track damage, with the added bonuses of good acceleration and better braking characteristics.

Questions have been raised as to why TPE decided to order the relatively small fleet of '397s' (and Mk.5As) rather than expanding the

order for Hitachi bi-mode Class 802s; the answer being timescales. With an urgent need to add more capacity and reduce overcrowding on TPE, several manufacturers were contracted to provide replacement rolling stock as quickly as possible.

After ordering the EMUs in May 2016, (after TPE had confirmed its franchise award), construction of the Class 397s began in mid-March 2017 at CAF's Beasain plant in northern Spain. At the time plans were for the first unit to arrive in the UK in spring 2018 with its entry into service planned for early 2019.

After arrival at Velim, Czech Republic, on July 1, 2018, test running began for Class 397s and two days later 125mph running was reported near the end of the day's testing session. A second unit arrived in September for coupling tests, with Freightliner crew also on site to train on the new EMUs for commissioning work ahead of their arrival in the UK.



TransPennine Express No. 397009 stands at Glasgow Central on January 27, having arrived with the 1540 09.04 from Manchester Airport, which had run via Chorley. Andy Flowers



No. 397009 arrives at Glasgow Central with the 1540 09.04 from Manchester Airport on January 27. The five-car electric multiple units, built by CAF, entered traffic in late-2019 and are confined to the northern section of the West Coast Main Line. Andy Flowers



After a delay in delivery, the first ‘397s’ arrived into the UK at the end of November 2018, with the first set, No. 397003, moved from Portbury to Crewe by rail on December 4, 2018, running as the 5Q32 10.24 Portbury Automotive Terminal-Crewe Carriage Sidings, and hauled by Rail Operations Group Nos. 47812 and 47815 *Lost Boys* 68-88, with barrier vehicles.

Lease of the ‘397s’ was originally scheduled to begin on October 2, 2018, with TPE’s Class 350/4s to go off-lease between November 11, 2018, and April 30, 2019, which would allow time for the new CAF units fleet to bed in.

The Class 397s were tested on UK metals in mid-January 2019 around Stoke-on-Trent in an SPZ (Signalling Protected Zone) with other trains excluded while the new stock could prove that its electromagnetic signature (EMC) didn’t interfere with signalling control electronics. Unlike a normal engineering possession, in an SPZ trains can run at line speed to ensure meaningful testing and results.

Online ‘Open Railway testing began (between Crewe and Carlisle) on February 12, 2019, using No. 397003 on 3C51, the 06.44 from Crewe to Carlisle, with speeds up to 125mph reported (permission being granted as part of the testing programme to run up to the enhanced permissible speed usually only allowed with tilt enabled but here used as part of a required 10%

overspeed test). At Velim, 130mph running had been achieved. The EMU returned south to Crewe on February 14, 2019, running as the 3H25 09.38 Carlisle-Crewe.

By February 27, 2019, main line testing had moved to Manchester International Depot with running tests carried out to Carlisle (mostly on the actual route they would see service on) with No. 397001 noted running as the 5Q51 05.41 Manchester International Depot-Carlisle and returning as the 5Q52, 11.06 Carlisle-Manchester International Depot on the same day.

On March 25, 2019, Rail Operations Group revealed it had been contracted to assist dynamic testing of the Class 397s at speeds of up to 125mph.

The first UK coupling tests took place at the Arriva Traincare depot at Crewe on May 20, 2019, featuring Nos. 397003 and 397004. Main line testing moved to between Crewe and Liverpool shortly afterwards with Liverpool to Carlisle also tested as part of the day’s full diagram.

On June 25, 2019, the twinned test pair, Nos. 397003 and 397004, ran coupled together between Crewe and Glasgow Central, running as 3Q53, the 07.49 Crewe Carriage Shed-Glasgow Central, which was the first visit of the class to Scotland. The sets returned south in the afternoon, running as 3Q54, the 12.06 Glasgow Central-Crewe.

CLASS 397 SPECIFICATIONS

Length:	118-metres
Carriage lengths:	DM cars 24.03m, Intermediate cars 23.35m
Door Type:	Single-lead sliding plug (four per car)
Maximum speed:	125mph
Acceleration:	0.92m/s ²
Power output:	2929kW (3948hp)
Traction motors:	TSA (Traktionssysteme Austria) of 220kW (296hp)
Brake systems:	Electro-Pneumatic (discs) and regenerative
Weight:	188.4t
Couplers:	Dellner
Multiple working:	Within class. Theoretically with ‘331’ but not authorised
Door control:	ASDO (Automatic Selective Door Opening)
Door opening:	Automatic and flexible manual selective (ASDO/MSDO)
Communications:	GSM-r PA, Cab-to-cab, PAD/CFA
Formation:	DMFLW, PTS, MSL, PTSL, DMSL
Seats:	288
Bodyshell:	Aluminium
Control system:	IGBT inverter
Numbers:	397001-397012
Owner:	Eversholt Rail

Key: DMFLW – Driving Motor First Lavatory Wheelchair, DMSL – Driving Motor Standard Lavatory, MSL – Motor Standard Lavatory, PTS – Pantograph Trailer Standard, PTSL – Pantograph Trailer Standard Lavatory,

In July that year, Class 397s were employed on several mileage accumulation test runs between Longsight and Crewe, with No. 397004 noted on July 23, 2019.

After acceptance of the first set, No. 397005, into the fleet, approved by the Office of Rail and Road (ORR) on July 19, 2019, it was followed shortly afterwards by No. 397006 on July 25,

2019. Testing was intensified with Nos. 397004 and 397003 achieving 125mph running on the West Coast Main Line, in multiple with pantographs on both units raised. The final unit was accepted into service on March 31, 2020.

Meanwhile, training for conductors on the new sets had been undertaken over three days, via “Conversion Courses” from the Class 350/4s.

TECHNICAL DETAILS

The Class 397s are maintained by Alstom at its facility at Longsight, and with some work carried out at its Polmadie site with CAF supplying spare parts and Knorr Bremsè overhauling battery packs and braking systems. A tender for a new overhaul contract for the Class 397 fleet was issued in 2023.

The tender documentation revealed that the fleet has an MSA (Manufacture and Supply Agreement) target of 45,000 MTIN and is currently achieving 13,457 MTIN (Miles Per Technical Incident) with CAF fully expected to continue with the current maintenance arrangements, although as this

issue of *Rail Express* went to press the maintenance contract was out for retendering.

Internally the Class 397s share a similar design to the CAF Mk.5A hauled stock and externally the styling was designed to match both the Mk.5A sets and the '802s' to give a standardised corporate image.

The Class 397s also have an external UIC.EVN 12-digit number and the guidance to train crew interestingly advises: "Thankfully there will never be a need to use this!", although a link is provided for those who wish to know more.

The sets feature a retractable

nose cone to help aerodynamics, and to provide a clean front end when the Dellner coupler is not in use.

The Class 397s utilise the relatively new ASDO (Automatic Selective Door Opening) system with the driver responsible for releasing the doors and conductors responsible for closing them. The system allows for selection of individual doors for opening, the system having automation using GPS and odometry (wheel rotation/distance measurement) – providing accurate location positioning when approaching stations.

The ASDO system holds a database for all stations and platform

configurations (though it does rely on the driver stopping the train at the correct location (plus or minus one metre of the Car Stop board on the platform). In the event of problems with the system, either the conductor takes charge of door opening duties or, if possible, the driver will step on to the platform and check which doors are safe to open. In reality, ASDO is rarely needed as most stations on the TPE network served by '397s' can comfortably accommodate a full five-car set.

The Class 397s feature a multifunctional seat reservation system with the possibility for multiple pre-booked reservations (up to a maximum of five) with the ability to reserve a seat up to 10 minutes before departure (including on a train already in transit), the system updates every two minutes.

CCTV is in place throughout the trains, inside and outside (via bodyside cameras – for use of the driver on departure), though not in toilets, cabs or the galley.

The Class 397s have been fitted with an advanced anti drag system – each exterior door having a sensitive edge to detect trapped objects, to prevent passengers being dragged along the platform by a departing train. The system instigates a traction cut-out and full emergency brake application.

In the event of a failure the large on board battery packs allow load-shedding with train auxiliaries gradually switching off before full shutdown after 180 minutes. The best recovery option is another Class 397 and this will allow certain systems to still operate, including door controls, though traction power and HVAC will still be unavailable. Theoretically a set could be rescued by a Northern Class 331 (another member of the Civity CAF family) although this is unlikely to happen in practice.

An emergency coupler is available for use where only a locomotive can be summoned to rescue the set. An emergency coupler is carried in a drawer underneath the PTS2 car.

Initially the intention was to keep the First Class end of sets at the Liverpool/Manchester (up) end, though some diversions have shown that this was not possible all the time.

OPERATIONS

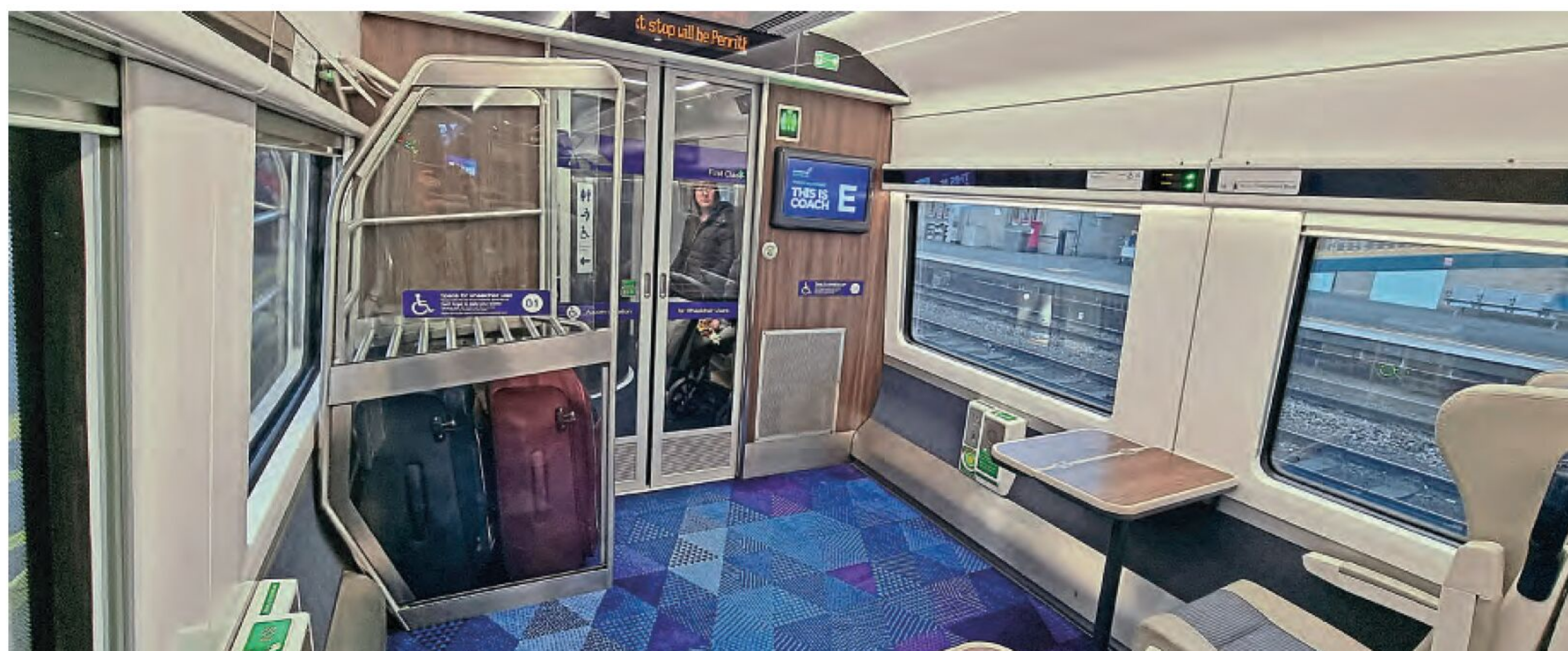
Further delays in the testing programme, thought to be due to crew training issues, with the '397s' reported to have excelled under test conditions, meant that the spring 2019 entrance date was missed – the first working in service taking place on November 30, 2019, with No. 397007 working the 1538 08.10 Manchester Airport-Edinburgh Waverley. The train was unfortunately delayed by an overhead wire problem just south of Carlisle, being held at Preston for an hour until this was resolved. The set went on to work the 1M97 12.11 Edinburgh-Manchester Airport, which was terminated at Preston, and then the 1S75 17.05 Preston-Edinburgh.



The First Class interior of a Class 397. Andy Flowers



The Standard Class interior of a Class 397. Andy Flowers



The wheelchair area of a Class 397. Andy Flowers



TransPennine Express No. 397005 arrives at Lancaster on September 22, 2023, as No. 397004 arrives with a southbound train destined for Manchester Airport. Phil Wallis

By the end of December 2019, four separate Class 397s had appeared in service, Nos. 397003/005-007, although the transfer of Nos. 350401/404/405/410 to London Northwestern Railway meant that there was a need for several Class 185 diesel multiple unit substitutions on the services planned for EMU operation, resulting in some inevitable late running.

The first Class 397s in service were concentrated on the more heavily loaded Manchester Airport to Glasgow Central/Edinburgh route with the more lightly loaded Liverpool Lime Street-Glasgow Central service seeing some appearances by Class 185s from the start of the new timetable on December 15, 2019, until sufficient '397s' became available.

The introduction of the Class 397s provided some of the much-needed extra capacity with estimations suggesting 13 million per year, with the five-car sets having 286 seats in total (264 standard and 22 First Class) compared to 212 (193+19) in a four-car Class 350/4.

In May 2023, TPE added a 'Welcome to Liverpool' message, and

the Eurovision logo, to No. 397011 to celebrate the staging of the song contest on Merseyside between May 9 and 13, 2023.

PERFORMANCE

The advanced traction control, lightweight bodyshell and accessories, together with high installed horsepower virtually guaranteed that the Class 397 would display high performance, and experience so far has shown this to be the case. The previously challenging 1-in-75 northbound attack on Shap summit, reducing trains to walking pace at times in steam days, even with banking assistance, is now taken regularly at speeds up to 105mph. Similarly, the 90mph limit for the class over Beattock, due to not being tilt enabled, is no challenge at all. The superior acceleration characteristics of the Class 397s, with 0-60mph recorded in as little as 37 seconds (and despite their 110mph limit due to lack of tilt) enables TPE trains on the northern section of the WCML to be slotted in between Avanti West Coast's 125mph tilt-enabled Pendolinos with relative ease.

CLASS 397 NUMBERING

Set	DMFLW	PTS	MSL	PTSL	DMSL
397001	471001	472001	473001	474001	475001
397002	471002	472002	473002	474002	475002
397003	471003	472003	473003	474003	475003
397004	471004	472004	473004	474004	475004
397005	471005	472005	473005	474005	475005
397006	471006	472006	473006	474006	475006
397007	471007	472007	473007	474007	475007
397008	471008	472008	473008	474008	475008
397009	471009	472009	473009	474009	475009
397010	471010	472010	473010	474010	475010
397011	471011	472011	473011	474011	475011
397012	471012	472012	473012	474012	475012

Key: DMFLW – Driving Motor First Lavatory Wheelchair, DMSL – Driving Motor Standard Lavatory, MSL – Motor Standard Lavatory, PTS – Pantograph Trailer Standard, PTSL – Pantograph Trailer Standard Lavatory.

Once the '397s' entered traffic, there were relatively few major teething problems, although air conditioning proved to be an issue in very hot weather in their first year in traffic, and windscreen cracks saw a need for a fleet-wide replacement program.

Bogie issues saw the fleet inspected, together with the Mk.5As in late-2020 with the issue resolved

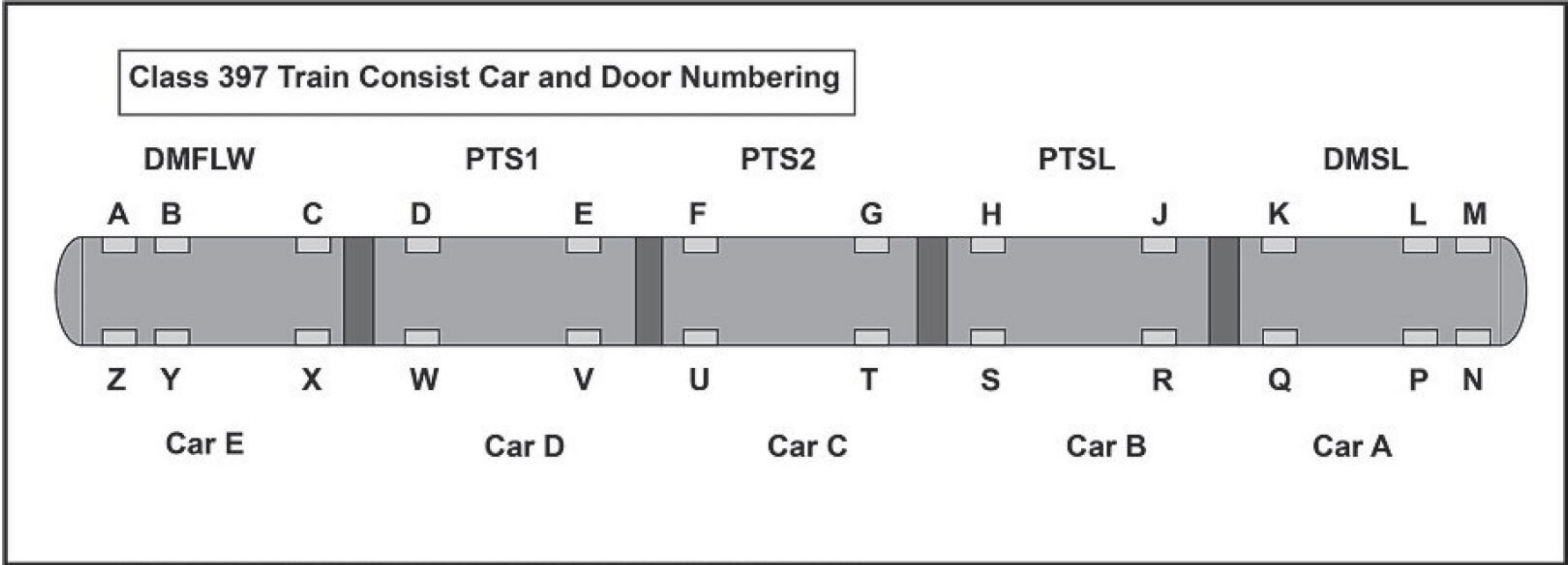
quickly at Longsight. Cold weather start-ups were also a teething problem for the '397s' but this was soon resolved with software updates.

THE FUTURE

There has been speculation that TPE's Liverpool and Manchester Airport services would combine at Preston to form 10-car sets forward to Edinburgh or Glasgow, but this is awaiting authorisation after testing of pantograph performance when working in multiple, while platform lengths at Manchester Airport currently preclude the running of 10-car sets that could serve there.

While TPE has an option for follow on orders for the Class 397s, there are currently no indications that they will exercise this and the existing fleet will most likely remain in service on their current WCML route for the foreseeable future.

In the future, 125mph running may be approved by Network Rail for non-tilt-enabled rolling stock which could mean TPE's Class 397 service on the WCML could see accelerated timings.



The door layout of the Class 397s. Andy Flowers

Together in electric dreams

Varamis Rail aims to serve London terminals with a network of electric freight services. **Richard Clinnick** talks to Phil Read, the man behind the plans.

LESS than a year after Class 321s finished serving London Liverpool Street in daily service, a pair of the four-car electric multiple units returned to the station on March 13, to showcase their planned return, which could happen in the very near future.

Still carrying National Express East Anglia colours from their days serving the station, Nos. 321428/429 were used to showcase just what Varamis Rail is all about.

Its business says its plans to serve Central London are quicker and more efficient, cheaper than current methods, directly reduce the carbon footprint of UK businesses, support the clean air strategies of major towns and cities and offer a sustainable alternative not achievable elsewhere.

The operator has been running trains for many months now, initially on the Birmingham International-Mossend route using No. 321334. That '321/3' was the first 'Swift' freight electric multiple unit conversion, which its owner Eversholt Rail used as a demonstrator. Unveiled at Wabtec Rail, Doncaster, on July 1, 2021, it eventually moved to

Varamis and was the sole EMU in the fleet for many months as Phil Read, the managing director of Varamis, sought to get the business up-and-running. It has since been joined by four more '321s', with five more to follow.

These are all owned by Varamis now, with the business having acquired them from the rolling stock leasing company. Such has been the success of the initial service, which uses roll cages to fill the train, that the four-car train has been doubled in length and now runs as a pair of '321s' with a second train planned on the same section of the West Coast Main Line.

"The transport sector in the UK remains the largest emitter of CO2. If the UK Government target of net-zero emissions by 2050 is to be met, then ambitious, carbon-free initiatives like Varamis Rail are offering are not just desirable, they are essential," says Mr Read.

Maggie Simpson OBE, Rail Freight Group CEO, says: "Cultivating a sustainable future for urban logistics demands innovative solutions, and this underscores the pivotal role of railfreight in reshaping the transport landscape of central London. As we forge ahead, collaboration between rail and logistics industry stakeholders remains paramount in realising the vision of a greener, more efficient urban freight network with rail at the centre."

Varamis Rail, and its partners, have worked with Transport for London on the proposals regarding serving the capital. Scott Wilding, principal strategy planner, TFL transport strategy and policy (roads and freight), says: "This signals a significant leap forward in our commitment to sustainability

and improving air quality in central London. By prioritising rail freight solutions, we're not only reducing congestion and emissions on our roads but also fostering a cleaner, healthier environment for all Londoners. Through collaborative efforts, we're paving the way for a greener, more sustainable future where freight transportation plays a pivotal role in preserving our city's air quality and vitality."

More routes are also planned as Mr Read revealed at the event at Liverpool Street.

Talking to *Rail Express*, he said that he chose the '321s' for the role as they had plenty of life in them and were capable of 100mph. Unrefurbished EMUs are a better fit for the business instead of the 30 Renatus Class 321/3s as the latter have AC traction motors which require a different safety case compared to what is available with the unmodified '321s'.

All the seats and tables have been removed, as the toilets have been too. They are fitted with reinforced floors to cater for the increased weight of the loads they are carrying. Bizarrely, for the time being at least, they retain their passenger information screens! The '321s' remain capable of 100mph too and none have yet received a new livery, although at least two have now received Varamis Rail branding. For Mr Read, it's about establishing the business and new routes.

"They have the same body as a Mk.3 coach and are able to go everywhere and there is no reason why they cannot serve routes that we aspire to." One of those routes could be Tonbridge, which would not be for a couple of years yet, and Mr Read says



A map displayed at London Liverpool Street on March 13, showing Varamis Rail's aspirations. Already some of the dates, such as Birmingham to London, have had to change.

that would be another type of unit that would be used on that, probably a Flex Class 769. The intention remains that all 10 '321s' will be available for traffic by the end of the year. As this issue of *Rail Express* went to press, Varamis had accepted eight sets: 321334/339/341, 321407/419/428/429/440 with two from 321332/338/342 to follow. Mr Read told *RE* that all 10 had been acquired but had not confirmed the final sets.

He admitted that there have been issues in setting up a second route, which is planned to be Birmingham International to London, with the aim of serving Liverpool Street rather than the Princess Royal Distribution Centre (PRDC) at Willesden. Getting guaranteed paths has been a problem on the southern section of the West Coast Main Line, he said, due to ongoing engineering possessions, which is why the event at Liverpool Street, attended by Network Rail chair Lord Hendy, was



The interior of a vehicle from No. 321429 shows the reinforced floor and various equipment installed to secure the freight carried on board.

VARAMIS RAIL FLEET

Unit	Livery
321334	SW
321339	NU
321341	NU
321407	FB
321419	FB
321428	NX
321429	NX
321440	NU

Livery code: FB – FirstGroup blue, NX – National Express, NU – National Express unbranded, SW – Swift



Still carrying National Express colours, No. 321428 stands at London Liverpool Street on March 13. Paired with No. 321429, the electric multiple unit was used to showcase what Varamis Rail can offer the rail freight sector.



Varamis Rail No. 321429 stands at London Liverpool Street on March 13. This is one of five Class 321s available to the operator now for passenger duties. All photos: Richard Clinnick

so important for Varamis. “I think this is really showing people what we do and showcasing what the railway can offer in central London. It gets the buy-in from businesses and can deliver to the heart of the city.”

Mr Read has also previously highlighted his frustrations with NR in terms of paths in that he has a fleet of 100mph-capable EMUs and yet his paths offer average end-to-end timings with an average speed of around 40mph. Last mile deliveries are a possibility too with Varamis working with partners to explore what is available. “We believe that bringing electric trains into London with their high volume, then being dispersed into local areas using cargo bikes is the way forward, not just for London but any city. This could be Manchester or Birmingham, for example.”

Other locations were mentioned including Norwich and King’s Lynn. “They are all aspirations. Initially it was about Birmingham to Glasgow. We’ll extend that to London and go on the East Coast.

“What I’m trying to do, what I’ve been trying to do, is to create a circular network of high-speed, fully electric goods distribution. That’s what it’s all about,” he says. Bristol is in the plans too, meaning that Varamis Rail could become the first freight operator to use electric traction on the Great Western Main Line almost a decade after it was first electrified. “The reason I put Bristol on the map is I know the city is very forward thinking about green initiatives and developing them, and I think they’d love a fully-electric train to be serving their city.”

Using repurposed trains is one thing but Varamis is looking to the future and the possibility of a new-build fleet as the company grows. “That is something about five or six years away but it’s definitely on our radar,” he says.

“Royal Mail has an appetite for buying new trains and we’d certainly like to be a part of that. Lord Hendy has spoken about the future being this type of rail freight and multimodal business [and so] we need to look at the future. The trains could be AC-only, dual-voltage or electric with a little diesel engine and battery packs. Or battery-only?”

Varamis currently employs 25 staff including train drivers and its own operations control centre. There are also depot managers at Birmingham and Glasgow and teams in Scotland who service the goods. The trains themselves are maintained at Glasgow Shields Road by ScotRail. “They have been a great partner and we, also, get a lot of buy-in from Transport Scotland as well,” Mr Read says, adding that he believes that is partly due to SR being a nationalised operation.

While he praises TS, he admits that there needs to be more support from other government agencies. He says that the Department for Transport and Welsh Assembly Government could be more supportive and adds that he would love to hear from vocal mayors such as Andy Burnham, as well as local councils.

Network Rail Anglia route director Katie Frost said: “This shows that the future is bright for railfreight. Partners from across the industry and beyond are coming together to explore new opportunities and accelerate the shift



On board Trailer Standard No. 71976 from No. 321428. This is looking towards where two small toilets were once located.

to rail. We are proud to be playing our part in delivering greener and more efficient freight transportation, and to be hosting this showcase at Liverpool Street station, just as we celebrate its 150th birthday. Over the years, the station has been at the forefront of innovation and reinvention, so it is a fitting backdrop for this exciting event.”

Finally, Steve Evans, the founder of XeroE, which works with Varamis in London, said: “This event shows the indispensable role of companies like ours in revolutionising urban freight logistics, particularly in the critical first and last mile of deliveries in central London. By navigating congested city streets with ease and zero emissions,

I’m proud that XeroE’s bikes, cargo bikes, and electric vehicles are not just delivering goods; they’re delivering on our commitment to cleaner air, reduced congestion, and enhanced urban liveability. Our partnership with Varamis Rail enables us to make initial bulk deliveries into the centre of cities sustainable. But not only that, it costs less. This means we can provide clean green deliveries at competitive prices and reduce the barriers to businesses that want to make the switch.”

These are exciting times for Varamis Rail, and it will be interesting to watch the company attempt to serve new locations and continue to grow its business. **B**



No. 230001 *Viva Venturer* stands at West Ealing on March 15. All photos: Richard Clinnick

Why batteries could be included

Trials using a battery-powered Class 230 on the Greenford branch are under way. **Richard Clinnick** reports from the formal launch of the project and speaks to those involved in the project.

THE issue of traction power for trains, both existing and new-build, is one that is set to dominate discussions for some time.

In many cases, electric trains are the preferred choice, however this is not always possible. A lack of coherent electrification strategy by the Department for Transport (DfT), combined with the costs surrounding such schemes, means operators, manufacturers and rolling stock leasing companies, as well as infrastructure suppliers, must look to other options to power trains.

This situation is further exacerbated by the need to decarbonise the country's railway system by the 2050 deadline set by the Government. But then this is the same Government that has increasingly turned off the funding tap for the railway and, only recently, published a letter detailing planned orders for Chiltern Railways, Northern, Southeastern and TransPennine Express without confirming any progress (RE335).

Great Western Railway has a large fleet of Sprinters and Turbos dating from the mid-1980s (24 Class 150/2s, 18 Class 158s in two and three-car formations, 36 Class 165s in two and

three-car formations and 21 Class 166s) and yet the letter stated that their replacement was an aspiration and was not included in the main round of proposed orders! This means that the '150s' will easily pass their 40th anniversary in traffic and could be forced to carry even more passengers when the five High Speed Train Castle sets largely confined to the Plymouth-Penzance route are withdrawn next year.

For the time being, if GWR wants to increase capacity on its fleet it will need to look to cast-offs from other regions. As the operator's managing director Mark Hopwood told *Rail Express* in an exclusive interview in November 2023: "I think a lot of people, politically, get obsessed with the sort of north south divide and that actually, the south west often gets forgotten." That certainly looks to be the case for new trains for the rural routes.

But GWR has been looking at ways to circumnavigate these problems. Figures published by the Office of Rail and Road (ORR) last autumn showed that of GWR's 1087 vehicles, some 12% were electric, 22% were diesel, 10% were locomotive-hauled and 56% were bi-mode. The average age of

GWR's fleet was 14.9 years, placing it 14th in the overall table of oldest trains in Britain but failing to mention that while the Hitachi Class 80x fleets and Class 387 Electrostars are both fairly young, the Class 15x and '16x' fleets are much older. Certainly Mr Hopwood conceded to RE332 that: "We've got quite a lot of trains that are approaching the point where they'll need replacement."

Enter the Class 230 now undergoing trials on the 2.4-mile-long West Ealing-Greenford branch. Back in early 2022 it was announced that, with funding from the DfT, GWR would operate a trial using a Vivarail '230'. The unit, No. 230001, was to be prepared ahead of the trial, however, this was put at risk when Vivarail went bust at the end of 2022. To save the trial, GWR bought not only that '230' but also many stored D-Train vehicles at Long Marston, the intellectual property regarding the fast-charging system developed by Vivarail, and agreed to take on staff who had been working on the project.

GWR also subsequently bought the three Class 230s that had been used by London Northwestern Railway on the Marston Vale line between Bedford and Bletchley, but which had been withdrawn after Vivarail's demise meant that they could not be maintained.

With the project able to continue, testing of No. 230001, now in GWR colours and named *Viva Venturer*, was able to commence initially at Long

Marston, although it ventured onto the national network.

On February 14, the '230' set the record for the longest distance covered without a charge when it ran for 86 miles; the previous record being 84 miles completed by a Stadler Class 777 under test conditions. Some 1500 hours of testing had also been completed at Long Marston before the '230' headed to its new home at Reading on February 16. Running under its own power, the '230' completed 70 miles on the national network and even then, only used 45% of its battery capacity.

Ahead of the official launch of tests on the Greenford branch, GWR held an event with invited guests able to take a trip on the '230'. *Rail Express* attended the event where Mr Hopwood said of the three-car battery unit's performance: "If I'm honest, the last few weeks have actually exceeded our expectations. We'll be working very hard to make sure that the trial delivers what we've said it will and we'll be obviously engaging with our colleagues in DfT and Network Rail."

He added that innovation is really important at GWR. "People often talk to me about our brand and they say, 'oh well you know, Great Western Railway is harking back in history', but we're not. Actually, we are ahead of everyone else with the technology that we have here. GWR has always had a bold and broad approach about replacing diesel trains and we're proud to continue leading the way."

"I think research will help the industry understand what's needed to roll this technology out. We are blessed at GWR with a number of branch lines which I think are ideal for this technology to be rolled out."

He said that the trials will seek to judge the potential compatibility of the technology with up to six trips per day operating on the Greenford branch. "The hard work really begins as we test the performance of the technology in what's going to be a variety of different climates and different operating conditions. I think we've already demonstrated with the work we've done that there is a place for battery train technology to decarbonise [the railway]."

"Although at this stage we're only running the train on the Greenford branch, we have done computer simulations of how this would work on things like Windsor, Bourne End, Marlow and Henley, as we believe the technology could transfer quite easily."

Mr Hopwood also used the launch to acknowledge the work of Adrian Shooter, the creator of Vivarail, who died in 2022.

He said: "It was Adrian's passion for developing a fast charging system that brought us to where we are today. We originally engaged with Vivarail on this project and we recognise the great work they've done. We were very keen, when there were some challenges there, to work with the team to engage with the DfT to find a solution that enables us to ensure that the intellectual property and the rolling stock was protected, and that we could deliver this project."

"We've also employed a fantastic team of engineers who continue to develop the system, and now we've got a train that can operate to at least the same timetable as the diesel train, and who knows, at some point, maybe accelerate a little bit quicker in the timetable as well, but we don't have the associated emissions or air quality issues."

Rail minister Huw Merriman was unable to attend the event but did speak via a pre-recorded video message. He said: "This trial proves the potential for battery technology to accelerate decarbonisation of our railway and deliver real environmental benefits through the removal of harmful diesel emissions at pace. This trial will provide invaluable data to help us understand if battery technology can be used on other parts of the network such as those places where electrification is difficult due to structural or environmental restrictions, or doesn't provide the best value for money. I know the Great Western team are already looking at the other branch lines on their network and I look forward to discussing the opportunities with them soon."

Speaking to *Rail Express* on February 29, GWR engineering director Dr Simon Green explained: "The Greenford branch was chosen because it is a two-track railway so we can effectively have two trains in action and we can get confidence in how the battery train is performing. And, if there is a problem, the passenger service is not affected."

Initially the '230' will operate without passengers and will be crewed by RailAdventure, which drove the unit from Long Marston to Reading. Longer-term the aspiration is for it to carry passengers, although negotiations need to be concluded with the relevant unions before training can start.

"Then, at some point we will get to a position where we then switch over into passenger service and take the '165' away and use the '230'. It's not an absolute requirement of the trial, we could do it entirely in 'shadow mode', but that's not what we want to do."

THE TRAIN

The three-car battery unit, No. 230001 *Viva Venturer*, was rebuilt from redundant London Underground D-Stock by Vivarail. Driving Motor



Branding applied to the Class 230.

Standard (DMS) vehicles Nos. 300001 and 300101 were rebuilt from Nos. 7058 and 7511 respectively, while Trailer Standard No. 300201 was rebuilt from No. 17058.

Each DMS is fitted with three 84kWh Hoppecke batteries.

Internally, the '230' features a modern interior, with 28 seats in No. 300001 and 32 in No. 300101, while the TS features an accessible toilet and wheelchair space, as well as 34 seats including bench seating. There are also USB ports and sockets.

When travelling on the '230', specialist data shown to guests showed that four of the six batteries were being used when the train travelled. These batteries are fitted to rafts with each raft weighing 1.7 tonnes. In total, the train has 504kWh (675hp).

The operator believes that while batteries offer highly-usable energy storage solutions, until now, their use in providing tractive power has been restricted by range. However, with a round-trip on the Greenford branch being less than five miles, range anxiety is not expected to be



The *Viva Venturer* nameplate fitted to Driving Motor Standard No. 300001.

a concern. But there are factors that must be taken into account when it comes to power being drained from the battery. The exact range of a battery-powered train is dependent on many factors including the installed battery capacity and chemistry, hotel power for lights, heating and cooling, the number of stations stops, gradients, maximum running speed and passenger loading. Because these vary on a route-by-route basis, the range is expected to vary depending upon which service the train is employed on.

One example is the weather. The energy required to heat the train will reduce the energy available for traction. GWR said that this trial will quantify the effect of cold weather across a full year through all four seasons. Dr Green said: "We're coming out of winter into spring and in terms of performance spring's usually a pretty good time of the year. There aren't too many adverse conditions, but as we get into summer and it gets hot you get to see how the batteries perform. Then as we pass through autumn into winter, we want to see how they perform in the cold. Then we'll come back into the spring and the official trial period will end and we'll then have a better understanding of how this sort of technology works."



The '230' will operate from the bay at West Ealing. On March 15, during its official launch, No. 230001 *Viva Venturer* waits to head to Greenford with another trial run.



“What we would hope to see in the 12 months is a much wider range of conditions and to understand how the train performs in those circumstances and specifically how the batteries perform.”

The ‘230’ is fitted with charging shoes and each set is rated for up to 1MW charging power, meaning that the two sets could deliver real-life range to the train at over 4.6 miles of range for every minute charged. The Greenford branch has a maximum speed of 40mph so the train is only charged at 700kW as the fast-charge system can be sized appropriately for its location to maximise cost effectiveness.

GWR said that looking beyond the trial it is hoped that the technology could one day see battery-powered trains operating across the country on more than 80 branch lines.

The operator said that the fast charge technology is small in size and complexity and uses off-the-shelf technology in key areas, including trackside battery energy storage systems, while the speed of its installation is another benefit as track works only takes hours. The fast-charge system also does not require the rails to be live all the time, indeed they only go live when the train covers them, while the system has been developed to fit into any suitable diesel train with the shoe gear designed to be ultra-compact and able to fit into a space barely bigger than a shoebox.

Maintenance will be carried out at Reading, Dr Green confirmed, but it is planned that the unit will return there roughly once a month and will remain outbased at West Ealing.

HOW IT WORKS

Charging rails are installed at a chosen station. For the GWR trial they are located at West Ealing in the bay platform. These are positioned within the rails and are easy to install without the need for lengthy engineering possessions which would likely cause disruption.



The interior of Driving Motor Standard No. 300101 on March 15.

As the train approaches the station the sensors fitted to the train and trackside prime the fast-charge system ahead of charging. Then, as the train approaches the fast-charge rails the electrical contact shoes lower, ready for charging to begin. Once lowered, the charging shoes will then ride along the fast-charge rails to make a solid contact.

Once the fast-charge begins, the six batteries on board the train are charged at a rate of up to 2 Megawatts from the trackside battery bank. An air-cooling system helps maintain optimum performance. The trackside battery bank is trickle charged from the National Grid, meaning no spikes in demand on the grid and no large electrical infrastructure is required to be installed at stations along the route.

GWR said that the fast-charge system uses a trackside battery energy storage unit which has the ability to be hooked up to existing technologies including renewable energy supplies such as wind farms and solar panels, as well as off-peak energy supply, and integration, with electric vehicle charging. Charging at West Ealing will take 3½ minutes.

THE FUTURE

Great Western Railway has confirmed that the trial will last for 12 months and will test the capability and viability of the technology. It is keen to point out that the Class 230 is already approved

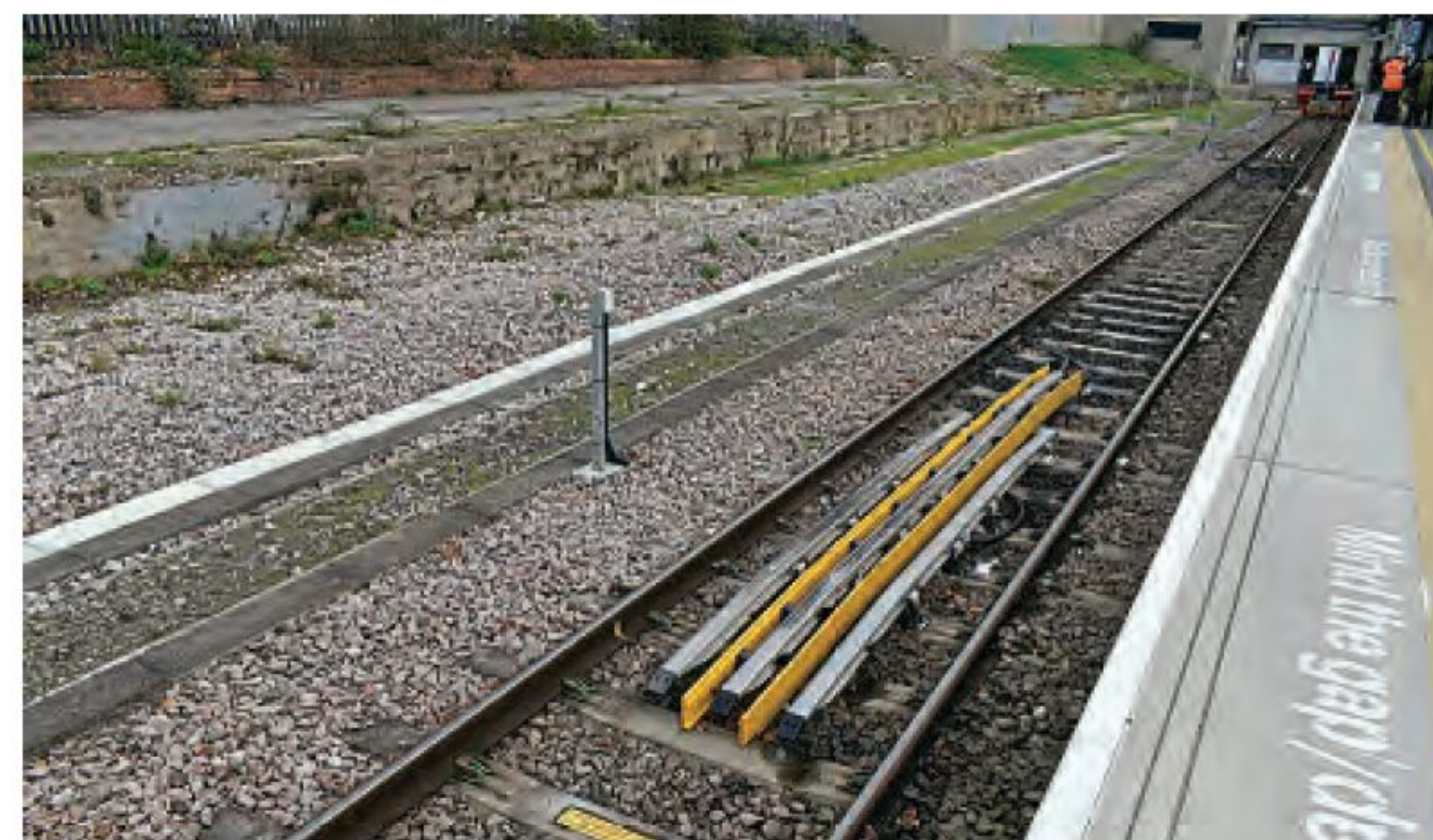
and proven. As this issue of *Rail Express* went to press there were currently no plans to use the ‘230’ beyond the trial.

There have been independent assessments conducted that have already identified a place for the technology in the decarbonisation of the network, with the Rail Safety and Standard Board and Great British Railways Transition Team involved in this work.

GWR has several routes it believes the technology could be used, with the Thames Valley branches prime candidates. The operator said that switching to the fast-charge technology on the four Thames Valley branches could reduce GWR’s emissions by over 1700 tonnes of CO₂e per year.

No. 230001 has a top speed of 60mph, however its superior acceleration from electric power enables it to match, or even improve, station-to-station running times of similar diesel trains which have a higher top speed but a lower rate of acceleration. GWR added that the introduction of battery electric multiple units (BEMUs) offers the benefit of an electrified railway without the requirement of building the infrastructure.

However, GWR is realistic in that it does not believe that BEMUs will replace all diesel trains. “The fast-charge system brings most benefit on shorter, branch-line type routes. On longer routes, battery bi-modes, which can either



The fast-charging equipment installed at West Ealing. This is only live as the Class 230 approaches. Charging takes 3½ minutes.

take power from the 25kV overhead electrification or run on battery power alone, are currently a better solution.”

For typical branch line operation where DMUs are currently used, battery trains with fast-charge technology offer reduced operating costs when considering associated infrastructure, fuel and maintenance costs according to a study on the use of fuel cells and hydrogen in the railway environment conducted by the EUa Shift2Rail Joint Undertaking back in 2019.

Dr Green said: “There is a wider question in the round whether [battery technology] is something that we want to do, but actually we know it can be done. At the moment we don’t perceive any technical reason [why it could not be used] but the purpose of running a trial is to find that technical reason and resolve it but, on paper right now, we could use them.”

Rail Express suggests that the branches in Devon and Cornwall could be ripe for battery trains considering that they are unlikely to ever be electrified. Dr Green replies: “The problem at St Ives is capacity in the summer, a three-car train doesn’t cut it. We use four-car Class 150s and they are full and standing. That is not to say that these trains could not do that, but that is not part of the trial. And then some of the Cornish branches are trickier because of their topology and, again, we have looked at that and there is always an engineering solution but it is going to depend on how many fast charge points you want.

“A lot of the Thames Valley branches are doable with a charger at one location on the branch, whereas some of the Cornish ones might require a charger at either end, and you have got to have enough dwell time to charge the batteries to be able to get back. So, at this stage, it is not planned to take these trains to Cornwall, but that doesn’t mean to say that might not be a future option, depending on what happens with the trial.

“We have to go back to the fact that this is a trial, it is not necessarily intended to be a widespread fleet introduction at this stage.”

These trials will prove fascinating as to the future decisions for rolling stock. Hydrogen and battery power is being used in mainland Europe and further afield, discontinuous electrification is another possibility, but GWR’s use of fast charge technology on this trial could offer a tantalising glimpse into the future of its new train fleet. 



No. 230001 has been used on the national network before. Initially used for trials in the West Midlands, it operated passenger shuttles for the Rail Live event and, in 2021, moved to Scotland to demonstrate its technology at the COP26 event. On October 29, 2021, the ‘230’ makes an unusual sight stood at Glasgow Central.

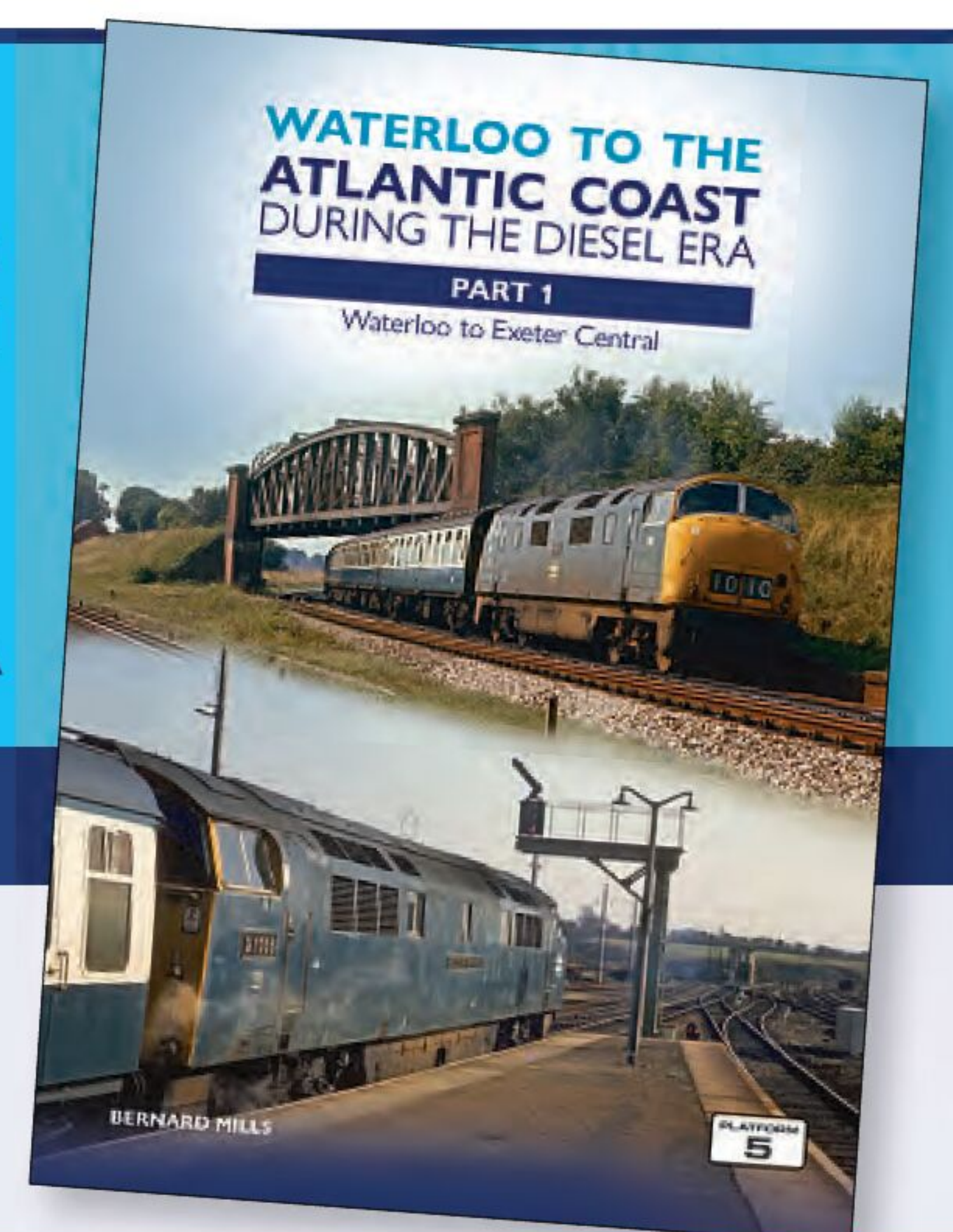


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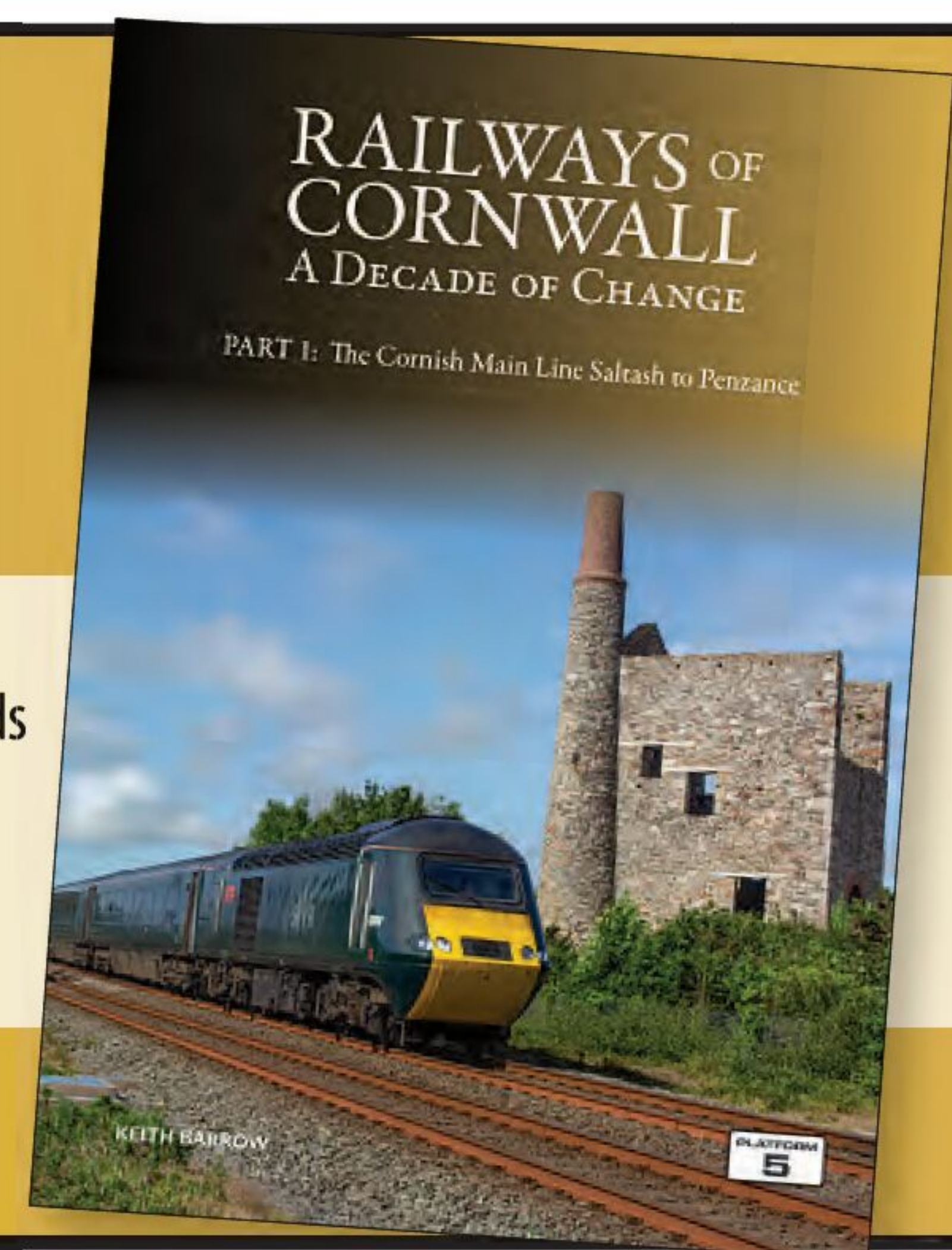
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RailAdventure No. 43468 leads Retro Railtours' 1Z46 15.21 London Marylebone-Sheffield 'The Master Cutler' charter past the flooded fields at Kings Sutton, near Banbury, on March 15. RA No. 43480 was on the rear. The Mk.3s are from the 125 Group. CJ Rich

Flurry of summer tours announced

From a somewhat slow start to this year's itineraries, there are numerous new tours in the diary.

FOUR railtour promoters have released a series of new tours that are set to run over the coming weeks, with an array of traction, rare track and unusual itineraries on offer.

The **Branch Line Society** is visiting the North Norfolk Railway on June 6, when 'The Holt Hoover' departs Eastleigh at 08.34, and runs to Norfolk via an interesting route with pick-ups at: Basingstoke, Reading, Slough, South Ruislip, High Wycombe, Haddenham & Thame Parkway, Banbury, Warwick Parkway, Coleshill Parkway, Leicester, Peterborough and Norwich. The charter is operated by Hanson & Hall and features the London Transport 4-TC unit as stock with Nos. D6515 (33012) *Lt Jenny Lewis RN* and 50008 *Thunderer* as power. The '50' is expected to lead from Eastleigh to Humberstone Road, where it will run round to the rear of the train. Tickets are £99 standard class (£30 from Norwich).

The '33', '50' and 4-TC will be in action during the NNR gala on June 7/8/9, but will leave with 'The Cromer Crompton' on June 9. They will depart Sheringham at 17.05, and set-down at Norwich, Ely, Peterborough, Leicester, Nuneaton, Coleshill Parkway and Water

Orton. Standard class tickets are £89. Sheringham-Ely is £45 and Sheringham-Norwich is £30. It is expected that the '33' will lead from Cromer.

On August 3, **Bishop Tours** is running its 'Rail Excursion to City of Chester' from Newcastle to Chester. Using the 125 Group's preserved High Speed Train, the charter departs Newcastle at 07.45 and picks-up to York before heading across the Hope Valley. Standard class tickets are £99 while first class are £150, although the latter was sold out as this issue of *Rail Express* went to press.

UK Railtours has revealed four charters, with the first on June 8. RailAdventure Class 43 High Speed Train power cars will haul a rake of Mk.2s on this tour double-headed, which departs Finsbury Park at 07.15 and picks-up to Doncaster before heading to Newcastle. There is a mini tour over the Blyth & Tyne freight-only route too. Tickets are £124 standard class, £184 first class, £289 first class dining. The mini tour option is £20.

A pair of DB Cargo UK Class 67s will haul UKR's 'The Ancient Kingdom' tour on June 15, which departs London King's Cross at 07.15 and picks-up

at stations to Peterborough before heading to Newcastle, Alnmouth and Berwick-upon-Tweed. A mini-tour to Edinburgh suburban lines including Joppa straight will also run. Standard class is £124 while it is £184 first class and £289 first class dining. The mini tour option is £25.

UKR will use preserved No. D6515 (33012) to power 'The Dean Forest Railway' charter on July 27, hauling the LT 4-TC. This will depart Basingstoke at 07.30 and pick-up to Didcot Parkway before heading to the DFR. The return will be hauled by a GB Railfreight Class 66 from Basingstoke, from where the train will run to Woking, Wimbledon, Tulse Hill and Brixton before terminating at Clapham Junction. Tickets are £139 standard class and £199 first class.

The following day, the same '33' and 4-TC will be used on UKR's 'The Waterside Wanderer', which departs London Fenchurch Street at 09.00 and picks-up at Stratford, Chelmsford and Colchester before visiting Harwich Town, Griffin Wharf (Ipswich), Clacton, Walton-on-the-Naze and Colchester Town. Tickets are £144 standard class, £199 first class but, as this issue of *Rail Express* went to press, it was sold out.

Pathfinder Tours will also use Class 33s, this time on July 13 when it takes a pair of West Coast Railways 'Cromptons' to Carlisle. The train

departs the Berkshire station behind a WCR '47' or '57' at 06.15 and picks-up to Crewe, where the '33s' take over for the run over the Settle & Carlisle route. The return is via the West Coast Main Line. Tickets are £129 standard class, £195 first class and £299 premier dining.

On July 27, the Class Forty Preservation Society (CFPS) No. D345 (40145) is the attraction for 'The Jolly Whistler' tour from Burton-on-Trent to Skegness. Departing at 06.10, the train will pick-up at Birmingham New Street and stations to Crewe before heading to Skegness via the Hope Valley, Worksop and Lincoln. The return is via Nottingham, Castle Donington and Burton. A WCR '47' or '57' will haul the train from Burton to Crewe, where the '40' will take over. Tickets are £129 standard class, £195 first class and £299 premier dining.

Four Class 33s are on offer on August 17's 'The Exmoor Coast Cromptons'. A pair of WCR '33s' will depart Reading at 06.40, picking up at Eastleigh and stations to Bristol Temple Meads (via Salisbury) before heading to Minehead. At Bishops Lydeard the WCR '33s' will be replaced by the West Somerset Railway's resident Class 33s Nos. D6566/575 (33048/057) for the final 20 miles to the coast. Tickets are £129 standard class, £195 first class and £299 premier dining. 

FORTHCOMING TOURS FOR MAY

Date	Tour Name	From-To	Motive Power	Promoter
1	Highclere Castle	London Victoria-Newbury	DBC '67'	BBP
2	Royal Windsor Statesman	Paignton, stations to Westbury-Windsor	LS '47'x2	SR
2	Garden of England	London Victoria-Kent circular	DBC '67'	BBP
4	Moving Murder Mystery	London Victoria-Kent circular	DBC '67'	BBP
4	Historic Edinburgh At Leisure	Derby, Chesterfield, Swinton, Doncaster-Edinburgh	WCR '47'/'57'	NB
4	Spring Cornish Explorer	Dorridge, stations to Bristol Temple Meads-Penzance	WCR '37'x2	PR
6	Llandudno Victorian Statesman	Woking, stations to Bath Spa-Llandudno	LS '47'x2	SR
8	Chatsworth House	London Victoria-Chesterfield	DBC '67'	BBP
9	Jurassic Crompton	Eastleigh, Guildford, Waterloo, Woking, Basingstoke, Southampton-Swanage	No. 33012 & GBRf '69' & 4TC	BLS
9	Historic Dundee At Leisure	Darlington, Durham, Newcastle-Dundee	WCR '47'/'57'	NB
9	Royal Windsor Statesman	Carnforth, stations to Rugeley Trent Valley-Windsor	LS '47'x2	SR
10	Moving Murder Mystery	London Victoria-Kent circular	DBC '67'	BBP
10	Spirit of Travel Lunch	Darlington, Durham, Newcastle-circular	WCR '47'/'57'	NB
10	Champagne Afternoon Tea	Darlington, Durham, Newcastle-circular	WCR '47'/'57'	NB
11	Settle & Carlisle & Tyne Valley Pullman	St Albans City, stations to Loughborough-S&C-Carlisle-Tyne Valley	LS HST	MP
12	Return of Jurassic Crompton	Swanage, Corfe Castle, Wareham-London Waterloo-Eastleigh	No. 33012 & GBRf '69' & 4TC	BLS
12	Champagne Afternoon Tea	London Victoria-Kent circular	DBC '67'	BBP
15	Historic Bath	London Victoria-Bath	DBC '67'	BBP
15	Snowdonia Statesman	Chesterfield, stations to Nuneaton-Blaenau Ffestiniog	LS '47'x2	SR
16	Golden Age of Travel	London Victoria-Kent circular	DBC '67'	BBP
16	Historic Edinburgh At Leisure	Crewe, Warrington, Liverpool-Edinburgh	WCR '47'/'57'	NB
17	Brief Encounter Lunch	Crewe, Warrington, Liverpool circular	WCR '47'/'57'	NB
17	Brief Encounter Champagne Afternoon Tea	Crewe, Warrington, Liverpool circular	WCR '47'/'57'	NB
18	Exmoor Coast Pullman	Whitchurch, stations to Worcester Shrub Hill-Minehead	LS HST	MP
18	Historic Edinburgh At Leisure	Manchester, Preston, Lancaster-Edinburgh	WCR '47'/'57'	NB
22	Le Manoir Aux Quat' Seasons	London Victoria-Oxford Parkway	DBC '67'	BBP
23	RHS Chelsea Flower Show	Manchester, Stoke-on-Trent, Birmingham-London Euston	WCR '47'/'57'	NB
23	Cornish Riviera Statesman	Shrewsbury, stations to Severn Tunnel Junction-Penzance	LS '47'x2	SR
24	Spirit of Travel Lunch	York, Leeds, Wakefield circular	WCR '47'/'57'	NB
24	Champagne Afternoon Tea	York, Leeds, Wakefield circular	WCR '47'/'57'	NB
25	Hanson House	Eastleigh, stations to London King's Cross-Kings Lynn	No. 50008 & '20'	BLS
25	Settle & Carlisle & Blackpool Pullman	Ayr, stations to Gretna Green-S&C-Blackpool	LS HST	MP
26	Champagne Afternoon Tea	London Victoria-Kent circular	DBC '67'	BBP
26	Millbrook Meander	Eastleigh, Southampton Airport, Southampton Central - Millbrook, Weymouth	No. 50008, '20' & Freightliner '66'	BLS
28	Ben Nevis & Lochaber Pullman	Morpeth, stations to Linlithgow-Fort William	LS HST	MP
29	Historic Canterbury	London Victoria-Canterbury	DBC '67'	BBP
31	Carriage Club	London Victoria-Kent circular via Folkestone	DBC '67'	BBP
31	Torbay Riviera Pullman	Carlisle, stations to Warrington Bank Quay-Torquay/Paignton	LS HST	MP

Operators: BBP - British Belmond Pullman, BLS - Branch Line Society, MP – Midland Pullman, NB - Northern Belle, PR - Pathfinder Railtours, SR - Statesman Rail.

UK Railtours plans four more trains

UK Railtours is planning four tours, on **July 6, August 10, September 21/28**. All will start in London, with the first running to the East Somerset Railway, the second to freight-only lines in the Newport area, the third to the Bluebell

Railway and the fourth to Llandudno and Chester including Glan Conwyn sidings. Details of traction, exact timings and routes have not been confirmed.

Hastings possibilities

HASTINGS Diesels has advised *Rail Express* that it is looking to operate the following tours if possible:
■ **June 8:** to Skegness, if (and only if) viable timings are provided
■ **July 13:** to Leicester, Loughborough and Derby
■ **September 14:** with the Gloucester area being considered.

Two BLS trips deferred

THE Branch Line Society has announced two deferrals. The first, 'The Class 507 Farwell', was originally booked for May 12 but will now take place this summer with a new date yet to be announced as this issue of *Rail Express* went to press. Also put back, until next year, is the ambitious Kernow tour which was to visit the Cornish branches with power provided by Class 50 Alliance locomotives. This had been booked for May 3-6 but has now been delayed. Again, no new date had been confirmed as this issue closed.



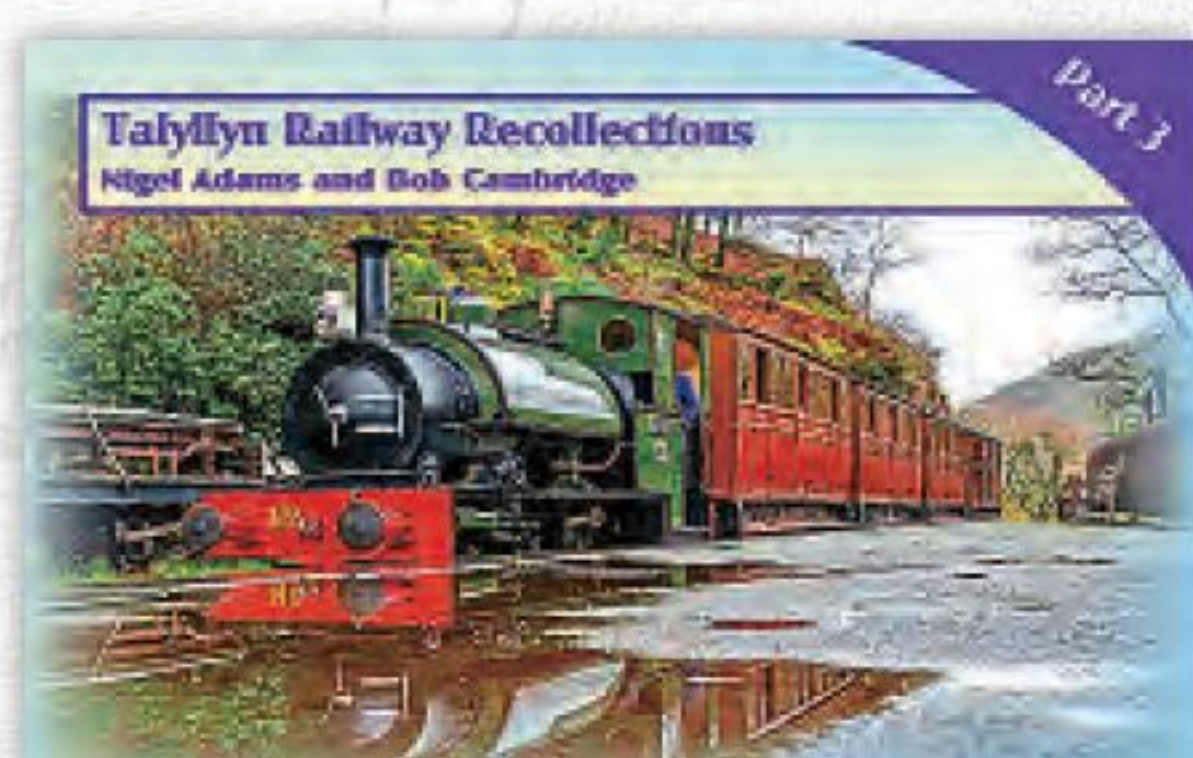
DB Cargo UK No. 66050 arrives on to the Cwmbargoed branch at Ystrad Manach on March 9, with Pathfinder Tours' 1Z95 07.14 Burton-on-Trent-Cwmbargoed 'The Cwm and Glo' charter. This also featured DBC No. 66070 and visited the East Usk branch. Matthew Plumpton.

RAIL **EXPRESS**

BOOK CORNER



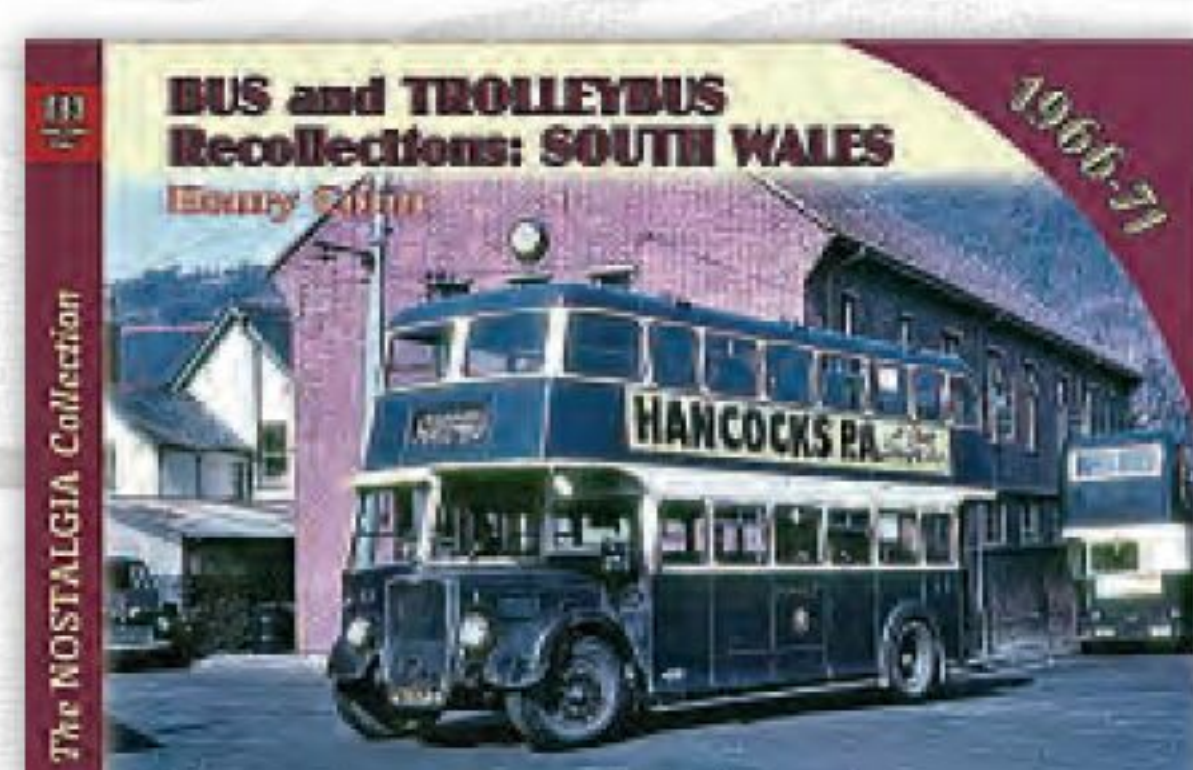
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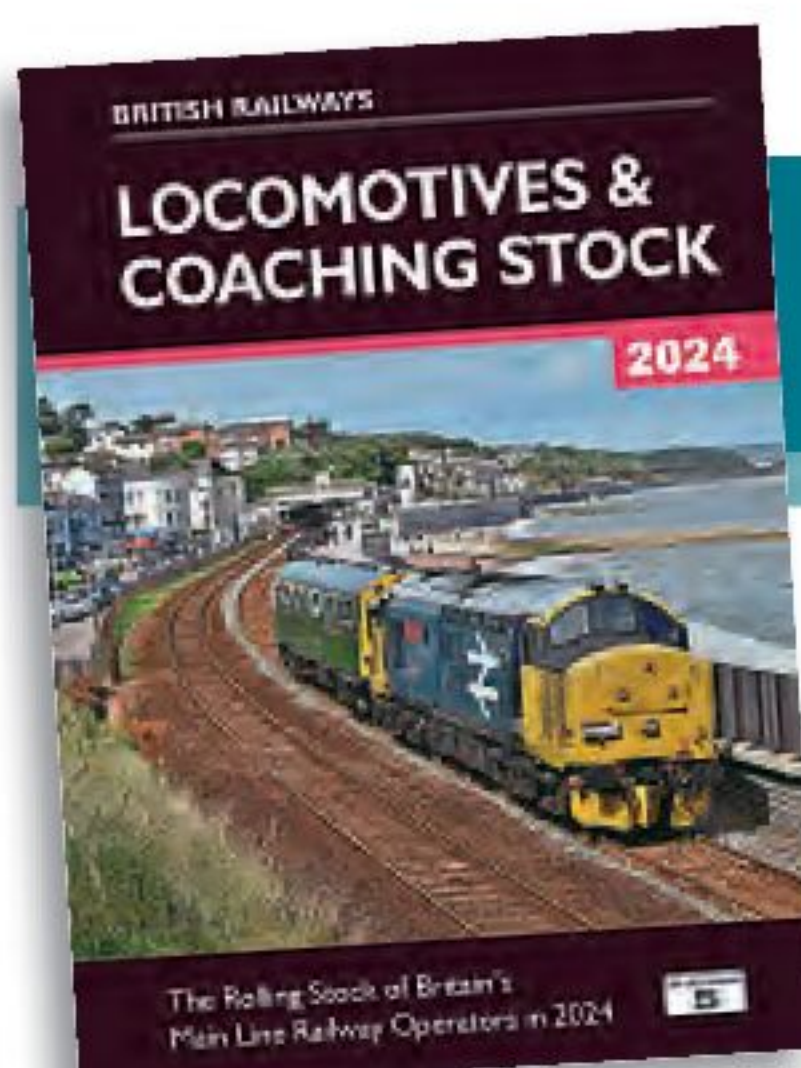
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British Railways Locomotives & Coaching Stock 2024: The Rolling Stock of Britain's Main Line Railway Operators in 2024

Published by Platform 5
www.platform5.com
ISBN: 9781915984180
Price £29.95

THE essential guide for all enthusiasts and for the large number also working in the rail industry, the 2024 combined volume from Platform 5 contains almost all the relevant information anyone with an interest in rolling stock requires.

With the obvious exception of wagons, which have never been included, the 432-page book, which fits handily in your bag or coat pocket, contains all main line locomotives, coaches, multiple units and On-Track Plant. As per the last few years, light

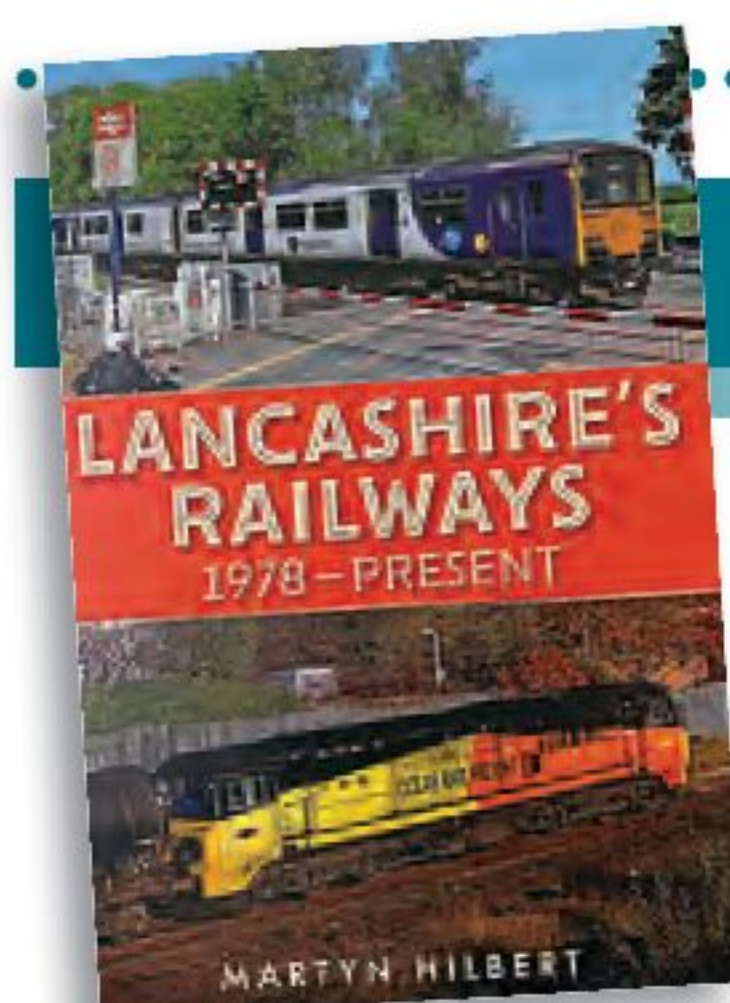
rail systems are no longer included, with the publisher producing a separate book covering this sector.

As you would expect with the Platform 5 combine, all the relevant information regarding names, allocations, pools and liveries are included and these are correct up until early 2024. As with all such books, there will be information that has changed since the book went to press, but the team behind this publication have once again gone out of their way

to make it as up-to-date as possible, including some information that I was surprised to see considering the date I received the book.

The price has risen £9 in six years, but it does still represent fantastic value-for-money considering the quality of the publication and its accuracy.

Whether it is needed for your office desk, your bag when out on the railways or for underlining upon your return from a trip, this is still very much the book for you. Recommended. **(RC)**.



Lancashire's Railways 1978-present

Published by Amberley Publishing
www.amberley-books.com
ISBN: 9781398114715
Price £15.99

THIS book by Martyn Hilbert contains images depicting the changes seen on the railway network around Lancashire from 1978 until the present day.

Presented in Amberley's standard 96-page format, the photographer has sought to show the every day railway rather than cater for purely locomotive-hauled trains, meaning there is a wide selection of multiple unit, light rail and even narrow gauge images.

The book covers the end of the

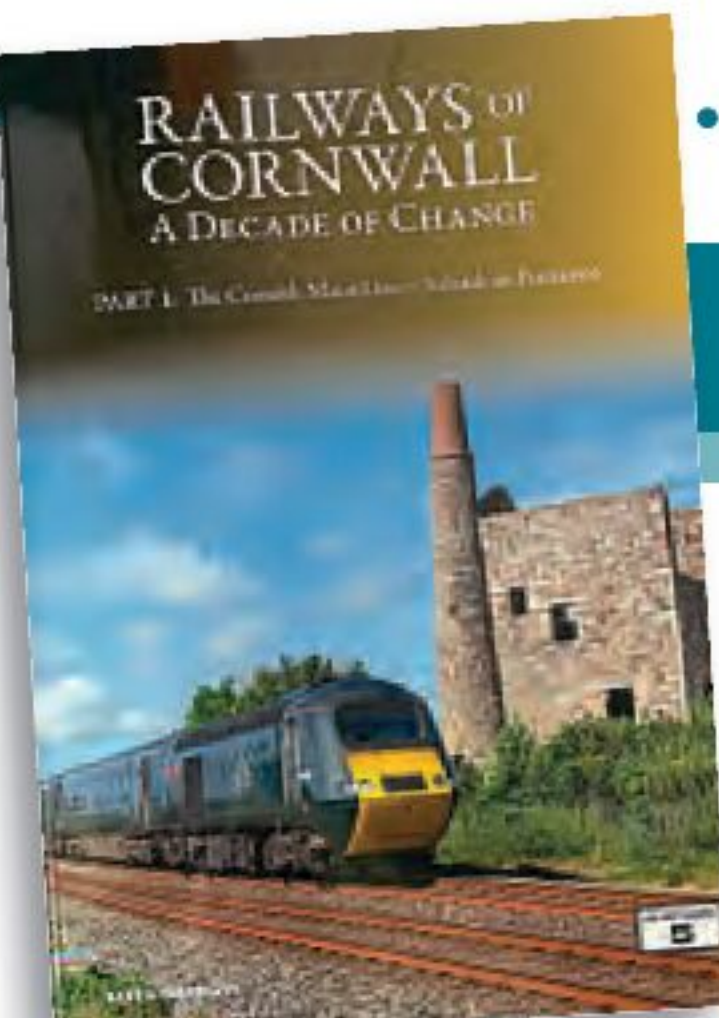
regional British Railways rail blue era, through sectorisation and Privatisation and captures the huge array of motive power that has operated in the Lancashire region.

The geographic area covered includes Lancaster and Carnforth to the West Yorkshire boundary, the Fylde area including Blackpool and Lytham, Central Lancashire (the Preston, Chorley and Leyland areas) and West Lancashire where it reaches the current Merseyside boundary south of

Ormskirk. Traditional former Lancashire towns of Bolton, Bury, Oldham and Wigan, which are now part of Greater Manchester, are also included, as is the city of Salford.

Captions are detailed, with the train's number, working and headcode, as well as location, details.

Locations vary from station to terminal, to lineside to depot which helps make this feel a varied and interesting book that is well worth adding to your shelf. **(RC)**.



Railways of Cornwall - A decade of change

Published by Platform 5
www.platform5.com
ISBN: 9781915984166
Price £21.95

CORNWALL'S railways have always been a fascinating subject for railway enthusiasts. From branch lines hugging rivers and clifftops, to freight trains meandering through rolling hills, to locomotive-hauled passenger trains thundering across moors and through rugged scenery, the Royal Duchy has been a place to go over the years.

Whether it was for observing, haulage opportunities or photography, there was something for everyone in the county. Locomotive-hauled expresses rubbed shoulders with multiple units at junction stations while traditional semaphore signals and signalboxes remained in situ even after the freight all-but-disappeared

and the locomotive-hauled trains were replaced by High Speed Trains and, now, Voyagers and Intercity Express Trains.

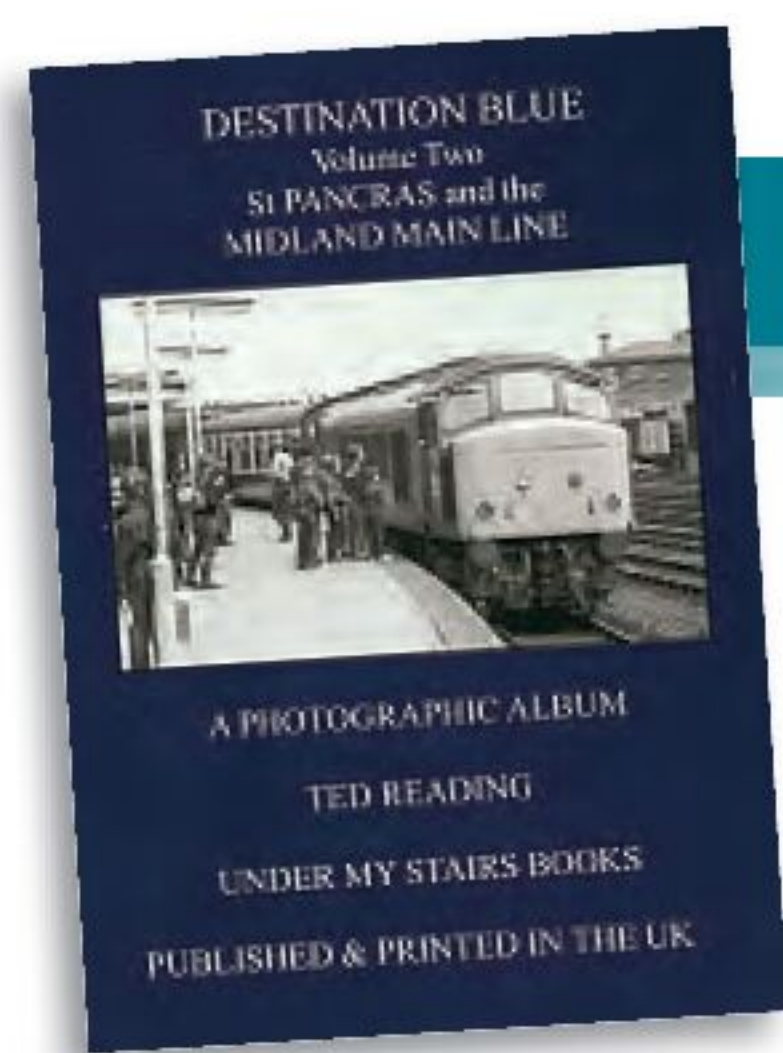
Respected railway journalist Keith Barrow reflects upon the change in Cornwall's railways in the intro of this 96-page, A4 publication which is produced in full colour. An excellent photographer in his own right, Keith has not only produced the book using his own images but also from other Cornish photographers including regular *Rail Express* contributor Craig Munday.

The book is split into five chapters: Ten Years of Change, Saltash-Liskeard, Liskeard-Par, Par-Truro and Truro-Penzance. Each features a small

introduction presenting the history of that part of the railway as well as interesting information regarding the route. The various branches and heritage lines are not included in this book and Keith writes that they will feature in a future Platform 5 publication.

All images are from 2013 and still include an array of liveries and multiple power, even if the days of Class 50s hauling Mk.1s had, by then, long gone.

With the demise of much of the semaphores in the region (see *Headline News*), this book is perfectly timed to remind people of what was in Cornwall until recently. I cannot recommend it enough! **(RC)**.



Destination Blue: Volume Two: St Pancras and the Midland Main Line

Published by Under My Stairs Books
Email irisandtedreading@gmail.com
Telephone: 01460 63904
Price £15.00 (including P&P)

It is no secret that I have been a fan of Ted Reading's *Terminal Blue* series, which focussed on the railways in and around the various London terminus stations. With that series now finished and wrapped up, the author has moved on to cover a much wider geographic area with his follow up series, *Destination Blue*.

This second volume in the series covers the route between London St Pancras and the Midland Main Line, but it covers so much more throughout its 188 pages. Our journey up the MML includes plenty of stations along the route, as well as lineside locations, depots, works and yards. The period covered was at a time when the Peaks dominated passenger services on the route and there are plenty of evocative

images of these popular locomotives within the pages and plenty of other locomotives, High Speed Trains, units and shunters also included in good measure.

What the author has managed to do is to capture the railway as it was at the time. Many station images show the ordinariness of the period, with images that many photographers would have probably ignored, but that is the brilliance of these books to my mind. They help to paint a picture of the railway when locomotive-hauled trains were the norm and at a time when the BR network felt rather down-at-heel yet is an era many enthusiasts remember with such fondness.

As with the previous books, all the images featured are black and

white, but whereas most publishers prefer colour photography these days, the pictures selected still exude a quality and realism that makes them atmospheric, and the lack of colour does not spoil the overall selection of images.

I had worried that as this series grew, the quality of images may start to decline, but that fear is completely unfounded and the author was a prolific and accomplished photographer during his travels. This is a real time machine look at an era of the railway that is long gone, but still feels like yesterday to those of us who were there at the time.

These fantastic books are self-published and any reader interested in adding this book, or any of Ted Reading's previous volumes which

may still be available, can order them directly from the author by telephone or email.

Please don't let the fact that it is purely black and white photography put you off, as these books are worth every penny and are arguably cheaper than they would be if they had been produced by a bigger publishing company. I cannot recommend these books highly enough. Buy it! (AMC)



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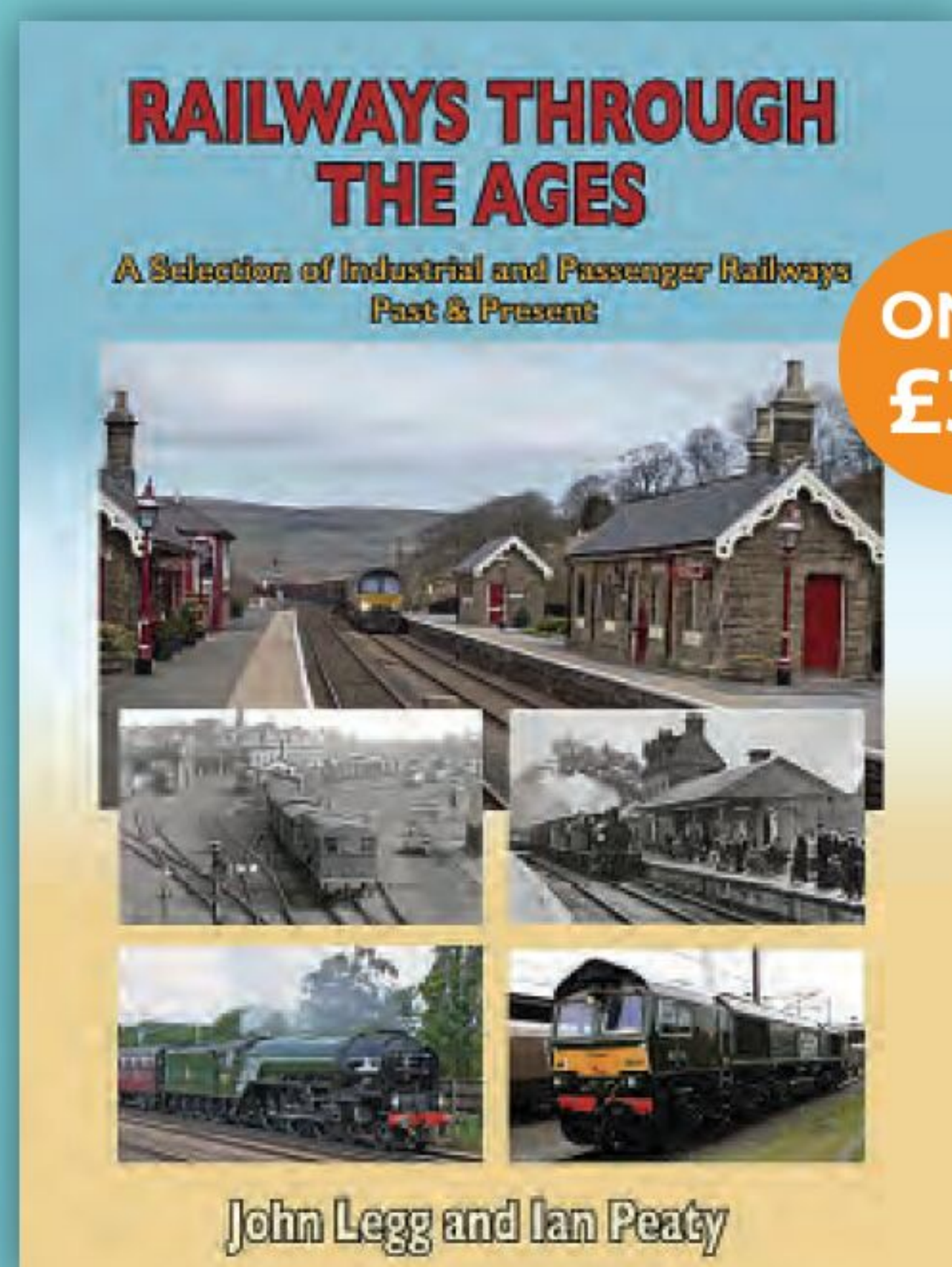
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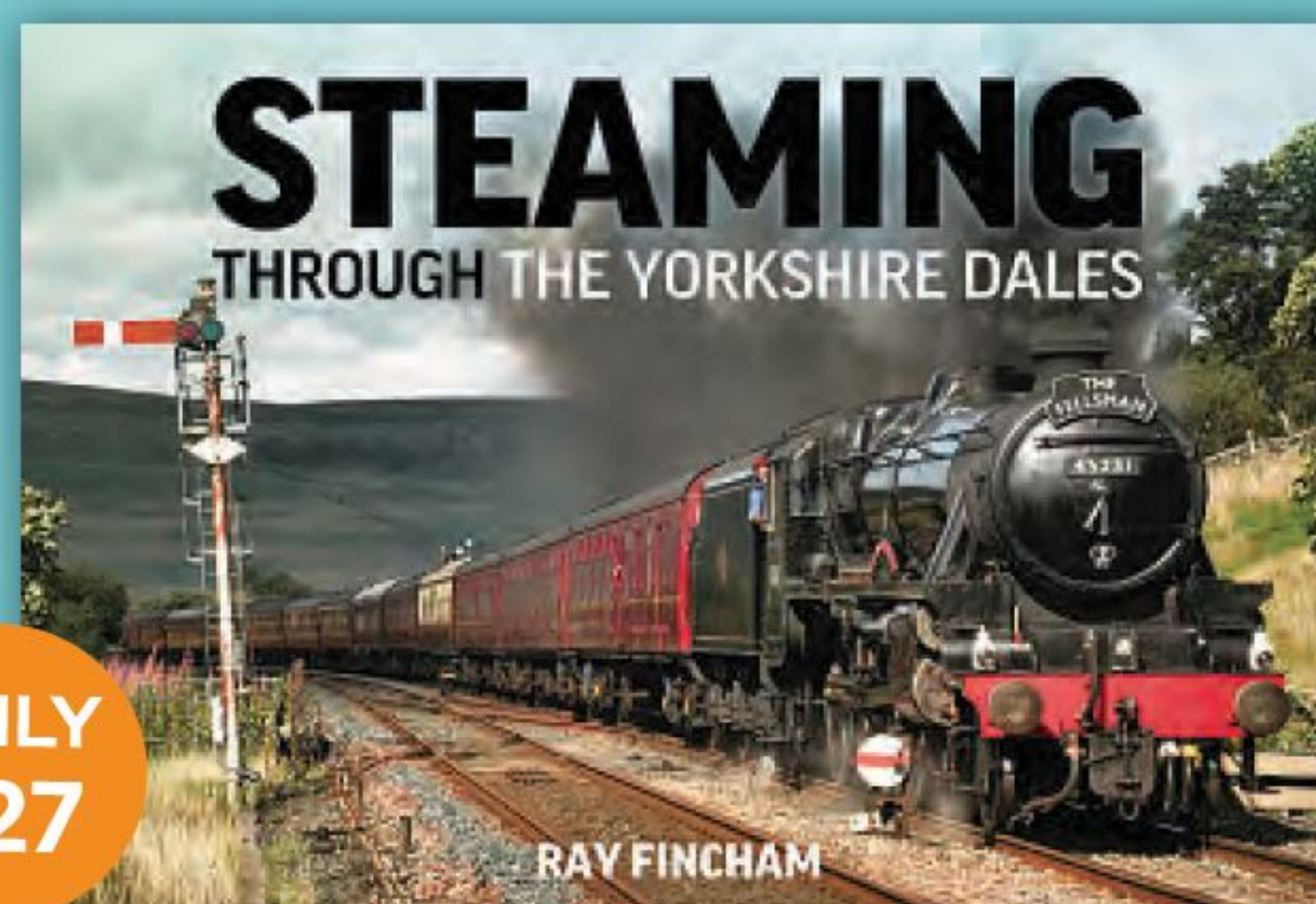
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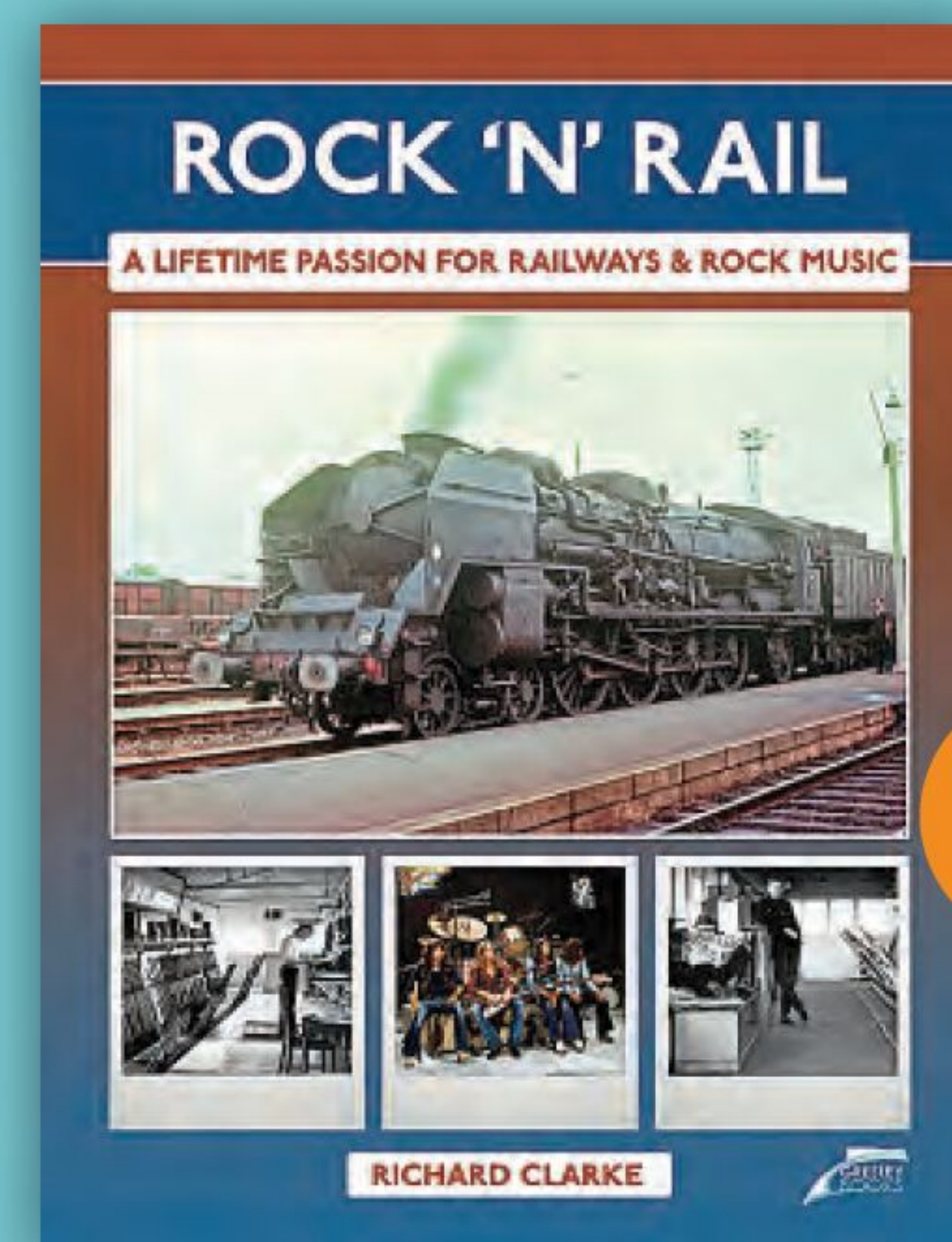


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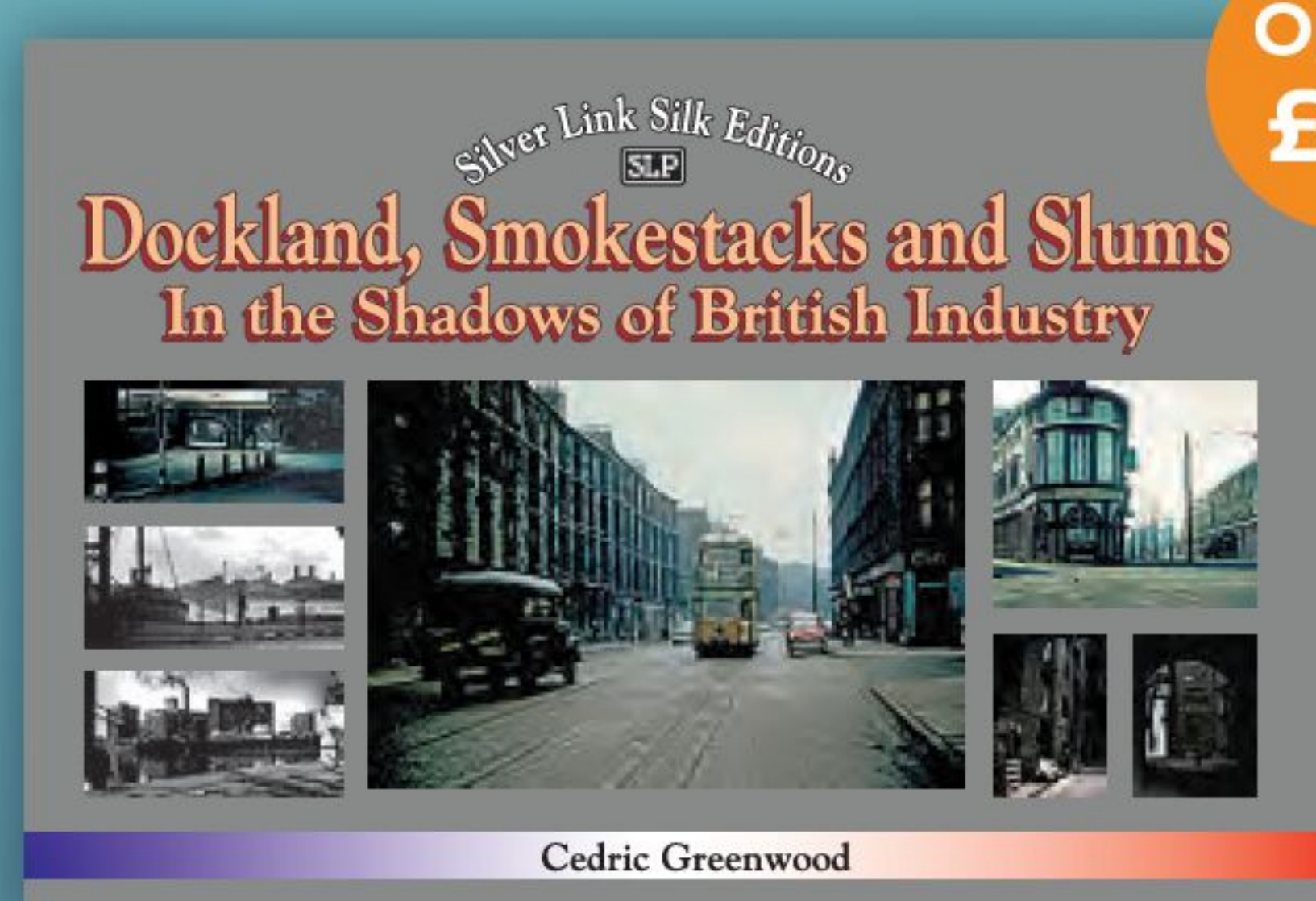


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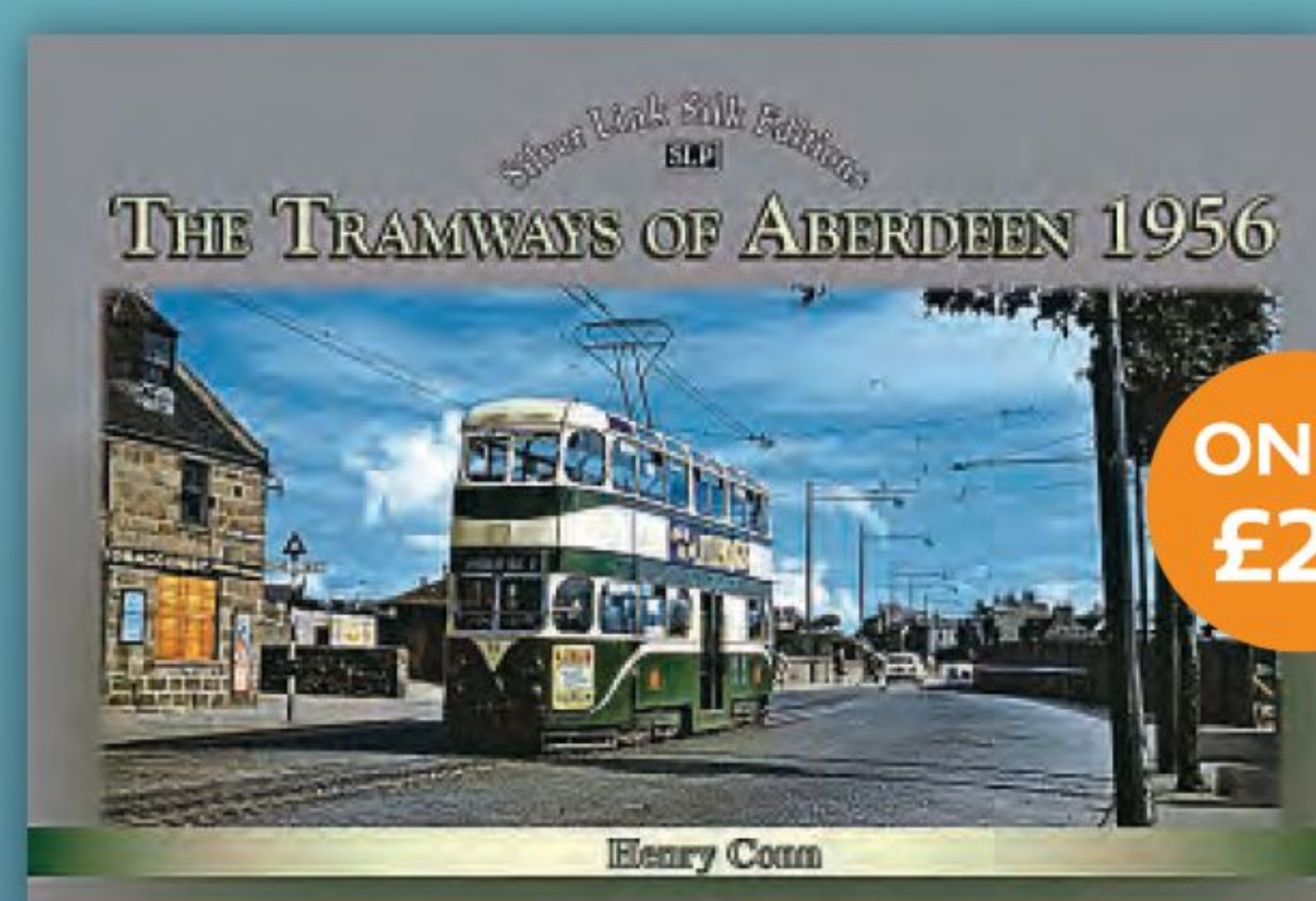


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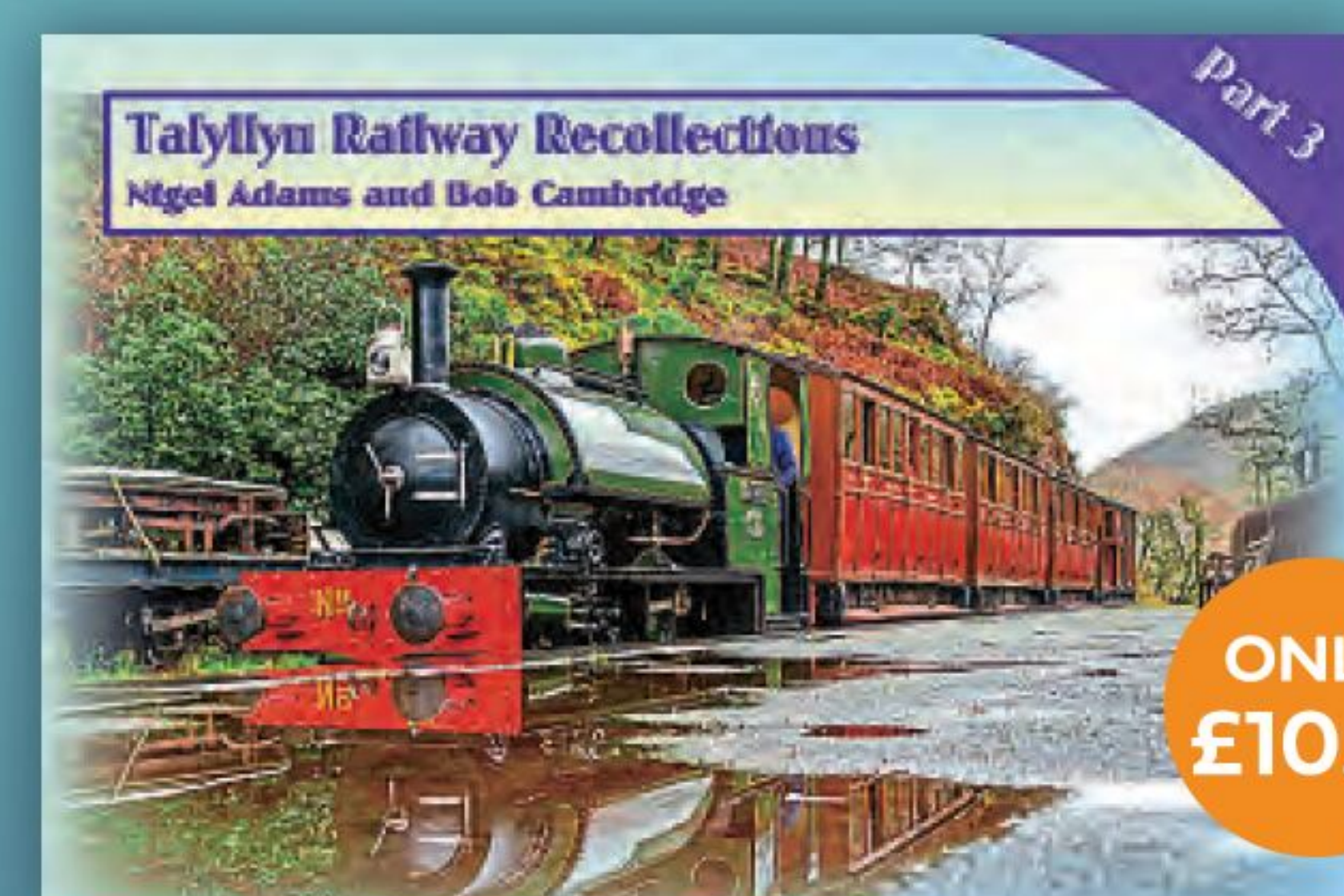


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