

New electrics for electrified line



Picture: HITACHI

New 100 mph electric trains were beginning to arrive in Scotland in January from Hitachi's new factory in Newton Aycliffe, County Durham.

The class 385s will be used on several routes, including the newly electrified Edinburgh-Glasgow via Falkirk route.

ScotRail has 70 electric trains on order with some of the new trains having undergone tests at Velim in the Czech Republic and Germany where they were hauled at speeds of up to 100mph.

Although the trains are arriving several months late, they will transform services and boost capacity.

A ScotRail spokesman said: "These new trains mean more seats, faster journeys and better services. We are excited about their arrival and know our customers will love them too."

The new electric trains will also be used on services to Stirling, Alloa and Dunblane, and on the Shotts line between Edinburgh and Glasgow, as well as North Berwick services and Strathclyde routes, including to Newton, Neilston and the Cathcart Circle.

The next electrification project in Scotland is the £160 million Shotts line (Holytown Junction-Midcalder Junction) which is already under way.

Delays have however beset the electrification of London's Gospel Oak-Barking line which reopened in January with two-car diesels still operating. New four-car electric

railaction

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Caledonian Sleeper chairman Peter Strachan said: "Travelling with the Caledonian Sleeper is a wonderful experience and the new train fleet being introduced will offer a new standard in overnight travel.

"Providing comfort and convenience, the sleeper allows for plenty of time for a full day of work or play, before transporting you to and from the destinations we serve – without the hassle of flying. The sleeper offers great value for money compared to other travel and accommodation options and combined with the new train accommodation will give guests the journey of a night time."

Serco has launched a website where people can see what the new trains will be like.

<http://newtrains.sleeper.scot/>

Alstom shows off its new train depot in Widnes



Picture: ALSTOM

Pendolino trains from Virgin West Coast have been passing through Alstom UK's depot in Widnes which opened in June. The main modernisation hall is almost the same size as the flight deck of the new HMS Queen Elizabeth aircraft carrier. The contract to repaint the Pendolinos is expected to be complete at the end of next year.

In Alstom's plant at Belfort, France, where the first TGV was produced, work is under way on designs for the TGV 2020 which will be able to carry 600 passengers.

www.alstom.com/uk

New CAF train factory under construction in Newport, south Wales



Picture: CAF

Work is under way on a new CAF factory at Newport, south Wales. The Spanish company expects to employ 200 people at the plant when it opens in the autumn, increasing to 300 in 2019. There will be opportunities for technicians and engineers as well as apprentices. CAF is investing £30 million in the plant on the site of the Llanwern steelworks. It has received grant support from the Welsh Government's inward

Railfuture AGM 2018

The Railfuture AGM is in Edinburgh on 12 May 2018 and will take place at the Holyrood Hotel.

For more information:

www.railfuture.org.uk/conferences/

Railfuture conferences

The next Railfuture conference is in Carlisle on 23 June 2018.

Speakers include:

Mark Rand, Past Chairman, Friends of the Settle-Carlisle Line

For further information see:

www.railfuture.org.uk/conferences

investment programme. CAF has orders to build coaches for the Caledonian Sleeper, as well as trains for TransPennine Express, West Midlands Trains and Northern. The factory will have the flexibility to build trams, metro, suburban and inter-city trains, as well as high speed trains.

<http://www.caf.net/en/sala-prensa/nota-prensa-detalle.php?e=219>

Talgo reveals plans for British factory

The Spanish train maker Talgo announced long-term plans to build a factory to supply the British market. Talgo is targeting high-speed and commuter rolling stock supply and maintenance contracts in Britain and Ireland. Talgo president Mr Carlos Palacio visited Britain in October and the company said it is analysing dozens of locations across Britain. Talgo says its bimode products could be crucial.

London Docklands station reopens after Elizabeth line works

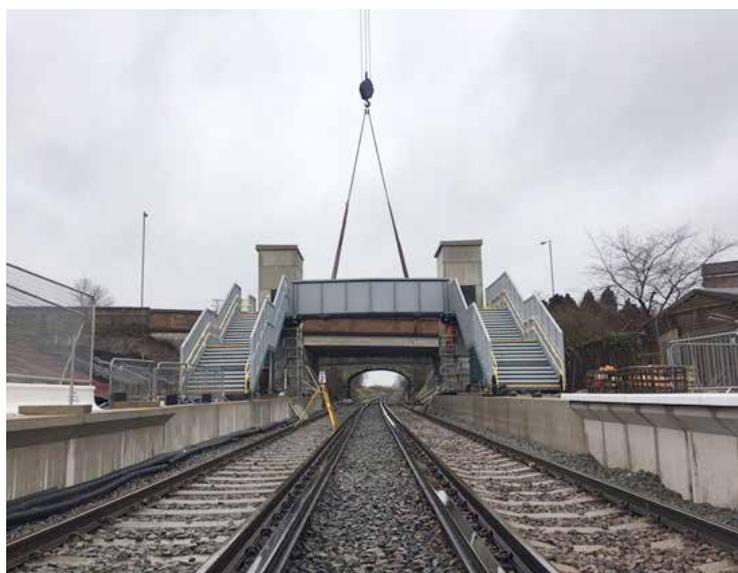


Custom House station on the Docklands Light Railway reopened in January after nearly a year of closure. The station is next to Crossrail (now called the Elizabeth line) and was upgraded ready for the introduction of Elizabeth line services in December 2018.

In November, Transport for London opened the bidding on 43 new DLR trains, as part of plans to increase capacity on the line and replace old stock.

TfL says the Elizabeth Line will boost rail transport capacity in central London by 10% and add £42 billion to the economy.

Maghull North station scheme on track for May opening



Work is under way on the new £13 million Maghull North station on the Ormskirk line in Liverpool. Liverpool City Region Metro Mayor Steve Rotheram and Sefton Central MP Bill Esterson visited the site in November.

The line was closed in early January for the new footbridge to the platforms and lift shafts to be installed, next to the former Ashworth Hospital site. Facilities at the new

station will include pedestrian and cycle routes to the station and future provision for electric vehicle charging points. It will open in May. Mr Esterson said: "This station has been talked about for over 30 years and I am pleased that Metro Mayor Steve Rotheram, the Combined Liverpool City Region Authority, Sefton Council, Merseytravel and Network Rail have worked together to make sure it is finally being built for the many in Maghull and Lydiate."

www.merseytravel.gov.uk/MaghullNorth

National Audit Office examines East Coast rail franchise

The National Audit Office launched an investigation in January into the East Coast main line franchise and the failure of Virgin Trains East Coast to deliver on its

What's on

Here are some forthcoming events that may be of interest to rail campaigners. Details of venues and times can be found on the Railfuture website:

6 February 2018 Tuesday

10th anniversary of reopening Ebbw Vale line, and Ebbw Vale Parkway, Newbridge, Risca & Pontymister, and Rogerstone stations, to passengers.

6 February 2018 Tuesday

Ribble Valley Rail committee meeting. Non-committee members welcome to attend, but not to vote. Venue: New Inn, 20 Parson Lane, Clitheroe, Lancs, BB7 2JN. 14.30.

6 February 2018 Tuesday

Crossrail: moving London forward. Guest speaker: Terry Morgan, Crossrail Chairman. Venue: Room 164, Skempton Building, Imperial College, Exhibition Road, London, SW7 2AZ. 16.30-18.15.

For further information on these and other events see:

<http://www.railfuture.org.uk/Events>



£3.3 billion promises. Transport Secretary Chris Grayling's decision to end the franchise deal early has led to accusations that ministers are bailing out the private operators to the tune of £2 billion. Stagecoach, which holds 90% of the contract alongside 10% partner Virgin, won the eight-year contract in 2014. It is believed to have relied on passenger revenues increasing

by 10% every year. The latest figures show revenues rising at a rate of just 3%. Mr Grayling said a new public-private partnership, uniting track and trains, will run from 2020 instead. Several other franchises may be affected by the reduced rate of growth in passenger numbers, which has been blamed on fares rising too fast.

The campaign group *We Own It* staged demonstrations at stations throughout Britain in January, calling for nationalisation of the East Coast rail franchise. It claims renegotiation of the franchise will cost taxpayers £2 billion.

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2018/jan/27/national-audit-office-to-investigate-east-coast-rail-bailout-chris-grayling>

Korea's Winter Olympic line starts operation



A high speed railway to serve the February Winter Olympics started to operate in December and links the South Korean capital Seoul with the north-east city of Gangneung as well as the international airport at Incheon. The 155mph line includes a station at Jinbu, designed to accommodate 20-car trains. Running through the Taebaek mountains, the line is steeply graded, with 60% in tunnel. It required the construction of 34 tunnels and 53 bridges.

Ayrshire transport summit and safeguarding Crossrail

An Ayrshire transport summit meeting is scheduled for 9 February 2018. Ken Sutherland of Railfuture Scotland has contacted the organisers to stress the importance of implementing the Glasgow Crossrail scheme which would connect Ayrshire with the rail network north of Glasgow. He is calling for the summit to agree to give Crossrail cross-party support. Ken has also contacted Paul Sweeney MP to urge that the crucial Glasgow High Street curve should be safeguarded as a key component of the Crossrail link project.

http://www.heraldscotland.com/opinion/letters/15675853.Letters__Why_Crossrail_still_deserves_to_be_given_the_green_light/

Web links

Readers of *railaction* should be able to click on the web links in this document to be taken straight to the relevant website.

However this is not yet an exact science. One problem is that organisations update their websites and change the page references.

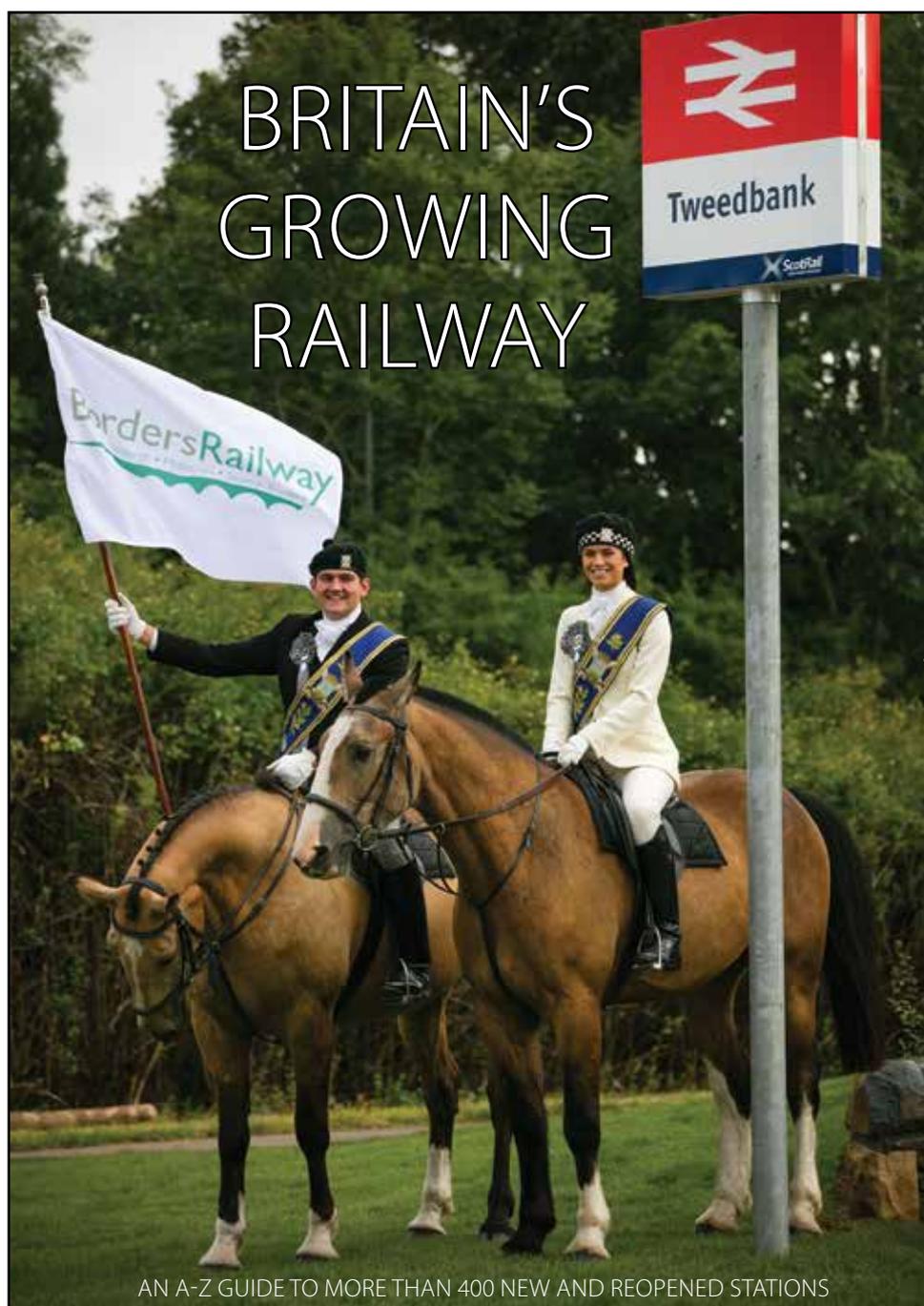
We do our best to keep abreast of these changes, but it is not always possible.

Railfuture submissions

Railfuture responds to many formal consultations about the railways.

Submissions can be downloaded from:

<http://www.railfuture.org.uk/consultation+responses>



Railfuture's latest book (above) has details of the 400 stations and over 950km of new routes which have opened to passengers since 1960. Rail expert and author Paul Salvesson said: "This book is indispensable not just to rail campaigners but transport professionals, local authority politicians – and those chap/esses in Government." The Rev Edmund Worthy of Wellingborough said: "Britain's Growing Railway is a wonderful work of reference and an inspiration to remind us of all the good news of railway expansion." The 192-page 2017 updated edition costs £9.95 and can be obtained online at

<http://www.railfuture.org.uk/shop/>

STOCKS ARE GOING FAST. GET YOUR COPY TODAY!

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Brazil plans new 600-mile rail line

The government of the Brazilian state of Paraná announced in São Paulo in November that it planned a new 600-mile freight railway to improve the flow of agricultural products from the midwest of Brazil through the port of Paranaguá.

The estimated cost is £2.2 billion.

<http://www.railjournal.com/index.php/freight/new-freight-line-aims-to-boost-brazilian-agriculture-exports.html>

Florida's 120 mph new Brightline

America's first private "high speed" rail service opened in January from Fort Lauderdale to West Palm Beach in Florida, promising to take as many as 3 million cars off the road.

The £2 billion Brightline express project runs along the state's densest population corridor.

Trains will run at between 80 and 120mph.

It is the first step in the long-awaited US move into high speed rail, said John Renne, director of the Center for Urban and Environmental Solutions at Florida Atlantic University.

<https://www.npr.org/2017/12/07/569183423/florida-set-to-launch-countrys-first-private-high-speed-train-service>